

**DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR
SUCCESSION PLANNING:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

by

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PROMOTOR: PROF CORLIA ALERS

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DECLARATION

I, MAGDALENA JOHANNA MARTHINUSSEN, student number 40159493, hereby declare that *Developing a Conceptual Model for Succession Planning: a Case Study of the University of Namibia*, which I submit in accordance with requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration at the University of South Africa, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I declare that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.



SIGNATURE

22 October 2025

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my son, Uliano and my grandson, Marchio. May this achievement serve as a testament to the importance of perseverance, learning, and the pursuit of knowledge across generations.

I also dedicate this work to my late parents, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices have laid the foundation for my academic journey. Their belief in the value of education has been an enduring source of inspiration.

And to my beloved late brother, Leon Feris. I still remember how proud you were when I ranked among the top three in Grade 1 – your pride sparked in me a lifelong love for learning. Your encouragement and loving spirit continue to inspire me every day. This work is a testament to your belief in me and honours your legacy of dedication, strength, and compassion you left behind.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined succession planning practices within the administrative workforce of the University of Namibia and developed a conceptual model intended to strengthen leadership development and ensure organisational continuity. The investigation was driven by the growing imperative for sustained leadership capacity in public higher education institutions and by the absence of a formalised succession planning framework at the University of Namibia, a gap that threatens leadership pipelines and limits the systematic preparation of future leaders.

A qualitative research approach was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of succession planning within the institutional context. Data were gathered from administrative staff using appropriate qualitative data collection techniques and were analysed thematically to identify dominant patterns, underlying challenges, and emergent opportunities related to succession planning and leadership development.

The findings indicate that succession planning practices at the University of Namibia are predominantly informal and fragmented, lacking a coherent framework to guide the systematic identification, development, and preparation of potential leaders. Leadership positions are largely filled through internal applications and Ad Hominem promotions, with limited evidence of structured mechanisms for talent identification, leadership development, or knowledge transfer. The study further identified weaknesses in the coordination of leadership development initiatives and constraints in human resource capacity that impede effective succession planning.

The study concludes that the absence of a formal succession planning framework constitutes a significant risk to leadership continuity and organisational sustainability at the University of Namibia. It argues that effective succession planning requires a systematic, integrated approach that aligns leadership development processes with the institution's strategic objectives.

In response to the identified gaps, the study recommends the establishment of a formalised succession planning framework, the implementation of structured talent identification and leadership development programmes, and the enhancement of human resource capacity to support succession planning efforts across the institution.

A conceptual succession planning model tailored to the administrative workforce of the University was subsequently developed. This model provides a structured and coherent approach for identifying, developing, and preparing potential leaders. Its purpose is to strengthen leadership continuity, enhance organisational sustainability, and reinforce institutional capacity.

Overall, the study concludes that without a deliberate and well-structured succession planning system, leadership development, organisational stability, and institutional sustainability are compromised. The lack of a strategic approach to identifying and developing successors increases the risk of losing institutional knowledge and weakening the leadership pipeline.

KEY CONCEPTS

Academic staff

Higher education

Human resources development

Leadership development

Middle managers

Strategic planning

Succession plan models

Succession planning

Talent management

University of Namibia

Workforce planning

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CHAPTER 1:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Public institutions across the world increasingly face challenges related to leadership continuity, organisational sustainability, and the preservation of institutional knowledge. As experienced employees retire, resign, or transition to other roles, organisations frequently struggle to identify and prepare competent successors for critical leadership positions. The absence of structured leadership development systems may result in capability gaps, weakened organisational performance, and disruptions to long-term strategic objectives. In response to these challenges, succession planning has emerged as an important strategy within strategic human resource management for ensuring leadership continuity and strengthening institutional capacity (Rothwell, 2016:20; Manzini & Malatjie, 2023:1132).

Succession planning refers to a deliberate and systematic process through which organisations identify, develop, and prepare employees to assume key leadership positions when vacancies arise. Rather than relying on reactive recruitment practices, succession planning enables organisations to build internal leadership pipelines and align staff development with organisational goals. Effective succession planning not only strengthens leadership capacity but also safeguards institutional memory and promotes organisational resilience during periods of leadership transition. Higher education institutions operate within complex governance environments that require leaders capable of balancing academic priorities, administrative responsibilities, and strategic management functions. Universities therefore require leaders who possess both academic credibility and managerial competence (Upadhyaya & Kuknor, 2025:178). Leadership continuity is consequently essential for universities seeking to sustain institutional performance and fulfil their mandates in teaching, research, and community engagement. Despite the recognised importance of succession planning in supporting institutional stability, many public institutions continue to rely on informal promotion practices rather than structured succession planning frameworks. This situation may weaken leadership pipelines and limit opportunities for staff development (Shava & Ndebele, 2024:87).

To provide a clear foundation for the present study, the background is discussed in two sections: the theoretical and conceptual background and the contextual background.

1.1.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Succession planning is widely recognised in organisational and public administration literature as an essential component of strategic human resource management. It is generally defined as a systematic process through which organisations identify potential leaders and prepare them to assume key positions in the future (Rothwell, 2016:25). According to Manzini and Malatjie (2023:1134), succession planning extends beyond the appointment of individuals to leadership roles and involves identifying critical positions, selecting potential successors, monitoring their development, and preparing them to assume leadership responsibilities when needed.

The concept of succession planning is closely linked to other organisational processes, including workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development. Workforce planning focuses on ensuring that organisations possess the appropriate number of employees with the necessary skills and competencies to achieve strategic objectives (Sutton, Prowse & Mc Vey, 2023:33; Shava & Ndebele, 2024:87). Talent management emphasises the attraction, development, and retention of high-performing employees who contribute to organisational performance (Taamneh, Taamneh, Alsaad & Al-Okaily, 2022:50; Marlapudi & Lenka, 2024:16). Leadership development focuses on strengthening leadership competencies through training, mentoring, and professional development initiatives (Lee, 2021:44; McDonald, 2025:65). Together, these processes support the development of a sustainable leadership pipeline within organisations. Within public sector organisations, succession planning also contributes to effective governance and institutional sustainability. Public institutions are required to maintain stability, accountability, and continuity despite leadership transitions and evolving policy environments. Structured succession planning therefore enables organisations to safeguard institutional knowledge, strengthen leadership pipelines, and ensure the continuous development of competent leaders who can support organisational objectives (Upadhyaya & Kuknor, 2025:55; Papaioannou & Serdaris, 2023:90).

In higher education institutions, succession planning is particularly important because leadership roles often require a combination of academic expertise, administrative competence, and strategic decision-making ability. University leaders must manage complex institutional structures,

coordinate multiple stakeholders, and respond to national and global developments in higher education. Consequently, the systematic development of future leaders becomes essential for maintaining institutional effectiveness and supporting organisational sustainability. Although the importance of succession planning is widely acknowledged in management literature, its implementation within public institutions remains inconsistent. Many organisations continue to rely on informal promotion practices or reactive recruitment processes rather than structured leadership development systems (Upadhyaya & Kuknor, 2025:55). These limitations highlight the need for context-specific research that examines how succession planning can be effectively implemented within public institutions, particularly within higher education environments (NEOGOV, 2023).

1.1.2 Contextual Background

The University of Namibia is the largest public higher education institution in Namibia and plays a significant role in national development through teaching, research, and the development of skilled human capital. The university offers programmes across various academic disciplines, including science, education, law, agriculture and health sciences. To fulfil its mandate effectively, the institution depends not only on academic expertise but also on capable administrative leadership that ensures organisational stability, efficient governance, and strategic institutional management. Despite its importance within Namibia's higher education landscape, evidence suggests that succession planning practices at the University of Namibia remain largely informal and fragmented. Leadership positions are typically filled through internal applications for advertised vacancies or through Ad Hominem promotions (UNAM, 2023). Although these mechanisms are recognised in institutional policies, they do not form part of a comprehensive succession planning framework designed to systematically identify and develop potential future leaders.

The absence of a structured succession planning system has several implications for the institution. Promotion processes may be perceived as unclear or inconsistent, which may negatively affect staff morale and job satisfaction. When opportunities for career advancement appear limited, capable employees may seek employment elsewhere, resulting in the loss of valuable institutional knowledge and organisational expertise. In addition, when leadership positions are filled through external recruitment, newly appointed individuals often require time to become familiar with the university's administrative systems, procedures and organisational culture. This adjustment period

may temporarily affect organisational efficiency and disrupt continuity in institutional management. The Human Resource Department also faces challenges related to limited technical capacity and insufficient coordination of leadership development initiatives. Another challenge concerns the absence of systematic mechanisms for identifying and developing high-potential employees within the administrative workforce. Without deliberate talent identification and leadership development processes, potential successors may not receive adequate opportunities to prepare for future leadership roles (UNAM, 2019b).

Given that many senior administrative positions within the university are filled internally, the absence of a structured succession planning framework poses a risk to leadership continuity and institutional sustainability. These contextual realities provide the foundation for this study, which seeks to examine succession planning practices at the University of Namibia and to develop a conceptual succession planning model that can support leadership development and organisational continuity within the institution.

1.2 CHALLENGES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

In higher education institutions, management positions often require a blend of academic excellence and administrative competence. However, as noted by Abdullahi, Raman and Solarin (2022:138), these roles tend to prioritise academic skills, sometimes at the expense of strong leadership and strategic planning capacities. The University of Namibia, as the largest public higher education institution in the country, epitomises this broader organisational challenge within the public sector. Although the responsibility for succession planning formally resides within the ambit of the Human Resource Management function, its operationalisation across public institutions remains fragmented and inconsistently applied. In the context of public administration, effective succession planning necessitates strategic leadership commitment at the institutional apex, as senior executives play a pivotal role in institutionalising clear and systematic criteria for identifying, developing, and nurturing potential successors. The absence of such leadership-driven initiatives risks undermining organisational continuity, institutional memory, and long-term capacity within the public service.

At the University of Namibia, the current succession planning strategies largely rely on traditional mechanisms. These include encouraging high-performing staff to apply for higher positions within

or outside their departments, as well as progressing through Ad Hominem promotions where individuals are promoted based on personal merit without applying for a vacant post (UNAM, 2023). While these promotion routes are officially recognised, they often fall short of forming part of a broader, visionary succession planning framework. This misalignment between policy and implementation creates a significant gap. High-performing individuals, particularly those in middle management, frequently feel overlooked. When their aspirations for advancement are not realised, they tend to pursue opportunities at other institutions, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge and capacity.

This exodus of skilled staff has ripple effects. New appointees, often recruited from outside the University, require extensive orientation and on-the-job training to become familiar with the University of Namibia's internal systems, procedures and culture. This transitional period can delay productivity and disrupt operational efficiency. Furthermore, when external candidates are selected over existing staff, it may create feelings of resentment and conflict among employees who were bypassed. According to the OECD (2020), such tensions are common in institutions lacking transparent and equitable succession planning mechanisms, and they may undermine morale and teamwork.

The primary goal of the University of Namibia is to train and develop qualified professionals in a variety of important fields, such as science, humanities, law, medicine, and agriculture. The institution's responsibilities include teaching, research advancement, knowledge dissemination, and helping to develop and carry out national education policy. A diversified and competent team is essential to the successful execution of this complex task. Master's and doctorate degree holders, professors, and senior lecturers make up the academic complement, while the vice chancellor, pro vice chancellors, deans, registrars, directors, heads of departments, and various support staff like faculty and administrative officers make up the administrative cadre. Notably, Deans and Heads of Departments (HoDs) occupy dual roles that encompass both operational management and academic leadership, thereby positioning them as pivotal actors in the institution's performance and strategic continuity (UNAM, 2019b:14).

Although the university possesses a robust staffing structure, the mechanisms for identifying and cultivating internal talent for key leadership positions remain predominantly informal and inconsistent. The lack of a structured succession planning model results in the current staff

development program not being utilised strategically. In the absence of a clear framework to guide access to the program, promotions often appear subjective. In some cases, individuals with limited experience or technical capability are promoted, while more qualified and committed staff are overlooked. This unpredictability has led many staff members to self-fund further education in the hope of improving their promotion prospects, even when they do not qualify for official study leave due to service requirements.

The absence of a clearly defined, effectively communicated, and systematically institutionalised succession planning framework at the University of Namibia carries significant and far-reaching implications for organisational continuity and leadership sustainability. Without a coordinated effort to monitor talent and performance across leadership levels, Faculties and Departments are left without reliable tools to determine whether the right people are advancing into appropriate roles at the optimal time. Consequently, organisational continuity is compromised, and long-term strategic goals are threatened. A well-formulated succession planning strategy, integrated with comprehensive career development programmes, would provide clear employee growth pathways, reduce recruitment and training costs and strengthen institutional performance.

The University of Namibia's Human Resource Department is central to developing such a sustainable and future-oriented succession planning process. However, current evidence suggests that it lacks the technical capacity, strategic resources, and design expertise required to implement a comprehensive programme that meets both the university's functional demands and the challenges of the broader higher education environment. Furthermore, there appears to be no coordinated monitoring of leadership performance or potential across departments. This results in uncertainty, speculation and discontent when leadership positions become vacant (UNAM, 2019b:14).

The candidate pool for senior management often comprises individuals from middle or lower management levels. Yet, there are limited institutional mechanisms to identify and nurture high-potential talent, particularly younger staff, who could eventually assume these roles. This neglect of forward planning risks long-term sustainability. If current patterns persist, the University of Namibia will continue to lose capable individuals to competing institutions, experience declining job satisfaction among staff, and ultimately struggle to meet its strategic and academic objectives (UNAM, 2019b:15).

In essence, the lack of a formal succession planning framework at the University of Namibia adversely affects staff development, compromises organisational continuity, and impedes the institution's pursuit of excellence. There is a critical need to move beyond *ad hoc* promotions and introduce a systematic, transparent and strategic succession planning process that aligns with the university's long-term goals and mission.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Succession planning is a fundamental organisational process that ensures leadership continuity, preserves institutional knowledge, and supports long-term organisational sustainability. Within higher education institutions, characterised by complex governance structures and demanding administrative functions effective leadership is essential for maintaining institutional performance. When succession planning practices are informal or absent, organisations risk developing inadequate leadership pipelines, experiencing leadership disruptions, and jeopardising their strategic objectives.

At the University of Namibia, succession planning within the administrative domain appears to be largely informal and inconsistently implemented. Leadership roles are typically filled through internal recruitment or Ad Hominem promotions; however, these mechanisms do not constitute a coherent or systematic approach to identifying and developing future leaders. The absence of a structured framework increases the likelihood of leadership gaps following staff turnover, inconsistencies in promotion practices, and the gradual loss of institutional memory. These challenges collectively threaten leadership stability and may hinder the university's long-term effectiveness and sustainability.

Despite recognition of its importance, empirical research on succession planning in Namibian higher education remains limited, particularly regarding administrative leadership. This gap restricts the development of context-appropriate leadership development models. Consequently, this study therefore seeks to examine succession planning practices at the University of Namibia and develop a conceptual succession planning model to support leadership continuity within the administrative workforce of the institution.

Several questions will be posed to respond to the research problem. The research questions based on the identified problem statement include the following:

1. What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?
2. To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?
3. What is the most appropriate research approach to investigate succession planning in public institutions?
4. What is the most suitable succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia?
5. What contribution can be made to succession planning models in Public Administration?

1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study is twofold, namely (1) to determine to what extent succession planning can be used to develop and promote competent and high performing staff and (2) to design a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia.

The following are the key specific objectives of the research.

1. Critically evaluate the literature on succession planning in public institutions.
2. Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a developmental tool for high performing staff.
3. Determine the most appropriate research approach to investigate succession planning in public institutions.
4. Suggest a succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia.
5. Contribute to succession planning models in Public Administration.

Below, the relevant key concepts are defined and described.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The study conducted a review of the literature on succession planning and its impact on the development of competent and high-performing staff within public institutions. The literature review primarily focused on key concepts, including succession planning, workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development. The discussion begins with a definition and conceptual clarification of succession planning, followed by an examination of the remaining concepts, highlighting their interrelationships and relevance to organisational effectiveness in the public sector.

1.5.1 Succession planning

As will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3, section 3.2 concerning *Succession Planning*, this process constitutes a fundamental aspect of an organisation's dedication to promoting equal opportunities for staff advancement into leadership roles. Succession planning entails the identification and development of employees with the potential to occupy key leadership positions within an organisation. It is a vital component of an organisation's ongoing human resource strategy and is frequently considered a cornerstone of sustainable talent management (Manzini & Malatjie, 2023:1132).

According to Maroga, Schultz and Smit (2024:69), succession planning is a deliberate and systematic initiative aimed at ensuring leadership continuity in critical positions, preserving and developing intellectual and knowledge capital, and supporting individual growth and career progression. The selection of successors for top leadership and senior management roles is among the most significant decisions an organisation, whether public or private, can undertake, including institutions of higher learning. Papaioannou and Serdaris (2023:476) emphasise that the primary objective of succession planning is to cultivate current talent and enhance organisational capacity to meet future needs.

Furthermore, Papaioannou and Serdaris (2023:478) underscore that succession planning should extend beyond executive management to encompass all levels of employment within public institutions. Succession planning has emerged as a top priority for both public and private sector organisations, as the departure of experienced employees through retirement, resignation, or death

often results in the loss of valuable expertise and institutional knowledge (Upadhyaya & Kuknor, 2025:178). This challenge can impact all areas and operational levels of institutions such as the University of Namibia, which has already experienced the repercussions of losing skilled personnel to retirement (UNAM, 2019a). Maroga, et al. (2024:72) further assert that succession planning serves as a key strategy for effective talent management and alignment of human resources with institutional objectives.

According to Wolfe (2018:32) and Taamneh, Taamneh, Alsaad and Al-Okaily (2022:734), the concept of succession planning can be understood as a structured and deliberate organisational programme designed to ensure leadership continuity across all critical positions. This is achieved through systematic identification, development, and preparation of internal personnel to assume future leadership roles. The unanticipated departure of key employees and delays in filling essential positions may significantly impede the attainment of institutional and strategic objectives. Seniwoliba (2015:2-3) posits that when such circumstances are coupled with a widening skills gap, an aging workforce, and intensified competition for high-performing individuals, the necessity for institutions to invest more time, effort, and resources in succession management becomes increasingly apparent. In this regard, succession planning serves not only as a human resource function but also as a strategic imperative for organisational sustainability and capacity building. Moreover, high-performing employees typically demonstrate a clear understanding of their professional objectives. They are proactive in defining their goals, establishing measurable targets, and organising their efforts to achieve them efficiently. Such individuals consistently exceed organisational expectations and are frequently entrusted with complex or high-stakes assignments due to their established record of reliability, competence, and achievement.

1.5.2 Workforce planning

Workforce planning means comparing the number and quality of people against an organisation's strategic objectives. According to Sutton, Prowse, McVey, Elshehaly, Neagu, Montague, Alvarado, Tissiman, O'Connell, Eysers, Faisal and Randell (2023:104827), workforce planning can be encapsulated in a deceptively simple yet fundamental question: Does the organisation possess a sufficient number of individuals with the appropriate skills and capabilities to achieve its strategic objectives? Workforce planning, according to Shava and Ndebele (2024:28-29), is an approach that

entails evaluating the current workforce, projecting future labour needs, identifying potential skill and capacity gaps, and putting targeted strategies into action to guarantee the organisation fulfils its mission, goals, and strategic vision. Workforce planning is a dynamic and iterative process rather than a strictly linear one, even though it is sometimes thought of as a series of procedural processes. Furthermore, it is a strategic strategy meant to increase organisational efficiency and reduce operational risk rather than an accurate or prescriptive science. This is to increase the efficiency of an organisation and reduce operational risk by reducing the distance between an organisation and the employees it really needs and who it has. Workforce planning and its relevance to this study is further elaborated on in Chapter 3, section 3.3 *Workforce planning*.

1.5.3 Talent management

Talent management extends beyond succession planning. Although the term has been described in numerous ways, Taamneh, et al. (2022:736) define talent management as a holistic process that includes the attraction, development, and retention of high-performing employees. This tripartite perspective distinguishes talent management from succession planning, emphasising the importance of complementing procedures.

In its broadest meaning, talent refers to the skills and abilities that allow a person to effectively do various activities. Marlapudi and Lenka (2024:712) describe talent as the sum of a person's abilities, which include innate gifts, learned skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgement, attitude, character, and motivation. It also shows a person's willingness to learn and progress. Lewis and Heckman (2006:140) suggest that talent management focuses on how organisations produce, develop, and preserve human capital resources.

In short, succession planning asks how an individual's potential can be used to meet institutional goals, whereas talent management asks how an organisation can optimise its whole talent structure through strategic attraction, development, and retention of competent employees. Furthermore, successful talent management entails employing systematic strategies for developing employees and managers from the beginning of their careers. As such, it is an important complement to larger organisational initiatives targeted at workforce preparation, professional development, and long-term institutional growth (Hatum, 2010:14; Marlapudi & Lenka, 2024:714).

More information about talent management is provided in Chapter 3, section 3.4 *Talent management*.

1.5.4 Leadership development

Effective succession planning and management require a focus on leadership development. Lee (2021:3) and McDonald (2025:486) argue that public institutions recognise that effective leadership involves more than merely pushing individuals, teams and organisations forward. Effective leadership involves demonstrating behaviours and developing organisational structures and policies that benefit associates and business partners. To achieve greatness, leaders must adopt active leadership styles, motivate followers, foster a healthy organisational culture, and prioritize environmental stewardship.

According to Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankwere (2011:103) and Lund (2024:340), leadership is a necessary topic in organisational behaviour. These writers go on to show that leadership has a dynamic effect on individual and organisational interactions. In other words, leadership competence is strongly correlated with management's 'collaborative effort' execution. Marcy (2023:264) defines leadership as an influence relationship between leaders and followers who want to see actual changes and outcomes that represent their common goals. Virtanen, Tammeaid and Jalonon (2023:77) propose a classification of five leadership perspectives: scientific management, excellent management, values displacement activities, trust culture, and whole-soul spiritual leadership. According to Sillah (2023:240), leadership is the driving force behind effective public institutions, and it is required to develop sustainable public institutions as well as mobilise public institutions to move towards new visions. Leadership development is incomplete as a standalone system. A leadership development project should be based on succession planning, aligned with the organisation's goal, and realistic given the organisation's size and resources. Specifically, succession management serves as the foundation for leadership development. It expands on this information by defining the parameters of practice and processes. It is vital to remember that the goal of leadership development is not to build programs. Instead, it should be about building and executing techniques and procedures that leverage work-related experiences to assist achieve the organisation's strategy.

Leadership in the public sector frequently takes the form of collective leadership, in which public bodies work together to achieve a common vision, goals, and values. These are dispersed

collaboratively through public institutions to promote, influence, and provide enhanced public value as proven by long-term social, environmental, and economic well-being in a complex and changing environment. The mayor's office is an example of public leadership. The goal of public leadership development is to improve people's ability to carry out their leadership roles and procedures successfully. To be effective, leadership development programs should align public administrators with an institution's vision and provide innovations tailored to each public sector employee (Brookes & Grint, 2010:11; Fang, Nguyen & Armstrong, 2022:828).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods research design was considered appropriate for addressing the main problem of the study, namely the absence of a succession planning model at the University of Namibia. Without such a model, it is unclear how succession planning contributes to the development and advancement of capable, high-performing employees. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, this research design offered a thorough and well-rounded framework for accomplishing the study's general and specific aims.

The qualitative component of the study enabled a critical evaluation of existing literature on succession planning in public institutions. Through structured literature reviews and thematic content analysis, the study systematically examined a wide array of scholarly sources and institutional policies. This process identified dominant themes, best practices and knowledge gaps, all of which informed the theoretical and contextual understanding of succession planning relevant to the University of Namibia.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were undertaken to investigate how succession planning may be utilised to produce high-performing individuals. This qualitative method captured the lived experiences, perceptions and attitudes of employees, managers and decision-makers. These insights provided rich, contextualised evidence on whether and how succession planning practices were being used to promote leadership development and enhance institutional capacity.

To support the qualitative results, the study also employed a quantitative approach by administering a structured questionnaire. This instrument was used to gather measurable and generalisable data on the prevalence, implementation and perceived effectiveness of succession planning practices across the university. The quantitative data were critical in determining the best research approach for

studying succession planning in public institutions, as well as verifying and expanding on the themes that emerged from the qualitative findings. The combined insights from the qualitative and quantitative results helped shape a succession planning model built specifically for use at the University of Namibia. This model was grounded in both theoretical frameworks identified through the literature and the empirical evidence gathered from institutional stakeholders. As such, it reflected the unique challenges, opportunities, and organisational context of the university, making it both practical and adaptable.

The mixed methods approach also strengthened the study's contribution to the broader field of Public Administration. By drawing on multiple sources of data and integrating diverse perspectives, the research produced recommendations that could be adapted by other public institutions facing similar challenges. In this way, the study helped to promote institutional sustainability, leadership continuity and the professional development of staff across the public sector.

As further detailed in Chapter 5, the mixed methods design aligned with the multifaceted nature of the research problem and allowed for a richer, deeper understanding of succession planning. It ensured that the research process was robust, contextually grounded, and capable of producing actionable recommendations for both policy and practice. The study's pragmatic approach allowed for the use of numerous research methodologies and acknowledged the existence of several views, allowing the researcher to choose ways that were most effective in answering the research objectives. As noted by Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent (2024:102), a pragmatic approach enabled the researcher to derive truth from practical outcomes, thus ensuring that the study produced relevant and impactful findings.

1.6.1 Data collection tools

Semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire were used to gather primary data and insights, which were then combined with existing theoretical knowledge to clarify essential concepts related to succession planning. Additional information was obtained from the University of Namibia's human resource policies and regulations. Furthermore, a thorough literature assessment was conducted, which included approved journal articles, academic textbooks, theses, official reports, and pertinent government regulations. The integration of these data sources helped to build a conceptual succession planning model, which served as the study's theoretical foundation.

Questionnaires typically consist of two different types of questions. Closed-ended questions provide respondents with a predetermined set of answer possibilities, such as **Yes/No**, and often produce quantitative data. In contrast, open-ended questions allow respondents to respond in their own terms, resulting in primarily qualitative data (Schoonenboom, 2023). This study used both closed-ended and open-ended question styles.

The interviews used open-ended questions to elicit participants' thoughts and opinions until no new insights were revealed. These interviews were performed with staff members from the University of Namibia's Windhoek campuses to confirm and supplement the data gathered through questionnaires. More information on semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires can be found in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, *Data Collection Instruments*.

1.6.2 Sampling techniques

The study population were administrative employees and managers from the University of Namibia's Windhoek Campus. The campus employs approximately 400 full-time administrative personnel and managers. A simple random selection procedure was used for selecting participants from various departments, sections, and units to answer the questionnaire. Simple random sampling gives every individual in the population an equal chance of being chosen, and every conceivable sample of the same size is equally likely to be drawn. This strategy is helpful because it generates a sample that is typical of the population while avoiding bias toward any specific group or unit of analysis (Olsen, 2022:28).

Participants in the interviews were chosen using purposive sampling. This sampling strategy is frequently used in qualitative research to find and choose individuals who can contribute exceptionally significant and relevant information, maximising the use of available resources (Patton, 2015:119). It entails selecting individuals who have extensive expertise or experience with the topic under research (Bouncken, Czakon & Schmitt, 2025:4-5). Detailed information follows in Chapter 5, section 5.5 *Population and Sample*.

1.6.3 Data analysis and interpretation

Once raw data was collected, it was analysed and interpreted to generate meaning. The data was interpreted using the questions included in the questionnaire and interview guide. Thereafter,

findings were formulated and aligned to the research questions and objectives. The quantitative data were statistically assessed with tabulations serving as the primary tool. In contrast, the qualitative data were examined in a non-statistical manner, guided solely by the content and context of the collected material. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative studies are reported descriptively.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Examining succession planning in university-based research institutes within large public universities is important in the field of public administration because of its links to policy, organisational management, strategic human resource management, financial considerations, and theoretical implications. Public colleges are inextricably related to public administration since they are answerable to governmental authorities. According to Albertus and Makoza (2025:e3-e4), universities are financially related to the public sector since they receive government funding through student loans, research grants, contracts, and state allocations for expenses such as staff salaries and institutional operations. Furthermore, research undertaken at public institutions improves a country's global status and assists in addressing important international concerns (Government Communication and Information System, 2023). These colleges face comparable management and human resource difficulties as other public institutions, and their goal is to meet societal requirements, expectations and demands.

In relation to this study, the importance of developing succession plans in public institutions cannot be emphasised enough. Many public organisations achieve positive results from having appropriate succession planning plans in place. The conclusions of this thesis will be useful to the University of Namibia's management in determining how their succession planning policy might be implemented in practice. Failure to implement a well-structured succession planning approach might result in catastrophic consequences. As a result, the study has significant implications for personnel, administrators, and the public. Furthermore, it will highlight the specific problems that University of Namibia employees confront in terms of effective succession planning.

The study will also add to the current body of knowledge in the discipline of Public Administration, guiding academics in the use of an appropriate theoretical model while researching succession planning. Unfortunately, the study's primary drawback is that the findings and suggestions are

particular to the University of Namibia. The conclusions can, therefore, not be applied to all public higher education institutions.

1.8 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

Limitations constitute potential weaknesses that may threaten the internal validity of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:102; Stockless & Brière, 2024). Fundamentally, a lack of finances limited the scope of the study to Windhoek campuses of the University instead of a comprehensive study of succession planning policies in the 12 satellite campuses which would have addressed the challenges facing the whole university. Another limitation is that the findings and recommendations are specific to the University of Namibia. The findings can therefore not be generalised to other public education institutions.

In addition, external factors such as changes in leadership, policies, or economic conditions at the University of Namibia could influence the relevance and applicability of the study's findings over time. Despite identifying a suitable succession planning model, practical challenges in implementing it at the University of Namibia, such as organisational resistance or lack of administrative support, could hinder successful application.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Delimitations refer to the boundaries intentionally set by the researcher to focus the scope of the study and ensure that it remains manageable and aligned with its objectives. This study is delimited to the University of Namibia as the institutional context within which succession planning practices are examined. The focus on a single public higher education institution allows for an in-depth understanding of the organisational structures, policies, and leadership development processes that influence succession planning within that specific environment.

The study further concentrates on the administrative workforce of the University of Namibia and does not include academic staff whose primary responsibilities relate to teaching, research, and academic leadership. The decision to focus on the administrative workforce is based on the recognition that administrative and managerial leadership roles are essential for ensuring institutional governance, operational continuity, and strategic management within the university.

In addition, the study is delimited to examining succession planning practices related to leadership development and the preparation of potential successors for administrative leadership positions. It does not attempt to examine all aspects of human resource management within the institution, such as recruitment, performance management, or compensation systems, except where these relate directly to succession planning.

Finally, the study focuses on developing a conceptual succession planning model based on the analysis of existing practices and challenges within the University of Namibia. The study does not attempt to implement or evaluate the proposed model within the institution but rather aims to provide a framework that may inform future leadership development and succession planning initiatives.

1.10 DEAMARCATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is specifically delimited to the examination of succession planning practices at the University of Namibia, with particular attention given to administrative leadership positions. It seeks to analyse current policies, institutional practices, and the extent of managerial involvement in leadership development, including how potential successors for critical roles are identified and prepared. UNAM was selected as the focus of the study due to its position as Namibia's largest public higher education institution and its significant contribution to national development. Concentrating on a single institution enables an in-depth exploration of the organisational culture, governance frameworks, and contextual factors that influence succession planning within a higher education environment in a developing country.

The scope of the research is further narrowed through both thematic and institutional boundaries. Thematically, the study emphasises leadership continuity, succession planning frameworks, talent identification processes, and capacity-development initiatives, rather than broader human resource management functions. Institutionally, the focus remains solely on UNAM, allowing for the examination of specific contextual issues such as policy deficiencies, informal advancement practices, and administrative constraints that affect the cultivation of internal leadership pipelines. This focused approach supports the generation of detailed, practical insights that are directly applicable to the institution's strategic and operational context.

The rationale for conducting this study is supported by both theoretical and practical arguments. Existing literature recognises succession planning as a vital strategic human resource function that

promotes organisational sustainability, preserves institutional knowledge, and ensures leadership stability (Rothwell, 2016; Manzini & Malatjie, 2023:1136). Nevertheless, available evidence indicates that succession planning at UNAM is predominantly informal and poorly coordinated, characterised by unstructured promotions and limited systematic development of high-potential employees. Such shortcomings threaten organisational stability, leadership effectiveness, and long-term performance. Investigating this context therefore provides empirical insights that can inform the development of a structured succession planning model tailored to the specific conditions of UNAM and comparable public universities in developing countries.

By limiting the study to UNAM and providing a clear justification for its emphasis on succession planning, the research delivers context-specific insights and practical recommendations. It enhances understanding of how formalised succession planning frameworks can support leadership development, maintain continuity in key roles, and reinforce institutional resilience within public sector higher education institutions.

1.11 SEQUENCE OF CHAPTERS

The study is divided into seven chapters.

The first chapter includes an overview of the research problem, as well as the study's goal and objectives. It also discusses the study questions, their significance and scope, and clarifies the major ideas used. The chapter outlines the research design and methodology, as well as the limits observed. It finishes with a summary of the remaining chapters and a discussion of ethical issues.

Chapter 2 of the thesis provides the theoretical basis for the study on succession planning at the University of Namibia. The chapter begins with background information that sets the context for the discussion on leadership and succession planning in public institutions. It then explores various theories of leadership to establish the conceptual link between leadership traits and the effectiveness of succession planning. Following this, the chapter discusses the Great Events Theory and the Transformational or Process Leadership Theory, offering further insight into how leadership can be developed, a concept closely tied to succession planning. The final section of the chapter focuses on models of succession planning, where three prominent models are examined namely, the Seven-Pointed Star Model, the Acceleration pool model and the Leadership Pipeline Model.

Chapter 3 presents a focused literature review on key themes relevant to succession planning within public institutions. It begins by defining succession planning, outlining its components, approaches, and the advantages it offers for institutional performance and public service delivery. It also identifies common barriers to implementation and examines how succession planning is practiced in public sector contexts. The chapter then explores workforce planning, emphasising criteria for effective planning and its strategic benefits in aligning staffing needs with institutional goals. A detailed discussion on talent management follows, covering different perspectives, operational principles, the talent management process, and its role in building leadership capacity. Lastly, the chapter addresses leadership development, reviewing various leadership styles, the benefits of investing in leadership growth, and development activities that support succession efforts.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the higher education landscape in Namibia, offering essential context for the study. It begins with the development of the higher education system, tracing its evolution and structure. The chapter then discusses the funding mechanisms that support higher education institutions in the country. A significant section is dedicated to national governance agencies, including the National Advisory Council on Education, the National Qualifications Authority, with specific attention to the National Qualifications Framework, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), and the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology. The final section presents an overview of Namibia's tertiary education institutions, including universities, vocational training providers, and colleges. It highlights key institutions such as the Namibia University of Science and Technology, vocational education centres, and the University of Namibia, where the research is situated, emphasising their structure and relevance in the national education system.

Chapter 5 outlines the research design and methodology employed in the study. It begins by describing the chosen research approach to frame the investigation into succession planning. The chapter then justifies the mixed methods research methodology, which combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. It details the data collection instruments used, namely a questionnaire and interviews, and explains how these tools were designed to gather relevant data. The chapter also covers the population and sampling strategies, distinguishing between probability and non-probability sampling methods. Attention is given to data collection procedures and ethical considerations, ensuring adherence to

research integrity. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how data analysis was conducted and addresses the validity, reliability, trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings.

Chapter 6 presents a detailed analysis, interpretation and findings of the study's quantitative and qualitative data. An in-depth analysis of quantitative data is presented. This includes four sections: the demographic profile of respondents, their understanding of succession planning, an assessment of strategies used to identify potential successors, and a review of employee development practices. The quantitative findings are summarised at the end of this section. The chapter then shifts to the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data gathered through interviews. It presents the demographic profile of interviewees and explores two key themes: the role of succession planning in leadership development for administrative staff, and the succession planning and management practices at the University of Namibia. A summary of the qualitative findings concludes the chapter.

Chapter 7 comprises of the conclusion and recommendations. The concluding chapter also describes the development of a succession planning model for succession planning of administrative staff at the University of Namibia. The different components of the conceptual plan for succession planning at the University of Namibia is explained. The chapter concludes with suggestions for new and expanded activities for researchers to pursue.

1.12 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical approval for this research was obtained on 7 March 2023 (reference #PAM/2023/002) before any data was gathered (Annexure B). The data collection commenced after receiving authorisation to carry out the study from the University of Namibia on 23 November 2022 (Annexure A).

Only staff members from the University of Namibia were solicited to complete the questionnaire and participate in interviews. These individuals were selected due to their extensive expertise on the subject matter. Their insights facilitated the development of a comprehensive depiction of succession planning and management practices at the University of Namibia. The participants were not subjected to any form of intervention or environmental manipulation, nor were they exposed to harm or exploitation. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary, and participants were under no obligation to consent to participate. Those who chose to participate were provided with an information leaflet (Annexure C) to retain and signed an informed consent form (Annexure D). Participants were free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

Participants were thoroughly informed about the study's nature, procedures, and potential benefits, and were afforded ample opportunity to ask questions and prepare for their involvement. Throughout the research process, the privacy of each participant was rigorously maintained by ensuring that no personal information was disclosed. Consequently, it is impossible to link participants to their responses, thereby upholding anonymity and confidentiality as fundamental aspects of the study. Participants did not receive any form of compensation, financial or otherwise, and the study did not impose any undue financial burden. Additionally, participants will have access to an electronic copy of the thesis at the Unisa library.

The researcher securely stored digital copies of the supporting data on a password-protected computer, while physical copies were secured in a locked office cabinet. All information is scheduled for destruction after five years, allowing adequate time for further research and subsequent publication in accredited journals within the field of Public Administration. Electronic data on the password-protected computer will be permanently erased from the hard drive, and physical research documents will be shredded.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided a comprehensive overview of the study by elucidating the background and rationale for investigating succession planning at the University of Namibia. It commenced by delineating the challenges the institution encounters in implementing effective succession planning practices, particularly those related to leadership continuity, capacity building, and the absence of a formalized succession planning framework. The problem statement and research questions were subsequently articulated, focusing on the lack of a structured succession planning model and the uncertainty regarding its role in enhancing and advancing competent staff. The chapter also delineated the study's purpose and objectives, which aimed to explore, evaluate, and recommend a model tailored to the University's specific context. Key concepts such as succession planning, workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development were clarified. Furthermore, the research design and methodology were described, detailing the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, sampling approaches, and techniques for data analysis and interpretation. The significance of the study was discussed in relation to strengthening institutional sustainability and

staff development. The chapter concluded by acknowledging potential research limitations and providing an outline of the subsequent chapters to guide the reader through the structure of the thesis.

The following chapter addresses the study's theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework that will be used to determine how succession planning can develop high performing staff. The theoretical foundation is also laid for the design of a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia. The research question ‘What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?’ drove the identification and discussion of various theories of leadership to establish the conceptual link between leadership traits and the effectiveness of succession planning. Following this, the chapter discusses the Great Events Theory (also known as Behavioural Theory) and the Transformational or Process Leadership Theory, offering further insight into how leadership can be developed, a concept closely tied to succession planning. The final section of the chapter focuses on models of succession planning, where three prominent models are examined namely, the Seven-Pointed Star Model, the Acceleration pool model and the Leadership Pipeline Model.

2.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dickson, Hussein and Adu-Agyem (2018:439) and Vors and Bourcier (2022:119) indicate that the overall aim of a theoretical framework is to make research findings more meaningful and acceptable to the research field, and ensures generalisability. It assists in stimulating research while ensuring the extension of knowledge by providing both direction and impetus to the research inquiry. Vors and Bourcier (2022:118-119) indicated that a theoretical framework offers several benefits to a research project. It provides a structure in showing how a researcher defines their study philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically. Liu, Miller and Thomas (2024:26) and Ravitch and Carl (2016:22-23) concur that a theoretical framework assists researchers in situating and contextualising formal theories into their studies as a guide. Moreover, the theoretical framework serves as the focus for any research project and must be directly linked to the research problem under study. Therefore, a theoretical framework guides a researcher’s choice of research design and data analysis plan.

The following theories are regarded to be particularly relevant in this study: the trait theory; great events theory or behavioural theory; and transformational or process leadership theory. These theories of leadership are described in the following section.

2.3 THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

Bass's theory of leadership states that there are three elementary ways to explain how people become leaders (Ladkin & Patrick, 2022:208-2010; Bass (1990:90), namely:

- Some people get into leadership roles based on their natural personality traits. This is the Trait Theory.
- Another person can show extraordinary leadership qualities due to a crisis or significant event. This is the Great Events theory also known as Behavioural theory.
- Some people make a choice to become leaders and learn leadership skills. This is the Transformational or Process Leadership theory. It is the most widely accepted theory. This theory relies on the encouragement of a team to realise overall success. By raising a team's morale and self-confidence, the team can then align itself to an overall vision or common purpose. This module is therefore the most appropriate theory for a model of succession planning.

2.3.1 Trait theory

In pioneering literature review conducted by Dubrin (2010:31&33), general personality traits suggest that successful leaders could be quickly assessed and put into positions of leadership if the traits that differentiated leaders from followers could be identified. Leaders' personality traits can be divided into two groups, namely general personality traits such as self-confidence and trustworthiness, and task-related traits, such as an internal locus of control. Traits predispose one to act in a certain way, regardless of the situation. According to Kelly (2022:15-22) and McLeod (2017:5), this means that traits should remain consistent across situations and over time, but may vary between individuals. It is presumed that individuals differ in their traits due to genetic differences. By measuring human traits during the succession planning process of public institutions

will assist to achieve the understanding of a human personality traits, and by utilising its empirical nature to learn more about a person and compare the differences. It will therefore be much easier to determine a successor based on its personality traits. As talent is developed, there must be identifiable traits that these employees possess, as explained in the following sections.

2.3.1.1 Self-confidence

Self-confidence is the ability to be certain about one's competencies and skills. It includes a sense of self-esteem and self-assurance and the belief that one can make a difference. Leadership involves influencing others, and self-confidence allows the leader to feel assured that their attempts to influence others are appropriate and right (Zehndorfer, 2021:22). According to Dubrin (2010:33-34), self-confidence was among the first leadership traits researchers identified and it has recently received considerable attention as a major contributor to leadership effectiveness. Self-confidence indicates whether a leader trusts their judgment, decision-making ideas and capabilities. Leaders who possess high confidence in their abilities tend to foster confidence among followers. They influence their followers through gaining their respect.

2.3.1.2 Humility

In the context of succession planning, humility plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable leadership transitions. Leaders who embody humility demonstrate a readiness to listen, learn and empower others, essential qualities for identifying and nurturing future leaders within an organisation. Leaders who know how to display humility display great leadership. The capability of leaders to admit that they do not know everything and cannot do everything and to admit mistakes to team members and stakeholder shows humility. A humble leader creates a climate in an organisation that allows people to be themselves, without fear of fault-finding, reprisal, or humiliation. Hence, there is value in humility, the leadership that comes from putting other people in the limelight, and not oneself. A humble leader often unleashes strengths and potential to flourish of those around them. In addition, leader humility at all levels is particularly relevant when organisations face crises, which require leaders to be open to learning and to be willing to ask for advice, to seek help, and to collaborate with others. By valuing diverse perspectives, humble leaders create a supportive environment that encourages potential successors to develop and excel. This approach not only strengthens

organisational culture but also ensures continuity in leadership effectiveness, paving the way for a seamless transition and sustained success (Maldonado, Vera & Spangler, 2022:130).

2.3.1.3 *Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness is fundamental to effective succession planning, as it underpins the relationship between current leaders and potential successors. According to Peels and Bouter (2021:78-79) trustworthiness is the ability to be honest, trustworthy and reliable. In a professional setting, trustworthiness means to be certain that someone will get things done. This is an important part of an effective and efficient working environment. Lack of trust can strain interpersonal relationships and lead to unnecessary conflicts and consequences. There is no teamwork without trust, and no growth without efficient teamwork. In addition to organisational success, professional development requires trust. DeVoe (2023:56) stated that effective leaders work to create environments where participants in ‘leadership-dynamics’ are fully engaged, derive meaning and take ownership and responsibility for the results of their actions. According to Merriman (2017:338), trust is a dynamic, interpersonal link between people, with unique implications for the workplace. Trust is defined as an expectation or belief that one can rely on another person’s actions and words and that the person has good intentions to carry out their promises. Trust is most meaningful in situations in which one party is at risk or vulnerable to another party. In turn, this cultivates a culture of loyalty and readiness, ensuring that succession planning is not only a strategic exercise but also one grounded in mutual respect and integrity.

2.3.1.4 *Sense of humour*

Dubrin (2010:42) stated that effective use of humour is an important part of the leader’s role that humour adds to the approachability of the leader. Because the humour helps the leader dissolve tension and defuse conflict, it helps the leader to exert power over the group. Humour is defined as a multi-paradigmatic, multi-faceted and systematic process to elicit psychologic, neuropsychological, social and cognitive reactions, evolutionary and developmental psychology, to the organisational psychology. A personality inclusive of disposition and use of humour is considered a good leadership trait. Grace-Odeleye and Santiago (2019:174) support the assumption that humour, when used appropriately employed by leaders play an important role in enhancing leadership styles and effectiveness of services deliveries, employees’ job related affective well-

being. A sense of humour, as part of a leader's personality and disposition, can thus significantly enhance succession planning by creating a positive, approachable and inclusive environment. Ultimately, humour contributes to a healthy organisational culture where potential successors feel motivated, supported and confident to step into leadership roles.

Notable, Iszatt-White and Saunders (2020:46) mentioned that humour and leadership come with risks. Leaders should use tools to assist with this to be more effective in motivating their followers, achieving goals, and growing communication relations.

2.3.1.5 Authenticity

According to Johnson (2022:4-5) the idea of authentic leadership is that leaders are seen as genuine and real. This theory was created by Bill George in his book *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*, published in 2003. George (2003:42-43) advocated that leaders, being themselves is key to finding success. Authentic leadership is the biggest predictor of an employee's job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and workplace happiness.

Authenticity in leadership is closely linked to effective succession planning, as it builds credibility, trust and a culture of transparency. Authentic leaders lead with integrity, self-awareness and consistency between their values and actions, setting a strong example for future leaders. Their genuine approach encourages honest dialogue, open feedback and meaningful mentorship. By fostering an environment where individuals feel safe to grow and be themselves, authentic leaders ensure that succession planning is not only strategic but also deeply rooted in ethical and values-based leadership (Knowles & Mainiero, 2021:12).

Covelli and Mason (2017:7-8) indicated that there are three factors that influence the development of an authentic leader: positive psychologic capabilities, moral reasoning, and critical life events. Positive psychologic capabilities include balanced cognitive reasoning and resilience. Resiliency and balanced reasoning are the skills that enable a leader to overcome difficulties, face challenges, and see alternative perspectives when making difficult decisions. Leaders with a balanced cognitive processing capability see multiple perspectives and consider all information objectively. Balanced processing includes making objective decisions while considering all opinions and relevant information. Leaders with this characteristic often solicit views that challenge their own when making decisions.

2.3.1.6 *Enthusiasm, optimism and warmth*

Leadership is more than just a set of skills. It combines several understated personal qualities that are difficult to notice, but very powerful. These include characteristics such as enthusiasm, integrity, warmth, optimism, courage and humility. Real leadership originates from a genuine concern for others. Enthusiasm often takes the form of optimism, which helps keep the group in an upbeat mood and hopeful about attaining difficult goals. The optimistic leader is therefore likely to help bring about outstanding levels of achievement (Dubrin 2010:41; Coffie, Müller, Marfo, Ocloo & De Klerk, 2024:688).

According to Scott (2020:1-3) optimism is a mental attitude characterised by hope and confidence in success and a positive future. Optimists are those who expect good things to happen, where pessimists instead predict unfavourable outcomes. Optimistic attitudes are linked to several benefits, including lower stress levels, better physical health, and higher persistence when pursuing goals. Group members respond positively to enthusiasm, partly because enthusiasm may be perceived as a reward for constructive behaviour.

Enthusiasm, optimism and warmth are thus vital traits that positively influence leadership succession planning. Leaders who exhibit these qualities create an encouraging and emotionally supportive environment that fosters trust and strong relationships. Their positive energy helps to inspire and motivate potential successors, making them more open to learning and growth. Optimism reinforces resilience during leadership transitions, while warmth cultivates approachability and open communication. Such leaders not only identify, and mentor future leaders effectively but also model the kind of emotionally intelligent leadership needed for long-term success. These traits ensure succession planning is both strategic and grounded in relational strength (Coffie, et al., 2024:689-690).

2.3.1.7 *Extraversion*

Extroverts are more likely to want to assume a leadership role and to participate in group activities. According to Eshet and Harpaz (2021:1370) extraversion is characterised by excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, and high amounts of emotional expressiveness. People who are high in extraversion are outgoing and tend to gain energy in social situations. Being around other people

helps them to feel energised and excited. Extroverts earn energy simply by engaging in social interactions. Highly extroverts need social stimuli to feel energetic. Gain inspiration and enthusiasm through conversations and discussions with others.

Extraversion, characterised by sociability, assertiveness and energy, plays a key role in leadership succession planning. Extraverted leaders are often proactive in identifying and engaging potential successors through open communication and collaborative relationships. Their outgoing nature helps create visibility around leadership development and encourages others to step forward. By fostering dynamic team environments and expressing confidence in others, extraverted leaders inspire trust and enthusiasm, which are essential for preparing and transitioning future leaders within an organisation (Brauer & Cesarone, 2022:136-138).

2.3.2 Great events theory

The Great events theory approach focuses on people's actions and is very different from a trait approach, which centres on a person's physical and personality characteristics. The behavioural approach compares effective and ineffective leaders and analyse how they communicate tasks to subordinates, where and when they communicate to others and how they perform their roles (Geisler, 2022:20).

Liu (2023:406-409) suggests that the question many organisations struggle with during the process of succession planning is 'What behaviours should our leaders possess and develop to be most effective?' Behavioural theory attempts to answer the question. When a person exhibits potential leadership behaviour, they are assessed for distinctiveness regarding that behaviour-if it distinguishable from behaviours of others in the question. Behavioural theory specifically identifies two primary examples of behaviour that leaders adopt: these are task orientation and follower orientation. When a person exhibits potential leadership behaviour, they are assessed for distinctiveness regarding that behaviour. According to Liu (2023:408-409), organisations need both production and people leadership. The extent of a leader's concern for production and people therefor reflects their behaviour. For example, a concern for people refers to the degree to which a leader considers the needs of team members, their interests and areas of personal development. These leaders bring structure and direction to followers by setting goals, providing training, defining expectations and limits on behaviour and establishing rules and procedures. A concern for

production refers to the degree to which a leader emphasises concrete objectives, organisational efficiency and high productivity when deciding how best to accomplish a task. For leaders who exhibit a task-oriented style, the focus is on accomplishing an assigned job, while concerns about followers take a back seat.

2.3.3 Transformational theory

Bass (1990:88) and Bass and Riggio (2006:134) stated that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Transformational theory explains one of the fundamental ways in which leaders influence followers by creating meaningful work. Transformational leadership is charming and visionary in nature, and leaders lead and motivate followers in ways beyond exchanges and rewards. According to Dubrin (2010:39) and Kludacz-Alessandri, Hawrysz, Żak and Zhang (2025:119), the goal of transformational leadership is to ‘transform’ people and organisations by enlarging the organisational vision, delivering insight and understanding, clarifying purposes, and shaping behaviour congruent with beliefs and principles to bring about changes that are permanent and momentum-building. Transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual motivation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.

2.4 SUCCESSION PLANNING MODELS

According to Tusquellas, López-Villanueva, Palau and Santiago (2025:e4103), a model is a framework others can duplicate to reach comparable outcomes. Conceptual models are qualitative and identify links within processes. According to Yudianto, Sekawarna, Susilaningsih, Ramoo and Somantri (2023:457), using succession planning models to develop a conceptual model for succession planning, minimises organisational exposure and ensures that the right internal personnel get promoted to the right kind of positions. The development of succession planning models is a task that falls under the Human Resources Management function of an organisation and the responsibility of senior management. Only through critical collaboration and consultations can an institution develop and implement suitable succession planning models that can ensure leadership continuity of the highest quality.

The most critical component of successful succession planning is an underlying organisational philosophy that highlights the need to manage top talent for the greater good of the institution. The most frequently cited reason for the failure of succession planning is the lack of sustained desire to implement succession planning on behalf of the Human Resources Management unit and senior management. It is often perceived as an expense and not as a potential benefit or risk mitigation strategy. This false view could be greatly corrected by developing effective succession planning models that institution could adhere to while implementing succession planning (Yildiz & Esmer, (2021:6). Section 3.2.1 of Chapter 3 elaborate further on the meaning of succession planning.

Ahmad and Keerio (2020:4031) and Arrieta, Barrameda and Sudarsana (2022:115) stated that higher education institutions are facing an impending leadership crisis, which is the lack of a future leader, and they need to have a formal succession planning to ensure their organisational leadership continuity in the future. According to Keller (2018) and Raja (2025:165-166), it has been suggested that external hiring is superior to internal hiring because it provides higher educational institutions a better chance to achieve what they cannot through internal development. However, conducting an open search to fill leadership positions also has the risk of alienating worthy internal candidates This increase in demand and competitiveness for top candidates at the highest level of college administration creates an increased pressure on the pipeline for succession, making planning and developing internal candidates for these positions even more important. The following section describes three succession planning models: the Seven-Pointed Star Model by Rothwell (2016:8-15) and Rothwell (2024:68-70), Acceleration pool model by Byham, Smith and Paese (2002), and the Leadership Pipeline Model by Charan, Drotter and Noel (2010:12).

2.4.1 Seven pointed star model

Rothwell (2016:24) and Rothwell (2024:68-70) define succession planning as systematic approach requiring full commitment. The life cycle of succession planning has five generations each highlighting how institutions become more sophisticated in their approaches with businesses and workforce relations.

Table 2.1 summarises the generations comprising the management cycle developed by Rothwell (2016:26-29). Generation One is targeting replacement training for managerial level. Generation Two and Three focus on a gradual development and management of talent pools. Generations Four

and Five develops from the previous stage's talent pool, developing leaders within the organisation and head-hunting for scarce talents from external sources.

Table 2.1: Five generations of the succession planning and management

Life Cycle	Typical Implementation Plan	Major Components
Generation 1	A simple replacement plan for leader	A simple replacement plan for Executive Director
Generation 2	A replacement plan for leader and their immediate reports	Simple replacement plan for Executive Director and their immediate report (senior leaders, the senior executive team)
		Involvement of senior managers
Generation 3	Succession planning and management programme for middle managers and perhaps their key reports	Policies and procedures drafts
		Use of competency models
		Value statement
		Development focus on internal pools
Generation 4	A talent pool approach focused inside the organisation	Everyone in the institution is considered as a possible successor for key position
		Provide tool for career development for future
		No-more organisation chart
		Use of competency model, performance appraisal, individual development plan, full cycle multi-rater assessment, and other sophisticated methods for development

Life Cycle	Typical Implementation Plan	Major Components
Generation 5	A proactive talent pool approach focused inside and outside the organisation	Include external talent pool

Source: (Rothwell, 2016:26-29; Rothwell, 2024:69-70).

2.4.1.1 Key Steps in a Fifth-generation approach

While the answer to the question of how succession planning and management should be carried out systematically in intuitions may vary by national culture, organisational culture and senior management values, a recommended method is to follow a seven-pointed star model for systematic succession planning and management. The model is illustrated in the Figure 2.1 below. In the model, seven steps for systematic succession planning and management had been identified, which were to commit, assess present work, appraisal individual performance, assess future work, assess future individual potential, close the development gap, and evaluate the succession planning program. In this model, promotion from within an institution is important because the institution must have some means by which to replace key job incumbents as vacancies occur in their positions (Rothwell, 2016:24-26; Ahmad, Ming, & Sapry, 2020:204; Raja, 2025:168).

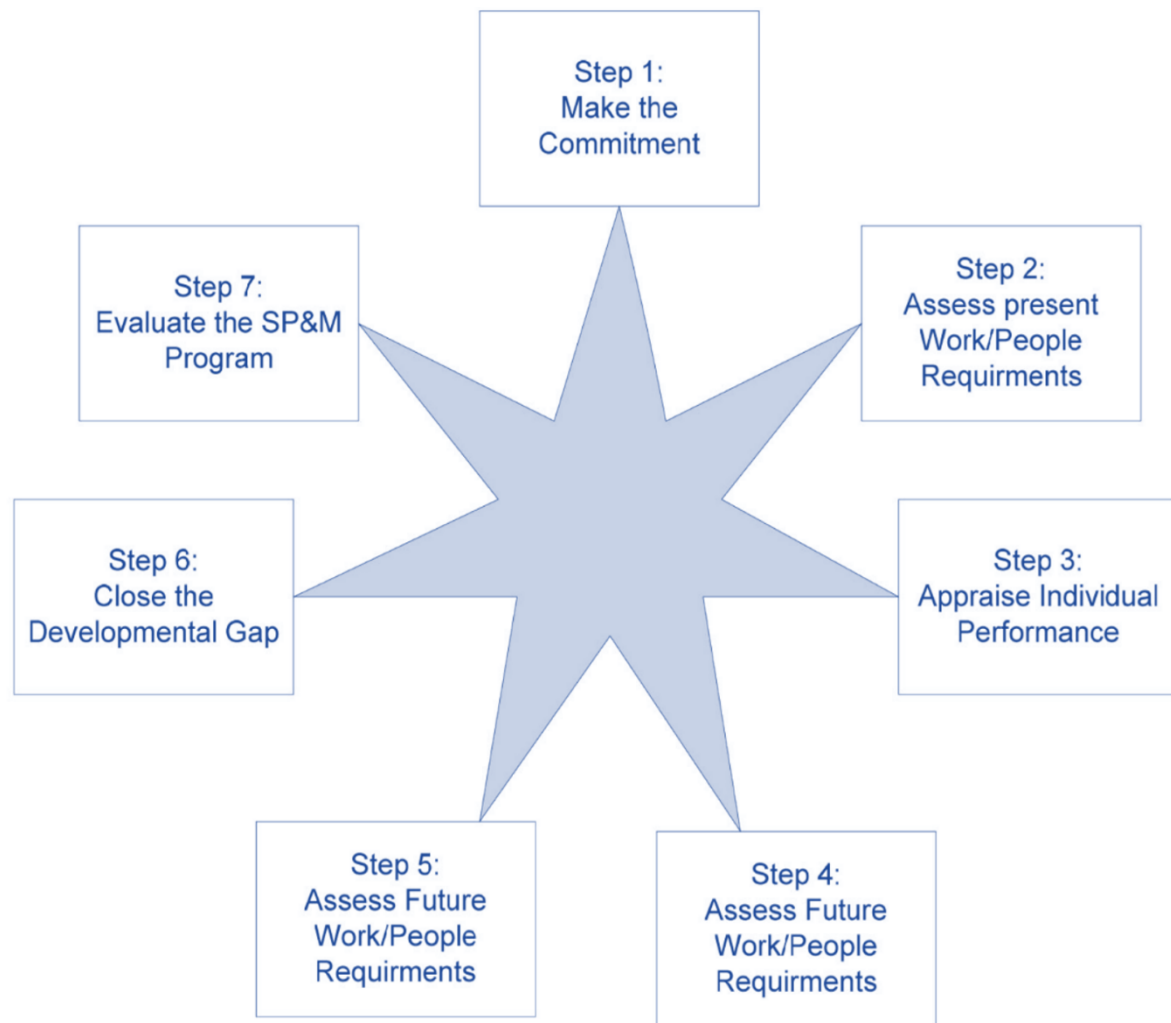


Figure 2.1: Seven Pointed Star Model for Systematic Succession Planning and Management

Source: (Rothwell, 2016:24-26; Rothwell, 2024:69).

The **first step** (*Make the Commitment*) of the Seven Pointed Star Model of a systematic succession model is for an institution to establish succession planning programs. This requires commitment with management's efforts and financial resources to sustain programs. The approach of this stage is further reinforced by Johansen (2012:52-53) through his Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC) Model, where commitment occurs before and after action Johansen (2012:53), emphasised that management must nurture commitment for sustainability. Rothwell (2016:36) stated that decision-makers in an institution should assess current problems and practice and assess and

demonstrate the need for the program. It should also determine the organisation's exact succession planning and management program requirements, link the succession planning and management program directly to organisational and human resource strategic plans and benchmark succession planning and management practices in other organisations. In addition, it should clarify the roles of different groups in the program, formulate a program mission statement and write a policy and procedures to guide the program. It should also identify target groups to be served by the program, establish program priorities, prepare an action plan to guide the program, communicate the action plan and conduct succession planning and management meetings as necessary to unveil the program and review progress continually. Lastly it should train those involved in the program as necessary and advice managers about succession planning and management problems in their areas of responsibility.

Step 2 (*Assess Present Work/People Requirements*) Examines the current requirements for the institutions' key positions. At this stage, institution management selects key leadership positions and reviews requirements. Once the requirements are set, management can prepare successors to eventually advance.

Step 3 (*Appraise Individual Performance*) assesses performance levels from individuals currently in key positions. institute. Individuals need effective performance for any promotion. This assists management implementing succession planning in selecting talent to mentor. (Manzini & Malatjie, 2023:1132-1133).

Step 4 (*Assess Future Work/People Requirements*) identifies future competencies for key leaders. Rothwell (2016:27) stated that management must have anticipate changes in technology, globalisation, and economics Step 4 remains critical to help management plan for future implications for those requirements.

Step 5 (*Assess Future Individual Potential*) reviews individuals' future potential towards the future work requirements. This step helps management appraise current competencies of staff earmarked for future leadership positions and develop measures to address existing gaps.

Step 6 (*Close the Developmental Gap*) establishes regular leadership development programmes for developing internal successors. Succession planning now evolves into succession management, where other measures to externally tap talents are explored to meet the future institutional needs.

Step 7 (*Evaluate the Succession Planning Program*) is the final stage of the model. This includes evaluation of program objectives with balanced scorecards. Management must do regular program evaluations to determine effectiveness. Evaluation conclusions should help consistently improve succession planning (Rothwell, 2016:27; Manzini & Malatjie, 2023:1133).

Rothwell's Seven-Pointed Star Model offers a detailed and systematic framework for succession planning, outlining key activities such as identifying critical positions, analysing present and future role demands, assessing employee performance, and addressing developmental shortcomings. Its structured, cyclical design aligns well with the ongoing and iterative planning required within higher education institutions. At the University of Namibia, the model can assist in identifying pivotal academic and administrative posts, particularly roles such as heads of departments and deans, where succession processes are often prolonged and multifaceted.

However, the model presupposes a degree of organisational stability and predictability that is not always characteristic of higher education environments. Academic career paths are frequently non-linear and shaped by variables such as research productivity, disciplinary expectations, and scholarly reputation. Moreover, although the model prioritises performance evaluation and potential assessment, it does not explicitly incorporate key principles such as equity, transparency, and inclusivity, which are fundamental within public universities. Without integrating these considerations, the use of the model may inadvertently reinforce perceptions of unfairness in promotion practices and leadership appointments.

2.4.2 Acceleration pool model

Indicating that replacement planning is lacking efficiency in public institutions, Byham, Smith and Paese (2002:10) and Jooss, Collings, McMackin and Dickmann (2024:144) suggested an Acceleration pool model approach to preparing executive talent. Instead of targeting one or two hand-picked people for executive positions, an 'accelerated pool' would emphasise the development of a group of high-potential candidates for executive positions in general. Byham, et al. (2002:8) invented an acceleration pool model to include two aspects systems often miss; accurate diagnoses of development needs, and a motivating environment inspiring individual change (Byham, *et al.*, 2002:12). The Acceleration Pool Model is designed to identify a broad spectrum of potential successors within an institution, thereby enabling the establishment of talent development programs

that focus on multiple candidates for critical leadership roles, rather than concentrating on one or two individuals. This model necessitates the implementation of initiatives by management to cultivate this talent pool through various means, including on-the-job training, mentorship, coaching, specialised training programs, and academic education provided by colleges and universities. Thus, this model creates a talent pool to use during staffing vacancies (Jooss, et al., 2024:145-146).

The aim of an acceleration pool is to identify those individuals who would benefit from career growth opportunities and accelerate their readiness towards critical institutional roles. Charan, et al., (2010:14) and Belte (2022:149) elaborate on how the Acceleration pool model advocates developing leadership skills and interpersonal competencies for many high performing individuals. This hastens preparation for future leadership assignments. A key benefit of growing leaders within an institution is the positive message it sends out across the entire workforce. Promoting people from within an institution is good for morale and essential to a positive organisational culture. The Acceleration pool model provides a systematic and targeted approach method for identifying and developing high-potential individuals. The Acceleration pool model by Byham, et al., (2002:8-12) has five phases and sub themes of analysis:

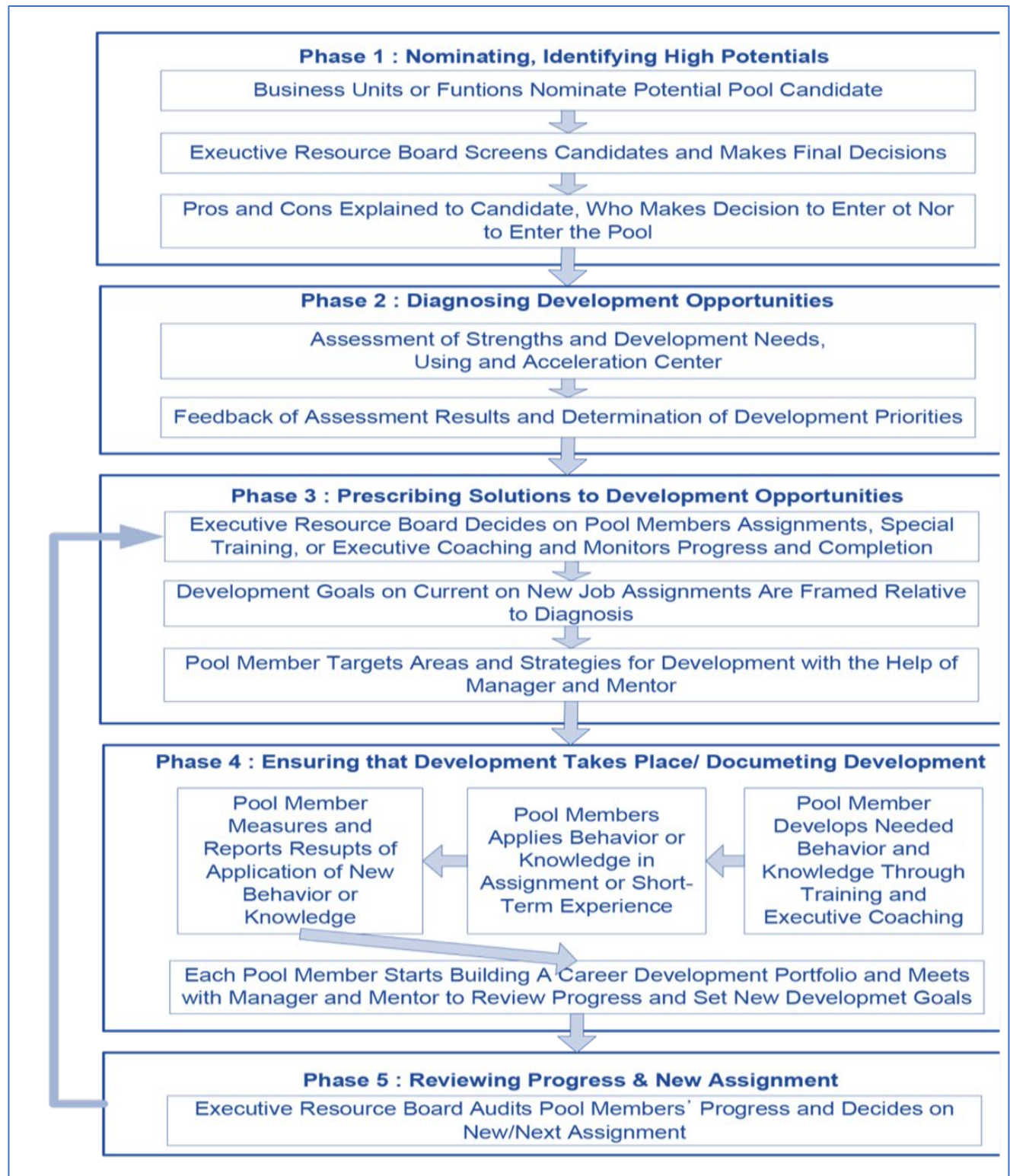


Figure 2.2: Acceleration Pool Model

Source: (Adapted from Byham, et al., 2002:8-21; Belte, 2022:149).

The Acceleration Pool Model focuses on recognising high-potential employees and accelerating their readiness for leadership positions through targeted developmental initiatives. This framework provides meaningful guidance for organisations seeking proactive talent development and can be particularly beneficial in addressing skills shortages. At the University of Namibia, it could help cultivate emerging academic and administrative leaders by establishing structured pathways that prepare capable staff to move into key roles.

However, applying this model in a higher education context presents notable challenges. Its emphasis on a select group of high-potential individuals may conflict with the principles of fairness, inclusivity and transparency that are fundamental in public institutions. Within universities, such selectivity may be viewed as exclusionary or elitist if not carefully implemented. Additionally, the model assumes that leadership potential can be easily identified and rapidly developed, an expectation that may not align with the typically longer, more complex development timelines required for academic leadership roles.

2.4.3 Leadership pipeline model

Leadership pipeline model is used when leadership demand exceeds supply with a solution of investing in leadership development. Imbalances usually occur when institutions bring in top executives outside. Outside recruitment can signal the internal talent pool and current programming are inadequate (Charan, et al., 2010:164).

Recruiting leaders with required capabilities and attitudes is increasingly expensive. According to Yudianto, et al., (2023:460), the Leadership pipeline model allows management to acknowledge employees need to acquire specific skills, and value transitions between different levels of leadership. This model further assists management to understand that an institution should limit staff promotions based on skills at set leadership level. The Leadership Pipeline Model forces management to explore additional methods to deploy and prepare leaders at all levels.

The Leadership pipeline model, according to Charan, et al., (2010:172), is not a straight cylinder but one bent into six career passages. Each passage represents a change in one organisational position, and an important leadership turn for potential successors. These changes include different job requirements. The Figure 2.3 displays the Leadership pipeline model. An explanation of the six leadership career passages follows thereafter.

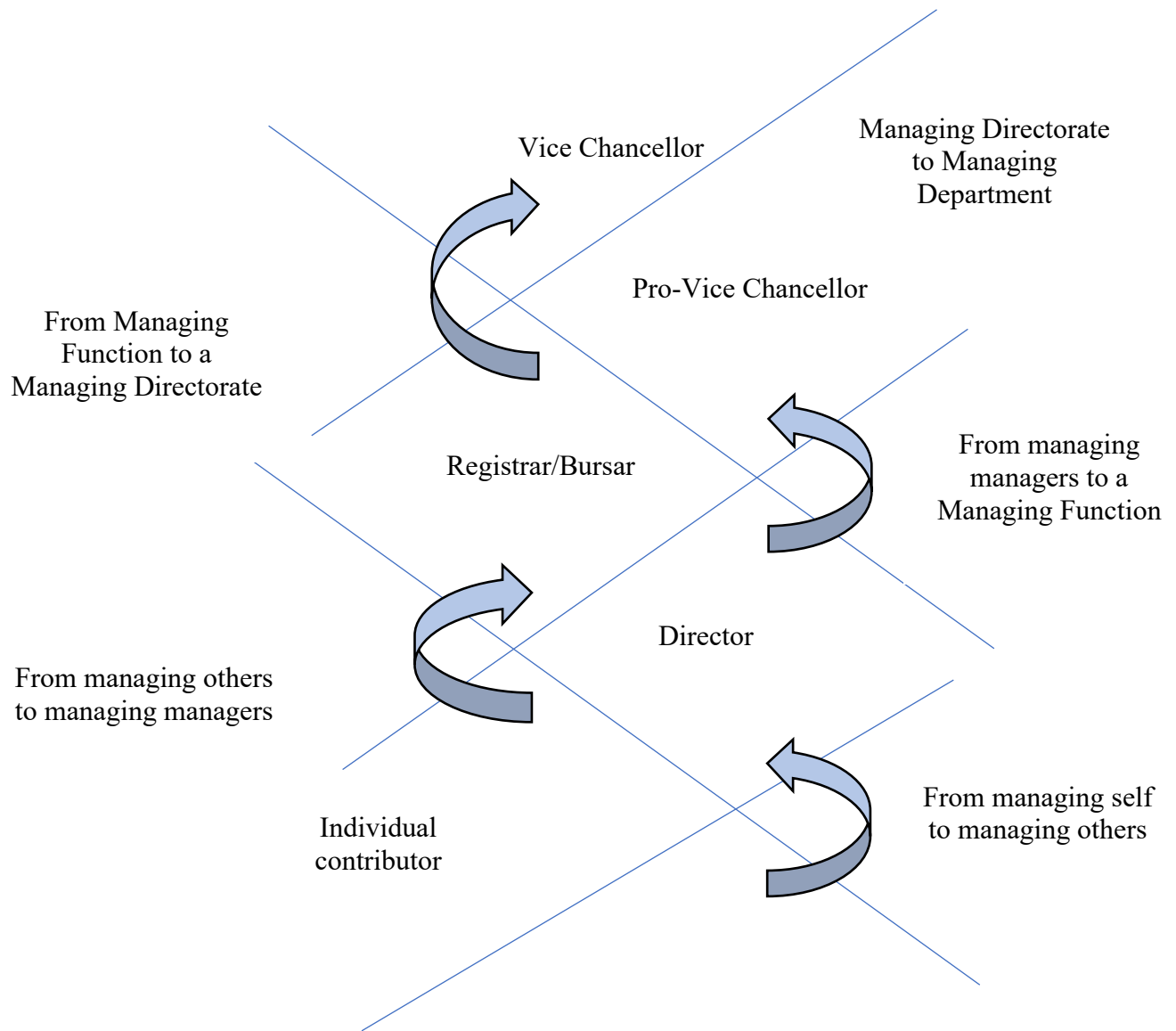


Figure 2.3: Leadership pipeline model

Source : (Adapted from Charan, et al., 2010 :164 ; Yudianto, et al., 2023 :460-461).

Passage One: Managing self to managing or leading others

Passage one is with new employees recently hired by an institution and individually contribute for their initial years. These employees complete work before deadlines and meet organisational values.

When they are able to take more responsibilities, these employees are eligible to move to a first time manager position. For this role, employees must manage time well, not just for set work schedules but also help their supervisees perform well. This passage helps the staff members to shift from completing all assignments, to understanding the importance of teamwork requiring multiple people to finish assignments (Charan, et al., 2010:174-179; Yudianto, et al., 2023:460).

Passage Two: Managing or leading others to managing or leading managers

This passage introduces staff members to managerial skills. Individual contribution remains important but staff at this level learn to delegate work to others and coach employees. Staff must start to think beyond their daily roles and focus on how their approaches fit with institutional objectives. This passage distinguishes management as those individuals capable of leading a team, as opposed to those who merely possess technical skills (Charan, et al., 2010:174; Yudianto, et al., 2023:461).

Passage Three: Managing or leading managers to functional managers

Passage three requires functional managers supervise other managers doing unfamiliar tasks. Functional managers not only know work outside their skillset and original training and when to use staff competent in these areas for critical tasks. This increased knowledge base should aid functional managers to create effective strategies for the whole organisation. The new authority necessitates managerial maturity, where staff behave like leaders instead of functional members (Charan, et al., 2010:175; Yudianto, et al., 2023:461).

Passage Four: Managing or leading functional managers to public managers

Passage four moves functional managers to effective public managers responsible for more unfamiliar roles. This level requires additional work with more staff with various technical skills, while balancing current and future institutional needs. A staff member's previous experience would make them knowledgeable of multiple organisational functions including human resources, finances, and legal affairs. More time is dedicated for reflection for the good of the institution and analysing realistic trends, opportunities. Public managers must be able to trust their teams and remain open to adequate feedback from functional managers, while pursuing an institution's success (Charan, et al., 2010:176; Yudianto, et al., 2023:461).

Passage Five: Managing or leading public managers to group managers

Passage five transforms of public managers advocating for their own section to group managers who incorporate public interests. This consists of critical shifts in four skill sets. The first skill is financial strategy evaluation for finance allocations and selecting options more likely to be successful. The second skill is identifying staff who are ready and possesses talent for manager promotions. Coaching new public managers is an important task for group managers The third skill is strategic thinking or asking questions about processes, fulling skill gaps and sustainability of institutional successes.

Group managers must assess current workforce capacity to remain realistic. Managers at this level practice challenging decisions with wider implications. Notably, some institutions lack group managers, this role is fulfilled by directors (Charan, et al., 2010:176).

Passage Six: Leading group leaders to senior management

Passage six is associated with senior management, who lead for longer timeframes and need to be proactive at problem solving. Examples include directors, chief directors and accounting offices. . Leaders here expand from strategic to visionary thinking and operational to global viewpoints. They assemble exceptional teams, knowing some direct reports are ambitious and desire their role. However, directors remain focused on successful performance for the institution's wellbeing. (Charan, et al., 2010:176).

The Leadership Pipeline Model is critical to succession planning as it fills each passage with high performers. It facilitates effective career development and talent management universally, which is crucial for succession planning and management. Employees move through each passage at calculated speed gaining additional experience at all the levels. Institutions with the Leadership Pipeline Model have fewer succession planning setbacks because they have an adequate level of staff trained and ready for promotions (Charan, et al., 2010:179).

A key issue in passages 3 and 4 is the role of public managers and the importance of trust in effective succession planning. Although the model notes that trust and credibility influence leadership decisions, this requires clearer contextualisation in higher education. At the University of Namibia, trust is an institutional necessity that supports collegial governance, academic freedom, and shared

decision-making. Because authority in universities is negotiated rather than imposed, transparency and fairness in identifying talent, setting promotion criteria, and providing development opportunities are essential. Without openness, succession processes risk weakening institutional trust and morale. By contrast, clear communication, participatory governance, and equitable access to leadership development enhance both the legitimacy and effectiveness of succession planning, making trust a foundational, not peripheral, element in models designed for higher education.

The Leadership Pipeline Model outlines how individuals progress through successive leadership levels, with each stage demanding distinct competencies, values, and capabilities. It is particularly valuable for emphasising the significance of leadership transitions and the preparation required as individuals assume roles with greater responsibility. Within higher education institutions such as the University of Namibia, this model can guide the development of academics moving into leadership positions, for instance transitioning from lecturer to head of department, and subsequently from head of department to dean or senior executive roles.

Nonetheless, the model's structured, hierarchical, and linear design presents challenges when applied in university environments. Higher education institutions typically function within flatter and more collegial organisational structures, where authority is shared rather than strictly layered. Furthermore, academic leadership requires both scholarly credibility and managerial expertise, elements the model does not fully address. Consequently, the assumption that leadership development follows a straightforward, predictable pipeline oversimplifies the complex, varied, and often non-linear career trajectories common in academic settings.

2.5 COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS OF THE REVIEWED SUCCESSION PLANNING MODELS

The Leadership Pipeline Model focuses on the progression of individuals through different leadership levels, with each stage requiring new skills, values, and competencies. This model is particularly useful in highlighting the importance of leadership transitions and the need to prepare individuals for increasing levels of responsibility. In higher education institutions such as the University of Namibia, the model can be applied to support the transition of academics into leadership roles, for example from lecturer to head of department, and from head of department to dean or senior management positions.

However, the model's hierarchical and linear structure presents limitations in the higher education context. Academic institutions often operate within flatter, collegial structures where authority is distributed rather than strictly hierarchical. Additionally, leadership roles in universities require a combination of academic credibility and managerial competence, which the model does not fully capture. The assumption that leadership progression follows a predictable pipeline may therefore oversimplify the complex and often irregular career paths found in academia.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 established the theoretical foundation of the study by exploring leadership theories and succession planning models relevant to the research problem. The chapter began by providing background information, followed by a review of major leadership theories, including Trait Theory, Great Events Theory and Transformational Theory. Within Trait Theory, specific traits such as self-confidence, humility, trustworthiness, authenticity, enthusiasm and extraversion were examined as qualities essential for effective leadership and potential succession candidates. The discussion then shifted to succession planning models, focusing on the Seven Pointed Star Model, the Acceleration pool model, and the Leadership Pipeline Model. These frameworks were analysed in terms of their applicability in guiding institutions toward structured leadership development and the preparation of high-performing staff for future leadership roles.

By reviewing leadership theories and succession planning models, the chapter partially addressed Research Question 1 by highlighting what the literature expresses about succession planning within public institutions. It also partially addressed Research Question 2 by demonstrating how succession planning models can be positioned as developmental tools to cultivate competent and high-performing staff.

In relation to the problem statement, the University of Namibia lacks a succession planning model, leaving the role of succession planning in staff development unknown. This chapter provided conceptual insights into how leadership theories and structured succession planning frameworks could inform the design of a suitable model for the institution.

Chapter 3 presents the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 3:

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of scholarly work, empirical studies, and conceptual debates informing the study of succession planning, workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development. The review is structured to provide both conceptual clarity and practical insights into how these interconnected themes support the development of a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia. This chapter addresses the research question identified in Chapter 1, section 1.3: ‘What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?’

The discussion begins with succession planning, engaging directly with definitional perspectives that trace its evolution as a deliberate and systematic human resource process aimed at ensuring leadership continuity and talent retention. It then explores how succession planning is linked to succession planning models, particularly frameworks such as Rothwell’s Seven-Pointed Star Model, the Acceleration Pool Model, and the Leadership Pipeline Model, which provide structured pathways for developing and promoting staff. Attention is given to the key components in a succession planning process, such as the identification of critical positions, assessment of workforce needs, creation of talent pools, and developmental opportunities. The review also considers different approaches to succession planning, distinguishing between inclusive versus exclusive strategies and examining how organisations adapt models to their specific contexts.

The literature further outlines the advantages of succession planning within institutions, with emphasis on how it strengthens leadership pipelines, improves staff motivation, and ensures institutional resilience. This discussion extends to the benefits of succession planning for public service delivery, particularly how continuity in leadership and technical expertise enhances efficiency, accountability, and the quality of services delivered to citizens. The review does not overlook the barriers to succession planning, such as resistance from leadership, limited resources, and the misconception of succession planning as an unnecessary expense rather than a strategic necessity. Finally, the discussion situates succession planning within public institutions, where

challenges such as ageing workforces, bureaucratic rigidity, and limited career mobility coexist with opportunities for inclusive and developmental approaches to staff progression.

The chapter then turns to workforce planning as a complementary strategy to succession planning. This involves aligning workforce supply with organisational demand and ensuring that institutions are adequately staffed with the right skills. Workforce planning is analysed in terms of the criteria that make the process effective, such as forecasting, skills audits, and strategic alignment, and the benefits it generates, including improved efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and readiness for future workforce needs.

Closely tied to both succession planning and workforce planning is talent management. The review explores perspectives on and approaches to talent, examining debates between inclusive and exclusive views, innate versus acquired talent, and transferable versus context-dependent perspectives. It also considers the operational principles that underpin talent management, such as equity, transparency, and alignment with organisational goals. The talent management process is discussed in detail, integrating attraction, selection, development, appraisal, reward, and retention practices. The benefits of effective talent management are also highlighted, including improved staff engagement, higher retention rates, and strengthened organisational performance.

The chapter also examines leadership development, which is inseparable from succession planning and talent management. It considers the influence of different leadership styles on succession planning strategies and staff development, and highlights the benefits of leadership development, such as enhanced decision-making, innovation, and the creation of a motivated workforce. Attention is also given to leadership development activities, including mentoring, coaching, training programmes, and experiential learning, all of which play a crucial role in preparing successors for higher levels of responsibility.

Collectively, this literature review establishes a comprehensive theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. It demonstrates how succession planning can be leveraged to cultivate exceptional staff in higher education. Most importantly, it identifies key themes, gaps, and models from the literature that will design a tailored model for succession planning at the University of Namibia.

3.2 SUCCESSION PLANNING

The application of succession planning has evolved from a narrow corporate strategy to a central pillar of institutional sustainability across both private and public sectors. Historically, succession planning was regarded as the preserve of large corporations, primarily focused on safeguarding leadership continuity at the executive level. Technical and professional positions were often excluded on the assumption that such skills were readily available in the open labour market or through the public service. However, in the contemporary world of work, this assumption is increasingly untenable. Scarcity of specialised expertise, the pace of organisational change, and the growing complexity of institutional environments have necessitated that succession planning extend beyond executive positions to include all key, critical and scarce skills (Zwane, Zondi, Mutambara & Mashau, 2021:14).

The imperative for succession planning is particularly pronounced in higher education institutions, where the retirement of experienced academics and administrators has resulted in significant losses of institutional knowledge, leadership capacity, and research expertise. Succession planning represents an essential yet frequently under-emphasised function within higher education institutions, particularly considering the sector's escalating leadership-related pressures. Higher education institutions increasingly confront risks arising from leadership attrition, retirements, and an insufficient pool of well-prepared candidates for senior positions (Ahmad & Keerio, 2020:4031; Arrieta et al., 2022:115). Although some institutions attempt to mitigate these gaps through external recruitment, this strategy can negatively affect internal staff morale and disrupt institutional continuity (Keller, 2018; Raja, 2025:165–166). Furthermore, succession planning in many higher education institutions remains largely *ad hoc* and is seldom integrated strategically with broader talent management or workforce planning frameworks. This lack of structured alignment diminishes efforts to cultivate future leaders who possess both scholarly legitimacy and managerial capability. Accordingly, adopting a more deliberate, systematic, and forward-looking succession planning approach is vital for ensuring sustained leadership stability, safeguarding organisational knowledge, and supporting the long-term viability of the institution (Rothwell, 2016:27). For institutions such as the University of Namibia, the challenge is not only to ensure that leadership positions are filled, but that they are filled with individuals who are both competent and well-prepared to sustain the continuity of academic and administrative excellence. As Upadhyaya and Kuknor (2025:178-179)

emphasises, effective succession planning is less about simply replacing an outgoing leader and more about gradually preparing high-performing individuals through deliberate grooming and development over time. A rushed or reactive approach jeopardises organisational stability, whereas a structured and anticipatory model ensures that successors are ready, credible, and supported by their peers when they assume leadership responsibilities.

This study therefore approaches succession planning as a deliberate and systematic effort to ensure institutional continuity, knowledge retention, and leadership development at multiple levels of the organisation. It views succession planning not as a narrow replacement exercise, but as an integrated strategy for talent management and organisational resilience. In this regard, the focus is not only on leadership succession, but on creating a staff pipeline for advancing into positions of greater responsibility. This holistic approach reflects the dual purpose of the study: first, to determine how succession planning can develop exemplary staff and second, designing a succession planning model applied to the University of Namibia.

Despite the extensive body of literature on succession planning, much of it remains normative and prescriptive, often assuming ideal organisational conditions that may not exist in practice. In particular, the literature tends to overemphasise the benefits of succession planning while underexploring the structural and contextual constraints that limit its implementation, especially within public sector institutions. This raises critical questions regarding the practical applicability of existing succession planning frameworks in resource-constrained and bureaucratic environments.

3.2.1 Succession planning defined

Succession planning has been widely defined in the literature as a strategic process of identifying, developing, preparing, and retaining employees who demonstrate the potential to assume future leadership and critical roles (Peters-Hawkins, Reed & Kingsberry, 2018:29; Sharma & Sengupta, 2018:382). This definition underscores succession planning as both a talent development strategy and a mechanism for risk management, ensuring that the departure of experienced employees through retirement, resignation, or other unforeseen circumstances does not undermine institutional effectiveness. As Yildiz and Esmer, (2021:6-7) cautioned, the absence of succession planning results in the loss of not only human capital but also the institutional knowledge and expertise that are essential for long-term sustainability.

For higher education institutions in particular, the urgency of succession planning is heightened by what Ahmad and Keerio (2020:4032) and Arrieta, Barrameda and Sudarsana (2022:115) describe as an impending leadership crisis. Universities across the globe face a dwindling pool of academic and administrative leaders, making the deliberate development of internal successors essential for organisational survival. At the University of Namibia, where significant retirements have already strained institutional capacity, succession planning offers a mechanism to ensure that high-quality leaders and staff are continuously prepared to step into critical roles.

Scholars such as Benson, Li and Shue (2019:2088) position succession planning as one of the most effective methods of both promotion and retention. By systematically identifying potential leaders and pairing them with existing leaders for mentoring and professional development, institutions can ensure that successors are prepared long before a vacancy arises. This approach reduces reliance on external hires, which while sometimes advantageous (Keller, 2018; Raja, 2025:165–166), can alienate qualified internal candidates and disrupt institutional culture. Internal succession planning, in contrast, strengthens organisational loyalty, enhances staff motivation, and creates a pipeline of talent that is aligned with institutional values and objectives.

Succession planning is therefore both developmental and preventative in nature. Ahsan (2018:4) highlights that it not only identifies future successors but prepares them with required skills and credibility to perform effectively in leadership positions. Similarly, Cappelli (2008) notes that succession planning requires institutions to develop broad-based talent pools across multiple organisational levels rather than focusing exclusively on a small group of elite individuals. This broader view ensures continuity across roles, departments, and seniority levels, strengthening institutional resilience.

For the purposes of this study, succession planning is defined as the proactive identification and development of prospective successors, both from within and, where necessary, outside the institution, through structured assessment, mentoring, and training processes. It ensures that the University of Namibia remains operationally effective and strategically prepared, even when key leaders or experts depart. More importantly, it provides a framework for staff development and promotion, aligning with the study's central objective of designing a conceptual succession planning model.

3.2.2 Linking Succession Planning to Succession Planning Models

The conceptualisation of succession planning cannot be fully appreciated without reference to succession planning models, which provide the frameworks through which succession processes can be structured, implemented, and sustained. Tusquellas, López-Villanueva, Palau and Santiago (2025:e4103) define models as frameworks that allow institutions to replicate successful processes and outcomes, while Yudianto, et al. (2023:457-458) argue that succession planning models minimise organisational risk by ensuring that internal personnel are adequately prepared and promoted into key positions. These models are not merely abstract tools; they embody an organisational philosophy that prioritises the management of top talent for the greater good of the institution.

For the University of Namibia, adopting and adapting succession planning models is critical in designing a conceptual model that ensures leadership continuity and staff development. The failure of many succession initiatives, as Yudianto, et al. (2023:458) point out, lies in the lack of sustained institutional will and commitment. By contrast, embedding succession planning within a structured model provides consistency, accountability, and strategic alignment. Models such as Rothwell's Seven-Pointed Star Model (2016:8-15; 2024:68-70), the Acceleration Pool Model by Byham, Smith and Paese (2002), and the Leadership Pipeline Model by Charan, Drotter and Noel (2010:12) offer distinct but complementary insights into how institutions can systematically identify, develop, and promote talent.

While these models provide valuable structural insights, they exhibit notable limitations. Most are designed within private-sector contexts and assume relatively flexible organisational structures, which may not translate effectively to public institutions. Furthermore, these models tend to focus on leadership pipelines without adequately integrating broader organisational processes such as workforce planning and talent management. As a result, they offer partial rather than comprehensive solutions to succession planning challenges.

This study views succession planning models not as an end but a means to inform the development of a customised model tailored to the University of Namibia. By aligning succession planning theory and models with institutional realities, the study aims to design a framework that supports leadership continuity, enhances staff development, and ensures that the University not only fills vacancies but

also cultivates a sustainable pipeline of high-performing staff capable of driving institutional success into the future.

3.2.3 Components in a succession planning process

Research conducted by NEOGOV (2023) on modern succession planning practices in the United States highlights that, processes differ across private and public institutions, there are several common components that are widely recognised as essential to their success. Foremost, the inclusion and support of senior management is indispensable. Succession planning cannot succeed without visible commitment from leadership, both in the design and in the implementation of the process. Senior leaders set the tone for talent development by modelling accountability and by aligning succession initiatives with the broader strategic direction of the organisation. According to Ahmed-Gamum (2018:11-12), without the involvement of senior leaders, succession planning risks being reduced to an administrative exercise rather than a strategic imperative.

Another central component is the systematic assessment of workforce need required for today and in the future. This involves analysing workforce data such as demographics, attrition, estimated retirements, and existing skill sets to anticipate critical workforce shifts. Such analyses not only identify immediate gaps but also provide insight into longer-term vulnerabilities, particularly in sectors where retirements are looming or where high turnover threatens institutional stability. By understanding these dynamics, organisations are better positioned to design proactive succession strategies rather than responding reactively to vacancies (Chen, Song & Chow, 2025:102485).

Closely linked to this is identifying of critical positions that exert influence on both operational and strategic outcomes. These roles are often central to institutional functioning, and their vacancy can result in significant disruption, missed deadlines, or failure to meet stakeholder expectations. Recognising which positions carry disproportionate weight ensures that succession efforts are prioritised where they are most needed. Competencies also play a pivotal role in succession planning, as they define the skills, behaviours, and attributes necessary for success in key roles. By mapping competencies, organisations establish clear expectations and measurable standards, ensuring that developmental initiatives are targeted and aligned with institutional goals. Competency frameworks also support the design of leadership development strategies, enabling institutions to

prepare employees not only for technical expertise but also for the broader leadership responsibilities that succession planning requires (NEOGOV, 2023).

Contemporary succession planning increasingly relies on the development of talent pools rather than limiting attention to a narrow group of individuals identified as potential successors for specific roles. This approach broadens the scope of succession planning across departments and creates greater organisational flexibility, as a wider pool of employees is prepared for advancement. By cultivating talent pools, institutions reduce the risks associated with over-reliance on a few individuals while also promoting equity in developmental opportunities.

A crucial dimension of this process is the creation and facilitation of skill building opportunities to equip staff for advancement into key positions. These opportunities are often formalised in professional development plans, which are crafted during one-on-one discussions between employees and their managers. Such plans are typically integrated into annual performance reviews or revisited more frequently, depending on the timeframe and urgency of the succession plan. Developmental activities may include mentoring, job rotations, targeted training, or stretch assignments, all designed to accelerate readiness for higher-level responsibilities.

Finally, effective succession planning requires robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Institutions must regularly review if succession initiatives support workforce needs, competencies remain relevant, and if programme objectives are met. Monitoring tracks staff developments to ensure alignment between training investments and organisational outcomes. Performance measures are therefore essential to determine the overall effectiveness of succession planning efforts and to ensure that the process remains dynamic and responsive to evolving institutional challenges (NEOGOV, 2023).

Although these components are widely accepted in the literature, they reflect an idealised view of organisational capability. In practice, public institutions may face significant constraints in implementing such comprehensive systems due to limited resources, weak data systems, and institutional resistance to change. This raises concerns about the feasibility of adopting these components without contextual adaptation.

Collectively, these components form an integrated system that links leadership commitment, workforce analysis, competency mapping, talent development, and continuous evaluation into a

coherent succession planning process. The University of Namibia, which seeks to use succession planning, these elements provide a foundation for building a conceptual model.

3.2.4 Ways to approach succession planning

The goal of succession planning is to ensure that the quantity and quality of executive leaders the organisation needs are identified, fully capable, and ready to contribute to the effective performance of a business over time (Garman & Glawe 2004:120). According to Cavanaugh (2017:25), the various ways to approach succession planning, two have arguably the most applicability in higher education: (a) succession planning in emergency situations; and (b) succession planning for predictable leadership transitions. Such plans should consider, as best as possible, the domino effects of individuals stepping into a new leadership position and leaving their previous position now open. The second major approach to succession planning, succession plans for predictable leadership transitions, involves creating a pool of internal talent from which a successor leader is chosen through a selection process.

Chen, Song and Chow (2025:102487) stated that there is no perfect practice for succession planning, therefore, institutions should not be limited to a prescribed approach. Succession planning does not need to be complicated, but each public institution can personalise the process for their institution's needs. Succession planning should be a collaborative process for the entire organisation, not completed alone by the human resources department. It necessitates that public executives like accounting officers guide the process.

Furthermore, identifying the development needs of an organisation can be a challenging task. However, it is essential for improving team productivity and overall job satisfaction. The process of evaluating development needs is extensive and involves gathering data from several sources, such as managers, employees, and performance records. Through the identification of skill gaps that impede team growth and productivity, of an organisation can design focused training programmes that provide your staff the abilities and information they require to thrive and guarantee preparedness. Since employee development needs vary over time, identifying practical development areas at work is a continuous effort (Al Jahwari & Nur Ruzainy Alwi, 2023:249).

Succession development offers the great advantage of maintaining smooth organisational performance while optimising talent management and exploring opportunities for transitioning

individuals into leadership roles. (Chen, Song & Chow, 2025:102488). These advantages will be discussed below.

3.2.5 Advantages of succession planning in an institution

Institutional benefits from succession include prompt knowledge sharing motivation for employees to take development opportunities and successfully engages staff. (Jooste, Frantz & Waggie, 2018:703). Succession planning also reduces attrition rates since staff want to develop at their current institution instead of seeking outside options. desire to seek outside jobs.. This helps institutions define current workforce needs and determines future directions.(Al-suraihi, Siti, Al-suraihi & Ibrahim, 2021:4).

Perrenoud and Sullivan (2017) argue that developing a succession pool ready for sudden vacancies, maintains competitive stability with consistent leadership.

Succession planning must have leadership participation for the continuous process of employee development.(Bozer, Kuna & Santora, 2015:493). Leaders could benefit by gaining knowledge and experience through constructing systems to obtain desired institutional. Leaders are receiving opportunities to run departments, while implementing the institution's strategic plan (Ahmad, Mohamed & Manaf 2017:20). Succession planning drives leadership pathways and career advancement (Ahmad, et al., 2017:21). Trepanier and Crenshaw (2013) argue that the process improves potential successors' morale and work performance while ensuring job security. . Potential successors have different backgrounds thus it is important to design leadership programmes for individual learning needs (McMurray, Henly, Chaboyer, Clapton, Lizzio & Teml 2012:366).

3.2.6 Benefits of succession planning to public service delivery

The major focus of effective succession planning is that replacements are prepared to fill key vacancies on short notice and that individuals have the development capacity to assume greater responsibilities and exercise increased technical proficiency and expanded management roles.

It requires commitment to a longer-term strategic view of talent needs and doing it will bring several benefits for public service delivery. Identifying the bench strength in place will help departments and divisions meet both long-term and emergency leadership, management and non-supervisory

needs. Promoting people is good for morale, and promoting from within encourages people to take on responsibility, assume risk and grow through their achievements. The organisation will have a clearer sense of the strengths of internal candidates, enabling more informed selection and promotion decisions. Effective succession planning in government is an ongoing, dynamic process, not a static, one-time objective. It not only empowers employees to achieve professional goals but also supports organisational goals. It's essential in today's competition for talent (Ibarra, 2024:12-14).

Based on the literature review, there are multiple generally accepted benefits of succession planning. This includes guaranteed continuity of prepared leaders for key executive positions and a disciplined process of reviewing leadership talent. Succession planning also increases opportunities for high potential workers, a talent pool of promotable employees, and support for individual career plans within the institution. Institutions experience more contributions to business plans through developing strong strategic leadership . Identifying replacement needs also helps target necessary training and employee education and employee development. Employees have improved morale and abilities to respond to changing organisational and environmental demands. It encourages the advancement of diverse groups and supporting multiculturalism in institutions. Succession planning also helps manage the effects of downscaling and of voluntary separation programmes. It can reduce head count in areas of decreasing demand and redeploy employees to areas of growth and strategic importance (Zhu & Azadeh, 2024:9830).

3.2.7 Barriers to succession planning

According to Rothwell (2016:30-32) and Rothwell (2024:71) few organisations today have effective succession plans for several reasons. These reasons amount to challenges that must be overcome if succession plans are to succeed. The first challenge is that succession planning prompts people to think of their own mortality. When people think about succession planning, they too often associate it with their own retirement, death, disability or resignation. That is not happy thinking and people avoid it. But ignoring succession does a disservice to the organisation, considering. the most common reason that small businesses fail is undercapitalisation, followed by lack of succession planning. If something happens to a key person or their incumbent, it has effects that affect the organisation. The second challenge is that many managers often mistakenly assume that success at

one level on the organisation chart guarantees success at higher levels. Promotion is sometimes considered a reward for hard work or loyalty to the organisation. The problem is that promotions should not be rewards; rather, employee selection decisions should be driven by who is likely to do the best job. Success at one level on the organisation chart is no guarantee at higher levels because more responsible jobs are qualitatively different from lower levels, and people must be selected or developed for those qualitative differences. Someone who performs well as administrative assistant is not necessarily the best choice for administrative supervisor or manager because the job challenges of manager differ from those of an administrative assistant (Rothwell, 2016:33). A third challenge in succession planning is overcoming the hire someone like me bias. Well documented in selection is the temptation of hiring officials to pick people like themselves. Men pick men; women pick women; engineers pick engineers; and so forth. The more ways that an individual resembles (that is, is a clone of) the hiring official, the more likely the individual will be selected for a job or identified as a possible successor. Cloning is not a good management practice because the future is different from the past. A better idea is to identify the characteristics of the person needed at each level on the organisation chart, and then compare individuals objectively to those requirements, noting strengths and areas for development (Rothwell & Prescott, 2022:17).

There are multiple barriers to succession planning including inadequate monitoring and evaluation, formal succession planning framework and available policies. Limited knowledge on defining roles included in the succession plan and support from top management also serve as barriers. Another obstacle is training specific to succession planning and determining skills and competencies needed for the unforeseen future. Training includes developing employee skills through a combination of lectures, hands-on-exercises, videos, podcasts, simulations, and individual or group-based assignments. It includes both formal and informal approaches to skills development (Andreev, 2021). Finances and implementation time also impact success. Finally, there are human barriers that hinder succession planning such as management's reluctance to share power, nepotism and communication breakdowns during the process.

3.2.8 Succession planning in public institutions

Public sector organisations are owned and controlled by governments to provide basic and essential services to its citizens. Depending on the jurisdiction and level of operation, they may be referred to

as federal or state, municipal, national, local governments, or county governments (Dewah & Mutula, 2016:363). They are characterised by bureaucratic structures and sometimes face conflicts as they serve diverse stakeholders (Glennon, Hodgkinson & Knowles, 2019:34). Public sector employees are civil servants, the disciplined forces, and county government staff (Balisi, 2014:129). Over time, the public sector across the globe has been characterised by an aging workforce leading to leadership and succession gaps (Boon & Verhoest, 2018:117). In both the public and private sectors, change is the one constant. There is a strong demand for leaders who can adapt on a personal level as well as initiate and drive large-scale changes in their organisations. These expectations are reasonable, but they present a concern. Is pressing on change so relentlessly risking the loss of recent innovations?

The public sector is one of the most important aspects of the government structure that has undergone significant reforms. As a result, public sector reforms have become a more prevalent element of public funds available. These reforms have been impacted in part by current private sector reforms, as well as the strategic and implementation values set forth by the new public management. The public sector is a prominent actor in providing services to citizens, and remains a policy objective for many countries. According to Chemengich (2013:8) public service organisations worldwide are under pressure to increase efficiency in delivery of services. Succession planning is considered one of the best mechanisms for ensuring constant supply of competent and experienced successors to various positions in an organisation (Baporikar, 2021:108). However, while succession planning in the private sector continues to flourish, there is a lack of strong public sector models of succession because many leaders in the public sectors have long tenure of services. Thus, it is argued that succession planning is rarely used in the public sector because of the inherent nature of bureaucracy and meritocracy (Chokoe, 2024:227).

The benefits of succession planning outweigh its drawbacks, promotion is sometimes seen as a reward for a job well done or a commitment to the company. Future at the company and potential for future leadership roles are huge aspects that contribute to the promotion of an employee, not only merit. However, that while succession planning in the private sector continues to flourish, there are lack of strong public sector models of succession. The problem seems to be widespread and includes high income economies where public service employment grew rapidly from 1970s to early 1980s. Many of the public service employees hired during these years had retired or were about to

do so, but the organisations had been slow to react to the ageing public service workforce (Kurashvili, Reinhold & Jarvis, 2023:118). Kim(2003:535) linked employee assessments to succession planning and estimated that public institutions could lose 40-50% of the workforce, and most staff with over 15 years of experience. Succession planning rarely occurred in public institutions for multiple reasons. Politicians viewed it as irrelevant to their work and were reluctant to engage in the process. Human resource practitioners were wary of changing their processes resulting in politicians never receiving training on succession planning. .

Public institutions should focus on human resources integration for institutional strategy, rather than on individual personnel. Public sector institutions often link, succession planning to the strategic plan, which addresses future issues, changes in public needs and reviews strengths and weaknesses. (Baporikar, 2021:108). According to Koketso (2011:82), many public sector organisations have substantial uncertainties about leadership capabilities. Additionally, poor career planning and low levels of integration between the personal and professional aspirations of employees continue to persist for a variety of reasons, including succession planning. Kock and Burke (2008) concur that most public service organisations lack succession planning. In support of the statement, Baporikar (2021:110) shows that research on succession planning is focused on the private sector, which leaves gaps in public sector practices of succession planning. Approximately 130 studies were conducted between 1980 and 1993, of which only five were conducted in public sector.

Perlman (2010) explained that when a government does not plan for succession, governance failure becomes imminent because there are no structures in place to ensure the capture of knowledge from the retiring workforce before they leave. Further, given that governments are the most important social institutions, policymakers should have enduring missions and functions by formulating necessary policies and adaptations for effective succession (Perry & Wise, 2010:56). However, many public institutions are failing to address an anticipated leadership crisis. Some public institutions' leaders lack exit strategies and ignore succession planning and knowledge transfer. Often succession planning is reduced to picking employees for soon to be vacant positions.

In summary, although the private sector has been more focused on developing succession planning programs that correspond with evolving business demands, the public sector has fallen behind. This is largely due to the difficulty of putting these initiatives in place in the public sector. The nature of tenure and political leadership in the public sector, as well as personnel system restrictions, a lack

of resources, and a lack of focus, are all challenges. Although there is a scarcity of literature on successful programmes, successful public sector models and approaches have been implemented at various levels. According to the literature, public sector organisations can benefit from these approaches when they are related to the institution's strategy and integrated with other human resource processes. Strong leadership support, with an emphasis on establishing a pool of future leaders and a strong focus on performance, is at the heart of these programmes. Succession planning has become necessary. The public sector can solve its talent challenges with the correct focus and competence and workforce planning.

The concept of workforce planning is discussed in the following section.

3.3 WORKFORCE PLANNING

Succession planning has been a strategic activity since the origins of human societies and organisations. However, this does not mean that the designated successor always will be well-trained and prepared to assume power when succession occurs. To address the deficiency, succession planning in government has gained popularity during the last decade as a strategy for the deliberate preparation of a successor to assume power when the time presents itself. As such, it is more targeted than workforce planning that has the goal of having the right people, across the organisation, in the right place at the right time. Both workforce and succession planning involve changing the workforce for future contingencies (Lerotholi & Bezuidenhout, 2023:2).

A workforce plan serves as a critical juncture where institutional information is systematically aligned with the requirements and criteria outlined in the broader human capital management framework. Through strategic and tactical planning processes, a public sector institution gains insight into the categories and numbers of employees it will require to achieve its objectives. This enables the institution to compare projected staffing needs with its current human resource 'inventory', essentially taking stock of the skills, qualifications, and capacities already available within the organisation. When the skills and competencies of existing personnel correspond with the identified requirements, the process of matching becomes straightforward and efficient. However, it is in the areas where these alignments do not exist that the real value of workforce planning emerges. Gaps in capacity, expertise, or numbers are highlighted, thereby creating a clear picture of where interventions are necessary. Of particular concern are looming retirement trends, which, if

not anticipated, can create sudden and critical shortages in key functional areas. By situating the gap analysis within a defined timeline, institutions can distinguish between long-term shortages that can be managed through gradual recruitment, training, or succession planning, and immediate crises that require urgent action to prevent service delivery failures. This temporal perspective allows for proactive planning rather than reactive responses. In essence, the workforce plan evolves into a dynamic tool that ensures gaps are filled in a timely manner, allowing for smooth transitions, knowledge transfer, and organisational continuity (Bruen & Brugha, 2020:738; Lerotholi & Bezuidenhout, 2023:3). Musakuro (2022:e4) agrees as the overall goal of workforce planning is determining current gaps between staff desired roles. Managers assess each position for ongoing and future institutional needs including skills and personality tests.

Reman and Nordin (2021:39-40) suggest that personality tests are more eminent than others, and it is necessary to consider some aspects before choosing one of them. Some personality tests will be presented following, emphasising their pros and cons, their main use, and their characteristics. Therefore, it is relevant that the test you use has high reliability and validity. In general, institutions assess personality qualities to identify attributes that are consistently displayed, frequently in the face of shifting conditions. Based on a personality assessment, succession planning tools offer a thorough understanding of the roles and their culture as well as an evaluation of the probability of carrying out an integrated work-related task.

This forward-looking approach prepares employees for future challenges. By mapping out the evolution of skills and competencies needed for upcoming positions, organisations can strategically align their workforce with future needs. This dynamic succession planning not only recognises current achievements but also equips employees with the capabilities required to thrive in evolving roles, thereby fostering long-term organisational resilience and growth (Musakuro, 2022:e5-e7).

Boden (2023:202) states workforce planning is more than recruitment, retention, and retirement. It begins with a sound strategic business plan, reliable and available workforce data, a strong internal and external analysis, and a keen awareness of trends at the local and national level that impact how an organisation does business and the types of skills an organisation will be able to attract. It is about aligning an organisation's human capital, its people, with its business plan to achieve its mission, or, in other words, ensuring that an organisation currently has and will continue to have the right people with the right skills in the right job at the right time performing at their assignments

efficiently and effectively. Similarly, Bruen and Brugha (2020:739) states that Workforce planning is the process used to ensure that the people with the skills, knowledge and experiences needed to deliver an organisation's long, and short-term objectives are available, when and where they are needed, that is or will be available. However, Maroga, et al. (2024:73) argue that workforce planning is a systematic, fully integrated organisational process that involves proactively planning to avoid talent surpluses or shortages. It is based on the premise that a company can be staffed more efficiently if it forecasts its talent needs as well as the actual supply of talent.

Workforce planning in higher education institutions is essential for aligning human capital with long-term institutional priorities, yet it is frequently constrained by reactive and short-term approaches. The dynamic nature of higher education, marked by fluctuating enrolments, funding uncertainties, and rapid technological change demands proactive planning mechanisms that anticipate future staffing and skills requirements. Despite this, many higher education institutions struggle to implement systematic workforce planning, often relying on historical staffing patterns rather than data-driven forecasting (Jooss, et al., 2024:144). This limits their capacity to respond effectively to emerging challenges such as skills shortages, interdisciplinary demands, and the ageing academic workforce. As a result, strengthening workforce planning processes is critical for enhancing institutional agility, improving resource allocation, and ensuring that staffing structures remain aligned with evolving academic and strategic needs.

In essence, workforce planning is the strategic alignment of an organisation's human capital with its business direction. It is a methodological process of analysing the current workforce, identifying future workforce needs, establishing the gap between the present and the future, and implementing solutions so the organisation can accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives (Boden, 2023:204). While workforce planning provides a valuable mechanism for aligning human capital with organisational needs, it does not, on its own, address the qualitative dimensions of leadership continuity and talent development. This suggests that workforce planning, although necessary, is insufficient as a standalone strategy for succession planning.

3.3.1 Criteria for an effective workforce planning process

Shava and Ndebele (2024:28-30) identified the criteria for an effective workforce planning process to include, developing a sense of collective ownership of the strategic importance of people issues,

agreeing workforce strategies that directly link to the strategic objectives, focusing on the major issues and identifying how to convert the workforce, using practical and cost-effective methods for the plan's development. These criteria link long term planning to day to day activities and ensuring the right people are involved, but only at the required time and in the most effective way. They can also be used for monitoring, evaluating and refining the planning process.

Barkhuizen and Masale (2022:e4) note that although workforce planning has consistently ranked at the top of wish lists for human resource executives, it remains one of the most challenging programmes to implement within the function. According to Barkhuizen and Masale (2022:e6), the reasons for these persistent challenges are multifaceted and deeply embedded in organisational practices and managerial mindsets.

One of the primary difficulties lies in the tension between short-term and long-term priorities. Many managers are driven by the imperative to deliver immediate results tied to the current financial year, while workforce planning inherently requires a longer time horizon. Because its benefits are not always immediately visible, it struggles to gain traction in environments dominated by short-term performance indicators. This is compounded by concerns around data integrity, which remain a critical factor in workforce planning. Human resource systems are expected not only to provide reliable historical data but also to generate forward-looking insights to guide institutional growth, restructuring, and adaptation to changing workforce dynamics. When managers perceive that they lack an accurate grasp of current headcount, they are understandably hesitant to engage with future projections (Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021:e4).

Managerial attitudes also present a barrier. Some managers rely heavily on intuition or 'gut feelings' and are reluctant to incorporate workforce data unless it is accompanied by a compelling narrative that demonstrates its value. In many cases, these managers only recognise the importance of robust workforce planning when they experience the negative consequences that could have been avoided through such foresight. Another recurring difficulty is the level of granularity required in workforce planning. While there is consensus that workforce plans must differentiate among job categories, institutions often struggle to determine the most appropriate level of detail. They may become entangled in debates over whether planning should focus on broad labour categories, narrower job families, specific job titles, or even distinct skillsets. These uncertainties frequently result in unnecessary delays in launching workforce planning initiatives. Nevertheless, as Barkhuizen and

Masale (2022:e7) emphasise, even beginning with broad-level job categories represents meaningful progress and may provide sufficient direction for organisational planning.

A further limitation arises from the inadequacies of traditional forecasting methods. Such approaches often fail to identify with precision the individuals who are most at risk of turnover or retirement, thereby limiting the actionable value of workforce projections. This lack of predictive accuracy undermines the proactive intent of workforce planning and reinforces the perception that it is an abstract exercise rather than a practical tool for addressing pressing human capital challenges. Collectively, these barriers explain why workforce planning, despite being recognised as essential, remains elusive in practice (Barkhuizen & Masale, 2022:e8; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021:e4).

In essence, workforce planning, as a central element of human capital management, involves aligning an organisation's people with its strategic objectives to ensure that the right skills are available at the right time and place. Effective planning typically entails clarifying the organisation's strategic direction, analysing both internal and external environments, assessing the current workforce, and projecting future needs and supply. This process also requires identifying and implementing strategies to close identified gaps, followed by continuous evaluation and revision to ensure ongoing alignment (Barkhuizen & Masale, 2022:e8).

3.3.2 Benefits of workforce planning

Strategic workforce planning provides significant benefits to institutions by creating a structured approach to prioritising, developing and resourcing workforce initiatives. It also guides organisational decision-making on how best to structure and deploy staff to overcome both internal and external barriers that may hinder the achievement of long-term strategic goals. At its core, the principal rationale for engaging in workforce planning is economic efficiency. When properly implemented, it enhances productivity, reduces labour costs, and shortens the time-to-market by ensuring that the organisation has the right number of employees, equipped with the right skills, positioned in the right roles, at the right time. The cumulative effect of this alignment is a measurable increase in organisational productivity, which Sutton, et al. (2023:104826) identify as the greatest benefit of workforce planning.

Beyond these economic and structural outcomes, workforce planning encourages a forward-looking culture within organisations. It compels managers and leaders to anticipate future workforce needs,

identify potential risks and plan for different contingencies, thereby exceeding the narrow expectations of immediate staffing requirements. In this way, workforce planning contributes to organisational resilience, preparing institutions to navigate demographic shifts, retirements, and evolving industry demands. As Sutton, et al. (2023:104827) argue, effective workforce planning operates as part of an integrated talent management system, yet it has historically been underutilised and underappreciated.

The integration of workforce planning with talent management is especially important in higher education contexts such as the University of Namibia, where succession planning must serve as both a developmental and a retention mechanism for high-performing staff. While both talent management and workforce planning pursue similar goals, namely, building a strong, capable, and sustainable workforce, their methods of execution differ. Talent management focuses on engaging, nurturing, and retaining individuals, while workforce planning takes a broader organisational view, aligning human capital with institutional strategy. Together, these approaches create a comprehensive framework that not only strengthens workforce capacity but also ensures that future leaders and specialists are identified, prepared, and positioned to take on critical roles. This dual emphasis is vital for the University of Namibia, where succession planning must balance immediate staffing needs with the longer-term objective of cultivating a pipeline of competent, high-performing individuals who will sustain the institution's mission into the future (Sutton, et al., 2023:104826–104827).

The following section will therefore expand on talent management as a complementary strategy to workforce planning, highlighting its role in succession planning and leadership development within the university context.

3.4 TALENT MANAGEMENT

Succession planning and talent management are closely linked as both aim to ensure an organisation's long-term success. Succession planning focuses on identifying and developing future leaders to fill key roles, ensuring a smooth transition when current leaders leave. Talent management, on the other hand, involves a broader strategy to attract, develop, and retain employees, aligning their growth with organisational goals. Effective talent management supports succession planning by preparing high-potential employees for future leadership positions, while

succession planning helps ensure that the organisation has the necessary talent pipeline to meet its future needs (Ibarra, 2024:12). Individuals who have been in their positions for longer periods may have insights into organisational practices related to succession planning. Their perspectives on leadership transitions, training programmes for successors, or organisational culture around career progression can provide qualitative data (Ibarra, 2024:15).

Long-term employees typically provide valuable perspectives on organisational practices, including succession planning and leadership transitions. The limited number of long-tenured employees suggests a potential gap in these qualitative insights, which could affect the organisation's ability to refine its succession planning strategies and training programmes (Dilg, 2024:92).

The notion of talent management overlaps between succession planning and succession management. Often, the term 'talent management' is used to denote strategies for recruiting, onboarding, and developing talents that are viewed as strategically important for the future of an organisation (Jooss, et al., 2024:143). Taamneh, et al. (2022:737) define talent management as the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of those individuals who are of value to an organisation, either in view of their high potential for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles. Gandi and Saurombe (2025:4) define talent management as the additional management, processes and opportunities that are made available to people in the organisation who are talent. Marlapudi and Lenka (2024:712) define talent management as the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and utilising people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs. Talent management is how successors are recruited and developed by institutions (Perrenoud & Sullivan 2017:68; Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi & Amiri, 2017:16). Institutions determine ongoing leadership needs and establish interventions to attract competent talent to maintain a leadership pipeline. Moreover, institutions can determine how likely these leadership outcomes are successful. (Ramseur, Fuchs, Edwards & Humphreys, 2018:25; Marlapudi & Lenka, 2024:716). Once a successor is selected, there should be adequate time for the predecessor's mentorship (McCleskey 2014:120; Rabarison, Ingram & Holsinger 2013:1). When new successors receive regular feedback for career progression, the talent pipeline of credible leaders is created and maintained (Bryant, Brody, Perez, Shillam, Edelman, Bond, Foster & Siegel, 2015:259).

Rothwell (2016:2) defines talent management as an integrated process developing and attracting high performing staff. In essence, talent management must integrate the organisation's entire human resources system. This view is further supported by Elegbe (2012:4) who confirms that talent can be defined in different ways such as mental power, an aptitude, ability, a natural capacity or special gift. Talent is not acquired but inborn. Having talent is not enough to be an exceptional employee; it must be developed and used. Jooss, et al. (2024:143) recollects how that talent management is not limited to a human resource or business process but management of people's expectations and skills to maintain a highly effective workforce. Obtaining staff buy-in remains a challenge (Gandi & Saurombe, 2025:5). For succession planning to be effectively organised and executed, the foundational elements of talent management must be established to ensure continuity in key roles identified for investment in the succession planning process. The key components explore the interrelationship between several critical concepts that together create a sustainable framework for developing and promoting competent, high-performing staff. These building blocks not only ensure that the right individuals are identified and nurtured within the organisation, but also provide the foundation upon which a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia can be constructed (Walker, 2020:144).

The first component, attracting talent, underscores the necessity of attaining and retaining productive and skilled employees in an increasingly competitive labour market. As Laser (2022:450) emphasises, organisations that introduce participatory practices, foster opportunities for skill development, and value employee contributions create a culture where staff feel genuinely integrated into the organisation. This sense of belonging enhances both engagement and retention, thereby ensuring a stable pipeline of potential successors who can be prepared for leadership roles.

Closely aligned with attraction is the process of selection. Effective selection involves not merely filtering out unsuitable candidates but also identifying those whose competencies, values and aspirations align with the organisation's long-term goals. A well-designed selection system, therefore, serves as a foundation for succession planning by ensuring that the individuals entering the institution already possess the potential to grow into more complex roles over time. A rigorous, fair and forward-looking selection process is particularly important in higher education contexts, where the quality of academic and administrative staff directly affects institutional performance.

Once the right individuals are selected, deliberate attention must be given to development. Cox and Overbey (2023:11) highlight the importance of leadership development programmes, action learning opportunities, rotations, mentoring, and targeted training interventions as central strategies to address skills gaps. For succession planning, development is not only about closing current gaps but also about anticipating future organisational needs and preparing staff accordingly. Encouraging open communication about career aspirations, embedding a culture of continuous learning, and fostering strong collaboration between human resource managers and employees are crucial for ensuring readiness and commitment to step into leadership positions when required.

Another essential building block is appraisal. According to Othman, Oweidat, Ashwan, Hijazi, and Jaber (2024), appraisal involves input from key members of an employee's working network to provide transparent, objective, and participative performance assessments. When integrated into succession planning, appraisals serve as a mechanism for identifying high-performing individuals with leadership potential. Transparent evaluation processes also increase trust and provide constructive feedback, both of which are essential for guiding career development pathways and succession planning strategies.

Following appraisal, reward systems reinforce desired behaviours and sustain motivation. Danish and Usman (2010:159) and Laser (2022:453) note that while financial rewards play an important role in encouraging performance, committed employees often require recognition and appreciation to remain motivated and loyal. Linking rewards directly to appraisal outcomes not only drives performance but also signals to employees that their contributions are valued, thereby increasing their willingness to stay and grow within the institution. This alignment between performance, recognition, and rewards strengthens the succession planning pipeline by ensuring that talented individuals remain engaged and committed.

Finally, retention emerges as a cornerstone of the succession planning framework. High staff turnover undermines organisational stability, increases recruitment and training costs, and risks the loss of institutional knowledge, expertise, and even customer loyalty in service contexts. As Odiachi, Sulaimon, and Kuye (2023:112) and Sandhya and Kumar (2011:1780) argue, effective retention strategies are not merely about reducing costs but about safeguarding organisational capacity and continuity. Brandt, Bielitz and Georgi (2016:1667) caution that losing employees results in workflow disruptions and weakened institutional performance, which can prove disastrous in the

long term. Within the University of Namibia, retention strategies must therefore be designed to secure the most competent and high-performing staff, ensuring that potential successors are available and committed to taking on critical roles as they emerge.

Together, these interrelated components, attraction, selection, development, appraisal, reward, and retention, form the building blocks of succession planning. They provide a holistic framework that aligns with research questions the University of Namibia's long-term needs for leadership continuity and institutional resilience. Talent management's success depends on defining individual blocks and understanding how they are interconnected (Gandi & Saurombe, 2025:4-5).

Figure 3.1 presents a simplified depiction of the foundational elements of talent management.

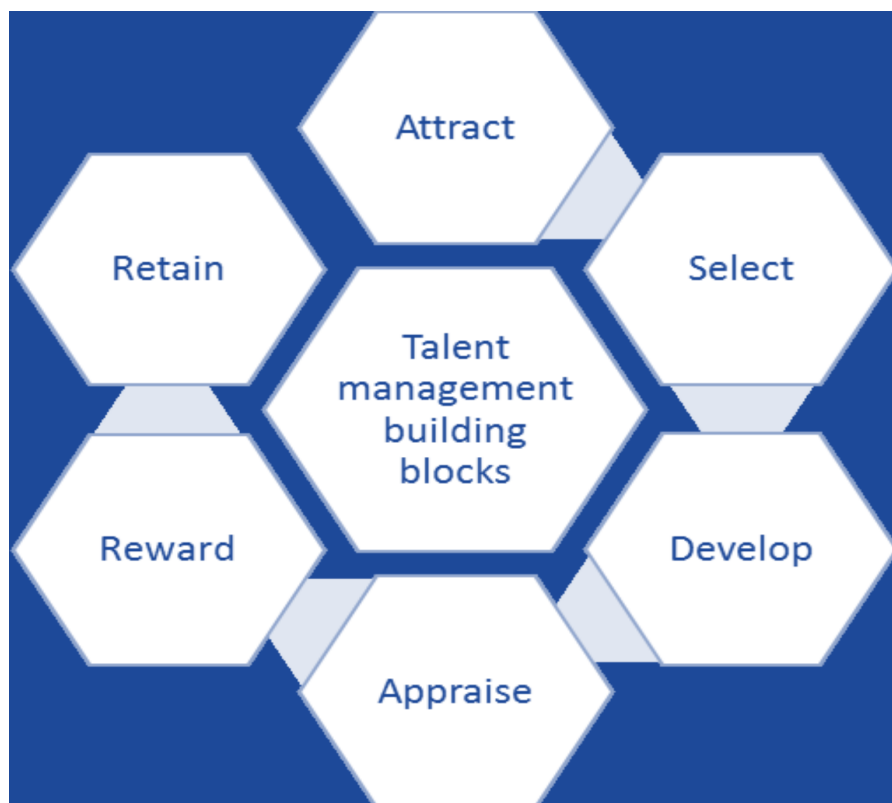


Figure 3.1: Talent management building blocks

Source: (Adapted from Rothwell, 2016:19; Rothwell & Prescott, 2022:18-20).

The true challenge with the above model lies in its lack of clarity regarding the interconnections between the different blocks. Without a clear depiction of how these components interact, the model

risks being perceived as fragmented rather than integrative. For any institution seeking to demonstrate its ability to implement a comprehensive talent management programme, it becomes essential to establish a well-defined process flow or roadmap that illustrates both sequence and coherence. Such a roadmap not only ensures that the key components are systematically integrated but also provides a practical guide for translating theoretical models into actionable strategies. The talent management programme, as outlined in the roadmap presented below, highlights a series of interrelated steps that collectively reinforce the institution's commitment to developing and sustaining talent in a structured and strategic manner. Each step allows potential successors to gain requisites for key positions with timeframes for filling available positions.

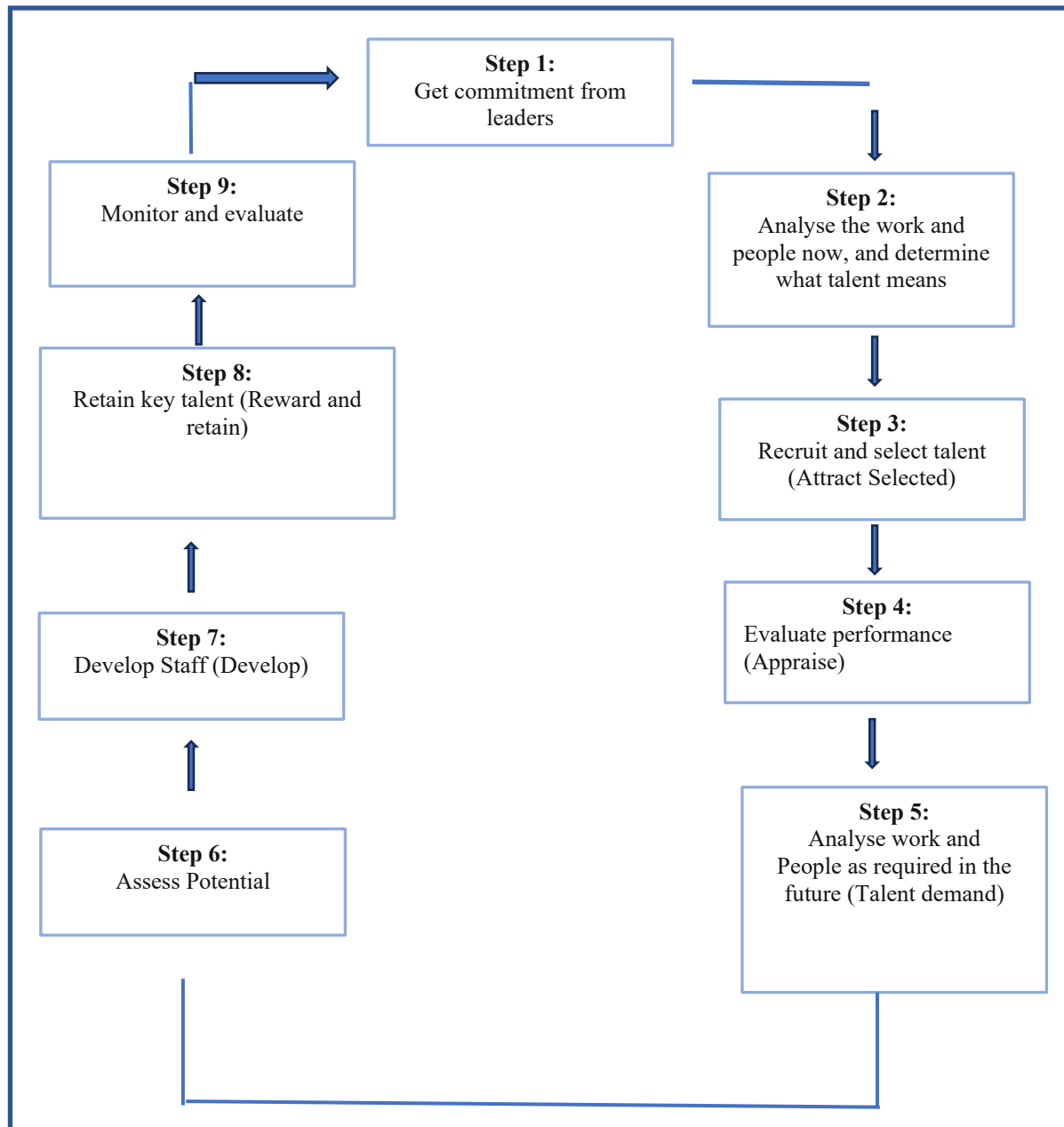


Figure 3.2: Roadmap to effective talent management

Source: (Adapted from Rothwell, 2016:21; Rothwell & Prescott, 2022:19-20).

The first step requires commitment and program support from the senior executive team. The implementation is the responsibility of the manager and the executive management team. Step 2 is analysing the organisation's existing work, talent and success (Rothwell, 2016:14). Line

departments must complete development analyses to review and develop competencies. Staff should have access to career development opportunities so qualify for key roles and are equipped to meet future demands (Horowitz, 2018:774-775).

Rothwell and Prescott (2022:23) explains that when an organisation defines talent, they must establish a source to address needs in positions. Step 5 confirms talent attraction strategies for internal and external candidates. In a talent management approach, management sustains staffing through succession or employment equity planning and eventually creates a recruitment process. New talent starts at the organisation with an established process where their work is appraised and ready for promotion. The organisation integrates new talent through a process to appraise individual performance. This results in capable staff members are promoted once they meet requirements. Integrated staff should have competencies monitored via an effective personal development plan as annual investments. Step five focuses on a future needs analysis for priority skills. This includes the identification of scarce skills. Scarce skills are disciplines and fields of occupation where an institution finds it difficult to attract, recruit and retain staff. It is the responsibility of the employer to determine the strategic and operational needs of the organisation. The employer needs to identify the critical skills shortages and how to attract individuals who have the skills required to achieve the turnaround strategy of an institution and retaining those individuals once appointed (Kutame, Kapueja, Muremela & Lawrence, 2020:74-75). This strategically aligns staff with institutional objectives while securing people ready for promotion opportunities. The exercise complements current reviews at the start of financial years, but HR performance management assessments can also occur monthly. Frequent reviews not only incorporate performance but plans for competencies required for higher-level positions. Rothwell (2024:71) reinforces this combination of assessments helps determine potential in future successors.

Development gaps must be confirmed for a successful talent management process (Rothwell, 2024:67-71). This stage also emphasises recognition to retain key staff mentioning intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors such as satisfaction, monetary rewards, and investment in professional development (Rothwell & Prescott, 2022:24). This concludes the formal steps, but the cycle continues with regular evaluation of program successes. Institutions should follow the roadmap and use information from the process towards succession planning.

According to Cooks-Campbell (2022) and Ringo and Kibambila (2025:112) giving a fair chance of promotion to all employees is essential for a promotion policy. This includes removing gender discrimination, ethnic discrimination, or nepotism from the promotion process. Providing a fair opportunity to excel to all employees reveals healthy transparency within an organisation's operations and keeps employees motivated to climb the promotion ladder.

Retention of internal successors remain a core aspect of talent management (Tafti, et al., 2017:16). When potential leaders receive additional training, they are often stolen by competing institutions. This reinforces the need for staff available for vacant roles with consistent talent management procedures (Ringo & Kibambila, 2025:114). Most definitions define talent management as a comprehensive, well-planned and systematic process that includes attracting, identifying, selecting, developing and accessing talented employees, to increase efficiency of operations. In comparison to human resource management, practitioners say that talent management covers a narrower scope, emphasises segmentation rather than egalitarianism, focuses on people rather on function and stresses the capture and retention of talents (Iles, Chuai & Preece, 2010:180).

Talent management constitutes a pivotal strategic function within higher education institutions, given their reliance on highly specialised academic and professional personnel to advance core mandates in teaching, research, and community engagement. Nevertheless, its operationalisation within higher education institutions frequently reveals a fundamental tension between traditional academic norms, most notably autonomy and collegiality, and the emergence of more managerial, performance-driven paradigms (Yudianto, et al., 2023:457). Although many institutions increasingly recognise the imperative to attract and retain globally competitive scholars, talent management practices often remain fragmented and insufficiently institutionalised, particularly regarding aligning individual academic development with broader organisational priorities. Consequently, these limitations weaken institutional capacity to effectively address persistent challenges related to staff retention, research productivity, and leadership development. Therefore, higher education institutions require a more integrated, strategically coherent, and context-sensitive talent management framework, one capable of reconciling academic values with human resource imperatives to safeguard long-term competitiveness and promote sustained academic excellence (Yildiz & Esmer, 2021:6).

Despite its strategic importance, talent management remains conceptually fragmented, with competing definitions and approaches that create ambiguity in practice. This lack of conceptual clarity complicates its integration into succession planning systems and highlights the need for a more coherent and contextually grounded approach. Thus, it can be concluded that talent management is a concept that is not fixed to an ultimate definition and that certain tensions exist. Dries (2013) summarised the five tensions of talent as described in the following section.

3.4.1 Perspectives on and approaches to talent

Defining talent has long been a contested and complex issue in human resource and organisational studies. Scholars frequently avoid offering a singular definition, whether intentionally or unintentionally, due to the multiple avenues from which the concept can be approached (Gallardo-Gallardo, 2018; Meyers, Van Woerkom, Paauwe & Dries, 2020:564). The difficulty in conceptualising talent stems from the inherent tensions within the term itself, particularly the question of whether talent should be understood inclusively, where all employees are regarded as talented, or exclusively, where only a select group of individuals are identified as having exceptional potential (Dries, 2013; Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe, 2014; Collings & Mellahi, 2009:306). This debate is critical in shaping succession planning strategies since the chosen perspective determines whether an organisation invests broadly in its workforce or focuses its resources on a limited pool of high-potential individuals.

Linked to this debate is the distinction between object and subject perspectives on talent. Gallardo-Gallardo, et al. (2013) describe the object approach as defining talent through measurable attributes such as skills, knowledge, or competencies, whereas the subject approach considers talent to reside in people themselves. The object perspective lends itself to practices such as competence and knowledge management, while the subject perspective aligns more closely with succession planning and career management, since it recognises individuals as carriers of unique potential. Although in practice the distinction between these approaches is blurred, the implications for talent management strategy are profound (Dries, 2013, Bolander, Werr & Asplund, 2017). Operationalising talent therefore often involves a combination of both perspectives, with organisations needing to decide whether to prioritise individual characteristics or broader human potential (Gallardo-Gallardo, et al., 2013).

Chamorro-Premuzic (2017:139) further expands the discussion by identifying four common perspectives on talent: the rule of the vital few, which recognises a minority as disproportionately contributing to organisational success; the maximum performance rule, which emphasises measurable high performance; the effortless performance rule, which regards talent as natural and innate; and the perspective that talent equals fit, highlighting the alignment between individual capabilities and organisational culture. These perspectives provide organisations with different lenses through which to view succession planning, ranging from performance-driven models to those focused on cultural alignment and adaptability.

In line with this, Pruis (2011:207) defines talent as the attributes that motivate individuals to exceed others, while Marlapudi and Lenka (2024:715) stress that those adopting an object perspective often link talent to developed skills, innate competencies, or employee engagement and fit. When this object-based approach is applied in practice, talent management is often integrated into competence and knowledge management systems. Conversely, when the subjective approach is employed, succession planning and career management become central to the talent management system, emphasising individual growth and career progression.

Another major debate concerns whether talent management should be inclusive or exclusive. Inclusive talent management assumes that every employee possesses unique qualities and that all can contribute to organisational performance (Dries, 2013; Gelens, Dies, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2013:345). This approach emphasises equal treatment through employee development, promotion, and retention strategies, creating an environment of fairness and parity. Transparent promotion policies, as Bonifacio (2024) argues, not only foster equity but also enhance engagement and satisfaction by providing clear pathways for career progression that align with organisational goals and values. By contrast, exclusive talent management emphasises the identification and development of a select group of employees deemed critical to organisational success (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017:4-5). While this approach can drive profitability and targeted leadership development, it risks neglecting broader workforce potential. For institutions such as the University of Namibia, which must balance equity, staff development, and leadership continuity, the inclusive model offers an important mechanism for ensuring that succession planning supports institutional values while retaining fairness and transparency.

Closely related to inclusivity and exclusivity are debates about whether talent is innate or acquired. The innate perspective views talent as an inherent quality that organisations must attract and retain, while the acquired perspective regards talent as something that can be developed through training, learning, and experience (Meyers, et al., 2020:565; Meyers, et al., 2013). In practice, organisations that view talent as innate tend to focus on attraction and retention strategies, whereas those that adopt the acquired perspective emphasise development initiatives. Both approaches are evident in public sector organisations, which often seek to balance recruitment of individuals with strong entry-level capabilities with investment in long-term development programmes for existing staff (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen & Scullion, 2020:462).

Additional perspectives further enrich the debate. The input versus output view distinguishes between talent as effort, motivation, and career orientation (input) and talent as measurable results and achievements (output) (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen & Scullion, 2020:463). The transferable versus context-dependent debate considers whether talent can be applied universally across contexts or whether it is bound to specific environments and organisational cultures (Dries, 2013:280; Bolander, Werr & Asplund, 2017:1525). For succession planning, these perspectives hold important implications: an exclusive view of talent as innate and transferable supports investment in a small pool of high-potential individuals who can thrive in varied contexts, while a belief in talent as mastery shaped by context encourages knowledge management and context-specific leadership development.

Taken together, these perspectives highlight the complexity of defining and managing talent. For succession planning at the University of Namibia, clarity on how talent is conceptualised will be crucial. Whether the institution adopts an inclusive or exclusive approach, views talent as innate or acquired, or defines it through input or output, each choice will shape how potential successors are identified, developed, and retained. Explicitly articulating a conceptual approach to talent will therefore form a cornerstone of the succession planning model proposed in this study, ensuring that the University develops competent and high-performing staff while maintaining alignment with its institutional mission and values.

Operations principles to talent management are elaborated on in more detail in the following section.

3.4.2 Operations principles applied to talent management

A supply chain perspective on talent management relies on four principles, two that address the risks in estimating demand and two that address the uncertainty of supply (Cappelli & Keller, 2014:77).

The first principle, manage risk indicates that a deep bench of talent is expensive, so institutions should undershoot their estimates of what will be needed and plan to hire from outside to make up for any shortfall. Some positions may be easier to fill from outside than others, so organisations should be thoughtful about where they put precious resources in development: Talent management is an investment, not an entitlement. The second principle adapt to the uncertainty in talent demand is a given, and smart organisations find ways to adapt to it. One approach is to break up development programmes into shorter units: Rather than put management trainees through a three-year functional program, for instance, bring employees from all the functions together in an 18-month course that teaches general management skills, and then send them back to their functions to specialise. Another option is to create an organisation-wide talent pool that can be allocated among departments as the need arises.

The third principle, improve the return on investment in developing employees suggests that one way to improve the payoff is to get employees to share in the costs of development. That might mean asking them to take on additional stretch assignments on a volunteer basis. Another approach is to maintain relationships with former employees in the hope that they may return someday, bringing back your investment in their skills. While principle four preserve the investment by balancing employee-employer interests. Arguably, the main reason good employees leave an organisation is that they find better opportunities elsewhere. This makes talent development a perishable commodity. The key to preserving your investment in development efforts as long as possible is to balance the interests of employees and employer by having them share in advancement decisions (Cappelli, 2013:6).

Ghosh (2021) explains that under the umbrella of talent management, there are a string of elements and sub-processes that need to work in unison to ensure the success of the organisation. For example, analysing the right talent gaps for the present and the future, identifying the right talent pools and best-fit candidates, getting them to join and then optimising their existing skills and strengths while helping them grow are touchpoints that are all equally important. They support each other and the

whole structure would crumble even if one sub-process fell out of sync. The talent management process is discussed in the following section.

3.4.3 The talent management process

The process of talent management could be considered, to begin with acknowledging the need for talent and leads to filling that gap and ultimately growing and optimising the skills, traits, and expertise of employees, new and old (Ghosh, 2021:1). Taamneh, et al. (2022:737) further identified the following key steps in the process of managing talent effectively.

In any process with a predetermined outcome, planning constitutes the initial phase of talent management. This stage involves identifying existing gaps in human capital requirements, formulating job descriptions for essential roles to guide sourcing and selection, and developing a workforce plan for recruitment initiatives. Following the plan, the subsequent step, attraction, involves determining whether to fulfil talent requirements internally or through external sources. Regardless of the choice, the process necessitates attracting a substantial pool of applicants. Common external sources include job portals, social networks, and referrals. Identifying the talent pools to be targeted in advance is crucial for ensuring a smooth and efficient process. The employer brand that the organisation has established plays a significant role in determining the quality of applications received. The third step, selection, involves employing a series of tests and evaluations to identify the optimal person-organisation fit. This includes written tests, interviews, group discussions, and psychometric assessments, along with a comprehensive analysis of all publicly accessible information on the candidate, to form a well-rounded understanding of the individual (Taamneh, et al., 2022:738-739).

Many organisations adopt the strategy of hiring based on attitude and subsequently training for skills. This approach is logical, as it emphasises the importance of the individual over their resume, while still valuing a predisposition towards certain skill sets. By investing in the development of employees to align with organisational growth and equipping them with the necessary expertise to contribute to business success, organisations can foster loyalty and enhance employee engagement. This process commences with an effective onboarding program to facilitate the employee's transition into their new role, followed by ample opportunities for skill enhancement, aptitude development, and proficiency improvement. Additionally, growth is supported through counselling, coaching,

mentoring, and job rotation schemes. For an organisation to achieve sustainable success, it is imperative to retain talent effectively. Many organisations strive to retain their top talent through promotions, salary increments, growth opportunities, involvement in special projects and decision-making, training for advanced roles, and rewards and recognition programs. Effective talent management emphasises the collective transformation and evolution of the organisation through the growth of individual employees, ensuring that each employee feels integrated into a larger entity. Although retirement benefits, exit interviews, and effective succession planning may appear as disparate career points, they collectively serve as transitional tools that facilitate the shared journey (Ghosh, 2021:4).

According to Bersin (2006), talent management is a powerful and important trend across human resource management. It changes the way employees are organised, how they use technology, how they resources are allocated, and how they measure what they do. The benefits of talent management are discussed in the following section.

3.4.4 Benefits of talent management

Talent management creates a warm environment to work, increased productivity and profitability, increased employee retention, increased level of staff engagement and lower recruitment costs. (Nishad, Nawaz & Prathibha 2013:4). Public sector organisations currently emphasise the importance of their workforce, aiming to enhance it through the implementation of talent management (Podger, 2017:7). Talent management can also facilitate equitable performance management procedures that assess both quality and quantity, thereby identifying each employee's talents in routine tasks. A well-established and implemented talent management system can significantly benefit an organisation by enabling talented employees to contribute substantially to the achievement of its economic objectives and strategic goals. Additionally, talent management systems can reduce the costs associated with acquiring new employees, mitigate losses related to key vacancies, position the organisation as an employer of choice, and provide a more effective approach for identifying and retaining talented individuals. Such a system can integrate succession planning to fill key positions more efficiently and ensure that internal employees remain motivated, with talented individuals being assigned roles that fully utilise their potential (Lee, 2021:5).

Based on the above literature review, it can be concluded that talent management and succession planning go hand in hand. When they are linked to the institution's vision, employees can align their personal goals to the institution's current and future needs, creating a mutually beneficial environment. Internal talent management programmes are proving critical in keeping appreciated employees while concurrently, ensuring greater control over the succession planning process. Retention research indicates that individuals tend to stay longer where they are experiencing personal and professional growth.

3.5 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development can be defined as an expansion of a person's capability to be effective in a leadership role and process. Leader development refers to the development of an individual person, whereas leadership development refers to a collective dimension of development that occurs within different groups (Zake, Jonck & Pelser, 2024:207). This is built on the assumption that leader and leadership development are based on creating vivid experiences at the workplace and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to workplace learning and development and enhanced capabilities that should enable people to think and act in new ways (Ndatshe, Mokhele & Jakoet-Salie, 2024:205). When focusing on individual leaders, development refers to individual-based knowledge, skills, and abilities primarily connected to being effective in formal leader roles. Leadership development can be seen as the development of human cultural capital within an entire organisation and working with system processes, collective practices and organisational cultures, where leadership is developed as an outcome of shared work and interaction (Lund, 2024:341).

Leaders who lead by excellence inspire their followers' potential, improve competence and meet their requirements in terms of attainment of institutional goals (Upadhyaya & Kuknor, 2025:181). In addition, Marcy (2023:265) argues that leaders could instil a sense of trust and loyalty in followers and equip them with leadership skills and competencies over time. The ability of institutions to confirm continued leadership relies on a succession plan and the commitment and involvement of leaders during succession planning to prevent disruption in current and future leadership.

Leadership development refers to how leaders motivate followers to voluntarily work and meet goals (Peters-Hawkins, et al., 2018:28). The process starts with examining the institution's staff and existing skillsets through or human resource planning (Mhlongo & Harunavamwe, 2017:9; Odiachi,

Sulaimon & Kuye, 2023:115). Education is thus an influential step in staying competitive and enhancing employees' skills, and having more higher education graduates in the job market has a positive influence on wages. Whether they are starting out a career or returning to continue to build upon years of experience, pursuing educational training helps employees keep moving forward in their careers. Successfully attaining a nationally recognised qualification proves to employers that the staff are both skills-ready and knowledgeable in their respective fields. Obtaining a degree also demonstrate an employee's capability to take on higher-skilled occupations, allowing them to command higher salaries and benefits. In the context of succession planning, leadership development utilises human resources to locate and equip an institution's future leaders (Tavares, Sin, Sá, Pereira & Amaral, 2023:1149-1150).

Succession planning enshrines leadership development through an institution's strategic plan often as a core objective (Odiachi, et al., 2023:116). These established measurements assist with measuring progress within potential staff. Creating leadership development programmes takes years, and are critical to have in place as a resource for unexpected staff vacancies. In summary, leadership development is the vigorous process of training the necessary traits, skills, confidence and practical knowledge in individuals wishing to pursue leadership positions (Ahsan, 2018:5).

The following section describes leadership styles and links them to succession planning. There are positive and negative aspects of each leadership style which impacts successor development. (Brinkman, 2017:164; Sfantou, Laliotis, Patelarou, Sifaki-Pistolla, Matalliotakis & Patelarou, 2017:2-3).

3.5.1 Leadership styles

A more inclusive perspective on leadership may open fruitful avenues for the scientific study of its development and better prepare all individuals to address the increasingly complex challenges of leadership (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023:333). Chen, Huang, Sun, Zheng, Graham and Jiang, (2024:508) suggest that the biggest challenge facing leaders today is the changing world that wants a paradigm of leadership to evolve to a new mind-set that relies on human skills, integrity and teamwork.

Chen, et al. (2024:509) further explains that organisations need talented people a lot more than talented people need organisations. The general picture of developing leaders is to make such developments part of the culture, including mentoring and offering constructive feedback on

performance. It also involves proper buy-in by executive management to the idea of succession planning. The idea is that an organisation must grow its own talent pool and when leadership roles become vacant, a candidate to fill that role has been groomed and grown from within. Various authors regard leadership as the behaviour of an individual when directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. According to Dinh, Zhu and Kondakci (2023:794). The success of a company is traditionally measured by the leader's innovativeness and cost-effectiveness in handling a company's projects. The main theme in the literature on the topic is that leadership development should be strategic. Thus, a leader's development should be intertwined with strategic planning, organisational culture and strategic issue resolution. Clients today shape organisations by demanding what they want, when they want it, how they want it and what they will pay for it. As Fischer and Sitkin (2023:334) state, the core purpose of leadership development should therefore be to align leadership behaviour with strategies to serve customer needs. Without this central focus, leadership development practices tend to become ends in themselves. Leadership styles are combinations of personal traits with technical skills that leaders employ in their daily interactions with subordinates, shaping how authority is exercised and how relationships are maintained (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022:988). Within higher education institutions, where complex academic, administrative and societal demands converge, leadership styles determine not only how leaders manage staff and students, but also how they cultivate a culture of innovation, inclusivity, and accountability. Leaders are often clustered into distinct styles according to behavioural traits and approaches that foster a supportive working environment, enhance communication, and promote collaboration among academic and administrative staff in pursuit of institutional goals (Ahsan, 2018:4; Backhaus & Vogel, 2022:989). For instance, transformational leadership may be particularly relevant in universities striving to encourage research excellence and teaching innovation, whereas transactional leadership may be more evident in contexts requiring strict compliance with policies, accreditation standards, or financial accountability (Ahmad, et al., 2017:22).

A more inclusive perspective on leadership is particularly significant in higher education because universities operate in dynamic and often uncertain environments, where leaders must balance academic freedom with managerial efficiency. Fischer and Sitkin (2023:333) argue that such inclusivity in leadership perspectives expands the scientific study of leadership while also equipping leaders to respond more effectively to increasingly complex challenges. In higher education, these

challenges include adapting to digital transformation, navigating shifting funding landscapes, promoting diversity, and ensuring social impact. Leaders who adopt adaptive or distributed leadership styles are often better positioned to address such complexities by fostering shared responsibility, drawing on collective expertise, and empowering staff and students to participate in institutional decision-making processes.

Chen, Huang, Sun, Zheng, Graham and Jiang (2024:508) highlight the pressing need for leadership paradigms to evolve towards a new mindset grounded in human skills, integrity, and teamwork. This is highly relevant in universities where collaboration across disciplines, departments, and administrative units is critical for success. Leaders who embody servant or authentic leadership styles, for example, emphasise empathy, integrity, and service to others, which resonates with the values of higher education as a public good. Moreover, as Chen, et al. (2024:509) suggest, organisations increasingly require talented people more than talented people require organisations. In academia, this reality is reflected in the global competition for highly skilled researchers, academics, and administrative leaders. Hence, leadership development within higher education must focus not only on recruiting external talent but also on cultivating a strong internal talent pipeline through mentorship, succession planning, and constructive performance feedback.

The notion that leadership involves directing group activities toward shared goals (Dinh, Zhu & Kondakci, 2023:794) is particularly relevant in academic contexts, where achieving institutional goals depends on mobilising diverse stakeholders with potentially divergent interests. Universities succeed when leaders combine strategic vision with the ability to inspire and coordinate faculty, staff, and students around priorities such as research productivity, student success, or community engagement. In line with this, institutional success is increasingly measured not only by financial prudence or project management skills but also by the ability of leaders to foster innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and global competitiveness.

Leadership development in higher education therefore needs to be viewed as a strategic endeavour, embedded in institutional culture and aligned with long-term goals. As Fischer and Sitkin (2023:334) argue, leadership development should not be treated as an isolated exercise but rather as a means of aligning leadership behaviour with strategic objectives. In universities, this means ensuring that leadership styles are responsive to student needs, stakeholder expectations, and societal demands. For example, a participative leadership style that engages faculty and students in

governance decisions can help institutions remain responsive to rapidly changing external environments. Without such alignment, leadership training risks becoming perfunctory, disconnected from the broader mission of higher education.

Ultimately, the literature underscores that leadership styles in higher education must be adaptable, inclusive, and strategically oriented. Whether transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, or distributed, leadership styles have direct implications for how universities respond to change, cultivate talent, and deliver on their mission of teaching, research, and community service. Leaders who can integrate these styles into a coherent and context-sensitive approach are better equipped to navigate the challenges of contemporary higher education.

3.5.2 Benefits of leadership development

Dinh, Zhu and Kondakci (2023:795-796) highlight that in a strong culture, the organisation's core values are held strongly and shared widely. This suggests that when organisational members accept the shared values, they become more committed to them. A strong organisational culture therefore refers to organisations in which beliefs and values are shared relatively consistently throughout an organisation. Strong organisational cultures have a great influence on the behaviour of organisational members. In other words, a strong culture is a powerful lever for guiding behaviour.

According to the different definitions of the word agility, the concept of speed and quick response and the concepts of group work and common goal regarding the word organisation can be inferred. Agility can be defined as swiftness and quick response of a harmonious group to the changes made by the environment surrounding them to reach a goal. Organisational agility can be viewed as the state of organisational performance in terms of flexibility and adaptability and is attainable through organisation's activities. From the process-based perspective, organisational agility is a set of processes that allow an organisation to sense changes and respond efficiently and effectively in a timely and cost-effective manner in the internal and external environments. A high degree of agility helps organisations react successfully to the emergence of new competition, technology and shifting market conditions.

Developing people is indeed a costly endeavour, requiring substantial investments of time, effort, and resources, and in the early stages, its tangible benefits may be difficult to measure or quantify (Virtanen, et al., 2023:77-78). However, in the context of higher education institutions, where the

demands of teaching, research, and service place significant pressures on staff and management, the long-term benefits of leadership development far outweigh the initial challenges. Universities operate within highly competitive and dynamic environments that require effective leaders capable of balancing academic excellence, stakeholder engagement, and institutional sustainability. Leadership development is thus not merely a supplementary activity but a strategic necessity for cultivating leaders who can navigate these complexities while ensuring institutional resilience and innovation.

One of the central benefits of leadership development lies in its ability to equip leaders with the skills to inspire teams, stimulate creativity, and enhance productivity. Accomplished and effective leaders are those who can create a clear roadmap, guide staff members toward shared goals, and cultivate a sense of purpose that contributes directly to institutional performance (Sillah, 2023:242). In higher education, such competencies translate into improved research outputs, enhanced teaching quality, and stronger community engagement, all which feed into the university's reputation and bottom line. Leadership development programmes play a crucial role in nurturing these competencies, providing leaders with the tools to set vision and strategy, manage diverse teams, and adapt to the fast-paced transformations in the higher education sector, such as digitalisation and internationalisation.

Another significant advantage of structured leadership development in higher education institutions is its impact on staff retention. Universities invest heavily in attracting world-class academics and administrative staff, and without a clear pathway for leadership growth and progression, these talented individuals are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. A well-designed leadership development framework not only provides opportunities for growth but also demonstrates institutional commitment to the career progression of its employees. As a result, turnover is reduced, and institutions can retain their intellectual and administrative capital (Zwane, et al., 2021:15). In practical terms, offering mentorship programmes, conference participation, workshops, and seminars equips emerging leaders with both academic and managerial competencies, while simultaneously exposing them to diverse ideas and perspectives. This investment strengthens institutional capacity and ensures that leadership succession is managed effectively.

Leadership development also plays a vital role in cultivating a strong organisational culture, which is particularly important in higher education institutions where academic autonomy often intersects

with institutional governance. Dinh, Zhu and Kondakci (2023:795-796) highlight that when organisational members share and embrace common values, their commitment to those values increases, resulting in greater alignment and cohesion. In a university setting, leadership development that is grounded in shared values such as integrity, academic excellence, and social responsibility fosters a strong culture that guides behaviour, enhances collaboration across departments, and aligns institutional goals with broader societal needs. Such cultures also create a sense of belonging and purpose, motivating staff and students alike to contribute meaningfully to institutional advancement.

Moreover, leadership development enhances organisational agility, which is increasingly essential in higher education given the pace of change in funding models, technology, and student demographics. Agility refers to the ability of an organisation to respond quickly and effectively to internal and external changes (Alhosani & Ahmad, 2024:665). For universities, agility manifests in the ability to adapt curricula to emerging labour market demands, incorporate digital tools into teaching and research, and respond proactively to global challenges such as pandemics or shifts in government policy. Leadership programmes that instil agility in higher education leaders therefore prepare them to anticipate changes, reconfigure strategies, and ensure institutional relevance in rapidly shifting environments. While some may argue that agility is less relevant in the public sector, it is in fact critical for higher education institutions which often serve a diverse array of stakeholders and must balance efficiency, quality, and accessibility. Agility in this context ensures that institutions remain responsive to societal needs while maintaining high standards of academic and operational excellence (Rahimiati, Zare, & Yazdani, 2018:142; Alhosani & Ahmad, 2024:667).

3.5.3 Leadership development activities

Maheshwari and Kha (2023:4-6) identified four broad types of leadership development activities, namely qualifications, development programmes, on-the-job development and assessment. The first activity namely, qualifications are typically formal and off-the-job development activities, including business school and professional bodies' qualifications. Development programmes are also typically formal development activities but may be either or both on- and off-the-job and include short courses on management and leadership development and external coaching. On-the-job development may include formal or informal development, such as on-the-job coaching and 'acting up' opportunities.

Assessment another typically formal development but may be on-the-job or off-the-job and includes 360-degree tools and psychometric tests.

To provide effective services and goods to citizens, public institutions must constantly innovate and evolve, including assisting employees with development and training. Making employee development a key part of the culture of public institutions is to ensure employees stay up to date on best practices and learn new skills. This, in turn, boosts staff engagement and attracts top talent to the public sector. According to Ali and Mehreen (2019:219), employers who support staff development enable their staff members to develop new abilities and enhance existing ones, better preparing them for their current positions. This directly promoted effective service delivery and gives employees' work greater value.

Bano, Omar and Ismail (2022:10) and Zhang, Zahir-ul-Hassan, Wei and Leslie (2024: 3136) note how daily operations at public Higher Education institutions require competent staff. However, most institutions do not have a formal succession plan in place in case prominent leaders leave the institution due to resignation, retirement, promotion, illness, disability and death. Most institutions are not ready for a new leadership generation. Maheshwari and Kha (2023:8), associate these consequences to the lack of formal succession planning framework to generate talent pipeline of successors. When competent staff leave the institutions, daily operations could cease. Zamri (2023:36) also suggests that universities need to develop retention strategies that offer competitive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for career growth to retain their staff. By doing so, universities can reduce the costs associated with employee turnover and ensure that they have experienced and talented staff to deliver high-quality education and research.

It can be summarised that leadership development is as it represents a great chance for organisations to seize a competitive advantage in their industries. In the ever-escalating challenges and competition faced by modern public institutions, succession planning and leadership management cease to be background issues or matters that can be taken lightly (Fragouli, 2018:301). Leaders have the responsibilities to ensure a smooth transition of helmsmanship, which is supported by a viable leadership building mechanism (Maseke & Muadinohamba, 2023:45-46). The arguments presented by Zhang, et al. (2024:3136) put the needs and aspirations for leadership excellence, continuation and succession in an intricate symbiotic relationship, for securing the leaders of tomorrow.

Although leadership development is widely recognised as essential for succession planning, it is often treated as a parallel rather than integrated process. This separation limits its effectiveness and underscores the need for a model that explicitly embeds leadership development within succession planning systems.

3.6 SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE AND IDENTIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE GAP

The review of literature on succession planning, workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development reveals a conceptually rich yet fragmented body of knowledge. While each domain contributes valuable insights into organisational sustainability and leadership continuity, the literature remains largely compartmentalised, with limited integration across these interdependent constructs. Succession planning is predominantly treated as a replacement strategy, talent management as a system for attracting and retaining high-potential employees, workforce planning as a forecasting mechanism, and leadership development as a capacity-building process. However, in practice, these elements operate in a highly interdependent manner, suggesting the need for a more integrated and systemic conceptualisation.

A critical synthesis of the literature exposes several important gaps. First, there is a conceptual integration gap, where existing studies fail to provide a unified framework that systematically links succession planning with workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development. This fragmentation limits the ability of institutions to implement coherent and sustainable succession strategies. Second, there is a contextual gap, as most existing models are derived from private-sector and Western contexts, with limited applicability to public higher education institutions in developing countries. These models often assume levels of organisational flexibility, resource availability, and managerial autonomy that may not exist in public sector environments such as the University of Namibia.

Third, a model gap is evident in the literature. Although frameworks such as Rothwell's Seven-Pointed Star Model, the Leadership Pipeline Model, and the Acceleration Pool Model offer structured approaches to succession planning, they remain largely generic and insufficiently responsive to the unique institutional, cultural, and structural dynamics of public universities. They do not adequately demonstrate how core elements such as talent identification, workforce

forecasting, and leadership development can be operationally integrated into a coherent process model.

Fourth, the literature reveals a theory–practice gap. Despite widespread recognition of the benefits of succession planning, its implementation in public institutions remains inconsistent and often ineffective. Structural constraints such as bureaucracy, limited resources, political influence, and weak strategic alignment continue to undermine the practical application of theoretically sound models. This disconnect suggests that existing frameworks lack sufficient contextual sensitivity and operational clarity.

Fifth, there is a conceptual ambiguity regarding talent, with ongoing debates around inclusive versus exclusive approaches, and whether talent is innate or developed. This lack of consensus has direct implications for succession planning, as it influences how potential successors are identified, developed, and retained. Without a clearly articulated and contextually appropriate definition of talent, succession planning initiatives risk inconsistency, bias, and limited effectiveness.

Finally, a process gap emerges from the literature, particularly in relation to the lack of clarity regarding the interrelationships and sequencing of key components within talent management and succession planning systems. As observed in existing models, the absence of a clearly defined process flow undermines their practical applicability and limits their usefulness as implementation tools.

Collectively, these gaps highlight the need for a contextually grounded, integrative, and process-oriented conceptual model that aligns succession planning with workforce planning, talent management, and leadership development. Such a model must not only address the structural and strategic dimensions of succession planning but also provide a clear and operational roadmap for implementation within the specific context of the University of Namibia.

3.6.1 Link to Conceptual Framework

Although earlier sections have addressed talent management, leadership development, workforce planning, and succession planning as related concepts, the theoretical basis for this study requires more explicit articulation. Many of the existing models in the literature treat these constructs as separate activities or as loosely connected elements, without clearly defining how they relate to one

another or how they jointly respond to leadership continuity challenges within higher education institutions. This ambiguity results in fragmented implementation and reduces their practical usefulness (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen & Scullion, 2020:96; Meyers, Van Woerkom & Dries, 2013:88).

To address this gap, the present study positions succession planning as the main outcome variable, supported by two key enabling systems: talent management and leadership development. Talent management refers to a structured approach to identifying, attracting, developing, and retaining potential leaders, while leadership development focuses on cultivating the competencies needed for individuals to assume leadership positions. These systems operate interdependently and reinforce one another within a continuous, cyclical process. The framework also acknowledges that these processes are influenced by important contextual enablers, specifically institutional strategy, governance mechanisms, principles of equity and transparency, and organisational culture. At the University of Namibia, these contextual elements carry weight due to the institution's emphasis on fairness, collegial decision-making, and public accountability. Without such enablers, talent management and leadership development initiatives may appear inconsistent or biased, thereby weakening their impact (Brown, 2007:44).

Moreover, the framework proposes a process flow beginning with workforce analysis and talent identification, followed by development and performance management, and culminating in succession readiness and sustained leadership continuity. Built-in feedback loops promote ongoing evaluation and refinement, addressing a critical gap identified in many existing models. This process-oriented approach reinforces the idea that succession planning is not a one-time intervention, but an adaptive, continuous system aligned with institutional priorities.

By clearly articulating these relationships, the framework responds to the central issue identified in this study, the lack of a coherent, systematic, and context-appropriate approach to succession planning at the University of Namibia. It offers an integrated structure that brings together previously disconnected practices and lays a logical foundation for the conceptual model presented in Chapter 7.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter covered a literature review of succession planning, workforce planning, talent management and leadership development. It defined succession planning as the development of prospective successors or people within or from outside an institution to take up key positions in an institution through a controlled process of assessment and training. It also examined succession planning in the public sectors with positive and negative impacts. Benefits of succession planning include guaranteed continuity of prepared leaders for key executive positions, a disciplined process of reviewing leadership talent, increased opportunities for high potential workers, increased talent pool of promotable employees, contribution to the institution's business plans, support individuals to recognise their own career plans within the institution and developing strong leadership teams for strategic tasks. The nature and scope of succession planning demonstrates that there is no single best format or checklist of activities for a good career development and succession plan, because each plan is unique to the individual, their attitudes and learning style, their mentor and coach, and the skills and position they are preparing for. In certain circumstances, there may not be a specific role in mind, but the succession planning will assist them to develop abilities that will prepare them for a variety of positions or a rank within the government institution's pipeline of people ready to advance in their career.

The literature review stressed the importance of leadership development processes occurring with succession planning. Leadership development is the vigorous process of training the necessary traits, skills, confidence and practical knowledge in individuals wishing to pursue leadership positions. The four broad types of leadership development activities are qualifications, development programmes, on-the-job development and assessment. Workforce planning and talent management were also addressed in the chapter. Significant benefits of workforce planning include the facilitating the prioritising, developing and funding of workforce initiatives and informing decisions on better structuring organisation to deploy the workforce to overcome identified internal or external barriers to accomplishing strategic workforce goals. Talent management systems can help reduce the cost of acquiring new employees, help reduce losses in relation to key vacancies, enable an organisation to become an employer of choice, and can help there to be a more effective approach for identifying and retaining talented individuals. From the literature review it became clear that without succession planning, positions will be left vacant and government services will be inadequate. Leadership

development is therefore critical to prepare for potential vacancies and investing in staff is the best thing an institution can do for its human resources.

Chapter 4 gives an overview of higher education in Namibia and discuss the case study, the University of Namibia.

CHAPTER 4:

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the higher education landscape in Namibia, situating the study within its institutional, policy, and governance context. It begins with an introduction that outlines the purpose of the chapter and its link to the broader study. The discussion then turns to the historical development of the higher education system in Namibia, tracing how it has evolved since independence with attention to key reforms, policy frameworks, and institutional growth. The chapter also explores the funding of higher education in Namibia, examining government allocations, the role of public and private contributions, and challenges related to sustainability and access.

Attention is further given to the national agencies responsible for higher education governance, highlighting their roles in ensuring quality, accountability, and system development. These include the National Advisory Council on Education, which provides strategic guidance on education policy; the National Qualifications Authority, which oversees the National Qualifications Framework of Namibia and ensures standardisation and comparability of qualifications; the National Council for Higher Education, which regulates standards, accreditation, and policy implementation; and the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, which promotes research, innovation, and technological advancement in the higher education sector.

The chapter also presents an overview of universities and colleges in Namibia, focusing on the diversity of institutions within the tertiary sector. This includes an examination of tertiary institutions such as specialised colleges, vocational education and training centres that play a critical role in workforce development, as well as the country's two main universities, the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the University of Namibia. These institutions are discussed in relation to their mandates, organisational structures, contributions to national development, and the challenges they face.

The current population of Namibia is estimated at 3,092,816. The country spans an area of approximately 823,000 square kilometres (Worldometer, 2025). Following independence, critical reviews of the higher education sector were undertaken, the most notable being the Presidential Commission on Higher Education of 1991 (Turner, 1991). The outcomes of this commission led to the establishment of the University of Namibia (UNAM) in 1992 and the Polytechnic of Namibia in 1994, which has since been renamed the Namibia University of Science and Technology. Both institutions were created as state-funded public higher education institutions (Yankson, 2023:292). The following section briefly outlines the development of higher education in Namibia, both before and after independence in 1990.

4.2 HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IN NAMIBIA

Prior to gaining independence, Namibia's educational system served as a tool for apartheid rather than just advancement of social and economic development. The disparities between white Namibians and black Namibians are not limited to an economic gap, but impact daily life from educational attainment, nutrition, to career opportunities and beyond. Development-hindering factors reveals that apartheid and colonisation's legacies have a significant impact on Namibia's present and future. Apartheid's unique nature and legacies, coupled with a failing educational system and institutional weaknesses, create a unique set of circumstances to overcome (Hutchinson, 2021:2).

The apartheid education system was divided along racial and ethnic lines, with glaring differences in available resources and the standard of education provided. Prior to 1979, only students who could travel to South Africa or other foreign nations could pursue higher education. Thus, significant adjustments were required and justified to guarantee that all Namibians had equitable access to higher education. Access, equity, quality and democracy are the four main aims of education that served as the foundation for systemic changes (Ministry of Basic Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, 1993:14). Limiting education restricts the growth potential and overall development of the nation (Hutchinson, 2021:1). The 1990 *World Declaration on Education for All* (UNESCO, 1994), which recognised education as a human right, strengthened these objectives. The strategic objectives for Namibian HEIs have not diminished, but the framing of higher education as a cornerstone of national development came into focus in 2017. The Academy for Tertiary in Windhoek was

Namibia's first university opening in the 1980s in Windhoek (Republic of Namibia, 1980). The Academy only provided training programmes for teachers and secretarial skills. More specifically, the Tertiary Education Act 9 of 1985, gave the Academy permission to open a college for out-of-school training (COST), a university, and a Technikon (a Technikon was a post-secondary institute of technology). The Academy provided 13 commercial certificates and 17 University degrees in many fields' education, science, nursing, social science, accounting, public administration, management, agriculture nature conservation, communications and legal studies.

Mr Sam Nujoma, the president of Namibia created the Commission on Higher Education not long after independence. The Commission was chaired by Professor John Turner, a well-known British academic from the University of Manchester, who also chaired the Presidential Commission on higher education shortly after independence. The commission with local and foreign academics examined Namibia's higher education needs and provided recommendations through the 1990 Tuner Report. The three institutions founded under the auspices of the Academy for Tertiary Education were abolished and replaced with two separate institutions of higher learning). The University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia now called Namibia University of Science and Technology (Keyter, 2002:264). The University of Namibia Act 33 of 1992 created the University of Namibia in 1992 (GRN, 1992). The Technikon and COST, the other two elements of the Academy of Tertiary Education were supervised by UNAM (Keyter, 2002:265) until the Polytechnic of Namibia Act 33 of 1994, merged Technikon of Namibia and COST were designated as the Polytechnic of Namibia. This Act authorised the Polytechnic of Namibia to provide degree programs and allowed for the progressive phase-out of vocational training courses.

Funding for education is a crucial issue that influence our society's overall trajectory. It directly affects students' access to opportunities and the standard of education. Education funding is frequently a divisive topic, with differing opinions on its distribution and administration (Marsh, 2018:101; Mwambi, Jesca, Taha, Mohammed, Faza, Taha, Omer, Eid, Suliman, Awelbait & Terfa, 2025:e12448). Therefore, the discussion of funding of higher education in Namibia in the next paragraph.

4.3 FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

Significant structural and operational developments have taken place since 1992 at the UNAM. In terms of infrastructure development, operational expenses and student funding, the government continued to be the primary source of funding for higher education. The Namibian government contributed N\$8,774 million when UNAM was founded in 1992. Since then, the government has kept funding UNAM's operations, allowing it to carry out its mandate and mission (Yankson, 2023:293).

Aspiring students needing funding for studies can choose between the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) and the Namibia Government Scholarship and Training Program. The NSFAF is a grant and loan program that was introduced in 2005 to replace the Public Service Bursary Program, which offered students money and guaranteed employment upon graduation. However, the government could no longer guarantee jobs for graduates, which made the elimination of student bursaries necessary. In addition, the demand for student financial aid had increased beyond what the government could afford; to such an extent that the government needed to collect money from beneficiaries who completed studies to continue funding future students (GRN, 2000; GRN, 2005). The Namibia Government Scholarship and Training Program was initially run by the Africa-America Institute but is now (in 2025) supported by the Government Endowment Fund and offers domestic and international graduate programs and postgraduate degrees (Hangula, Matengu, Likando & Shanyanana, 2020:12). Despite government commitment, the lack of financial support remains a major barrier to accessing higher education (Matengu, Martin, Kasanda & Matengu, 2009:4).

Overall, state subsidies continue to play a major role in funding higher education in Namibia, despite the higher education institutions' administrative semi-autonomy. In addition to subsidising public higher education institutions, the Namibian government also pays for tuition and student fees at private HEIs. The International Institute of Management, Namibia's first private institution, was established in 1994 (International University of Management, 2025). Since then, a sizable number of privately owned educational facilities that provide post-secondary instruction but are not classified as HEIs have registered. The National Council on Higher Education is currently undergoing accreditation of institutions that have been registered with the National Qualifications Authority. This liberalisation indicates that the government understands that regardless of a

Namibian institution is public or private, information and skills from post-secondary education play a decisive role in advancing national social and economic progress (NCHE, 2025).

Although funding and the cost of higher education are pressing global challenges, education in Namibia remains relatively affordable because government loans are widely accessible. Many students also rely on donor support, parental contributions, or personal resources. Research suggests, however, that Namibia could strengthen the sustainability of higher education funding by revising the allocation formula, improving the NSFAP, eliminating unnecessary charges, introducing stronger administrative checks and balances, and reforming financing structures. It is further recommended that higher education institutions play a more proactive role in developing revenue-generating initiatives. Such efforts would not only support greater institutional independence but also gradually reduce the sector's heavy reliance on tuition fee increases to sustain operations (UNICEF Namibia, 2025).

4.4 NATIONAL AGENCIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

This section addresses the roles of national agencies responsible for higher education governance, emphasising their efforts to ensure quality, accountability, and system development. These included the National Advisory Council on Education, which provided strategic guidance on education policy; the National Qualifications Authority, which oversaw the National Qualifications Framework and ensured standardisation of qualifications; the National Council for Higher Education, which regulated standards, accreditation, and policy implementation; and the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, which promoted research, innovation, and technological advancement.

4.4.1 National Advisory Council on Education

The National Advisory Council on Education was established by the Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Education Act 16 of 2001. Its mandate was to advise the Minister of Education on educational matters, either on its own initiative or in response to issues referred by the Minister, and to carry out any additional powers or functions imposed under the Act. The structure of the Council was designed to ensure broad representation, with twenty-four members drawn from higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations, teacher unions, student bodies,

private schools, churches, traditional leaders, employers, and persons with disabilities. Members were appointed for three years, with the option of re-appointment, while provisions also existed for removal in cases of misconduct, incapacity, or persistent absence from meetings (GRN, 2001; Namibian, 2010).

Despite this seemingly robust framework, the mandate of the Council has been widely criticised as vague and indeterminate. The Act grants it an advisory role but stops short of conferring meaningful authority to shape or coordinate higher education policy. As a result, the Council's influence has been somewhat restricted, particularly when compared to statutory organisations like the National Council for Higher Education and the Namibia Qualifications Authority. These bodies possess more defined regulatory and accreditation responsibilities, which has not only overshadowed the role of the National Advisory Council on Education but has also led to confusion about the division of responsibilities within the higher education governance framework.

The limited impact of the Council is also evident in its inability to provide coherent direction for higher education coordination. Although it has existed for decades, little progress has been made in translating its advice into systemic reforms or ensuring effective policy implementation. Scholars have noted that there are no strong mechanisms requiring the Minister or relevant bodies to adopt, respond to, or report on its recommendations. This lack of accountability, combined with possible operational constraints such as inadequate resources, limited staffing, and insufficient technical expertise, has prevented the Council from playing a decisive role in areas such as financing, quality assurance, and institutional oversight. In addition to these challenges, the legislative framework governing the Council has evolved. The Education Act 16 of 2001 was repealed by the Basic Education Act of 2020, which narrowed the Council's scope primarily to basic education, leaving higher education governance largely in the hands of the NCHE and the NQA. This legislative shift has further diminished National Advisory Council on Education's relevance in the higher education sector, where pressing issues of access, quality, and funding require strong and coordinated leadership (Yankson, 2023:295).

Taken together, these factors suggest that the Council has been under-utilised and ineffective in shaping the higher education landscape in Namibia. For the system to become more sustainable, its advisory structures must either be redefined or streamlined to avoid duplication and ensure clearer lines of responsibility. This would require granting the Council a more precise mandate, adequate

resources, and mechanisms that compel government to respond to its recommendations. Without such reforms, the Council will continue to play a peripheral role in higher education, offering limited guidance in addressing the sector's systemic challenges (Hutchinson, 2021:9-11).

4.4.2 National Qualifications Authority

The Namibia Qualifications Authority is a State-Owned Enterprise established in 1996. After independence, The Namibian government anticipated the need for a central organisation to oversee competencies required within each occupational field and creating rules and procedures for certification. The Namibia Qualifications Authority was also declared as the independent body capable of recognising the equivalences between the various education and training pathways available to Namibians. The Minister of Education published regulations for the National Qualifications Authority's accreditation of individuals, institutions, and training organisations in August 2006 (Namibia Qualifications Authority, 2025).

The National Qualifications Authority's highest decision-making body is the Council which is appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation. The National Qualifications Authority council monitors and advises on the standards and quality of training and education in Namibia. This not only ensures consumer protection for investing in education, but also safeguards the country's reputation. The National Qualifications Authority serves as the country's regulatory body for all qualification issues in the training and education sector. It is charged with the duty of ensuring that qualifications are quality assured and consistent with the goals of the Namibian people. Accreditation by the National Qualifications Authority is an independent attestation that ensures specific courses or programmes offered by an education and training provider in Namibia meet acceptable standards; the education and training provider can teach or deliver those specified courses or programmes, and assess the performance of learners taking the specified courses or programmes (Namibia Qualifications Authority, 2025).

4.4.2.1 National Qualifications Framework of Namibia

The National Qualifications Framework (NFQ) was formalised through Namibia's 1994 Cabinet decision led to the creation of the Namibia Qualifications Authority. The NFQ is a register of legal qualifications in Namibia and represents a set of agreements, rules and requirements to promote the

consistent use of titles, a clearer understanding of what qualification means, and determine people differences between qualifications. In addition, the framework also improves the harmonisation of the different education and training sectors with the workforce. This gives greater assurance of the quality of education, training and assessment in Namibia and enhances the international reputation of Namibia's education and training systems (Namibia Qualifications Authority, 2025).

The NQF is made up of ten levels, representing different levels of difficulty in learning and/or the application of knowledge and skills learnt. NQF Certificates can be registered from NQF Levels 1 to 8 and multiple qualification types can be registered at the same NQF Level. Diplomas can be registered from NQF Levels 5 to 8. Thus, from Levels 5 to 8 there can be both NQF Certificates and NQF Diplomas registered. NQF Degree qualifications can be registered from Levels 7 to 10. Thus, at Levels 7 and 8 there can be up to three qualification types registered. The registration of up to three different qualification types at the same NQF Level was identified as being a source of confusion for some users of the NQF in Namibia. This policy statement discusses the rationale for multiple qualification types at the same level and looks at international practices.

A consensus emerged among stakeholders that the existing arrangement, whereby multiple qualification types may be registered at the same NQF level, should be retained. This position has received broad support, as it allows the framework to accommodate the diversity of qualifications within the education and training system. However, without continuous information sharing and education, the structural mechanisms of the NQF, particularly the level system and the credit system, remain vulnerable to misinterpretation. Misunderstandings about what NQF levels and credits represent can lead to confusion among learners, employers, and even institutions, potentially undermining confidence in the framework. It is therefore essential to strengthen communication and capacity-building initiatives that clarify the meaning and value of specific qualifications once they are registered on the NQF. The structure of the Namibia National Qualifications Framework is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

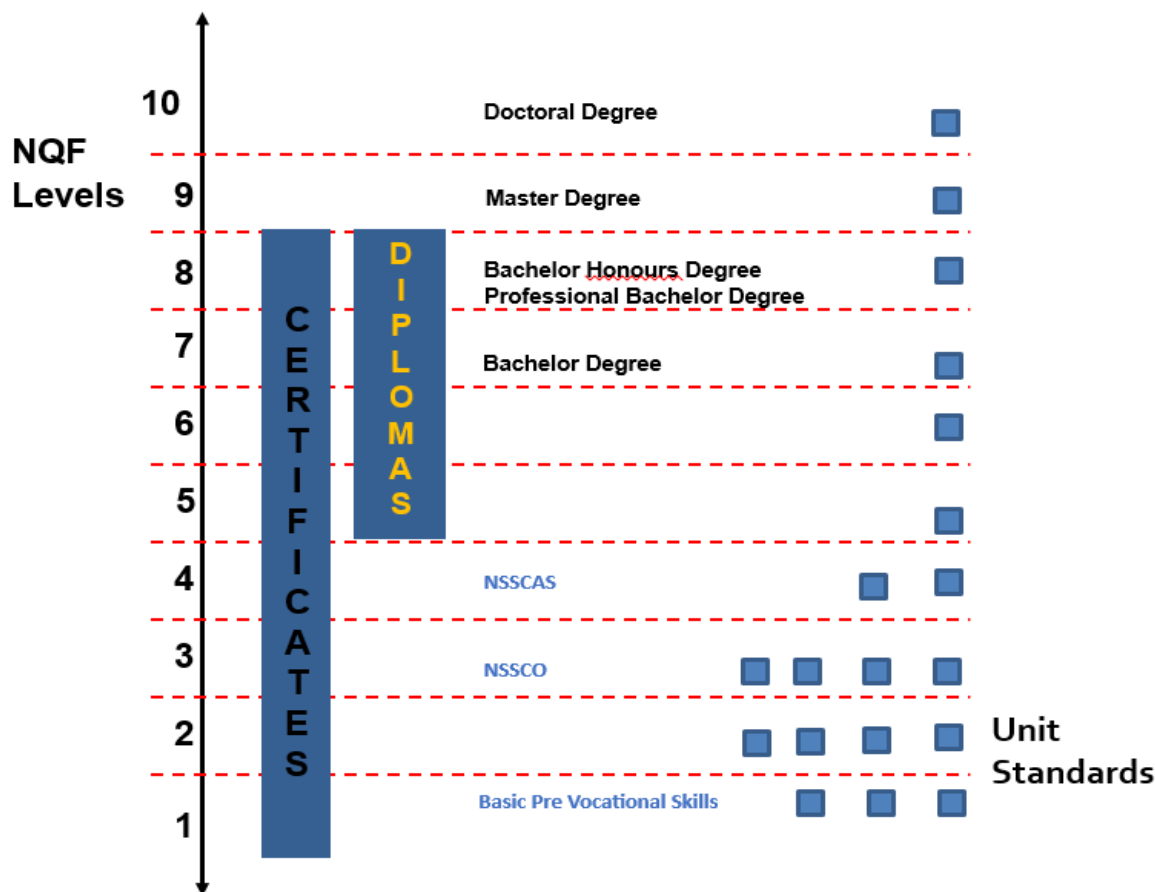


Figure 4.1: Namibia National Qualifications Framework

Source: (Namibia Qualifications Authority, 2025).

4.4.3 National Council for Higher Education

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established under the Higher Education Act 26 of 2003 as a statutory body charged with regulating and guiding higher education in Namibia. The objects of the NCHE, as provided in the Act, include promoting a coordinated higher education system, facilitating access for students to higher education institutions, ensuring quality assurance, and advising on the allocation of public funds to public higher education institutions. Also defined in the Act is the council's responsibility to advise the Minister on governing higher education, structure, financing, and related aspects (GRN, 2003).

Administratively, the NCHE is supported by a secretariat established by the same Act, which provides secretarial, administrative, and technical assistance to the Council and its committees. The Act also mandates that higher education institutions furnish the NCHE with information upon request, to perform its functions. On its official website, the NCHE (through the Directorate) lists among its responsibilities the coordination of higher education development, enhancing responsiveness to national development goals, accrediting programmes, auditing institutions, advising on equitable funding, and overseeing implementation of the funding framework for public higher education (NCHE, 2025).

Over time, the NCHE's role in conducting quality audits has expanded beyond mere academic oversight to include governance, administrative efficiency, and support services. These audits aim to benchmark institutions against national standards, supporting accountability and transparency. However, although the NCHE is empowered by law to accredit programmes (with concurrence from the Namibia Qualifications Authority), monitor institutional quality assurance, and take measures to promote access, in practice there are challenges. These include limited local capacity in some technical areas of quality assurance and the need to rely in certain cases on external expertise or benchmarks to align with best practices (GRN, 2003; NCHE, 2025).

Furthermore, while audit findings and accreditation decisions are contributing to maintaining oversight, there is evidence that implementation of recommendations from audits is uneven. The legal structure gives NCHE strong powers, but realising its full mandate has been constrained by institutional capacity, resources, and sometimes delays in following up on audit outcomes. NCHE's function is central in aligning the higher education sector with Namibia's broader development plans, such as Vision 2030, which emphasises a skilled and educated workforce and the transformation of higher education to be more responsive and contributory to development goals (National Planning Commission, 2004; GRN, 2003).

4.4.4 National Commission for Research, Science and Technology

The Namibian Parliament passed the Research, Science and Technology Act 23 of 2004 to provide for the promotion, coordination, and development of research, science, technology, and innovation in Namibia. It established the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) and the National Research, Science and Technology Fund. Among its statutory goals are ensuring

the coordination, monitoring and supervision of research, science and technology; promoting development across all disciplines (physical, mathematical, life sciences as well as human, social and economic sciences); encouraging innovative and independent thinking; fostering intellectual capacity; and ensuring systematic, prioritised funding and linkage with international research bodies (GRN, 2004). Administratively, NCRST's mandate includes preparing a national programme for research, science, and technology every three years (or as determined by the Minister) under Section 18 of the Act, reviewing the state of research to identify priorities, facilitating cooperation between local and foreign research institutions, and operating the National Research, Science and Technology Fund. The Fund is financed by parliamentary appropriations, fees under the Act, investment returns, donations or grants, and possibly borrowing, and is to be used for administrative expenses and approved research projects (GRN, 2004).

NCRST also plays a significant role in science promotion and capacity building. The Human and Institutional Development, Science and Technology Promotion unit works to deepen public awareness of science, identify gaps in human and institutional capacity, and implement programmes to address these gaps, particularly in mathematics and science education. Meanwhile, the Natural Sciences Research Division coordinates natural science research and emerging technologies in line with national development priorities, including facilitating partnerships with higher education institutions and international partners (NCRST, 2023).

While the legislation was passed in 2004, the Act officially commenced on 1 November 2011 (GRN, 2004). There have been reported challenges, such as criticisms that the registration requirement for researchers or institutions imposes burdens, and concerns about potential overreach in terms of regulation or delays in operationalising certain programmes (NCRST, 2023).

The next section briefly describes the different universities and colleges in Namibia. Vocational training in Namibia will also be addressed.

4.5 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN NAMIBIA

This section presented an overview of universities and colleges in Namibia, highlighting the diversity of institutions within the tertiary sector. It examined specialised colleges, vocational education and training centres, and the country's two main universities, the Namibia University of

Science and Technology and the University of Namibia, discussing their mandates, organisational structures and contributions to national development.

4.5.1 Tertiary Institutions

Namibia has two public tertiary institutions of general education, the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the University of Namibia and one private University, the International University of Management. There are several specialised tertiary educational institutions such as the College of the Arts in Windhoek, The University Centre for Studies in Namibia in Windhoek, Oshakati, Rundu, and Rehoboth, the Namibian Maritime and Fisheries Institute in Walvis Bay and the Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology in Arandis. The following section will briefly discuss the Namibia University of Science and Technology. An overview of the University of Namibia as the case under study will close the chapter.

4.5.1.1 Namibia University of Science and Technology

The Main Campus of the Polytechnic of Namibia was established in 1992 on the premises of the former Academy of Tertiary Education, located in the Windhoek West suburb. The inaugural Rector was appointed on 4 August 1995 and subsequently served as Vice Chancellor at the Namibia University of Science and Technology until 31 March 2019. On 10 August 1995, the Council of Polytechnic of Namibia convened for the first time and hastened and the university's delinking from UNAM in December 1995. In January 1996, Polytechnic of Namibia gained its independence and autonomy as an organisation. On 18 April 1996, Polytechnic of Namibia hosted its inaugural graduation ceremony, with the Government of Namibia's founding president giving the keynote speech. The Polytechnic of Namibia is made up of The Schools of Business and Management, Engineering and Computer Technology, Natural Resources and Tourism, Communication, Legal, Media, and Secretarial Studies (Namibia University of Science and Technology, 2025).

The Namibian government released numerous directions to restructure the country's higher education system at the close of 2012. These orders served to support Vision 2030 and the objective of human resource development. By 2030, Namibia intends to have a service-driven economy (GRN, 2004; Namibia Today, 2025). These guidelines said that the Polytechnic of Namibia had to become a university of science and technology to provide both broad academic and career-focused

programs. Following a nationwide consultation, the then-Minister of Education pushed for the conversion of the Polytechnic of Namibia into the Namibia University of Science and Technology at the beginning of 2015. The change from the Polytechnic of Namibia to the Namibia University of Science and Technology was justified on the grounds that it would enhance Namibia's people resources, expertise, and knowledge base, and strengthen applied research. In support of this change, the Minister of Higher Education gave a motivational speech to the Namibian National Assembly, stating that these concerns may be resolved during the five-year conversion process. Prior to 2010, the institution was a traditional polytechnic that provided academic degrees in technical and applied sciences as well as advanced vocational training. These programs could often be combined so that after completing a more basic vocational training, the academic degree could be attempted. Short, entry-level certifications have been phased out and several master's and PhD programs have been developed since obtaining university status in 2015. The Namibia University of Science and Technology is now offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in business and management, engineering, information technology, journalism, hospitality, natural resource management, and medicine (Namibia University of Science and Technology, 2025).

4.5.2 Vocational Education

The goal of Namibia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is to assist individuals in gaining the skills and knowledge required in a changing economy. The demand for skills has changed because of the changing economy, with a greater need for social, cognitive, and non-routine manual skills. One of the most important challenges is figuring out how to pay for vocational education. Compared to high-income countries, which spend 0.46% of GDP on TVET, low- and middle-income countries spend less than 0.2%. Over the next 20 years, there will likely be an exponential rise in the number of TVET students (The World Bank, 2024.). One of the many ways that vocational education can benefit the economy is by addressing skills shortages. Vocational education helps close skills gaps in the labour market by offering industry-specific practical skills. Businesses can increase productivity and compete more successfully with the aid of vocational education. It can assist people in obtaining steady work and making a liveable wage robust TVET systems. By promoting employment and productivity, strong TVET systems can assist countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (National Planning Commission, 2005).

Namibia's economic development strategy is predicated on the establishment of a knowledge-based economy. In such economies, individuals must acquire the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively compete in the global marketplace and enhance economic productivity. The Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation is tasked with advancing the government's objectives of fostering skill development in several burgeoning sectors, including information technology and tourism, as well as responding to the evolving demands of economic conditions (African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), 2022:4). The Vocational Education and Training Act of 2008, which regulates the provision of vocational education and training, serves as the guiding policy for TVET legislation. The Fifth National Development Plan is the Namibian government's fifth five-year plan (2017/18 to 2021/2022) to accomplish the development goals outlined in Vision 2030, in addition to the laws. The Namibia Vocational Education Training Policy of 2021, which directs the development of vocational education and training, is one of several strategies and policies that assist the promotion of VET in Namibia (GRN, 2021).

According to Vision 2030, Namibia's economy will evolve into one that is industrialised, and knowledge based. It presents a challenge to the nation to put in place an effective TVET system that can provide young people with the skills they need to enter the workforce. In this regard, creating a TVET system that is sustainable, effective and in line with the present and future skills demands of the labour market falls under the purview of the Namibia Training Authority. Making sure that TVET in Namibia is equitable and of high quality is one of the NTA's goals. The National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy are under the custody of the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation, which also oversees the policy formulation process. The National Planning Commission has developed the Guidelines on the Public Policy Making Process to improve the process of policy making in Namibia. During the Policy Formulation process, there are several key things that need to be observed and undertaken to ensure that the formulation is inclusive of all stakeholders and follows the Structure of a Public Policy Document in Namibia.

During the first stage, the custodian of the proposed policy should study and adhere to the *Guidelines for the Structure of a Public Policy Document*, developed by the NPC and adopted by Cabinet (Decision Number 02.08.16/004). These guidelines serve as a reference throughout the process. In the second stage, it is strongly recommended that the policy custodian utilise internal personnel to

draft the policy without external assistance. If external support is required, a dedicated internal team should be assigned to work closely with the external consultant to ensure compliance with the policy document guidelines. All relevant stakeholders must be engaged and consulted through the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, consultative workshops, meetings, and individual or group interviews. Stakeholders should be encouraged to provide input relevant to the specific policy being formulated or revised. Proper stakeholder mapping and analysis should be conducted to ensure inclusivity. A comprehensive resource folder should be maintained to centralise all proceedings and reference materials. This folder should include Terms of Reference, policy proposals submitted to Cabinet, inception reports, minutes of meetings, lists of consulted stakeholders, stakeholder comments, relevant policies and documents, invitation letters, applicable legislation, workshop proceedings, and any other materials used during the drafting process. Finally, an Implementation Action Plan should be developed concurrently with the policy document. This plan should assign roles to all stakeholders according to their mandates and any additional responsibilities they have agreed to undertake. The plan must also outline how the policy will be funded and clearly specify the programmes and projects to be implemented (Office of Personnel Management, 2018:3–5).

This duty stems from the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation's mandate to advance science, technology, and innovation, as well as to govern higher education, to propel Namibia toward a knowledge-based economy. In areas like strategy creation, goal setting, the issuance of TVET orders or bylaws, outlining a general framework for courses, teaching and learning, and policy revision, the Ministry offers policy guidance and the required support. In addition, the Ministry will oversee the regulation of TVET financing, as well as the success of the policy framework in connection to socioeconomic developments and the observation and assessment of the efficacy of implementing agencies (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022:5-6).

The Namibia Training Authority (NTA) oversees the administration of seven vocational training centers and extends support to additional institutions, including NamWater. These centers offer a diverse array of programs for school leavers, encompassing fields such as Plumbing, Welding, Electrical General, Automotive Electrical, Bricklaying, Cabinet Making, Technical Drawing, Dressmaking, Hospitality, Office Management, and Automotive Mechanics. Students enrolled in these Vocational Training Centres receive limited financial assistance from the government to aid their studies. Nevertheless, the provision of training that directly aligns with labor market demands

remains inadequate, thereby constraining critical aspects of Namibia's economic development. To ensure that demand-led training is available to meet the needs of the employed, the unemployed, and the disadvantaged, specific interventions must be introduced in this context, such as a levy scheme to fund and supplement the development and establishment of applicable systems and processes. It is anticipated that the establishment of the National Training Fund and related Training Levy program will encourage and propel the VET industry's expansion. By mobilising more resources, it will be possible to improve the quantity and quality of skills development, decrease the skills shortages impeding firm development, and increase productivity, incomes, and/or profits. The Namibian Training Authority oversees the National Training Fund, which was established with the goal of assisting Namibia in advancing its skilled and technical vocational education and training. The private sector is committed to enhancing the development of skills and training programs that align with its specific needs. Furthermore, it plays a significant role in the formulation and implementation of policies that facilitate Namibia's initiatives to recruit and train a highly skilled workforce (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022:2).

The subsequent section presents a discussion on the University of Namibia, which serves as the case study for this research.

4.5.3 University of Namibia

The University of Namibia Act 18 of 1992 established the University of Namibia, provides for its administration and control of affairs, the regulation of its activities and for matters incidental thereto. UNAM aims to provide higher education, undertake research, advance and disseminate knowledge, to provide extension services, to encourage the growth and nurturing of cultural expressions within the context of the Namibian society, to further training and continuing education, contribute to social and economic development of Namibia, and to foster relationships with any person or institution both nationally and internationally. Ranked in the top 30 of tertiary institutions on the continent in the past 10 years, UNAM is one of the best universities in Africa. The University of Namibia is the only institution in the world to offer a doctorate in the study of the Khoekhoegowab language (University of Namibia, 2025).

The University of Namibia, a multi-campus public research institution, is the largest university in the country. Its main campus is located approximately a five-minute drive from the town center. Figure 4.2 illustrates the location map of the University of Namibia in Windhoek.



Figure 4.2: University of Namibia Location Map

Source: (Google Maps, 2025).

The main campus offers students a wide variety of study options and includes courses and degrees at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. The Windhoek Main Campus, as central hub of the university, is unrivalled in size in comparison to the other campuses of the institution. Being the largest, it offers students a rich life and wider access to academic programmes. Students can look to a broader scope of things. Despite its size, the Main Campus has a warm and fun-loving community, where most people generally know each other (University of Namibia, 2025).

Figures 4.3(a) and (b) illustrate the main campus of the University of Namibia in Windhoek:

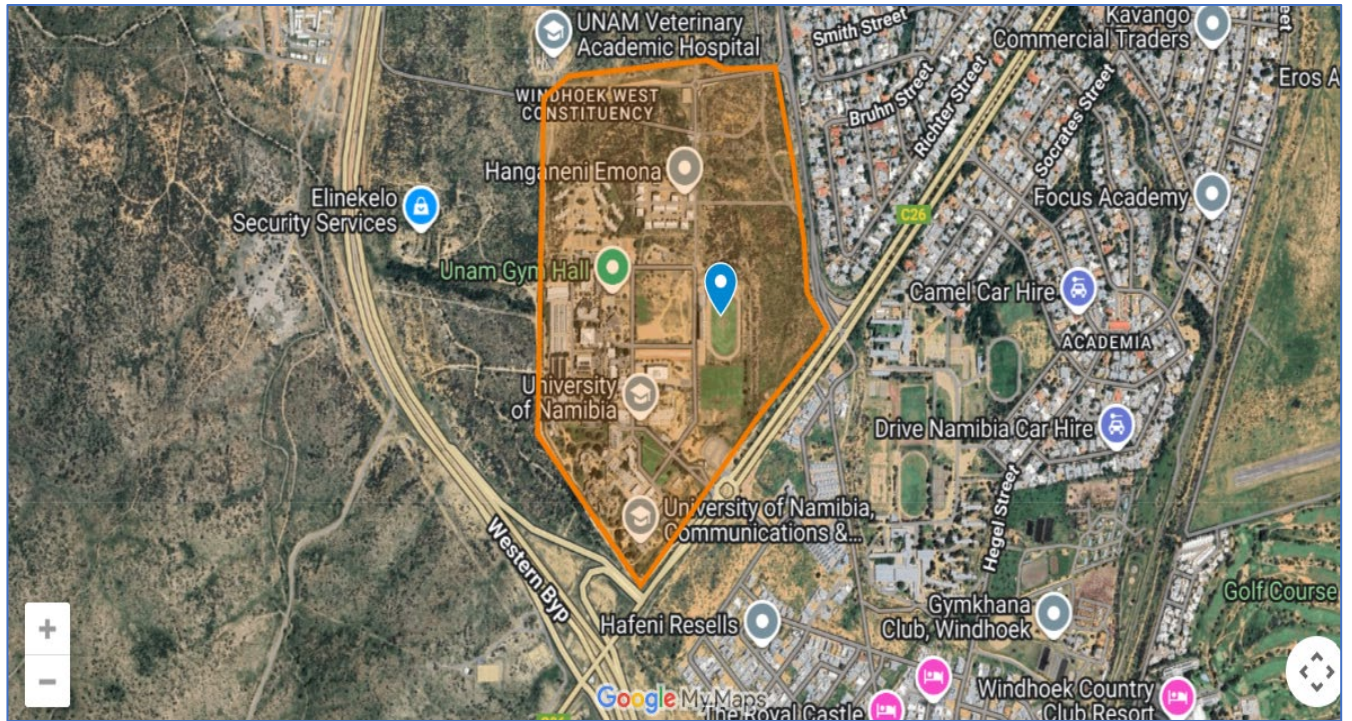


Figure 4.3: Main Campus of University of Namibia (Satellite view)

Source: (Google Maps, 2025).



Figure 4.4: Main Campus of University of Namibia

Source: (Google Maps, 2025).

In terms of governance, UNAM is constituted by a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor, three Pro Vice-Chancellors, a Council, a Senate, academic and administrative staff, and students. The first Chancellor of the University of Namibia was the Founding President of Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma. While the Chancellor is the titular chairman and is elected by the Council for a term of six years, the Vice-Chancellor, his/her Pro-Vice Chancellors, a Registrar, Bursar and Librarian are appointed by Council. The Council consists of over 26 members, 6 appointed by the President of the Republic of Namibia. In addition to the four persons elected by Senate, the Ministries of Education and Finance are represented in the Council by their secretaries. Other members include two alumni, two student council representatives and two non-Namibian residents because of their knowledge and experience in matters relating to higher education. The vice-chancellor is the chief academic and administrative officer of the university. In this capacity, he is also chairman of senate, the body responsible for reviewing all academic programs from certificates to doctoral degrees. The highest governing body of the university is the UNAM Council (Matengu, Likando & Kangumu, 2014:88).

The University's budget and development plans are approved by the Council. In a sense, the Council establishes the autonomy of the University, but through its committees and sub-committees it also serves as the body that holds the University accountable. To maintain transparency, the law stipulates that the university board, must provide its reports and audited financial statements to the Minister of Education, who must table them in the National Assembly (National Council for Higher Education, 2021:6). The autonomy and independence of the academic body is considered so important that the Act provides that no law or regulation proposed to be amended under subsection (1) dealing with any matter relating to the composition of Senate shall be made by the Council, unless the Council consults the Senate (GRN, 1992). The University of Namibia has significantly grown from a staff complement of 147 at its inception in 1992 to a total staff complement of 2,302 of which 1,403 (61%) are academic and 899 (39%) are administrative. In terms of qualifications among academic staff, 215 (21.65%) possess PhDs, and 534 (53.72%) hold master's degrees in various fields (Hangula, et al., 2020:14).

UNAM's vision is "*To be a sustainable international hub of excellence in higher education, training, research and innovation by 2030*". To ensure that the university upholds its vision and mission, it guarantees that its operations are guided by the qualities such as professionalism, mutual respect,

integrity, transparency, equity and accountability. UNAM’s mission is “*To contribute to the achievement of national and international development goals through the pursuit of translational research, quality training and innovation*”. The University of Namibia has made progress towards its vision and mission and is one of the leading institutions of tertiary education in Africa. Consisting of 12 campuses across the country, the University of Namibia is a community-based institution with a diverse student population from over 40 countries across the world. The main campus is in Windhoek, Namibia’s capital city. The University’s 12 campuses are spread across Namibia (University of Namibia 2025).

Main Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	José Eduardo dos Santos (JEDS) Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Hage Geingob Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life
Hifikepunye Pohamba (HP) Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Katima Mulilo Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Khomasdal Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life
Neudamm Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Ogongo Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Oshakati Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life
Rundu Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Sam Nujoma Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life	Southern Campus Campus Map Campus Virtual Tour Campus Student Life

Figure 4.5: Campuses of the University of Namibia

Source: (University of Namibia, 2025).

The university undergone a restructuring process in 2021 and reduce faculties from eight to four and now offers academic programmes across its four faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, and Natural

Sciences; Commerce, Management, and Law; Education and Human Sciences; Health Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. The university provides courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Equipped with lecture rooms, computer labs, a library, and a 24-hour study facility, students have access to a range of facilities (University of Namibia, 2025).

The first group of students arrived early in 1993. UNAM inaugurated its second campus, the northern campus at Oshakati on 7 May 1998. The Faculties of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Economics and Management Services, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Law, Medical and Health Sciences, and Science all offer bachelors and master's degrees as well as diplomas. Additionally, it has established a Language Center, a Center for Visual and Performing Arts, a Center for Human Rights Documentation, a Center for Interactive Multimedia Services, and a Center for Justice Training. The university's library houses the records of the United Nations Institute for Namibia, including the crucial documents that determined the nation's language, in a reasonably well-developed archive. The institution established a Center for External Studies in 1993. The Department of Continuing Education was established by incorporating the preceding Department of Distance Education so off-campus students and external students could enroll in degree programs. The Department of Continuing Education mostly provides brief non-credit courses that address the urgent needs of diverse community groups. The University of Namibia offers distance learning programs for the Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Nursing (Advanced Practice), Bachelor of African Languages, and Bachelor of Business Administration (University of Namibia, 2025). UNAM continues to make a significant contribution to the economic, social, and cultural advancement of the nation through its fundamental activities of teaching, research, innovation, and community service. By establishing connections with business, companies, educational institutions, and governmental organisations, UNAM provides services to a wide range of persons around the world. It is a diverse institution with a student population from 41 countries and from all continents. Although a relatively young university, it has grown to support a student population of over 30,144 this year. With more international students enrolling each year, UNAM's constantly expanding global presence continues to show potential. Over the years, the institution has established several international relations, partnerships, and collaborations. The Sam Nujoma Marine and Coastal Resources Research Centre research partnership is an example of an international collaboration that was established with famous institutions to create the Regional Graduate Network in Oceanography program. These are just a few instances of how UNAM

participates in community outreach. The Namibian National Marine Information and Research Centre is one of the organisations that is a part of this collaboration, along with the Agouron Institute, University of Minnesota, ETH Zurich, and Swiss Research & Training. Additionally, the University of Namibia has several international agreements with universities all over the world, including Finland's University of Eastern Finland, the United States' University of Washington and University of California San Francisco, South Africa's Stellenbosch University, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and several German universities (University of Namibia, 2025).

In 1999, UNAM established an Executive Master's in Business Administration (MBA) at the Namibian Business School (NBS) at UNAM in collaboration with the First National Bank (FNB) Foundation and the Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands. In response to the demands of the Namibian market, the NBS was founded as a stand-alone division of UNAM in 1999. Its mission is *to deliver excellent management education in an African context, to carry out excellent research from an African perspective, and to provide excellent consulting services in Namibia, Africa and beyond*. To fulfill its purpose and goals, the NBS makes a conscious effort to the following principles: quality, inventiveness, and honesty. Its academic activities are governed by the School of Economics and Management Sciences, providing the subsequent courses: a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, an MBA in Finance, an MBA in Management Strategy, and a Doctorate in Business Administration. The institution also offers a range of services, community engagement programs, and consulting to the larger Namibian population. The Ministry of Education embraced a decentralised model of Continuing Professional Development and the Centre for Professional Development and Teaching and Learning Improvement continues to help regional directorates of education. The Sam Nujoma Campus also significantly supports the fishing sector by doing research and collaborating with local populations. These are only a few instances of how UNAM participates in community outreach (Namibian Business School, 2024).

On the front of research and development, UNAM's Faculty of Health Sciences oversees the medical, nursing, and pharmacy schools. After five years of intense discussion, preparation, and partnership building with multiple stakeholders, the School of Medicine was finally founded in June 2008. In 2009 and 2010, the curriculum was completed and approved, and the first 55 students were enrolled. The Department of Nursing was established in 1992 and changed its name to the School

of Nursing in 2010. The School of Pharmacy was founded in 2011. The UNAM School of Medicine graduated its first class of medical doctors in 2016 and continues to set standards by partnering with top-tier research facilities to educate young, aspiring scientists about creating medications to treat COVID-19, cancer, and malaria. The goal of this postgraduate and undergraduate study is to use Namibia's abundance of different plant resources for the good of all communities and ability to perform preclinical testing (Du Plessis & Keyter, 2019:72).

The Faculty of Science at UNAM offers the Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies, marking the first military academic degree introduced in 2007. In 2011, the Namibian Ministry of Defense approached UNAM to establish a Bachelor of Science in Military Science (Honours). Consequently, the Department of Military Science was formed when the Faculty of Science was tasked with developing the program's curriculum. The Senate ratified the curriculum for the Army, Aeronautical, and Nautical programs in August 2013, and the Department of Military Science was officially established in January 2014. In 2014, the Senate approved the transition of the Department of Military Science into the School of Military Science within the Faculty of Science (Du Plessis & Keyter, 2019:73).

UNAM is broadly connected to their stakeholders with strong partnerships that enhance the national and international student experience. As an international University, UNAM prepares their graduates to thrive in competitive global context, proudly fostering a diverse and connected learning environment. Recognised as a top-ranked university in Africa, UNAM embraces global partnerships to expand the impact their alumni are making as leaders in their respective fields and doing innovative research. Alumni continue to influence policy, shape industry and uplift communities. UNAM provides endless opportunities that will lead to the necessary connections to shape their student's future through expertise and connections (Du Plessis & Keyter, 2019:74).

4.5.3.1 Research Context: Organisational and Staffing Profile of the University of Namibia (Main Campus)

This research is conducted at the University of Namibia's main campus, which operates as the institution's central academic and administrative nucleus. Hosting a broad spectrum of faculties and support units, the campus provides an appropriate context for exploring succession planning and leadership development within a complex public higher education setting. The study specifically

includes both academic and administrative personnel from the Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences; Commerce, Management and Law; Education and Human Sciences; Health Sciences and Veterinary Medicine; as well as staff from Professional, Academic and Research Support units (University of Namibia, 2025).

The staffing composition of the main campus reflects a sizeable and diverse workforce. In total, the University employs 823 staff members across academic and administrative categories, comprising 431 academic staff and 392 administrative staff. The academic staff profile demonstrates a relatively high level of qualification, with 177 individuals holding doctoral degrees and 227 holding master's degrees. This qualification profile points to a strong intellectual base that is conducive to leadership development. By contrast, the administrative workforce displays a broader range of qualifications and is predominantly concentrated within the Professional, Academic and Research Support units (378 staff members), underscoring the range of functional roles that support institutional operations (University of Namibia, 2025).

An examination of staff distribution across faculties indicates that academic staff are most heavily represented in the Faculty of Education and Human Sciences (131) and the Faculty of Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences (124). This distribution suggests the presence of potential internal leadership pipelines within these faculties. Administrative staff, however, are largely centralised within support units rather than being faculty-based, which has important implications for the structuring of succession planning and leadership development initiatives across the institution (University of Namibia, 2025).

The distribution of post levels further illustrates the hierarchical nature of the organisation. Within the academic category, staffing is distributed across 43 Professors, 119 Senior Lecturers, and 223 Lecturers, reflecting a defined academic progression pathway but also indicating possible bottlenecks at senior levels. Within the administrative category, the majority of staff occupy supervisory (213) and middle-management (61) positions, while relatively few are positioned at senior management (49) and executive management (7) levels. This uneven distribution highlights a narrow leadership apex and reinforces the necessity of intentional and structured succession planning to ensure leadership continuity in critical roles (University of Namibia, 2025).

Significantly, the institutional context directly informs the study's research questions, particularly those examining the extent to which succession planning can function as a developmental mechanism for high-performing staff and the identification of an appropriate succession planning model for the University. While the presence of a substantial pool of qualified personnel suggests considerable potential for internal leadership development, the uneven distribution of post level and the concentration of staff in non-leadership roles reveal structural limitations that may constrain the progression of high-potential employees. This situation underscores the need to move away from reactive recruitment practices towards a more proactive and systematic approach to leadership development (University of Namibia, 2025).

Moreover, the case study context provides an important empirical basis for the conceptual model presented in Chapter 7, Figure 7.2. Identified challenges, including the underutilisation of internal talent, restricted advancement pathways, and the concentration of staff at lower and middle organisational levels, directly inform the incorporation of key elements within the model, such as strategic leadership commitment, structured talent identification, leadership development programmes, and succession management processes. As such, the staffing profile not only contextualises the research problem but also illustrates the relevance and applicability of the proposed model in addressing institutional leadership challenges (University of Namibia, 2025).

The University of Namibia's main campus represents a complex organisational setting characterised by substantial human capital alongside structural and strategic shortcomings in leadership development. This context reinforces the study's central argument that, in the absence of a formalised and integrated succession planning framework, the University risks underutilising its internal talent pool and undermining long-term leadership continuity. Consequently, the case study context serves both as the empirical foundation of the research and as the justification for developing a contextually responsive and strategically aligned succession planning model.

Table 4.1: Staff 2025 Windhoek Main Campus (Permanent Staff only) – Staff by Qualifications

Staff Level/	Qualification	Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences	Commerce, Management and Laws	Education and Human Sciences	Health Science and Vet Medicines	Professional, Academic and Research Support	Grand Total
	Master's Degree	64	50	62	31	20	227
	Honours Degree	12	1	2		12	27
Academic Total		124	76	131	53	47	431
Administrative	Doctorate Degree	1				25	26
	Master's Degree	1	2	1		69	73
	Honours Degree					30	30
	Professional Degree					28	28
	Post Grad Diploma					22	22
	Bachelor Degree		1			77	78
	Certificate	2				9	11
	Diploma	1	2	1		60	64
	Senior Secondary	1		1		48	50
	Junior Secondary					8	8
	Primary/Lower					2	2
Administrative Total		6	5	3		378	392

Source: (University of Namibia, 2025).

Table 4.2: Staff 2025 Windhoek Main Campus (Permanent Staff only) – Staff by Post level

Post Level	Qualification	Agriculture, Engineering and Natural Sciences	Commerce, Management and Laws	Education and Human Sciences	Health Science and Vet Medicines	Professional, Academic and Research Support	Grand Total
Academic	1. Professors	15	4	18	2	4	43
	2. Senior Lecturer	32	18	38	18	13	119
	3. Lecturer	60	52	65	30	16	223
	4. Assistant Lecturer	1	1	6	3	9	20
	5. Tutors/SDF	16	1	4		5	26
Academic Total		124	76	131	53	47	431
Administrative	1. Exc. Management					7	7
	2. Senior Management	1	1			47	49
	3. Middle management					61	61
	4. Supervisory	4	2	2		205	213
	5. Administrative	1	2	1		58	62
Administrative Total		6	5	3		378	392
Grand Total		130	81	134	53	425	823

Source: (University of Namibia, 2025).

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter provided an overview of the higher education landscape in Namibia, situating the study within its institutional, policy, and governance context. It began with the historical development of Namibia's higher education system, highlighting its evolution since independence, including key reforms, policy frameworks, and institutional growth.

The chapter examined the funding of higher education, focusing on government allocations, the contributions of public and private actors, and the challenges associated with sustainability and access. It also addressed the roles of national agencies responsible for higher education governance, emphasising their efforts to ensure quality, accountability, and system development. These included the National Advisory Council on Education, which provided strategic guidance on education policy; the National Qualifications Authority, which oversaw the National Qualifications Framework and ensured standardisation of qualifications; the National Council for Higher Education, which regulated standards, accreditation, and policy implementation; and the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, which promoted research, innovation, and technological advancement.

Finally, the chapter presented an overview of universities and colleges in Namibia, highlighting the diversity of institutions within the tertiary sector. It examined specialised colleges, vocational education and training centres, and the country's two main universities, the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the University of Namibia, discussing their mandates, organisational structures, contributions to national development, and the challenges they faced.

Chapter 5 discusses the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 5:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The initial section of this study delineates the theoretical framework, introducing the pivotal issues pertaining to succession planning within public administration. Chapter 3 encompasses a literature review, which serves as both a theoretical and empirical foundation for the conceptualization of this research. The literature review's objective was to acquaint the researcher with existing studies on the subject matter. Specifically, it facilitated the connection of this study to broader scholarly discussions, addressed existing gaps, referenced other pertinent studies, and established a benchmark for comparing the study's results with other findings. The literature review on succession planning, particularly its impact on the development of competent and high-performing personnel in public institutions, underscored the gaps that this thesis aims to address. Consequently, the theoretical framework and literature review underpin the research design and methodology employed in this study.

This chapter, Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive explanation of the research design and methodology employed in this study. It delineates the research approach and design, elucidating the rationale behind the chosen research design. The chapter further identifies the population sample for this research project, offering justifications for its selection. The data collection instruments are thoroughly discussed, with an emphasis on the framework underpinning these instruments. Additionally, the preferred research instruments are explicated, alongside an analysis of their respective advantages and disadvantages. The chapter also addresses the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments, as well as the ethical considerations observed during the research study. Finally, it presents an analysis of the data collection procedure and provides an explanation of the data analysis plan.

5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approaches are general techniques that researchers follow when conducting a study (Babbie, 2021:20). Employing research approaches in research vary from one researcher to another

based on the investigator's choice as well as the nature of the topic under investigation. The differences in the use of research approaches in information research do not rely on data gathering alone, but also on the practical consequences of the inquiry and the interpretation of the findings. Three research approaches, descriptive–, explanatory– and exploratory research are generally used in social sciences, including the discipline Public Administration. These research approaches not exclusive, but a research project may include two or more of these approaches or approaches other than those described in the following sections (Philip, 2020:166).

5.2.1 Descriptive research

The descriptive research approach is primarily concerned with identifying and delineating the characteristics of a specific problem, situation, or phenomenon (Babbie, 2021:21). Its objective is not necessarily to elucidate the reasons behind an occurrence but rather to provide a comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon in question. When the subject under investigation is too broad or complex to capture in its entirety, the researcher must carefully select and focus on the most relevant facts. These facts are then collected systematically, following predetermined criteria, to ensure that the information is accurate, reliable, and useful for the purpose of the study.

One of the principal advantages of descriptive research lies in its capacity to identify relationships or patterns of interest within the data, thereby facilitating the development of a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. This general understanding can then be applied in other contexts to interpret similar issues. For example, a descriptive study could focus on a unique municipal planning programme. By documenting how the programme functions and highlighting its distinctive features, the study could illustrate how it differs from similar programmes in other municipalities. In this way, descriptive research serves as a valuable tool for providing detailed accounts that build the foundation for further inquiry or comparison (Babbie, 2021:22-23).

5.2.2 Explanatory research

Explanatory research goes beyond description and seeks to provide answers to deeper, often puzzling questions (Babbie, 2021:24). Its main purpose is to uncover the underlying causes or reasons behind a particular occurrence or decision. Whereas descriptive research focuses on 'what' is happening, explanatory research asks 'why' it is happening. For instance, a researcher may ask

why a particular urban area has developed in a certain shape, or why a city council has consistently avoided approving mobile home parks within its jurisdiction.

Explanatory studies are designed to investigate causal relationships by examining origins, conditions, and consequences. They typically involve the systematic collection of empirical data to develop hypotheses, or even tentative hunches, about the cause-effect dynamics at play. These hypotheses are then subjected to testing through various methods available to the researcher, such as statistical analysis, comparative case studies, or field experiments. Explanatory research is particularly valuable because it illuminates processes and mechanisms, which can subsequently guide policy, planning, and decision-making (McNabb, 2021:103).

5.2.3 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is used when a research topic is relatively new, underdeveloped, or not well understood (Babbie, 2021:29). Its purpose is not to provide final or conclusive answers, but rather to explore a phenomenon in depth, generate fresh insights, and identify potential directions for further study. This approach is particularly advantageous in contexts where the research problem is complex or there is a scarcity of reliable data. Exploratory research often satisfies the initial curiosity of the researcher, helps clarify the nature of the phenomenon, and deepens the understanding of participants' perspectives before moving toward larger or more structured investigations.

Typically, exploratory studies can take one of two forms. First, they may provide a tentative, initial analysis of a completely new topic. Second, they may revisit an existing topic but from a fresh angle, with the aim of proposing new ideas or hypotheses. Although exploratory research often relies on qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, it can also employ quantitative techniques, particularly when dealing with larger samples. Its flexible and open-ended nature allows researchers to adjust their methods as the study progresses, which is why it is sometimes referred to as interpretive research or associated with grounded theory approaches (Casula, Rangarajan & Shields, 2021:1704).

In this study, an exploratory approach was identified as the most appropriate methodology. This decision was informed by the research's two primary objectives: firstly, to evaluate the role of succession planning in the development and advancement of skilled, high-performing employees; and secondly, to formulate a conceptual succession planning model tailored for the University of

Namibia. By adopting an exploratory perspective, the researcher was able to investigate succession planning within a context characterised by limited existing research, while simultaneously laying the groundwork for a practical model that could inform both policy and practice.

5.3 CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The selection of appropriate research methods is significantly influenced by the nature of the research, the unit of analysis, the data sources, and the academic discipline within which a particular study is conducted (McNabb, 2021:51). A research design serves as a strategic framework for addressing the research question through empirical data (Baron & Young, 2021:7). This design outlines the procedures for conducting the study, enabling the researcher to anticipate the necessary research decisions to maximise the validity of the results. The primary objectives of the study are twofold: (1) to assess the extent to which succession planning can be utilised to develop and promote competent and high-performing staff, and (2) to formulate a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia. In this study, the population comprised all administrative staff members and managers of the University of Namibia, as they shared common characteristics and could address the first research question. The population included approximately 400 staff members employed at the main campus of the University of Namibia.

Given the investigative nature of the study, the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This involved the distribution of questionnaires to administrative staff and managers at the main campus of the University of Namibia, as well as conducting unstructured interviews with these individuals.

5.3.1 Qualitative research

The objective of qualitative research is to produce comprehensive, genuine, and detailed narratives of individuals' experiences and behaviours (McLeod, 2017:32). Rooted in the interpretive social sciences paradigm, this approach emphasises the significance of human subjectivity and lived experience. It frequently employs a phenomenological approach, aiming to comprehend how individuals perceive and interpret their environment. Qualitative research seeks to reveal deeper insights by examining how participants perceive and interpret reality. It captures both what people say and what they do, acknowledging these as outcomes of complex thought processes and personal

perspectives. Through this lens, social phenomena are examined from the participants' point of view. To achieve this, qualitative research typically employs methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (Leavy, 2023:58).

Qualitative research entails the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio, with the objective of comprehending concepts, opinions, and experiences. This approach offers profound insights into a phenomenon and can also serve as a basis for generating novel research ideas (Bhandari, 2023). Nevertheless, this methodology is not without its criticisms. Common concerns include the perceived lack of reliability and validity of findings, particularly the difficulty in replicating observations (reliability) and accurately capturing the phenomenon under investigation (validity) (Patton, 2015:123). Further critiques emphasise the potential influence of the researcher's presence on participants' responses (reactivity) and the risk of selective perception or bias by the researcher. Issues of validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and authenticity are addressed in Sections 5.9 and 5.10.

Despite these challenges, qualitative research offers several advantages. It is flexible, as there are no rigidly predetermined questions or answers, and the researcher can adapt lines of inquiry as data collection unfolds. Conducted within natural settings, it allows for spontaneous interactions and often produces richer, more nuanced data. On the other hand, qualitative research is generally more time-intensive and resource-demanding, making it potentially more costly than quantitative approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018:54).

5.3.2 Quantitative research

As articulated by Kothari (2018:93), quantitative research is predicated on the measurement of quantity or amount, and it is applicable to phenomena that can be quantified. This form of research constitutes a systematic scientific inquiry into quantitative properties and phenomena, as well as their interrelationships. Often referred to as nomothetic research, quantitative research endeavours to establish general laws. It involves the collection and analysis of numerical data, which can be utilised to discern patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalise findings to broader populations. In contrast, qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio.

Quantitative research is extensively employed in both the natural and social sciences, as well as in the investigation of various educational aspects. Bhandari (2023) supports the concept that the consistency with which questionnaire items are answered, or an individual's score remains relatively constant, can be assessed through the test-retest method conducted at two different times. This characteristic of the instrument is termed stability. If the measure is stable, the results should be consistent. A high degree of stability signifies a high degree of reliability, indicating that the results are reproducible. Quantitative data collection generally requires less time, incurs lower costs, and can be generalised to the entire research population. However, quantitative research may be less adaptable, as it typically involves predetermined questions or answers, and the researcher cannot modify questions as data collection progresses. Consequently, data collection is less spontaneous and lacks depth (Morgan, 2019:192).

In quantitative research, a deductive theoretical approach is employed to guide the study's design and the interpretation of its results. The primary objective is to test and verify a theory, rather than to develop one. Consequently, the theory provides a conceptual framework for the entire study, serving as an organising model for the research questions or hypotheses and the entire data collection process. Quantitative research methods abstract data from participants into statistical representations, rather than textual depictions, of the phenomenon. The research process is constructed objectively, and the findings are typically generalised to represent the entire population under study (Leavy, 2023:52). A quantitative approach is often utilised where sources of error are controlled through statistical controls, such as multivariate analysis. The main strengths of the quantitative approach lie in its precision and control. Control is achieved through sampling and design techniques, as well as the precise and reliable quantitative measurement of collected data. An additional strength is that experimentation can lead to statements about causation, as the systematic manipulation of one variable can have a direct causal effect when other variables are eliminated or controlled for. Furthermore, hypotheses are tested using a deductive approach, and the use of quantitative data allows for statistical analyses to be conducted. Therefore, the quantitative research method provides answers with a much firmer basis (Gillespie, et al., 2024:103).

5.3.3 Mixed methods research

The employment of multiple methodologies for research design, data collection, and analysis within a single study is termed mixed methods research. This approach amalgamates both qualitative and quantitative techniques to address the limitations and biases inherent in utilising either approach independently. By integrating statistical data with narrative insights, mixed methods research offers a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of complex social and organisational phenomena (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021:60).

The research problem under examination underscores the absence of a succession planning model at the University of Namibia and the lack of clarity regarding the extent to which succession planning is employed to develop and promote competent, high-performing staff. Addressing this issue necessitates a research approach capable of capturing both the measurable extent of succession planning practices and the subjective experiences, perceptions, and expectations of staff members. A purely qualitative approach would offer valuable depth and insight into participants lived experiences but may not adequately quantify the scope or prevalence of succession planning practices. Conversely, a purely quantitative approach may reveal statistical patterns without sufficiently explaining the contextual, institutional, and human dynamics that influence succession planning.

Mixed methods research represents the most suitable approach to address the study's research questions. For instance, Research Question 1, which investigates existing literature on succession planning, will benefit from a qualitative synthesis. In contrast, Research Question 2, which evaluates the extent to which a succession planning model can serve as a developmental tool, necessitates both statistical analysis of institutional practices and qualitative exploration of staff experiences. Similarly, Research Questions 3 to 5, which aim to determine the most appropriate research approach, identify a suitable succession planning model for the University of Namibia, and assess contributions to public administration, require insights derived from both quantitative evidence and qualitative interpretation.

In this study, mixed methods are employed not only at the conclusion of the research but are integrated throughout the research process. This integration ensures that quantitative findings (e.g., a questionnaire measuring the prevalence and extent of succession planning practices) are

complemented and enriched by qualitative insights (e.g., interviews capturing staff perspectives on leadership development and career progression). Consequently, the study benefits from methodological pluralism, thereby enhancing both the validity and trustworthiness of the findings while producing a more nuanced and practical succession planning model for implementation (Dawadi, et al., 2021:64).

The primary premise is that combining quantitative and qualitative methods results in a deeper understanding of the issue than employing each method on its own. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018:60) also highlight that researchers using mixed methods explore various data collection and analysis techniques instead of adhering to a single approach. Therefore, mixed methods research can be highly beneficial for comprehensively understanding a research problem. Nonetheless, this approach requires more time and effort compared to using either qualitative or quantitative methods alone.

The level of interaction pertains to the degree to which qualitative and quantitative approaches are maintained independently or allowed to interact (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018:64). In instances where they remain independent, the researcher integrates the two approaches solely at the final stage, following data analysis. This investigation employed concurrent scheduling, wherein quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously yet separately. The data were subsequently gathered, and the findings were integrated prior to interpretation. The primary objective of the mixed methods approach in this study was to acquire distinct yet complementary data on the same topic to enhance understanding of the research challenges. The mixed methods research approach facilitates more rigorous conclusions by utilising two methods in a manner that allows the strengths of qualitative methods to offset the weaknesses of quantitative methods, and vice versa (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016:142). Another rationale for combining the two methods is the recognition that both types of research possess inherent value and, in certain respects, are complementary, thereby adding value when combined. Researchers employ both data sets to address the same research question, which can yield greater certainty and broader implications in the conclusions (Dawadi, et al., 2021:30).

Therefore, employing mixed methods research is particularly appropriate for this study, as it facilitates a thorough investigation of succession planning in public institutions and aids in creating a strong, evidence-based succession planning model for the University of Namibia.

5.3.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Mixed Methods Research

The application of mixed methods research offers several advantages, rendering it particularly appropriate for this investigation into succession planning at the University of Namibia. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study capitalises on the distinct strengths inherent in each approach (Gesser-Edelsburg, Ricky, Nour, Elhadi & Rana, 2020:2). This methodological integration ensures that the findings are both comprehensive and generalisable, thereby facilitating a more thorough understanding of the extent to which succession planning is implemented within the institution.

Mixed methods research allows the research problem to be broken down into its constituent elements, thereby enabling comprehensive conclusions. For instance, staff perceptions and lived experiences of leadership development can be captured through qualitative inquiry, while surveys can quantify the prevalence and scope of succession planning practices. This methodological pluralism not only strengthens the study's validity and reliability but also facilitates triangulation, ensuring that results from different sources corroborate one another (McCrudden & McTigue, 2018: 383).

In addition, the use of both data types allows researchers to address confirmatory and explanatory questions simultaneously. Quantitative data may confirm whether succession planning practices exist, while qualitative narratives explain how these practices are experienced and perceived by staff. This complementarity broadens the scope of the investigation, helps explain contradictory outcomes, and provides more nuanced recommendations for a succession planning model. Importantly, mixed methods also create opportunities for participants to contribute their voices and experiences throughout the research process, thereby enhancing the study's authenticity and practical relevance.

Despite its strengths, mixed methods research also presents several challenges. Initially, the process is both time-consuming and resource-demanding, as it necessitates the collection and analysis of two distinct types of data. This can be particularly demanding in studies that, like this one, require engagement with large staff populations alongside in-depth qualitative interviews. The process may also be costly and dependent on the availability of external funding. Second, mixed methods research requires a high level of expertise in both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Skilled

analysts are essential to ensure the accurate design, execution, and integration of both strands of research. In practice, the shortage of advanced quantitative expertise may pose a barrier to rigorous implementation (Gesser-Edelsburg, et al., 2020:4).

A further disadvantage is the potential for contradictory results between qualitative and quantitative strands. For example, survey data might suggest limited use of succession planning practices, while interviews may reveal nuanced informal practices not captured in numerical data. Such divergence can complicate generalization, though it also provides opportunities for deeper inquiry. Lastly, the need to carefully integrate findings only during the interpretation phase (as applied in this study) demands careful methodological design to ensure that neither data set is over- nor underemphasised. Without careful management, there is a risk of imbalance or bias in interpreting findings (McCrudden & McTigue, 2018:384-385).

5.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In research, tools used for data collection are also referred to as measuring instruments, these instruments include questionnaires, field observation, oral interviews, archival documents, laboratory experiments and scales as explained below.

5.4.1 Case study research

Case study research constitutes a qualitative methodology wherein the researcher investigates a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over a period. This is achieved through comprehensive, in-depth data collection that incorporates multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, audio-visual materials, documents, reports, and case-based themes (Harrison, Birks, Franklin & Mills, 2017:33). The specific case study for this research is the University of Namibia.

5.4.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a standardised instrument comprising a series of questions that a researcher poses to respondents. Typically, a questionnaire is distributed to many individuals, and the resulting data are computerised and subjected to statistical analysis to identify similarities and differences among respondents' answers. One of the primary objectives of employing a questionnaire in research is to

facilitate a dialogue between the researcher and the respondent. The questionnaire seeks to standardize the questions posed to different respondents, thereby ensuring that the responses are comparable (Jain, 2021:540). According to Jha (2023:198), primary data refers to data collected directly by researchers for the specific purpose of their study. Such data are gathered when researchers or designated fieldworkers engage in empirical research or fieldwork. In this study, primary data in a structured format was collected from administrative staff and managers at the University of Namibia through a self-administered, closed-ended questionnaire.

To ensure the effectiveness of a questionnaire, it is essential to incorporate both a logical structure and carefully formulated questions. The structure should facilitate a coherent progression between questions. Typically, a questionnaire is divided into three sections: the administrative section, the classification section, and the subject matter of inquiry (Jha, 2023: 219). Neale (2021: 157) argues that the sequence and layout of the questionnaire establish the foundation for empirical research. Furthermore, it is stated that a questionnaire should be concise while encompassing all relevant information pertaining to the study. These considerations will be integral in the development of the questionnaire for this study. The administration of a questionnaire is the most frequently employed method in quantitative research.

The general advantages and disadvantages are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Advantages and disadvantages of Questionnaires

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Cost-effective and time-efficient: Questionnaires are often more time-efficient and cost-effective than alternative methods such as interviews or focus groups, rendering them a practical option for conducting large-scale research studies.	Inflexibility of design: Once distributed, questionnaires typically cannot be modified. This rigidity limits the ability to probe further into responses or adapt questions to individual participants.
Ability to generalise findings: When administered to a sufficiently large and representative sample, questionnaires enable	Restricted response options: Respondents may feel constrained if the provided answer

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
researchers to generalise findings to the entire research population with a higher degree of confidence.	choices do not fully capture their views, leading to inaccurate or incomplete data.
Reduced researcher bias: Since questionnaires are self-administered, they limit direct interaction between researcher and participant, reducing the potential for interviewer influence or bias in data collection.	Limited depth of data: Questionnaires often capture surface-level information and may fail to uncover complex emotions, motivations, or contextual details behind participants' responses.
Standardisation of data collection: All participants are posed with an identical series of questions in a uniform manner, guaranteeing uniformity and the ability to compare responses effectively.	Low response rates and non-response bias: Participants may ignore or incompletely fill out questionnaires, which can reduce sample size and introduce bias if non-respondents differ significantly from respondents.
Anonymity encourages honesty: The anonymous nature of questionnaires can encourage participants to provide more honest and candid responses, especially on sensitive issues.	Misinterpretation of questions: Without the presence of a researcher to clarify, respondents may misunderstand questions, leading to unreliable or invalid responses.
Scalability: Questionnaires can be distributed to many participants simultaneously, especially through online platforms, making them highly scalable.	Lack of opportunity for follow-up: The inability of researchers to immediately pose follow-up questions or delve deeper into intriguing responses constrains the potential for obtaining more comprehensive insights.

Source: (Neale, 2021:109).

Although questionnaires may have inherent limitations in capturing complex or nuanced information, the researcher implemented strategies such as open-ended questions, qualitative methods, and cognitive testing to address these limitations and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Given that questionnaires are an effective means of obtaining information across a wide range of research problems, the researcher posited that incorporating a questionnaire into this study would be advantageous. Questionnaires allow researchers to strategically manage their target audience, questions, and format while collecting substantial quantities of data on any subject. The researcher also does not need to hire surveyors to deliver the survey questions but instead, use an online survey software like SurveyMonkey, to create, send and analyse surveys. The researcher can email surveys to respondents and post them on their websites and social media profiles to increase response rate at little to no cost. Survey results can be efficiently analysed using mobile tools, allowing for the acquisition of responses and insights within 24 hours or less.

In this study, the questionnaire alone did not fully address the research questions. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to complement the data obtained through the questionnaire. In mixed-method studies, questionnaires and interviews are frequently employed together. While questionnaires can reveal patterns within large populations, qualitative interview data often provide more comprehensive insights into participants' attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Jain, 2021:544). The researcher structured the questionnaire to ensure a logical and smooth flow of questions. It is recommended that related questions be grouped together, allowing respondents to focus on one topic at a time and reducing the cognitive effort required to switch between different aspects. As noted by Dillman, Smyth and Christian (2014), improper wording can lead to various problems, ranging from excessive vagueness or over-precision to misinterpretation or failure to be understood, as well as being either objectionable or irrelevant to respondents. The questionnaire utilised in this study was systematically divided into four sections, designated as Sections A through D, to ensure clarity and facilitate ease of response.

Section A encompassed Questions 1 to 6, which consisted of general inquiries aimed at obtaining a background overview of the participants.

Section B included Questions 7 to 11, which were designed to evaluate the participants' comprehension of succession planning.

Section C comprised Questions 12 to 15, which sought to assess the participants' perspectives on strategies for identifying potential successors.

Section D contained Questions 16 to 23, which aimed to evaluate the participants' opinions on employee development.

To minimise misinterpretation, the questions were carefully formulated to ensure that respondents could clearly understand their purpose.

5.4.3 Interviews

The predominant method for data collection in qualitative research is the interview, which is typically conducted face-to-face, via telephone, or through teleconferencing. The form of the interview may vary based on the research purpose, disciplinary context, and any constraints encountered (Haenssger, 2019:25). An interview is essentially a dialogue between two individuals, the interviewer and the interviewee, wherein the interviewer poses questions to elicit information from the interviewee. As noted by Babbie (2021:31), to effectively capture the insider's perspective, the most suitable interviewing strategy is one that is formally structured yet sufficiently flexible to align with the respondent's interests. Given that interviews involve human interaction, they present a greater potential for issues compared to questionnaires, as the personal characteristics of both researchers and respondents must be considered. Interviews can range from brief, structured sessions to extensive, complex, unstructured sessions lasting several hours. A structured interview employs a guide, primarily a questionnaire, which is administered to the respondent in a predetermined order. In contrast, the semi-structured interview is easier to score, minimises interviewer bias, is more readily replicable, and is more reliable than a structured interview. Interviews were conducted with the administrative staff at the University of Namibia (Annexure F) to assess how effectively succession planning can be utilised to cultivate and advance skilled and high-performing employees, and to create a conceptual model for succession planning at the university. In qualitative research, interviews typically begin with the creation of an interview guide. Ideally, the topics covered in this guide are based on existing literature and a preliminary conceptual framework that addresses the issue, providing a structured and logical basis for formulating questions that both inform these topics and uncover new ones (Haenssger, 2019:27). Like all measurement methods, the interview guide has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed in the following paragraph.

5.4.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of using an interview guide

An interview guide facilitates the conduct of an interview. Since the questions have already been prepared beforehand, it is easier to carry out and complete the interview. It increases the likelihood of collecting accurate information or data. The questions, which were already prepared beforehand, are expected to be well-thought out and have focus, thereby ensuring that the answers obtained are correct or accurate. According to Lindof and Taylor (2017:125) interview guides can increase the reliability and credibility of data gathered. It allows interviewers and researchers to get more information, since they can ask follow-up queries or clarifications to the questions they have prepared. Thus, the information gathered is more relevant and useful. The rate and number of responses are higher. Often, interviews are time-bound because interviewers are given only a limited amount of time to ask all their questions and get the answers. The interview guide provides flexibility and a high degree of customisation, making it suitable for interviewing diverse groups of individuals. A skilled, experienced, and well-trained interviewer can effectively probe complex questions during an interview.

Wafaa (2019:67) identifies several limitations associated with the use of interview guides. Primarily, interviews often serve as a minimal standard for evaluating individuals' attitudes, circumstances, and experiences, and they do not facilitate anonymity. Additionally, this method incurs significant financial and temporal costs, rendering it potentially time-consuming. Another disadvantage is that there is a high risk that the interview and its results may suffer from the bias of the interviewer, as he is the one that will choose the questions to be asked during the interview. Variability may be high when the interview guide is used by multiple interviewers. This may result to unreliable information gathered during the interviews.

Upon evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the interview guide, the researcher has concluded that the benefits surpass the drawbacks, thereby deciding to employ it as a method for data collection in this study. As previously discussed, interviews are an effective means of obtaining comprehensive information. This method allows for a more in-depth exploration of the research topic compared to most other methods. Participants are afforded the opportunity to elaborate in ways not possible with other methods, such as surveys, and can convey information in their own words and perspectives, rather than conforming to potentially restrictive response options. Given that interviews are structured to elicit detailed information, they are particularly beneficial for examining

social processes, such as the development of a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia. An additional, often overlooked, advantage is the researcher's ability to observe beyond verbal responses. A respondent's body language, as well as their choice of time and location for the interview, can provide valuable data. The structure of the interview guide utilised in this study is elaborated upon in the following paragraph.

5.4.3.2 Structure of the interview guide

The researcher prepared an interview guide in advance to facilitate the interview process. An interview guide comprises a list of topics or questions that the interviewer intends to address during the interview. As noted by Wingate and Bourdage (2024:557), qualitative interviews typically employ open-ended questions, which are questions posed by the researcher without predetermined answer options.

Examples of the open-ended questions utilised during the interview include:

- How is the University measuring the success of its succession planning?
- What are some of the challenges of the University of Namibia's succession planning?

Open-ended questions pose greater demands on participants compared to closed-ended questions, as they necessitate that participants articulate their responses in their own words, phrases, or sentences (Wingate & Bourdage, 2024:559). The interviewer conducted the transcription of interviews, which included 10 open-ended questions, to ascertain the following:

- The status of succession planning at the University of Namibia.
- The key interventions implemented in terms of talent management.
- The methods employed by the University to measure the success of its succession planning.
- The challenges faced by the University of Namibia concerning succession planning.

The framework for the questionnaires and the interview questions is summarised in the following table.

Table 5.2: Framework for data gathering

Interview Question	Question/statement in questionnaire	Research Objective	Research Question	Section in Literature Review
What is the status of succession planning at the University of Namibia?	How important do you think it is for the University to implement a formal succession planning system? What do you believe the primary goal of university succession planning should be?	Conduct a critical evaluation of the existing literature on succession planning within public institutions.	What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?	3.2 Succession Planning 3.2.1 Succession planning defined 3.2.5 Advantages of succession planning 3.2.8 Succession planning in public institutions
How is the University measuring the success of its succession planning?	Please rate the effectiveness of the following methods in evaluating development needs. Please rate the efficiency of the following methods in terms of staff development.	Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a developmental tool for high performing staff.	To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?	3.2.3 Components in a succession planning process 3.2.4 Ways to approach succession planning 3.2.6 Benefits of succession planning to public service delivery

Interview Question	Question/statement in questionnaire	Research Objective	Research Question	Section in Literature Review
				3.4 Talent Management 3.5 Leadership Development
What are some of the challenges of the University of Namibia's succession planning?	What do you think the reasons are for the University's turnover of managers with scarce skills?	Critically evaluate the literature on succession planning in public institutions.	What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?	3.2.7 Barriers to succession planning 3.3 Workforce Planning 3.4 Talent Management
How diversified are the current University's talent pools?	Do you think the current employee promotion system is effective? Do you think the current employee promotion system is fair? Do you think the University values learning and development?	Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a developmental tool for high performing staff.	To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?	3.4 Talent Management 3.4.4 Benefits of talent management 3.5.2 Benefits of leadership development
What approach does the University use to nominate its staff	Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following methods of identifying potential successors.	Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a	To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in	3.2.3 Components in a succession planning process 3.4.3 The talent management process

Interview Question	Question/statement in questionnaire	Research Objective	Research Question	Section in Literature Review
members for leadership courses?	Do you think personality tests should be used to assess potential successors? Do you think qualifications are more important than work experience?	developmental tool for high performing staff.	developing high performing staff?	3.5.3 Leadership development activities
Is the management team... aware of the succession planning process and participating effectively?	Do you think the University's HR policies and practices support the retention of talent? Do you think HR policies effectively support the opportunity for development and training of staff?	Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a developmental tool for high performing staff.	To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?	3.4.2 Operational principles of talent management 3.5.1 Leadership styles 3.5.2 Benefits of leadership development
UNAM is faced with a large number of retirements – what strategy will the University use to close the gap?	Do you believe the University is investing sufficient time and efforts in the retention of key critical and scarce skills? Do you think the University	Critically evaluate literature on succession planning in public institutions.	What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?	3.2.8 Succession planning in public institutions 3.3 Workforce Planning 3.4.4 Benefits of talent management

Interview Question	Question/statement in questionnaire	Research Objective	Research Question	Section in Literature Review
	has invested in a focused attraction and retention strategy for critical/scarce skills?			
Do HR Policies and practices support succession planning?	Do you think HR policies support retention? Do you think HR policies support training and development opportunities? Do you think the University grants staff opportunities to attend workshops/seminars? Do you believe post-matric studies can enhance career opportunities?	Explore to what extent succession planning can be used as a developmental tool for high performing staff.	To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?	3.2.4 Ways to approach succession planning 3.4 Talent Management 3.5.3 Leadership development activities
Do you have a successor for your current position?	How long do you think the development period for potential successors should be?	Suggest a succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia.	What is the most suitable succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia?	2.4 Succession Planning Models 2.4.1 Seven Pointed Star Model 2.4.2 Acceleration Pool Model

Interview Question	Question/statement in questionnaire	Research Objective	Research Question	Section in Literature Review
				2.4.3 Leadership Pipeline Model
–	How do you think implementing a formal succession planning strategy will benefit the University? What are your expectations for a succession planning system?	Contribute to succession planning models in Public Administration.	What contribution can be made to succession planning models in Public Administration?	3.2.5 Advantages of succession planning 3.2.6 Benefits of succession planning to public service delivery 3.4.4 Benefits of talent management

5.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

McCombes (2023:8) defines the concept of population as a concept frequently employed to denote potential human respondents or participants in a study. McMillan (2000:103) contends that a research population typically constitutes a large aggregation of individuals or objects that serves as the focal point of a scientific inquiry. However, given the substantial size of populations, it is impractical for researchers to examine every individual within the population due to prohibitive costs and time constraints. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. The target population encompasses the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers aim to generalize their findings. This population generally exhibits diverse characteristics and is also known as the theoretical population. As McCombes (2023:16) elucidates, a sample constitutes a subset of a broader population. It is imperative that the sample accurately represents the population from which it is derived and is of sufficient size to support robust statistical analysis. The primary purpose of the sample is to enable researchers to conduct studies on individuals from the population, thereby allowing the results to be generalized to the entire population. Given the complexity of the sampling process, the subsequent section offers precise definitions of key terms to ensure clarity and consistency.

5.5.1 Population

The concept of 'population' refers to the entire set of cases or units about which the researcher intends to draw conclusions. A population is defined as the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements (McCombes, 2023:8-9). As Shukla (2020:20) notes, the purpose of survey research is to collect data from a subset of the population, known as a sample, to interpret relationships between the measured variables. The initial step in obtaining a sample is to define the population, which involves identifying the characteristics that members of the universe share, thereby classifying each unit as part of a specific group. The population, universe, or aggregate comprises the totality of units possessing certain defined characteristics in common. Members or units of a population are consistently similar in some significant respects. However, a population may also consist of sub-groups, which are a crucial consideration during the sampling stage of research. In this study, all staff members of the University of Namibia constitute the population.

According to Shukla (2020:21), a survey population consists of the elements from which a sample is selected. In this research, the survey population is confined to the staff at the

University of Namibia's main campus. As Shukla (2020:23) points out, exclusions can be made for practical purposes. Therefore, staff from other campuses were excluded to avoid the difficulties associated with handling and analysing an excessively large dataset.

5.5.2 Sample

A sample is a smaller portion of the overall population. To achieve a high-quality sample, one that accurately mirrors the parent population or effectively represents the target population, it is referred to as a representative sample. This type of sample is a smaller segment that closely reflects the characteristics of the larger population. As noted by Shukla (2020:24), a sample is a segment of the population that fully represents it. This implies that the units chosen as a sample must embody all the various characteristics of the different types of units within the population. In most research endeavours, data are collected from a sample rather than the entire population due to various constraints. The generalisation of findings to the entire population is feasible only if the sample is selected with careful consideration of the characteristics of an ideal sample. A sample that fails to represent the population adequately is insufficient for testing, as it cannot be generalised to the population. In this study, the population refers to the administrative staff of the University of Namibia. A sample was drawn from this population using the cluster sampling method. The researcher aims to select a sample that is sufficiently small to provide an adequate description of the whole. For the quantitative data in this study, the sample comprised 200 staff members at the main campus of the University of Namibia. For the qualitative data, the sample consisted of the administrative managers at the main campus of the University of Namibia.

5.5.2.1 Sampling method

The act of choosing samples from a population is known as sampling. Researchers can utilise various sampling techniques based on the study's objectives. Sampling theory identifies two primary methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is used when the likelihood of including each population element can be calculated, whereas non-probability sampling does not ensure equal selection chances (McCombes, 2023:10).

In this research, the issue is that the University of Namibia currently lacks a succession planning model, and the degree to which succession planning is employed to develop and advance high-performing staff is unclear. To tackle this issue, research questions were formulated to investigate both existing succession planning practices and the potential for

developing a model. To obtain credible and representative findings, both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study used suitable sampling strategies.

In the quantitative component of the study, probability sampling was employed, specifically utilising simple random sampling. This method involves the random selection of a subset of participants from the population, ensuring that each member has an equal probability of being chosen. An illustrative example of this technique is the random drawing of names from a hat. Simple random sampling is particularly effective when dealing with a relatively small and well-defined population (Olsen, 2022:28; McCombes & George, 2023:26). Consequently, 200 administrative staff members from various departments, sections, and units at the University of Namibia's main campus were selected to participate in the questionnaire. The inclusion criteria required participants to be permanently employed staff members with a minimum of four years of work experience, thereby ensuring adequate familiarity with the institution's succession planning processes. The contact information for these individuals was obtained from the Human Capital Department of the University of Namibia.

In the qualitative component of this study, purposeful sampling was utilised as a non-probability sampling strategy. This approach is prevalent in qualitative research for identifying and selecting cases that are rich in information pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation. Among the various purposeful sampling strategies, criterion sampling is frequently employed in implementation research. As noted by Polit and Beck (2017:741) and Liamputtong (2017:525), purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants based on the researchers' judgment. Participants are chosen for their ability to provide comprehensive insights into the phenomenon being studied (Bouncken, Czakon & Schmitt, 2025:5-6). In this study, purposive sampling was employed to recruit seven (7) managers whose roles and responsibilities enabled them to offer valuable perspectives on succession planning. The procedure for determining the purposive sampling is elaborated upon below.

Thus, the study employed both probability and non-probability sampling methods. Simple random sampling was implemented for the quantitative component to ensure representativeness and reliability, while purposive sampling was used in the qualitative component to obtain in-depth, context-specific insights from information-rich participants. These combined approaches enhanced the methodological rigor of the study and bolstered the credibility and trustworthiness of its findings.

5.5.2.2 Probability sampling

McCombes and George (2023:26) identify four main techniques for probability sampling: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling.

Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling is a probability sampling technique where the researcher selects participants from the population at random, ensuring everyone has an equal likelihood of being chosen. This guarantees that every member of the population has the same chance of being included. A typical example of this method is drawing names from a hat. This approach is especially appropriate when dealing with a relatively small population (Olsen, 2022:28; McCombes & George, 2023:26).

Systematic Sampling

Systematic sampling is like simple random sampling but is often easier to implement. In this method, every *n*th element is selected from a list of all population members, starting from a randomly chosen element. It is crucial to ensure that no hidden pattern exists in the list that might bias the sample. For instance, if an HR database lists employees by team and in order of seniority, using a fixed interval could result in a sample skewed towards senior staff, underrepresenting junior employees (McCombes & George, 2023:26).

Stratified Random Sampling

Stratified random sampling entails segmenting the population into distinct subgroups, or strata, which may vary based on key characteristics such as gender, age, job role, or income level. This approach ensures that each subgroup is adequately represented within the sample, thereby facilitating more precise conclusions. Once the number of participants to be selected from each stratum is determined according to population proportions, the researcher may employ either random or systematic sampling within each subgroup (McCombes & George, 2023:28).

Cluster Sampling

Cluster sampling entails partitioning the population into subgroups, or clusters, each of which is representative of the entire population. Subsequently, entire clusters are randomly selected

to constitute the sample, rather than selecting individual elements (McCombes & George, 2023:26). This approach is particularly advantageous for large and geographically dispersed populations. However, it is associated with an increased risk of sampling error, as variations between clusters may result in unrepresentative samples. Errors can manifest at two levels: during the sampling of clusters and during the sampling of elements within each selected cluster (McCombes, 2023:10).

Although cluster sampling can efficiently handle large populations, it is generally less precise than other probability sampling methods because of these compounded sources of error.

5.5.2.3 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling refers to a method where the researcher chooses samples based on their own judgment rather than through random selection. This approach is less rigorous and relies significantly on the researcher's expertise. It is typically conducted through observation and is commonly used in qualitative research. Although this type of sampling is more accessible and cost-effective, it carries a greater risk of sampling bias. Consequently, the conclusions drawn about the population are less robust compared to those from probability samples, and the findings may be more restricted. When employing a non-probability sample, the goal should still be to ensure it is as representative of the population as possible. Researchers opt for this method in situations where random probability sampling is impractical due to constraints of time or budget (McCombes & George, 2023:29).

According to Stratton (2023:147), non-probability sampling is the umbrella term for various sampling methods.

Convenience sampling

As noted by Novosel (2023:245), convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where participants are chosen from the population simply because they are readily accessible to the researcher. This method involves selecting samples based on their ease of recruitment, without aiming to represent the entire population. Ideally, research should involve a sample that reflects the broader population. However, in certain studies, the population size is too vast to feasibly include everyone. This is one reason why researchers often turn to convenience sampling, the most prevalent non-probability sampling technique, due to its quickness, cost efficiency, and the ease with which samples can be obtained.

Consecutive sampling

Consecutive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that closely resembles convenience sampling, though with a minor distinction. This technique involves the researcher selecting a sample or group of individuals, conducting research over a specified period, collecting results, and subsequently proceeding to another sample. Consecutive sampling affords the researcher the opportunity to engage with multiple topics and refine their research by gathering results that provide critical insights. This method is generally deemed beneficial when other sampling techniques are unavailable (Nikolopoulou, 2022:134).

Quota sampling

In quota sampling, a predetermined number or proportion of units are selected, called a quota. The quota should comprise subgroups with specific characteristics (e.g., individuals, cases, or organisations) and should be selected in a non-random manner. Subgroups, called strata, should be mutually exclusive. The estimation can be based on previous studies or on other existing data, if there is any. This helps to determine how many units should be chosen from each subgroup. In the data collection phase, units are recruited until the required quota is reached (Nikolopoulou, 2022:134).

Judgmental or purposive sampling

Stratton (2023:147) asserts that the judgmental sampling method involves the selection of samples based solely on the researcher's expertise and credibility. In essence, researchers select participants whom they consider suitable for inclusion in the study. Judgmental or purposive sampling is not a scientific sampling method, and a significant limitation of this technique is the potential for researcher bias to affect the results. Consequently, this research method is characterized by a considerable degree of ambiguity.

Snowball sampling

Stratton (2023:148) posits that snowball sampling is an effective method for researchers to identify a sample when potential participants are challenging to locate. This technique is particularly useful when the sample size is small and not readily accessible. The process is analogous to a referral program; once researchers identify suitable participants, they request

these individuals to assist in identifying additional participants, thereby facilitating the formation of a sufficiently large sample.

Purposeful sampling

In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is commonly utilised to identify and choose cases that are rich in information and directly pertinent to the phenomenon being studied. Among the various strategies for purposeful sampling, criterion sampling is most often employed in implementation research. As noted by Polit and Beck (2017:741) and Liamputtong (2017:525), purposive sampling entails the deliberate selection of participants based on the researcher's expert judgement. These participants are anticipated to offer comprehensive insights into the phenomenon being examined (Bouncken, Czakon & Schmitt, 2025:5-6). In this particular study, purposive sampling was used to enlist seven (7) managers for participation.

Inclusion or eligibility criteria refer to the specific traits of the target population that the researcher considers crucial for the study's objectives (Polit & Beck, 2017:250). To ensure that the data gathered accurately represented succession planning practices at the University of Namibia, administrative managers were included if they were permanently employed at the University, had a minimum of four years of work experience, and could communicate in English, which was the language of communication. Participation was voluntary and not limited by age, race, or gender. The researcher assumed that the chosen participants were well-acquainted with the institution's daily operations and could thus provide valuable, pertinent information.

The target groups, population, and sample sizes of this study are summarised in the table below.

Table 5.3: Target groups, population and sample sizes

Target Group	Site Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique	Strand
Administrative Staff Members	400	200	Simple Random Sampling (Probability)	Quantitative
Administrative Managers	400	7	Purposive Sampling (Non-probability)	Qualitative
Total	400	207	-	-

5.6 PILOTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

After designing the questionnaire, the subsequent essential step involved validating and pilot testing it. As noted by Leavy (2023:77), no matter how meticulously a questionnaire is crafted, errors can still occur. The most effective way to prevent such mistakes is to conduct a preliminary test of the questionnaire, either entirely or partially, before it is distributed to the intended audience.

5.6.1 Expert Validation

To commence the validation process, draft copies of the questionnaire were submitted to a panel comprising two research experts. To facilitate an effective review, the experts were furnished with explicit guidelines detailing their role, the study's purpose, and the principal research questions. They were specifically tasked with evaluating the clarity of the items, the suitability of the language and expressions for the target respondents, and the adequacy of the provided instructions. The panel was allotted a period of seven days to complete their review and return the questionnaire to the researcher.

Both experts submitted the completed questionnaires with constructive feedback. These suggestions were meticulously considered and integrated into the revised version. Items identified as irrelevant to the study were removed, additional questions were incorporated to enhance coverage, and certain questions were redrafted, restructured, and regrouped for improved coherence. The revised questionnaire was subsequently submitted to the supervisor for further critique, following which additional refinements were made to produce the final draft.

5.6.2 Pilot Testing

The last stage of preparation involved conducting a pilot test. Following the guidelines of Martínez Celis (2024:149–151), the pilot test utilised the same wording, format, and order as the final questionnaire. Conducting a pilot test is crucial for identifying any flaws in the research design and data collection tool, offering proxy data for sample selection, and ensuring that any potential issues are resolved before the main data collection begins. This step helps prevent future regrets over data that is unusable, improperly formatted, or incorrectly specified.

A draft version of the questionnaire was given to seven colleagues with varying levels of qualifications, who were asked to fill it out, note the time it took, and provide feedback on the

clarity of the questions. The purpose of this exercise was to determine how respondents would interact with the instrument: whether the items were easily understood, whether additional questions were required, or whether there were questions that respondents were unwilling to answer. Space was also provided for participants to record their comments alongside their responses (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:88).

All seven team members completed the questionnaire, indicating an average time of under 15 minutes. They verified that the questions were clearly worded and that they faced no issues while filling it out. As a result, no additional changes were necessary at this point. Furthermore, the data obtained from the pilot test were examined to evaluate the practicality of the proposed data analysis techniques for the main study, thereby enhancing the research design's reliability.

5.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection involves the design of the questionnaire, while the data collection technique pertains to the administration of the questionnaire to gather survey data (Gray, Grove & Sutherland, 2017:672). Consequently, data collection refers to the systematic, organised, and formalised method for acquiring the data necessary to address the research question. Figure 5.1 illustrates the distribution of questionnaires during the data collection process. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire (Annexure G). An online platform, Google Forms, was employed to administer and manage the questionnaire to 200 participants. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to administrative staff members at the University of Namibia, Windhoek campuses. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 105 were returned, resulting in a representative response rate of 52.5%.

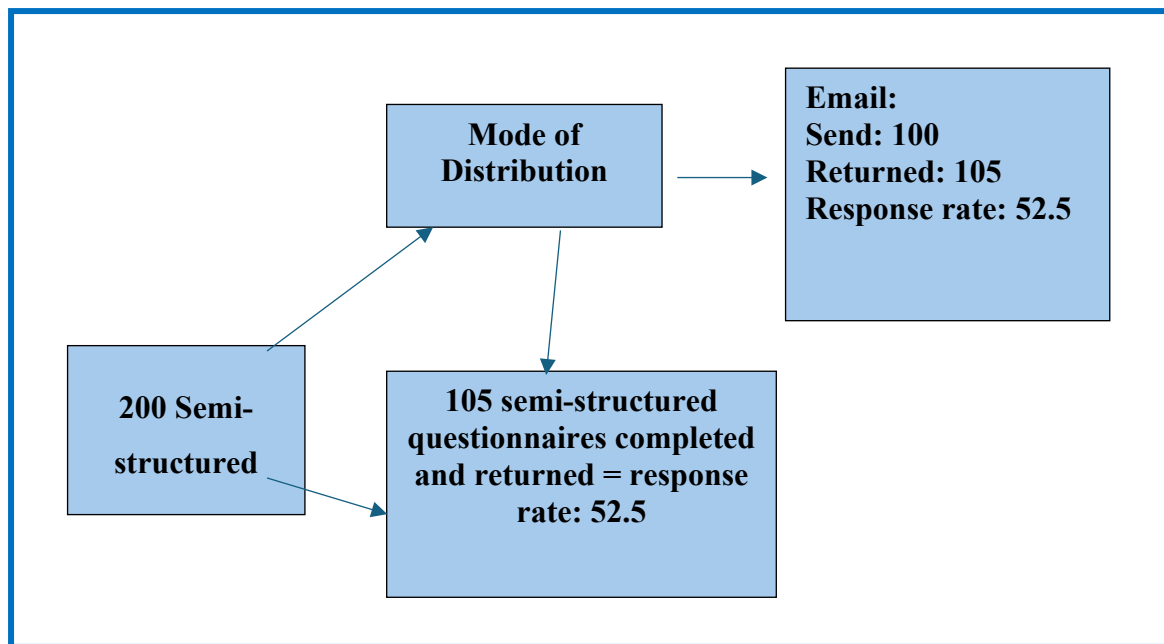


Figure 5.1: Distribution and return response rate of semi-structured questionnaire

Source: (Gray, Grove & Sutherland, 2017:675).

The researcher conducted online interviews via Microsoft Teams with seven managers from the University of Namibia. Appointments were scheduled with each manager, and individual interviews were subsequently conducted. On the designated day of data collection, the researcher met with each manager through Microsoft Teams. The researcher elucidated the study's purpose, anticipated outcomes, confidentiality and anonymity measures, and the dissemination of results. Participants were then invited to voluntarily partake in the study. Those who consented to participate were emailed a cover letter to obtain informed consent (Annexure D) and the Interview Schedule (Annexure F) for their completion. The researcher assured participants that their names would not be recorded in the study report to safeguard their identities.

5.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a methodological approach employed to reduce, categorize, organise, and manipulate raw data, thereby enabling the meaningful interpretation of the information derived from such data (Gray, Grove & Sutherland 2017:675). This process involves transcribing and coding raw data, subsequently organising it into categories, themes, and subthemes to facilitate meaningful interpretation (Gray et al., 2017:675; Liamputtong, 2017:512). The researcher

employed thematic data analysis for the qualitative data. The primary objective of thematic analysis is to identify themes, or patterns within the data, that are significant or intriguing, and to utilise these themes to address the research question or provide insights into a particular issue. This process extends beyond mere data summarization; a robust thematic analysis involves interpreting and making sense of the data. A common error is to use the main interview questions as themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013:124), which often indicates that the data have been summarized and organised rather than thoroughly analysed. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) distinguish between two levels of themes: semantic and latent. Semantic themes pertain to the explicit statements of participants, focusing on surface meanings without delving beyond what participants have articulated or documented. In contrast, latent themes explore underlying ideas, assumptions, and ideologies that are theorized to shape or inform the semantic content of the data (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield & Terry, 2018:4; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3353).

The researcher utilised thematic data analysis for the qualitative data, which comprised the following steps:

Acquaintance with the Data: In this initial phase, the researcher transcribed the recorded data verbatim. The researcher engaged in repeated readings of the data and field notes to thoroughly familiarise herself with the content prior to the coding process. A list of preliminary ideas regarding noteworthy aspects of the data was generated (Liamputtong, 2017:527; Polit & Beck, 2017:478).

Generation of Initial Codes: In the subsequent phase, the researcher developed initial codes from the data. Notable features of the data were systematically coded across the entire dataset, organising the data into meaningful categories. Coding may be conducted manually or with the assistance of software. In this study, the researcher opted for manual coding, employing notes and various coloured highlighters to denote potential patterns. All data extracts were coded and subsequently collated within each code (Liamputtong, 2017:527; Polit & Beck, 2017:478).

Identification of Themes: The researcher systematically organised various codes into potential themes and compiled all pertinent coded data extracts within these identified themes. Initially, the researcher analysed the codes and evaluated how different codes could be integrated to form overarching themes (Liamputtong, 2017:527, Polit & Beck, 2017: 478).

Evaluation of Themes: The researcher subsequently reviewed the themes to ascertain their coherence with the coded extracts and the entire data set, subsequently generating a thematic map of the analysis (Liamputtong, 2017:527, Polit & Beck, 2017: 478).

Define and name themes: This phase involves continuous analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overarching narrative conveyed by the analysis. The researcher developed clear definitions and names for each theme (Liamputtong, 2017:527, Polit & Beck, 2017:478).

Produce the report: This constitutes the final phase of thematic analysis. In this phase, the researcher selected vivid and compelling extract examples and conducted a final analysis of the selected extracts. The final analysis was then related back to the research question and literature review, followed by a report of the analysis. This core narrative was categorized into three themes, namely, current succession planning for leadership development of administrative staff at the University of Namibia, and current succession planning and management practices, and barriers to the implementation of succession planning for leadership development.

Thematic analysis is a versatile method for data analysis, characterized by a non-linear progression through its phases. Rather than following a sequential approach, the analysis involved a recursive process, allowing for movement back and forth between phases as codes were assigned to the data and themes and categories were identified. The researcher and the coder collaboratively confirmed and reached a consensus on the findings.

Percentages are instrumental in data interpretation, facilitating the understanding of essential frequency distributions and enabling comparisons between them (Grove, et al., 2017:674). An experienced statistician conducted the data analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 12.0.

The data analysis process followed for the quantitative data were as follows:

Upon completion of the questionnaire by the respondents, each questionnaire was meticulously reviewed for completeness, and record numbers were manually assigned. Subsequently, the responses underwent manual coding. Coding entails the assignment of numerical values or symbols to responses, facilitating their categorisation into a finite number of groups (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:93). In the context of this study, numbers were allocated in accordance with the questionnaire's question numbers. The closed-ended questions were coded based on the options provided within the questionnaire, for example.

Section A, question 5: How long have you been employed at the University of Namibia?

- A5-1 1 – 5 years
- A5-2 5 – 10 years
- A5.3 10 – 20 years
- A5.4 More than 20 years

The open-ended questions were systematically coded using prevalent keywords and terms derived from the respondents.

The quantitative data were subjected to descriptive analysis techniques to discern patterns, relationships, and emerging trends pertinent to the study context. Descriptive analysis provides an essential foundation for understanding organisational dynamics within a case study, particularly in Public Administration, where evidence-based insights support decision-making and policy refinement. The quantitative results are further enhanced by qualitative exploration, facilitating a more profound interpretation of the institutional and human factors that affect succession planning practices.

5.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Olmsted (2024:53) suggests that validity pertains to the extent to which a research design comprehensively addresses the research questions and objectives. Validity is categorised into internal and external types. Internal validity denotes the level of confidence that the causal relationship under investigation is not influenced by extraneous factors or variables, while external validity pertains to the generalisability of findings to other analogous situations and contexts. Both forms of validity are indicative of the research design's capacity to unequivocally test the research hypothesis.

Reliability, on the other hand, concerns the consistency of research outcomes and whether another researcher can replicate the study using the same design to achieve similar results. It refers to the degree to which the results are consistent and accurate. However, reliability alone is insufficient; for a test to be deemed reliable, it must also be valid (Olmsted, 2024:54).

In sequential explanatory mixed methods research, ensuring validity and reliability necessitates the implementation of strategies to mitigate potential challenges in data collection, analysis,

and interpretation. These challenges may affect the integration or linkage of the quantitative and qualitative components of the study (Liamputtong, 2017:525).

5.9.1 Validity

Validity pertains to the reliability and precision of a study (Liamputtong, 2017:529). It is employed to ascertain the extent to which a conclusion, measurement, or concept is well-founded and accurately reflects reality. Validity is assessed through construct, content, and face validity.

Construct validity denotes the extent to which a study comprehensively measures all aspects of a concept. It relies on the researcher's ability to conceptually and operationally define the study variable (Gray, Grove & Sutherland, 2017:674). Given that the questionnaire was newly developed, it underwent evaluation by a statistician. The following aspects were addressed in both data collection instruments:

1. Succession planning within public institutions.
2. The potential of utilising a succession planning model as a developmental tool for cultivating high-performing staff.
3. The identification of the most appropriate succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia.
4. Succession planning models in the context of Public Administration.

Content validity pertains to the extent to which a measurement instrument adequately represents the entire range of content, elements, or instances of the phenomenon under investigation (Gray, et al., 2017:675). The content validity of the questionnaire was established through pretesting, which assessed its practicality and suitability for respondents like those in the main study. Additionally, a statistician contributed to ensuring content validity by coding the questionnaire and analysing the data collected from it.

Face validity pertains to the extent to which a questionnaire appears relevant to its participants. A lack of face validity may lead to participant resistance, potentially compromising the integrity of the results (Gray, Grove & Sutherland 2017:678). The questionnaire underwent evaluation, and its validity was confirmed by both the statistician and the study supervisors.

The study supervisors recommended the inclusion of a 4-point Likert scale for certain sections, as well as open-ended questions. These suggestions were incorporated into the questionnaire, which was subsequently approved by the statistician and supervisors. The questionnaire was designed to be user-friendly, comprising four pages and requiring approximately 15 minutes to complete, as all questions were clear and easily comprehensible.

5.9.2 Reliability

The reliability of a questionnaire pertains to the consistency with which respondents comprehend and answer all the questions (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2018:515). An instrument may be reliable without being valid; however, it cannot be valid if it lacks reliability (Brinkman, 2017:169). According to Gray, et al. (2017:690), reliability encompasses three categories of measurement: stability, internal consistency, and equivalence reliability.

Stability assesses whether the research measurement instrument, when applied multiple times, can produce consistent results. Internal consistency examines the extent to which each item in a questionnaire is related to and agrees with the others (Liamputtong, 2017:517; Gray, et al., 2017:681). Equivalence reliability pertains to situations where multiple researchers are involved in the study, utilising the same measurement instrument to collect data (Gray, et al., 2017:677; Polit & Beck, 2017:727). In this study, stability was confirmed as the same questionnaire was administered to respondents across different departments.

Internal consistency is defined as the degree to which items within a scale consistently measure the same construct (Liamputtong, 2017:511). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher in collaboration with the study supervisors (Annexures F and G). An expert statistician was consulted to evaluate the questionnaire's practicality and the suitability of the proposed questions. Furthermore, a pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The same questions were employed during data collection to ensure internal consistency.

Equivalence was maintained throughout this study. The statistician (Annexure E – Confidentiality Agreement) utilised the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 12.0 for data analysis.

5.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND AUTHENTICITY

In qualitative research trustworthiness pertains to the quality and rigor of the data, analogous to the concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative research (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2018:125). In this study, the issue of trustworthiness was particularly significant due to the investigation of the absence of a succession planning model at the University of Namibia and the uncertainty regarding the extent to which succession planning is utilised to develop and promote high-performing staff. This necessitates credible and dependable evidence to inform conclusions and recommendations. To ensure the integrity of the findings, the researcher employed the four key criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Liamputtong, 2017:21).

Credibility was enhanced by dedicating ample time to the data collection process, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions. This approach was crucial in addressing the research questions, such as *"To what extent can a succession planning model be utilised as a developmental tool in cultivating high-performing staff?"* At the conclusion of each interview, participants were requested to verify whether the interpretations accurately represented their perspectives, thus ensuring that the findings presented were an authentic account of the succession planning processes at the University of Namibia.

Dependability was ensured through a comprehensive description of the methodology, encompassing the sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and analytical methods. Detailed documentation of interviews, transcripts, field notes, and research decisions was meticulously maintained to establish a transparent audit trail. This measure guarantees that future researchers exploring related inquiries, such as "What is the most appropriate research approach to investigate succession planning in public institutions?", can follow and, if necessary, replicate the process.

Confirmability was achieved by recognising and minimising researcher bias. A reflective diary was used to document personal assumptions, insights, and decisions throughout the study, ensuring that the results were guided by participants' narratives rather than the researcher's perceptions. In addition, an experienced co-coder was involved during the data analysis phase to enhance objectivity. This was particularly crucial in addressing questions such as *"What is the most suitable succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia?"*, where the researcher's perspectives could inadvertently affect interpretations.

Transferability was enhanced using purposive sampling and the provision of comprehensive, contextualized descriptions of the study setting, participants, and methodology. This approach enables readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other institutions encountering similar challenges in succession planning. Furthermore, this strategy supports the overarching research question: *“What contribution can be made to succession planning models in Public Administration?”*

In conclusion, the researcher meticulously reviewed each audio recording and repeatedly examined the transcribed data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the participants' accounts. Reports were presented using participants' direct quotations, thereby capturing authentic perspectives rather than filtered interpretations. These measures collectively strengthened the trustworthiness of the study and ensured that its findings provide a credible foundation for proposing a succession planning model for the University of Namibia.

5.11 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND CONTRIBUTION TO FUTURE RESEARCH

This study's research design and methodological choices proved highly effective for examining complex, context-specific organisational issues such as succession planning in higher education institutions. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative survey results with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, the study successfully captured both the broad patterns and the nuanced experiences surrounding succession planning at the University of Namibia. The quantitative data revealed general trends and perceptions among administrative staff, while the qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into managerial perspectives, institutional dynamics, and hidden organisational challenges that structured instruments alone often fail to reveal.

The use of thematic analysis also strengthened the study by enabling both surface-level and deeper interpretations of the qualitative data. This approach helped uncover implicit issues such as informal organisational practices, perceived promotion inequalities, and weaknesses in leadership development initiatives. Its iterative and flexible nature ensured that findings were not simply descriptive but analytically meaningful. In parallel, descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS added empirical grounding, allowing the qualitative insights to be supported and contextualised.

Importantly, the methodological strategy used in this research offers a transferable and practical model for scholars studying succession planning or leadership development in similar institutional environments. In public sector and higher education settings, where bureaucratic structures, changing leadership demands, and underdeveloped formal systems are common, combining quantitative and qualitative methods provides a strong framework for exploring both structural and human elements of organisational behaviour. This approach is especially useful for studies conducted in under-researched contexts or in institutions where succession planning systems are still emerging.

Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of aligning research methods with the research problem and objectives. By utilising both a semi-structured questionnaire and detailed interviews, the research directly addressed identified gaps in succession planning practices, ensuring coherence and relevance. This alignment enhanced the credibility of the findings and offered a clear methodological roadmap for future scholars working in organisational studies or public administration. Therefore, the methodological choices made in this study offer more than just procedural guidance, they contribute to broader knowledge by demonstrating how mixed-methods research can effectively explore and diagnose complex organisational challenges. The study therefore provides not only empirical insights but also valuable methodological direction for future research aimed at strengthening succession planning systems within higher education and similar institutional settings.

5.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter elucidates the research methodology and sampling techniques employed in this study. It provides a detailed account of the procedures followed in conducting the survey, including the selection of the sample and the construction and administration of the questionnaire. Two distinct procedures were utilised for data collection. The researcher opted to use questionnaires as a data collection method due to their efficiency, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness in gathering substantial data from large sample sizes. These methods are particularly advantageous for evaluating behaviours, preferences, intentions, attitudes, and opinions. An online platform, SurveyMonkey.com, was utilised to administer and manage the questionnaire for 200 participants. The response rate for questionnaires distributed to the administrative staff was 52.5%, while the response rate for managers was 100%. The procedure for administering the interview questionnaire was also delineated. The data analysis process was described, emphasising the necessity for raw data to be transcribed, coded, and organised

into categories, themes, and subthemes to facilitate meaningful interpretation. Following the collection of questionnaires, responses were coded, and the questionnaires were subsequently delivered for data capturing and analysis. The researcher employed thematic data analysis for the qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using statistical methods, as quantitative data consist of numerical values from which data points can be calculated.

A detailed account of the procedure employed to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data was provided. Trustworthiness pertains to the quality of data in qualitative research and is analogous to validity and reliability in quantitative studies. The four fundamental attributes of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are employed to ensure the security and reliability of information systems. Collectively, these attributes form the foundation of information security and are essential components that must be protected to ensure the secure management of sensitive data. The subsequent chapter will discuss the data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 6:

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 provided a comprehensive examination of the research design and methodology employed in this study. It commenced with an exploration of the research approach, elucidating the selected framework and the underlying rationale. The chapter also explored the methodology selected for the study, emphasising its suitability and advantages. The section on data collection instruments provided insights into the tools used to gather empirical data, followed by considerations on the population and sample characteristics. Ethical considerations were also addressed, outlining procedures and guidelines followed during data collection. The chapter concluded with an in-depth examination of data analysis techniques, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research findings. The discussion of research methodology in Chapter 5 established the groundwork for data collection and analysis. Consequently, Chapter 5 provided a structured framework for gathering reliable data and deriving meaningful insights. This solid groundwork not only underpinned the subsequent chapters' exploration of findings and interpretations but also provided a clear pathway for the culmination of conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 7.

This chapter, Chapter 6 is dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of the research findings. The data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative research instruments, indicating that mixed methods data collection techniques were employed to fulfil the study's objectives namely (1) to determine to what extent succession planning can be used to develop and promote competent and high performing staff and (2) to design a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia.

6.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Data collection is defined as the systematic and intentional acquisition of information from participants, which is directly aligned with the study's objectives, research questions, or hypotheses (Rahal & Adorjan, 2025:65). This process generally involves the implementation of structured procedures to ensure that the data collected are consistent, comparable, and predetermined across all participants (De Sordi, 2024:36). In this study, a semi-structured

questionnaire was used as the primary quantitative instrument. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, of which 105 were completed and returned. As the questionnaire did not require compulsory responses to all items, the totals for certain questions reflect fewer than 104 valid responses. To complement the quantitative strand, seven administrative managers also participated voluntarily in semi-structured interviews, aimed at exploring and describing their perceptions of succession planning practices and leadership development at the University of Namibia.

The combined use of questionnaires and interviews achieved the objective of the study by generating empirical evidence on the extent to which succession planning is currently applied within the institution. This, in turn, informed the development of a conceptual succession planning model for the University.

The study therefore adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative precision with qualitative descriptive interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of succession planning at the University of Namibia. Quantitative findings derived from the questionnaires offer measurable insights into staff demographics, qualifications, performance indicators, and promotion trajectories. For instance, statistical evidence reveals the absence of a formalised succession planning framework, confirming that systematic identification and development of high-potential staff remain largely uncoordinated. However, quantitative data alone cannot capture the organisational culture, leadership practices, or contextual factors influencing talent development. To address this, the qualitative descriptive analysis of interview data provides interpretive depth, highlighting themes such as managerial attitudes toward succession planning, perceptions of career growth opportunities, and institutional barriers to leadership development. This integration of numerical evidence with contextual interpretation enables a holistic understanding of the succession planning landscape, linking the findings to theoretical models, policy imperatives, and institutional realities (De Sordi, 2024:37).

By employing this dual approach, the study strengthens its capacity to produce evidence-based, contextually relevant recommendations. More importantly, it provides the analytical foundation for designing a conceptual model tailored to address the existing gap, namely, the absence of a structured succession planning framework at the University of Namibia and the current lack of knowledge regarding its potential to develop and promote competent, high-performing staff.

The quantitative data analysis and findings are presented as part one of the chapter, followed the analysis and findings of the qualitative data.

6.3 ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS OF QUANTIFIABLE DATA

Quantitative data analysis is the process of making sense of numerical data using mathematical calculations and statistical tests. It assists in recognising relationships, patterns, and trends to reach valid and reliable findings.

The quantitative data analysis is presented according to the four sections of the questionnaire, namely:

- Section A, which addresses the general background of the respondent;
- Section B, which focuses on the succession planning process;
- Section C, which examines succession planning strategies; and
- Section D, which explores the challenges associated with succession planning.

The symbol *n* used in the presentation in the data denotes the actual number of the respondents in relation to the total number per category or the overall number of research respondents.

6.3.1 Quantitative Data: Critical Analysis, Interpretation and Findings

This section moves beyond descriptive presentation to critically analyse and interpret the quantitative findings in relation to the study's central objective:

“to examine succession planning practices at the University of Namibia and develop a contextually relevant model.”

The analysis demonstrates that while awareness of succession planning exists, its conceptual understanding, strategic alignment, and institutional implementation remain fragmented and inconsistent.

6.3.1.1 Section A: Demographic profile of respondents

Section A of the questionnaire provided a general background of the respondents, whereby they were requested to provide information regarding their length of service and the period

they are in their current position at the University of Namibia. The data analysis and interpretation in this section follows the sequence of the questionnaire from Section A.

Question 1: *How long have you been employed at the University of Namibia?*

The participants were requested to specify their duration of employment (Length of Service) at the University of Namibia. The results in Figure 6.1 indicates that 39% of the respondents have between 5 to 10 years' service with the University of Namibia, 30% between 0 to 5 years, 21% between 10 to 20 years and 11% have indicated that they been employed at the University for more than 20 years.

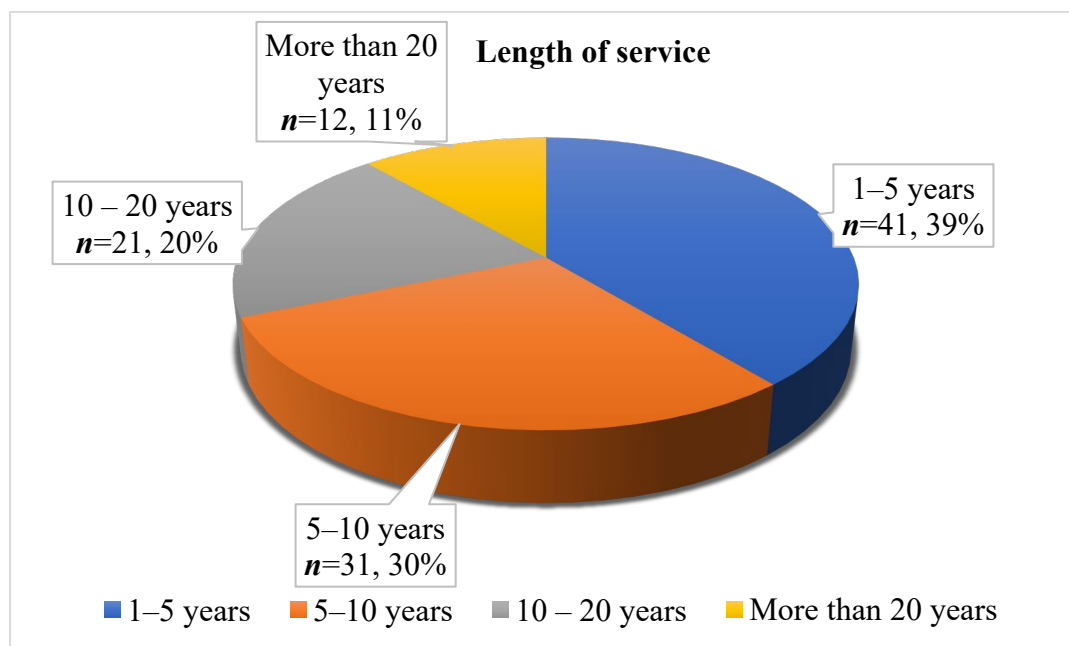


Figure 6.1: Length of service

According to Stinson (2017:2), staff members with over five years of experience in the same working environment are deemed experienced. Consequently, the results indicate that the respondents are experienced and skilled staff members, thereby affirming the validity and reliability of the responses. As corroborated in Chapter 3, section 3.4 on Talent Management, the respondents' years of experience contribute to sound judgment, decision-making, and actions in succession planning, professional responsibility, and procedural matters. Moreover, the respondents' extensive knowledge base facilitates a more comprehensive understanding and implementation of succession planning (Ibarra, 2024:16). This finding is analytically significant for two interrelated reasons. First, the dominance of experienced staff enhances the

credibility and validity of the data, as respondents are not peripheral observers but are deeply embedded within institutional processes. Second, employees with longer tenure are more likely to have directly encountered leadership transitions, including vacancies, promotions, and organisational discontinuities, which positions them to provide informed and contextually grounded insights into succession planning practices. However, this also reveals a critical tension within the data. Despite this substantial institutional experience, subsequent findings (Section B) indicate notable conceptual misunderstandings of succession planning, suggesting that experience alone does not translate into strategic awareness or a coherent understanding of succession planning as a formalised organisational process.

The gap between practical experience in organisations and the theoretical grasp of succession planning highlights a lack of mechanisms for institutional learning.

The period of current position is summarised in the following section.

Question 2: *How long have you been in your current position?*

It was highlighted in Chapter 3, section 3.4 Talent management, that the length of time a person has been in their current position can indicate stability within an organisation. High turnover rates may suggest challenges in succession planning, such as frequent disruptions in leadership continuity or difficulty in retaining talent. Individuals who have been in their positions for longer periods may have insights into organisational practices related to succession planning. Their perspectives on leadership transitions, training programmes for successors, or organisational culture around career progression can provide qualitative data (Ibarra, 2024:12-14).

Figure 6.2 shows that most respondents are between 1 to 5 years in their current position. Only 2 respondents indicated that they are more than 20 years in their current position.

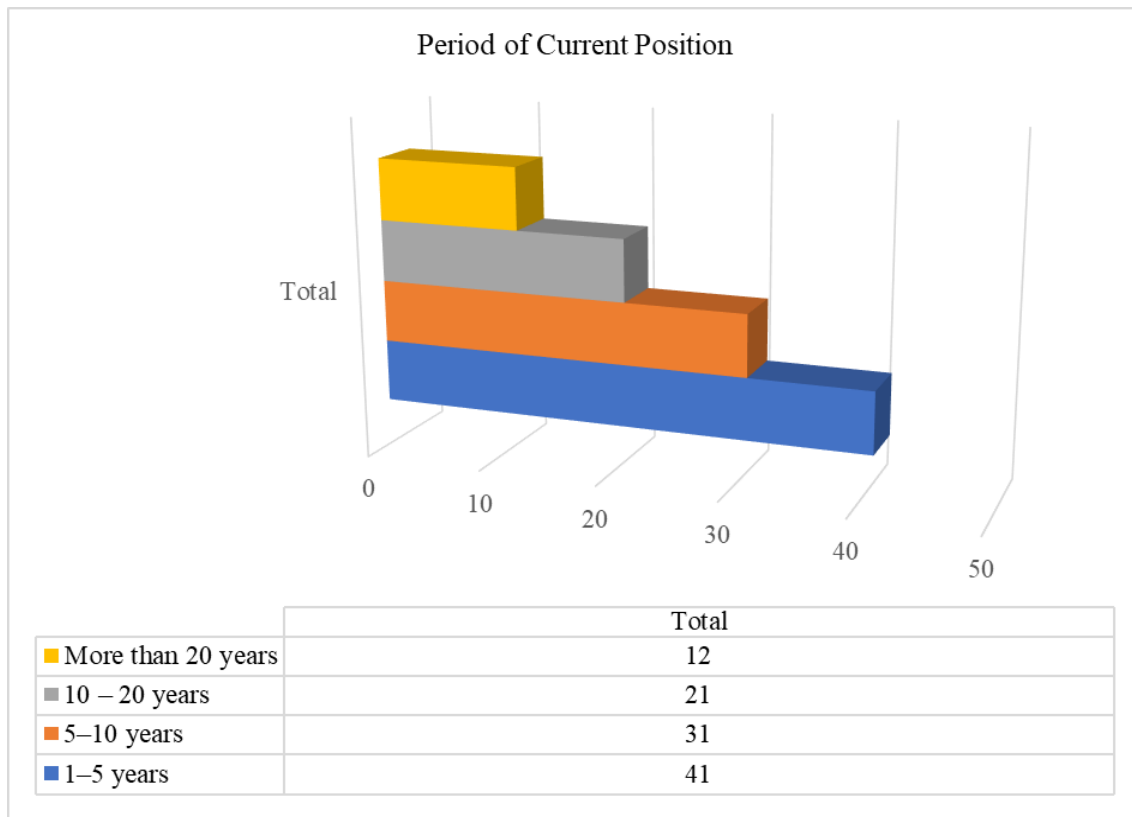


Figure 6.2: Period in Current Position

The findings indicate that most respondents have occupied their current positions for between one and five years, with relatively few long-tenured incumbents. This pattern suggests a degree of role instability or mobility within the institution, potentially characterised by horizontal movement without clear or structured progression pathways. From a critical perspective, such trends point to weaknesses in career-pathing systems and a lack of deliberate talent development mechanisms. In the context of succession planning, this pattern is unlikely to reflect healthy organisational mobility; rather, it more plausibly indicates reactive staffing practices, limited development of structured leadership pipelines, and the absence of planned progression into leadership roles. This interpretation is consistent with Dilg (2024:93), who associates shorter tenure patterns with broader systemic weaknesses in talent management frame works. Long-term employees typically provide valuable perspectives on organisational practices, including succession planning and leadership transitions (see Chapter 3, section 3.4 *Talent management*). The limited number of long-tenured employees suggests a potential gap in these qualitative insights, which could affect the organisation's ability to refine its succession planning strategies and training programmes (Dilg, 2024:93). The University exhibits

positional instability without structured progression, undermining the development of a sustainable leadership pipeline.

To address these issues, the University of Namibia may need to focus on enhancing its talent management strategies. This could include improving retention efforts, developing more robust succession planning processes, and creating opportunities for long-term career development to stabilise the workforce and capture valuable institutional knowledge.

6.3.1.2 Section B: Understanding of succession planning

The focus of section B was to determine the respondent's understanding of succession planning. The section focuses on understanding succession planning as highlighted by Abdullahi, Raman and Solarin (2022:138-139) and further expanded by Keerio and Ahmad (2024:1454). The text underscores the pivotal role of human resources management in succession planning, particularly in fostering workforce competencies, mentoring new employees, and aligning organisational objectives with workforce capabilities. The analysis and interpretation of data in this section adhere to the sequence outlined in Section B of the questionnaire.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

Including a question about the definition of succession planning helps gauge the respondent's baseline understanding of the concept, ensuring that their answers to subsequent questions are informed and relevant. It also helps identify any gaps in knowledge that may affect the quality of their responses.

Question 3: *Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of succession planning?*

- *Identifying high-performing, skilled staff for challenging tasks as well as providing them with further training and incentives to keep them within the institution*
- *Developing internal people with the potential to fill management and leadership positions.*
- *A systematic review and training process to prepare possible successors for key positions in an institution.*

Figure 6.3 below illustrates how the respondents define succession planning.

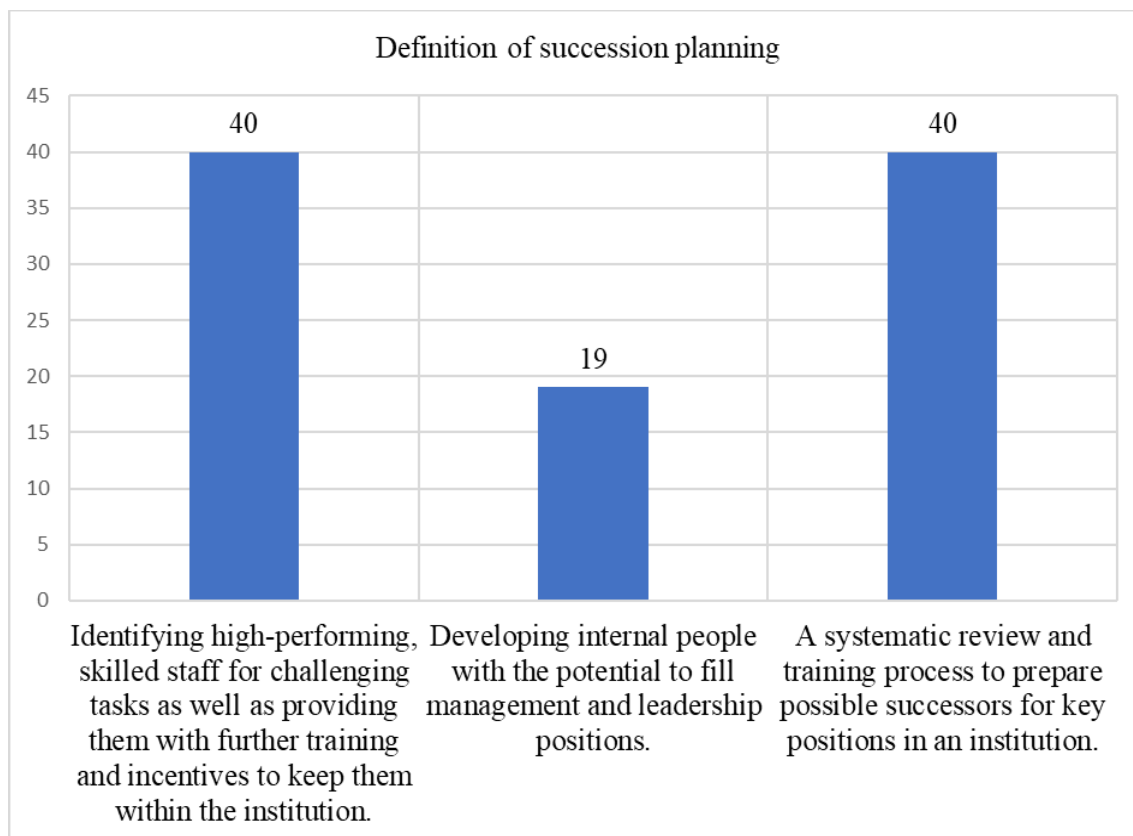


Figure 6.3: Definition of succession planning

The findings presented in Figure 6.3 indicate that 40% of respondents conceptualized succession planning as a replacement-focused process, a further 40% associated it with talent retention, and only 19% perceived it as a mechanism for leadership development. This distribution reveals a clear conceptual fragmentation, where the majority interpret succession planning in narrow, operational terms, while only a minority recognise its broader strategic and developmental function. Such interpretations are theoretically misaligned with Keerio and Ahmad (2024:1454), who define succession planning as a strategic developmental process centered on cultivating internal leadership capacity. Consequently, the prevailing understanding within the institution reflects a transactional rather than a transformational orientation. Importantly, this is not merely a gap in knowledge but indicative of a deeper systemic issue, as the understanding of succession planning directly influences its implementation in practice. A dominant replacement-focused mindset is likely to produce reactive staffing approaches rather than fostering deliberate leadership pipeline development.

The findings suggest that succession planning at the University of Namibia is conceptually reduced to replacement and retention, which significantly constrains its effectiveness as a strategic leadership development mechanism.

IMPORTANCE TO IMPLEMENT A FORMAL SUCCESSION PLANNING SYSTEM

Question 4 of the questionnaire assessed the respondent's perceived value of formal succession planning within the university, which provided insights into attitudes towards organisational stability and strategic management. It helped determine how crucial stakeholders believe the implementation is for long-term success and continuity.

Question 4: *How important do you think it is for the University to implement a formal succession planning system?*

As confirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1, "Succession Planning Defined," Abdullahi, Raman, and Solarin (2022:140) assert that human resources management plays a pivotal role in the implementation of succession planning, as well as in the development and implementation of competencies for the entire workforce. They further elucidate that the human resources management department is responsible for planning mentoring and coaching initiatives for new employees to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities. Conversely, Keerio and Ahmad (2023:2-3) propose that by broadening succession planning efforts, institutions can more effectively and consistently identify a pool of talented individuals. Thus, collaboration with management and human resource departments is essential in any succession planning process. This partnership enables institutions to evaluate the existing workforce and identify gaps between current and future workforce needs. Workforce planning should encompass recruitment, process mapping, job descriptions, institutional goals, and performance evaluation instruments that align with the institution's mission and vision.

Figure 6.4 below illustrates how important the implement of a formal succession planning system according to the responses.

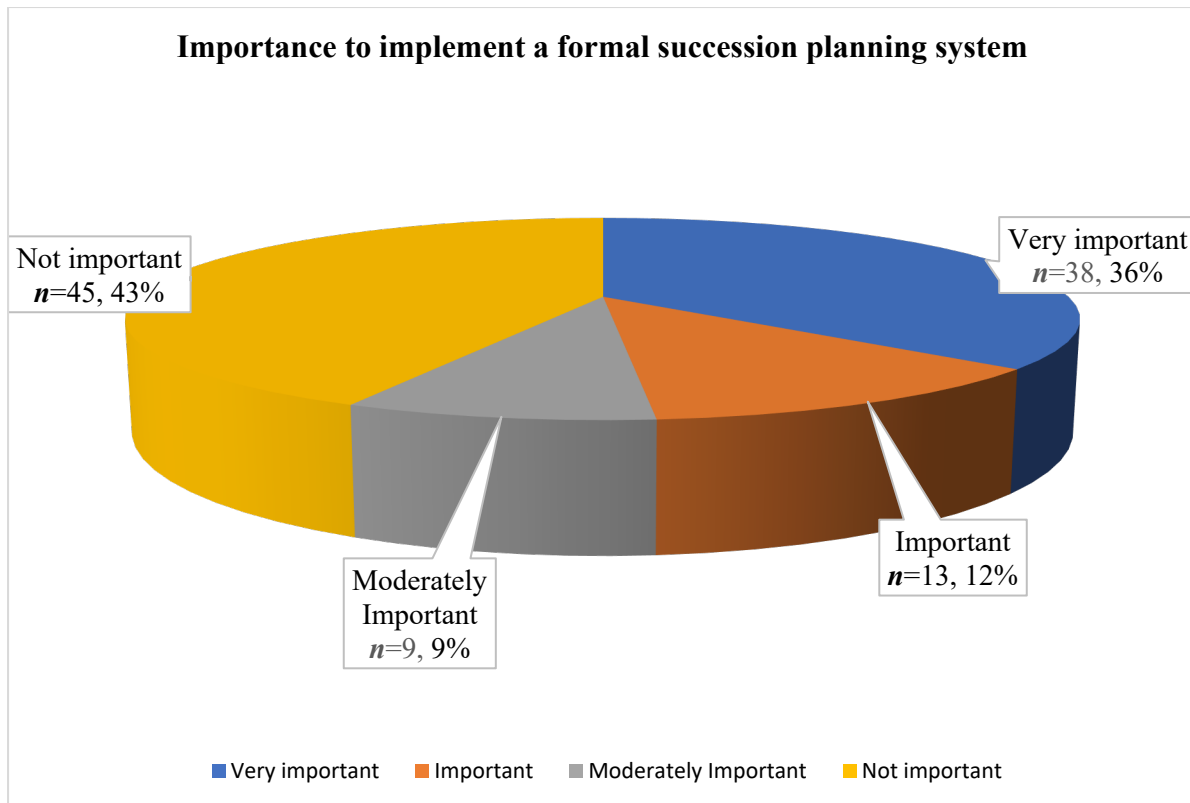


Figure 6.4: Importance to implement a formal succession planning system

The findings presented in Figure 6.4 indicate that while most of the respondents recognise the importance of formal succession planning, a significant minority (approximately 43%) do not, revealing a notable divergence in perceptions. This disparity is analytically important, as it reflects a lack of institutional consistency, suggests the absence of a shared strategic vision, and points to uneven exposure to or engagement with succession planning practices across the organisation. The coexistence of strong support alongside considerable indifference or resistance signals a deeper structural issue, namely that succession planning is not fully embedded within the organisational culture of the University of Namibia. Consequently, these findings indicate that there is no clear institutional consensus regarding the value of succession planning, reflecting weak organisational alignment and limited integration of succession planning as a strategic priority.

Understanding the reasons behind the perceived lack of importance among some respondents can guide HR departments in tailoring succession planning frameworks that resonate with the culture and goals of the University of Namibia. The University could benefit from further educating employees about the benefits of succession planning. Addressing misconceptions or

uncertainties may help in garnering more widespread support and engagement. Emphasising how succession planning contributes to long-term sustainability, leadership continuity, and organisational resilience can bridge gaps between differing perceptions and encourage unified support across the University of Namibia.

BENEFITS OF SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGY

Including the question ‘How do you think implementing a formal succession planning strategy at the University will benefit the University?’ in the questionnaire assisted to identify perceived advantages of succession planning, offering insights into its potential impact on organisational stability, employee retention, and knowledge management. This information could guide the development of effective succession planning practices tailored to the University’s needs.

Question 5: *How do you think implementing a formal succession planning strategy at the University will benefit the University?*

- *It will improve employee commitment and retention.*
- *It will assist employees in their career development.*
- *Preserve knowledge transfer and institutional memory.*
- *It will reduce the turnover of managers with scarce skills.*

The responses to Question 5 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.5 below.

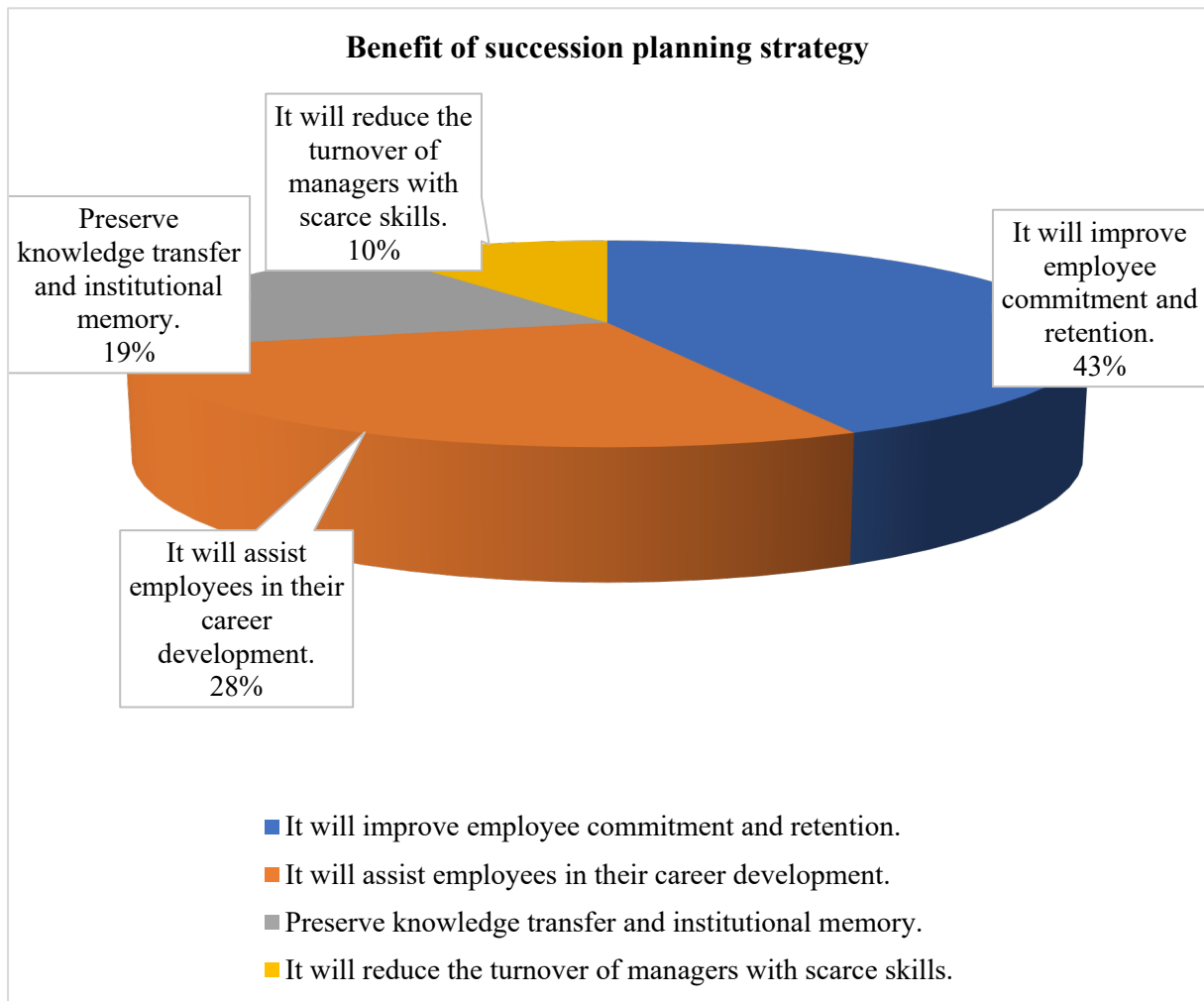


Figure 6.5: Benefits of succession planning strategies

The results illustrated in Figure 6.5 show that respondents view the main advantage of succession planning as its role in strengthening employee commitment and retention, while placing noticeably less value on aspects such as knowledge transfer and leadership continuity. This emphasis reflects a short-term outlook, prioritising immediate HR outcomes over longer-term strategic goals like sustaining leadership capacity and ensuring institutional stability. Importantly, this trend supports earlier findings suggesting that succession planning is perceived and implemented more as a routine HR activity than as a strategic leadership tool. As a result, succession planning at the University of Namibia appears to function mainly as a retention strategy rather than as a holistic approach for maintaining leadership continuity and promoting long-term organisational resilience.

To leverage the perceived benefits of formal succession planning, the University of Namibia should develop and implement a comprehensive succession planning strategy. This strategy should focus on improving employee commitment and retention by providing clear career progression paths, ensuring knowledge transfer, and addressing the retention of key personnel with scarce skills. Incorporating formal succession planning could help stabilise the workforce, retain institutional knowledge, and improve overall organisational performance.

Zhu and Azadeh (2024:9830) confirmed that it is imperative to make the public service open to external applicants, as revealed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.5 Benefits of succession planning to public service delivery. This will bring in new perspectives and abilities to help the public service meet its transformation objectives. When employees perceive their organisation as committed to ethical practices and societal welfare, it not only enhances their sense of belonging but also solidifies their psychological resources, making them more resilient and optimistic about their personal and professional growth.

As articulated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4, "Advantages of Succession Planning in an Institution," succession planning offers several benefits to institutions. It facilitates the effective and timely transfer of knowledge and information between successors and predecessors, provides motivating, growth-oriented, and meaningful professional opportunities, promotes the optimal development of remarkable achievements, and ensures the engagement of employees with high potential (Jooste, Frantz & Waggie, 2018:704). To maximise the benefits of succession planning, the University of Namibia should focus on creating a transparent and ethical succession planning process. This should include integrating external perspectives to foster innovation and transformation, as well as ensuring that employees perceive the organisation as committed to ethical practices and professional growth. By doing so, the University can enhance employee engagement, support career development, and effectively meet its organisational transformation objectives.

Reasons for high turnover of managers with scarce skills are elaborate on the following section.

REASONS FOR TURNOVER OF MANAGERS

Including the question 'What do you think the reasons are for the University's turnover of managers with scarce skills?' helped to uncover underlying factors contributing to high turnover rates among key personnel, providing valuable insights for developing targeted strategies to improve retention and address skill shortages.

Question 6: *What do you think the reasons are for the University's turnover of managers with scarce skills?*

- *Better salary elsewhere*
- *Better opportunities for development*
- *Poor interpersonal relations*
- *Retirement*

The responses to Question 6 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.6 below.

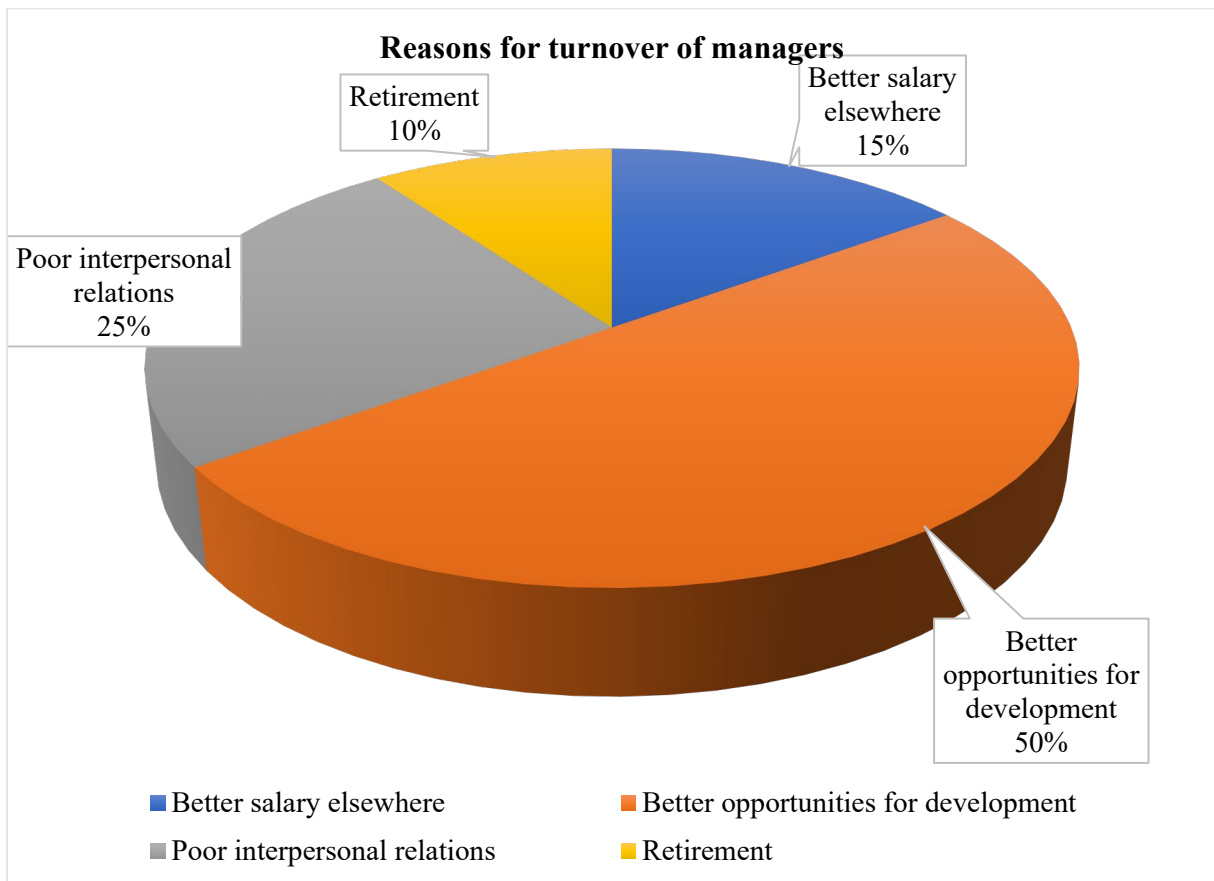


Figure 6.6: Reasons for turnover of managers

The results shown in Figure 6.6 reveal that the leading cause of managerial turnover is the pursuit of better development opportunities elsewhere (50%), followed by challenges in interpersonal relationships (25%), salary-related issues (15%), and retirement (10%). Critically, the prominence of development-related reasons suggests that staff departures at the

University of Namibia are influenced more by unmet professional growth needs than by financial motivations. This trend has significant implications for succession planning, as the lack of well-defined development pathways contributes to the loss of capable employees, ultimately weakening the internal pool of future leaders and forcing the institution to rely on reactive recruitment approaches. As a result, a cycle of instability is created: limited development opportunities lead to ongoing talent loss, which further diminishes the university's ability to ensure leadership continuity. Overall, the evidence highlights that insufficient developmental structures are a major contributor to employee turnover and a key barrier to the effectiveness of succession planning within the institution.

To address these issues, the university should enhance its succession planning and professional development programmes. Implementing targeted strategies for career growth, improving job fit, and fostering better interpersonal relations between managers and staff can significantly reduce turnover rates and retain valuable employees.

Employees have several reasons to leave their workplaces, such as job stress, job satisfaction, job security, work environment, motivation, wages, and rewards. According to Al-suraihi, et al. (2021:1-2), managers could be leaving the university and moving to the private sector being offered bigger salaries and benefits compared to the public sector. Institutional memory is also being lost when employees resign, and their positions are left vacant. Factors such as lack of recognition, lack of growth opportunities, poor job fit and an unhealthy working environment led to dissatisfaction, low staff morale and employees leaving the institution. Furthermore, employee turnover has a huge impact on an organisation due to the costs associated with employee turnover and can negatively impact the productivity, sustainability, competitiveness, and profitability of an organisation. However, the organisation must understand the needs of its employees, which will help organisations, adopt certain strategies to improve employee performance and reduce turnover. Thus, implementing strategies will increase job satisfaction, motivation and the productivity of individuals and organisations, which can reduce employment problems, absenteeism, and employee turnover.

As delineated in Chapter 3, section 3.2.4, concerning the advantages of succession planning within an institution, it is evident that such planning reduces turnover rates. This is attributed to employees feeling valued and possessing an intrinsic motivation to advance within the institution, thereby diminishing their propensity to seek opportunities elsewhere (Al-suraihi, et al., 2021:4). Furthermore, succession planning offers a strategic alignment that enables

institutions to address both current and future leadership requirements, achieve strategic objectives, and support the institution's overarching strategic direction (Ahmad, et al., 2017:22). Considering the responses to Question 6 above, the university should prioritise the development of a formal succession planning system. This system should include clear career progression pathways, recognition programmes, and a supportive work environment to enhance employee engagement and retention. By aligning succession planning with organisational goals, the university can mitigate the negative effects of turnover and improve overall productivity and stability.

PRIMARY GOAL OF A UNIVERSITY SUCCESSION PLANNING SYSTEM

Question 7 of the questionnaire helped to identify the respondents' perspectives on the fundamental objectives of succession planning, revealing priorities such identifying replacements to fill key positions, developing employees, achieving strategic goals and retaining institutional talent. Understanding these goals can guide the development of more effective succession planning strategies tailored to the university's needs.

Question 7: *What do you believe the primary goal of university succession planning should be?*

- *To easily identify replacements to fill key positions*
- *To develop employees*
- *To achieve strategic goals*
- *To retain institutional talent*

The responses to Question 7 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.7 below.

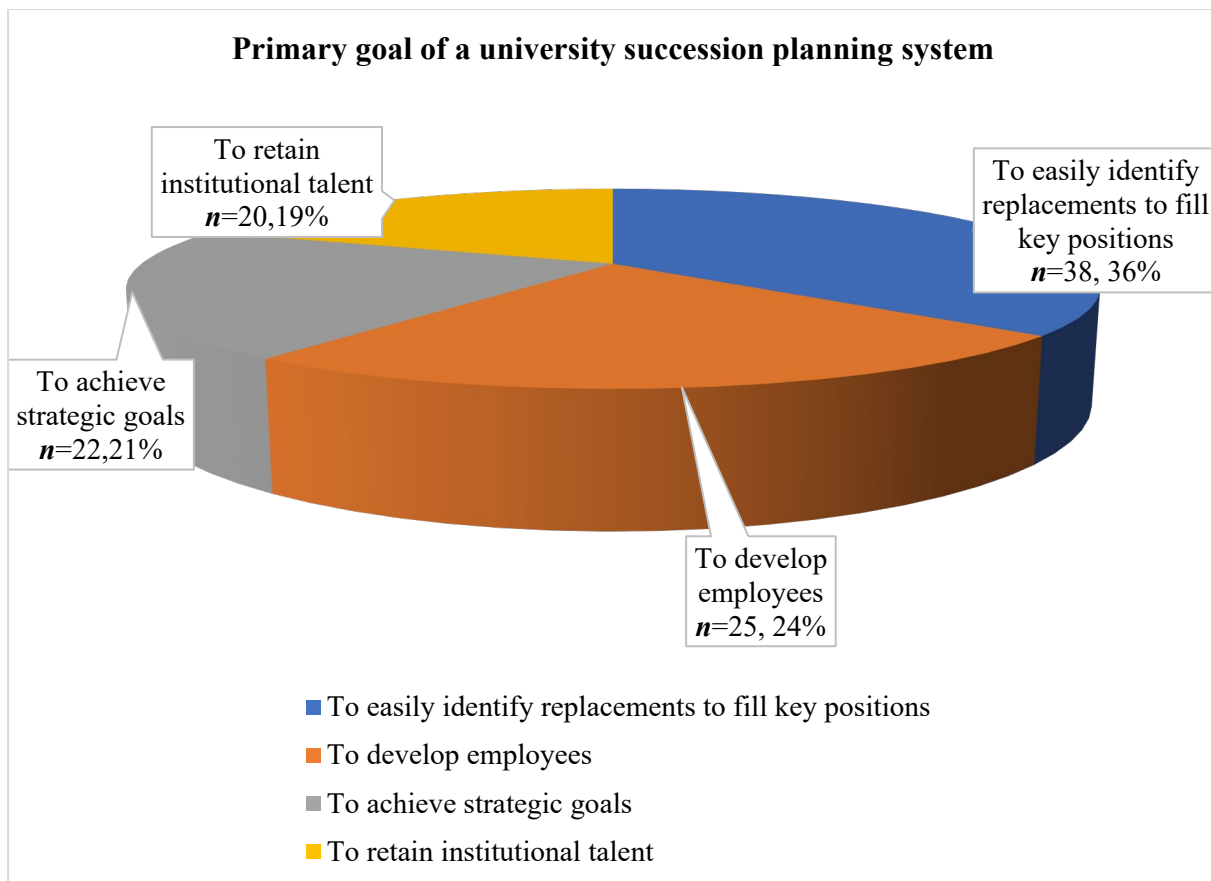


Figure 6.7: Primary goal of a university succession planning system

Easily identifying suitable replacements for important roles is the primary goal of succession planning, according to the majority (38) of the respondents, while 25 of them believed it is to develop employees. Twenty-two respondents state that the primary goal is to achieve strategic goals and 20 believes that it is to retain institutional talent. The findings presented in Figure 6.7 indicate that most respondents perceive the primary goal of succession planning as identifying replacements for key positions, while a smaller proportion view it to develop employees or achieve broader strategic objectives. This distribution confirms the dominance of a replacement-oriented paradigm within the institution. Critically, this reveals a significant contradiction: although respondents generally acknowledge the importance of succession planning, their understanding of its purpose remains narrowly defined in operational terms. This suggests a level of surface awareness that lacks strategic depth. Consequently, succession planning at the University of Namibia appears to be misaligned with its intended strategic function, reinforcing reactive approaches to staffing rather than fostering proactive leadership development and long-term organisational sustainability.

These results are in line with Chapter 3, section 3.2.1 *Succession planning defined* that state that true succession planning involves a careful process of identifying and developing future leaders among individuals who are already part of the institution. According to Yudianto, Sekawarna, Susilaningsih, Ramoo and Somantri (2023:459) a good succession planning framework ensures that institutions will survive leadership changes, support organisational goals, and provide opportunities for employees to develop to their full potential.

To align with these goals, the university should enhance its succession planning framework by integrating comprehensive talent identification processes with robust employee development programmes. This dual approach will ensure the institution can both swiftly address leadership gaps and support long-term strategic objectives.

There is also significant recognition of succession planning's role in retaining institutional talent, highlighting the importance of employee engagement and retention as part of the succession strategy. The university should incorporate retention strategies into its succession planning efforts, focusing on creating career development opportunities and recognising employee contributions. By doing so, the institution can improve talent retention and maintain a motivated workforce, further supporting organisational stability and growth.

EXPECTATIONS FOR A UNIVERSITY SUCCESSION PLANNING SYSTEM

The question ‘*What are your expectations for a university succession planning system?*’ helped determine whether respondents value a succession planning system that focuses on recognising existing skills and achievements, which can inform the development of strategies that align with employee expectations and enhance the system's effectiveness. Understanding these expectations ensures that the succession plan addresses key areas of importance for stakeholders, potentially improving its acceptance and implementation.

Question 8: *What are your expectations for a university succession planning system?*

- *To highlight current skills and accomplishments*
- *To map out the development of new information, skills, and abilities*
- *To prepare staff for advancement or promotion into more challenging roles*
- *To develop employees to reach their potential*

The responses to Question 8 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.8 below.

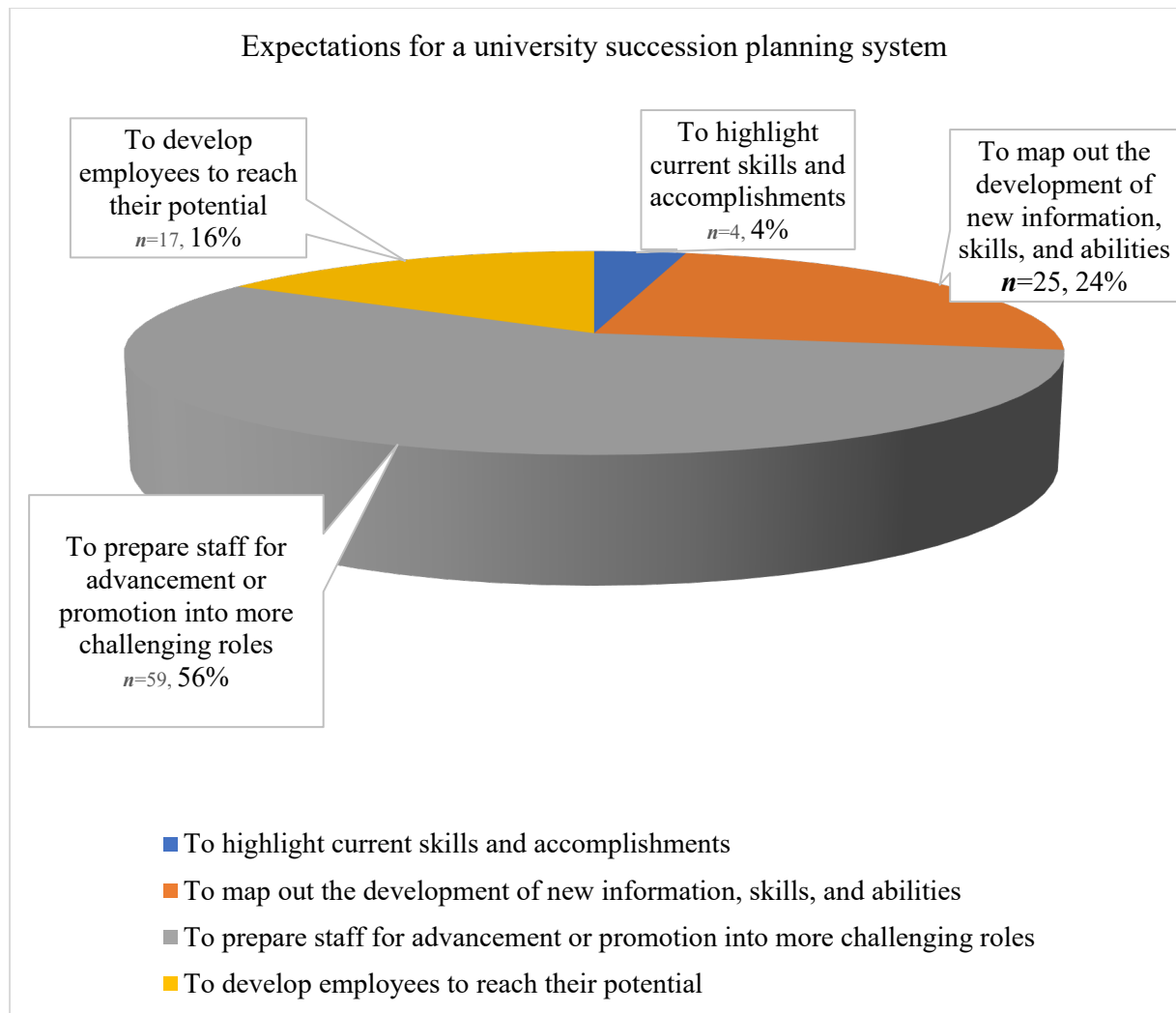


Figure 6.8: Expectations for a university succession planning system

The results shown in Figure 6.8 demonstrate that most respondents believe succession planning should prioritise preparing employees to advance into more demanding roles, while far less attention is given to acknowledging their existing skills and achievements. This reveals a significant gap between what employees expect and what the organisation currently practices. From a critical standpoint, employees clearly favour a development-focused approach to succession planning, yet the institution continues to apply procedures that emphasise replacement rather than growth. This mismatch carries important consequences, as it may generate employee dissatisfaction, lower engagement levels, and eventually higher turnover.

Therefore, the findings highlight a distinct disconnect between employees' expectations and institutional practice, ultimately diminishing the overall effectiveness of these initiatives.

An effective succession plan should ideally address key positions within the institution, including several potential successors for each critical role based on the competencies currently recognised. A flexible rank of succession so that individuals with greater competence can advance is therefore recommended. The succession planning framework should prioritise preparing employees for higher-level positions and developing their skills for future roles. This includes creating clear pathways for advancement and providing training and development opportunities tailored to preparing staff for increased responsibilities.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, section 3.3 *Workforce planning*, on the context of workforce planning, it is crucial to integrate succession planning that goes beyond current competencies and focuses on developing new information, skills, and abilities. The succession plan should be dynamic and forward-looking, incorporating strategies to develop new skills and competencies. This approach will ensure that employees are not only recognised for their current achievements but also equipped with the necessary capabilities for future roles and challenges within the institution (Musakuro, 2022:e6-e7).

6.3.1.3 Section C: Assessing strategies for identifying potential successors

By including Section C in the questionnaire, the researcher systematically gathered data and feedback essential for evaluating and refining succession planning strategies. This evaluation helps in ensuring that the methods employed are not only identifying potential successors but also developing them in a manner that aligns with organisational goals and future leadership needs. Ultimately, the insights gained from Section C contributed to building a robust and sustainable pipeline of talent capable of driving the organisation forward in the long term.

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD FOR POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS

The question 'How long do you think the development period for potential successors should be?' assisted to understand the duration and structure of development programmes or periods provided to potential successors. It aimed to assess whether the current development periods are adequate for preparing individuals for future leadership roles. Responses to this question assisted in evaluating if there are optimal time frames or stages required for effective succession planning and development.

Question 9: *How long do you think the development period for potential successors should be?*

- *Less than 1 year*
- *1 to 2 years*
- *2 to 3 years*
- *3 years and more*

The responses to Question 9 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.9 below.

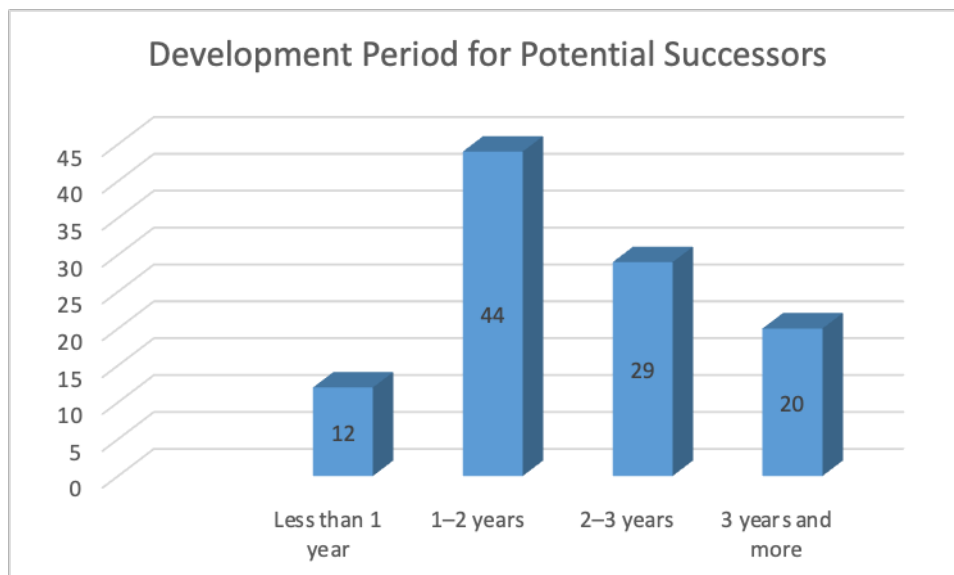


Figure 6.9: Development period for potential successors

Figure 6.9 shows that most respondents (44) believe that potential successors should undergo a development period of one to two years, while 29 respondents favour a two- to three-year timeframe, and 20 recommend three years or longer. This pattern suggests a general recognition of the importance of structured timelines for leadership development. However, the differing views also point to the lack of a clearly established institutional guideline for preparing future leaders. Although the preference for a one- to two-year period is consistent with recognised standards in the literature (Benson, Li & Shue, 2019:2088), the absence of agreement indicates that development practices are not yet uniformly embedded within the institution.

This lack of uniformity has significant consequences. Without a consistent and standardised development timeline, succession planning becomes fragmented and influenced by departmental or managerial preferences rather than a unified organisational approach. Consequently, the level of leadership readiness may differ widely across units, weakening the overall succession planning process. In summary, the findings demonstrate that the lack of a standardised development period reflects weak institutionalisation of leadership development practices, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of succession planning.

As indicated in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1 *Succession planning defined*, two years is the minimum duration that most people would wait to get a promotion. The average time for one to be promoted is about every three years, though this could differ based on your performance and role vacancies within an institution (Benson, Li & Shue, 2019:2088). Based on the findings from Figure 6.9 and alignment with established succession planning standards, the University of Namibia should consider adopting a structured development period of 1 to 2 years for potential successors. This timeframe reflects a balance between providing focused training and readiness initiatives while adhering to industry norms. Additionally, offering opportunities for longer development periods of 2 to 3 years or more, as preferred by some respondents, could further enhance preparation for leadership roles, depending on individual career trajectories and organisational goals.

METHODS OF IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS

This topic explored the different approaches or criteria used to identify individuals who have the potential to fill key positions in the future. It could include methods such as performance, management and development systems, job holder, supervisor, human resource development and Head of Department. Feedback on this topic helped in assessing the reliability and inclusiveness of the current methods used to identify successors.

Question 10: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following methods of identifying potential successors:*

- *Performance*
- *Management and Development Systems*
- *Job holder*
- *Supervisor*

- *Human Resource Development*
- *Head of Department*

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the methods of identifying potential successors. The majority (53) of the respondents agree to the use of method of Management and Development Systems while 51 of the respondents strongly agree to the method of performance. The responses to Question 10 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Methods of identifying potential successors

Methods	Agree	Strongly agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Performance	45	51	3	1	4	104
Management and Development Systems	53	29	16	5	1	104
Job Holder	31	20	22	22	9	104
Supervisor	41	19	15	24	5	104
Human Resource Development	40	19	19	20	6	104
Head of Department	38	22	20	20	4	104

The results show considerable endorsement for performance-based approaches (strong agreement: 51) and for management and development systems (agreement: 53) as the primary methods used to identify potential successors. In contrast, alternative approaches such as supervisor input, HR involvement, and recommendations from heads of department received more varied levels of support.

Although this indicates that several mechanisms for identifying successors are in place, a deeper analysis highlights a lack of integration and alignment among them. While reliance on performance data and management systems represents a methodologically sound practice, the

inconsistent responses regarding other methods point to irregular application and potential subjectivity in the decision-making process.

Notably, the data do not provide evidence of a unified competency-based framework guiding these identification practices. Without such a framework, succession planning becomes fragmented, with individual departments applying different criteria for assessing potential successors. This inconsistency compromises fairness, transparency, and overall strategic alignment. The findings demonstrate that even though various methods for identifying successors are utilised, they are not anchored within a cohesive competency-based framework, leading to disjointed and inconsistent succession planning practices.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, section 3.4 *Talent management*, collaboration and understanding between Human Resource managers, and employees is equally important (Cox & Overbey, 2023:12).

The responses to Question 10 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.10 below.

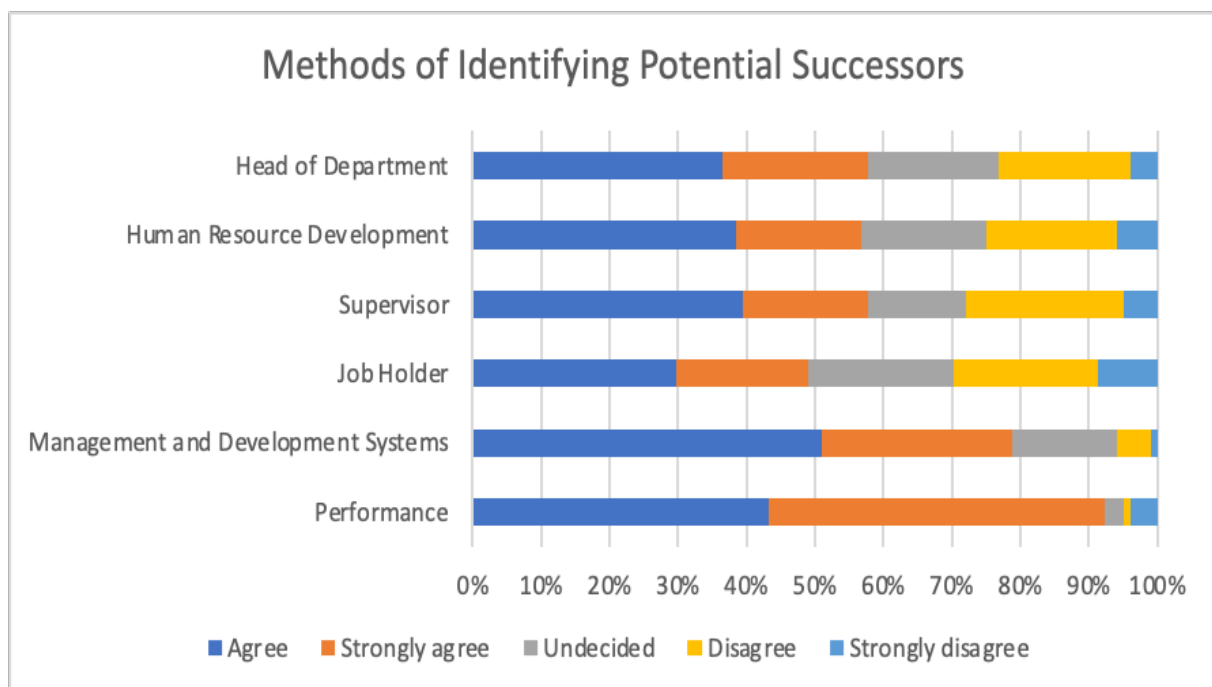


Figure 6.10: Methods of identifying potential successors

Based on the multifaceted approach identified in Table 6.1, and Figure 6.10, the University of Namibia should enhance its succession planning efforts by implementing a robust competency framework. This framework should integrate talent assessments, performance reviews, and

leadership development programmes to systematically identify and develop potential successors. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and open communication about employees' career aspirations is essential to minimise skill gaps and ensure readiness for future roles. Furthermore, providing comprehensive training and development opportunities will further support the growth and preparedness of staff members. Fostering collaboration and understanding between Human Resource managers and employees is also important. Implementing these strategies will not only strengthen the University's talent pipeline but also enhance organisational agility and resilience in meeting future challenges.

METHODS IN EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Here, the focus is on how the organisation assesses the specific developmental needs of potential successors once they are identified. This involved 360-degree feedback, self-assessments, performance evaluation ratings, and interviews. Understanding the effectiveness of these evaluation methods aids in refining developmental plans and ensuring they are tailored to individual needs.

Question 11: *‘Please rate the effectiveness of the following methods in evaluating development needs: 360-Degree Feedback, Self-Assessments, Performance Evaluation Ratings, and Interviews.’*

The responses to Question 11 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2: Methods in evaluating development needs

	360-Degree Feedback	Self- assessments	Performance Evaluation Ratings	Interviews
Most effective	29	21	38	18
Effective	28	34	36	35
Neutral	28	28	14	31
Least effective	17	17	14	17

	360-Degree Feedback	Self-assessments	Performance Evaluation Ratings	Interviews
Not effective	2	4	2	3
Total	104	104	104	104

The simplest and most accurate ways to determine an employee's development needs is to use various types of validated assessments, such as self-assessments, performance evaluation ratings, interviews and 360-degree feedback assessments. Identifying development needs is crucial for ensuring an organisation continually grows and reaches its full potential. Table 6.2 shows that 38 of the respondents agree that *Performance Evaluation Ratings* is the most effective method of assessing development needs, while 36 indicates that it is an effective method.

The responses to Question 11 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.11 below.

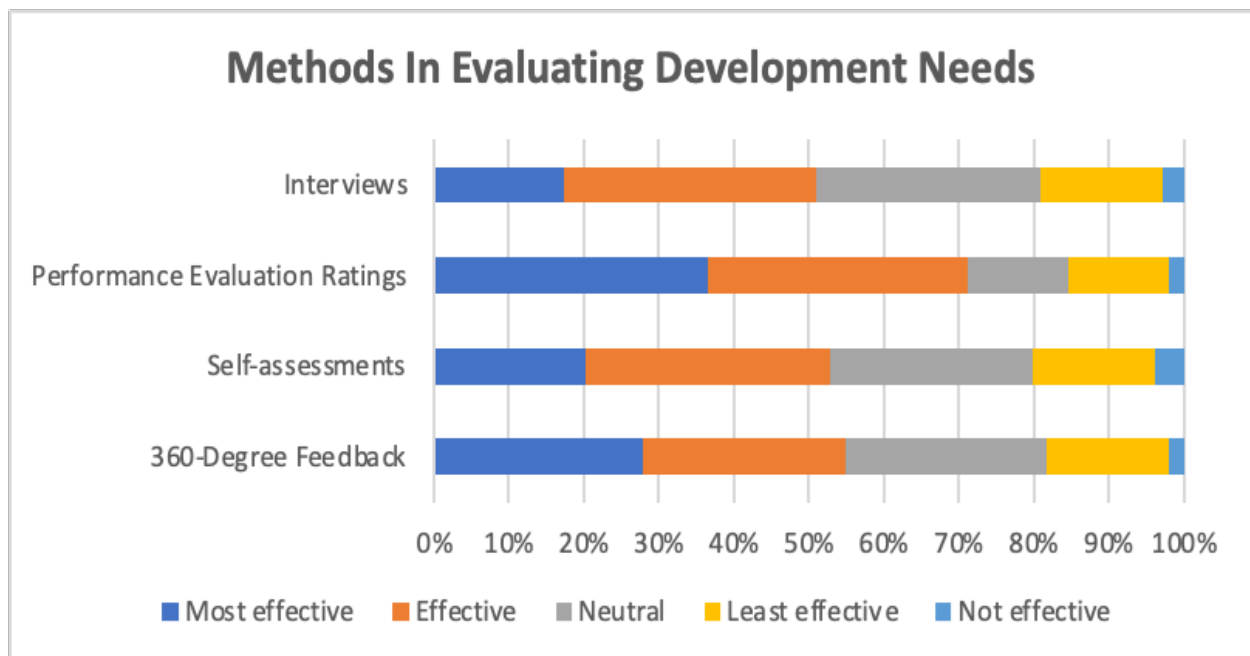


Figure 6.11: Methods in evaluating development needs

The results show that performance evaluation ratings are viewed as the most effective approach for identifying development needs, followed by self-assessment methods, interviews, and 360-degree feedback processes. Although this demonstrates the use of various assessment tools, a closer examination reveals an excessive dependence on traditional performance appraisal systems. While performance ratings offer useful information, they primarily capture past achievements rather than potential for future leadership. By comparison, more holistic tools, such as 360-degree feedback and developmental assessments, offer richer insight into leadership competencies but seem to be underused.

This uneven use of assessment methods indicates that development needs are being determined mainly through operational performance indicators instead of strategic leadership criteria. As a result, succession planning may overlook individuals with high leadership potential who have not yet demonstrated it through measurable performance metrics. As a result, the finding indicates that development needs are assessed too heavily through performance-based methods, limiting the ability to recognise and nurture future leadership potential.

It was confirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.3 *Ways to approach succession planning*, that identifying the development needs of an organisation can be a challenging task. However, it is essential for improving team productivity and overall job satisfaction. The process of evaluating development needs is extensive and involves gathering data from several sources, such as managers, employees, and performance records. Through the identification of skill gaps that impede team growth and productivity, the University of Namibia can design focused training programmes that provide your staff the abilities and information they require to thrive and guarantee preparedness. Understanding the effectiveness of methods like 360-Degree Feedback, Self-Assessments, Performance Evaluation Ratings, and Interviews in evaluating development needs is crucial. By assessing these methods, the research systematically gathered data to identify skill gaps that hinder team growth and productivity at the University of Namibia. This understanding enables the design of targeted training programmes that equip staff with the necessary skills and knowledge, fostering their ability to thrive and ensuring readiness for future challenges (Al Jahwari & Nur Ruzainy Alwi, 2023:250).

EFFICIENCY RATE OF METHODS IN TERMS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This topic measures the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the methods used in terms of staff development outcomes. It seeks to gather feedback on whether the current strategies and

practices contribute effectively to the growth and readiness of potential successors. Responses here provide valuable insights into which methods are most successful in preparing individuals for future leadership roles and where improvements may be needed.

Question 12: *‘Please rate the efficiency of the following methods in terms of staff development: Coaching, Conferences, Mentoring, On-the-job training, Simulations, Task/job rotations, Training and Workshops/Committees/Working-Group.’*

The responses to Question 12 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Methods in terms of staff development

Methods	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Coaching	28	34	17	18	7	104
Conferences	13	37	27	18	9	104
Mentoring	37	30	16	18	3	104
On-the-job training	40	36	13	10	5	104
Simulations	17	27	37	18	5	104
Task/job rotations.	26	28	25	20	5	104
Training	39	27	22	11	5	104
Workshops/Committees/ Working-Groups	19	35	23	18	9	104

The responses to Question 12 of the questionnaire are illustrated in Figure 6.12 below.

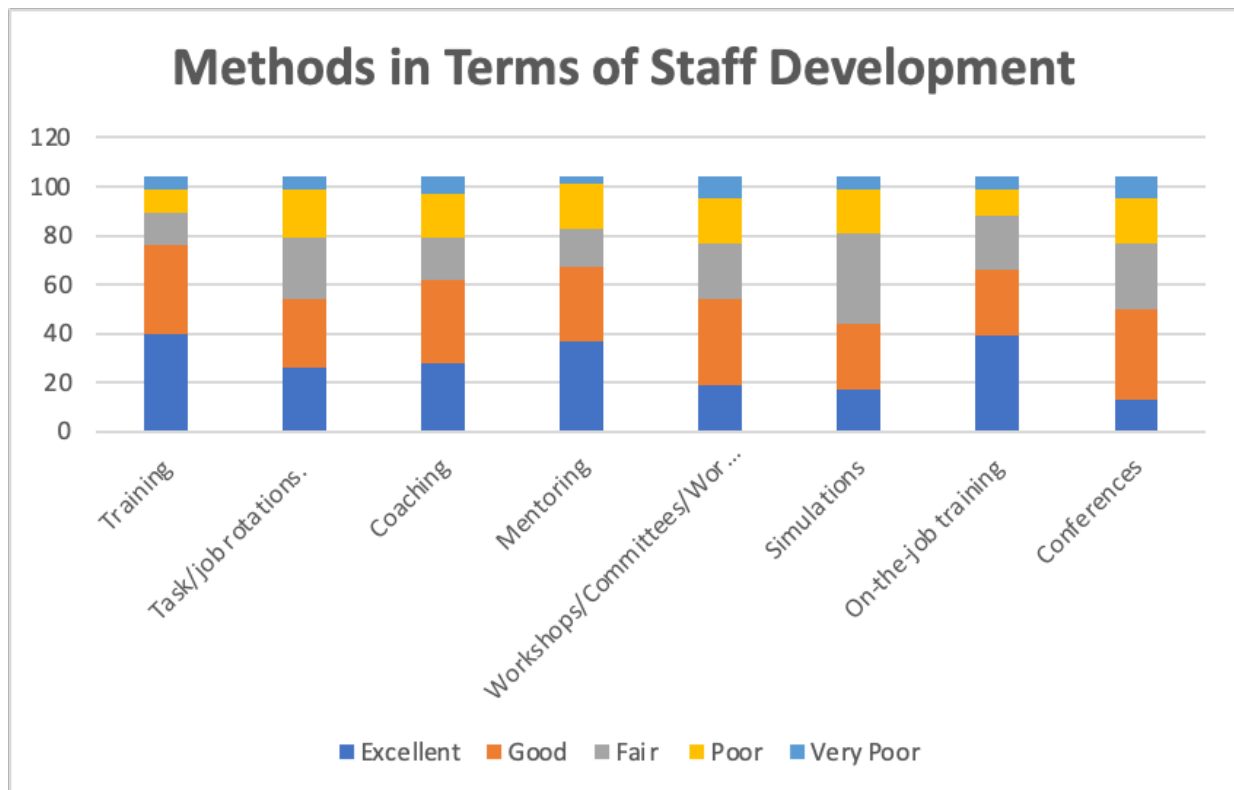


Figure 6.12: Methods in terms of staff development

The results from Table 6.3 and Figure 6.12 show that employees regard on-the-job training, mentoring, and training programmes as the most effective approaches to staff development, whereas methods such as simulations and job rotations receive considerably lower support. This pattern suggests that the institution places greater value on hands-on, experience-based learning. However, the comparatively limited use of more structured developmental approaches, such as simulated learning and rotational assignments, signals a lack of more advanced leadership development practices.

This imbalance has important implications for succession planning. Although on-the-job training promotes practical skill development, it may not sufficiently equip employees for more complex leadership positions that demand strategic insight, strong decision-making abilities, and exposure to different functional areas. The underuse of job rotations and simulation-based learning limits employees' opportunities to experience diverse organisational environments, which is essential for building leadership readiness.

Consequently, the findings reveal that staff development efforts are largely operational and experiential in nature, with minimal emphasis on strategic leadership development approaches, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of succession planning.

6.3.1.4 Section D: Employee development

Section D examined perceptions of employee development, retention, and organisational support mechanisms. The findings reveal significant structural weaknesses in the alignment between development practices, retention strategies, and succession planning objectives. This section comprises 11 questions designed to gather insights into various aspects related to employee development, as outlined below:

- Use of personality tests
- Importance of qualifications
- Value of learning and development
- Effectiveness of current promotion system
- Fairness of current promotion system
- Investment in the retention of key, critical, and scarce skills
- Support for retention of talent
- Opportunity for development and training of staff
- Attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills
- Participation in workshops and seminars to enhance knowledge and skills
- Enhancement of career opportunities

These questions aimed to gauge the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards various facets of employee development initiatives within the University of Namibia. The responses gathered from this section provided valuable quantitative data that contributed to understanding the effectiveness, relevance, and areas of improvement in employee development practices.

Use Of Personality Tests

The following question was posted to assess the respondents' perspectives on the use of personality tests in employee development, and their perceived relevance and effectiveness:

Question 13: *Should personality tests be used to assess potential successors?* The respondents were asked to indicate either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, section 3.3 *Workforce planning*, some personality tests have been developed and studied over the years. Reman and Nordin (2021:40) suggest that, based on a personality assessment, succession planning tools offer a thorough understanding of the roles and their culture as well as an evaluation of the probability of carrying out an integrated work-related task. In this study, the majority of the respondents agreed with the use of personality tests to assess potential successors.

The responses to Question 13 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4: Use of personality tests

<i>Should personality tests be used to assess potential successors?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	75
No	30
Total	105

A thorough personality assessment enhances succession planning by providing comprehensive insights into role requirements and organisational culture. This evaluation also aids in predicting an individual's ability to effectively handle integrated work-related tasks Reman and Nordin (2021:40). The majority of respondents support the use of personality tests in assessing potential successors.

While this indicates openness to more sophisticated assessment tools, the data do not suggest systematic or standardised implementation. Without clear guidelines on how such tools are integrated into succession planning, their effectiveness remains limited.

The finding reveals that although there is support for advanced assessment tools, their application appears *ad hoc* and lacks strategic integration into succession planning processes.

IMPORTANCE OF QUALIFICATIONS

The following question was posted to understand how the respondents value academic or professional qualifications in relation to employee development and career advancement:

Question 14: *In your opinion, are qualifications more important than work experience?* The respondents were asked to indicate either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

In general, possessing a formal qualification enhances an individual's prospects for promotion, as opposed to relying solely on work experience. This notion is underscored in Chapter 3, section 3.4 on Talent Management, where it is asserted that both qualifications and work experience are essential prerequisites for succession planning (Horowitz, 2018:774-775). Academic qualifications typically reflect the breadth of an individual's exposure to diverse perspectives and encompass a wider knowledge base. Nevertheless, most respondents indicated 'No', suggesting that qualifications are not deemed more important than work experience.

The responses to Question 14 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5: Importance of obtaining qualifications

<i>In your opinion, are qualifications more important than work experience?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	23
No	72
Total	95

The majority of respondents indicated that work experience is more important than formal qualifications.

This reflects a pragmatic orientation; however, an overemphasis on experience may limit the recognition of emerging talent with strong academic or professional potential. Effective succession planning requires a balanced approach that integrates both experiential and formal competencies. The finding indicates that an overreliance on experience may constrain the identification of high-potential talent, limiting the inclusiveness of succession planning processes.

To optimise succession planning, job specifications at the University of Namibia should delineate the minimum qualifications required, encompassing academic credentials, relevant experience, skills (including technical, language, and interpersonal), and other competencies. It is thus critical that both qualifications and work experience are integrated into succession planning frameworks, ensuring that potential successors possess a well-rounded skill set that aligns with organisational needs.

VALUE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The following question was posted to gauge the importance attributed by respondents to continuous learning and development opportunities within their organisation: **Question 15:** *Do you think the University values learning and development?* The respondents were asked to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'. As anticipated, most of the respondents (61) concurred that the University of Namibia prioritises learning and development. The data obtained aligns with the argument presented by Cox and Overbey (2023:10-11), who affirmed that identifying and cultivating successors for future leadership roles is vital, as is providing them with the requisite training and development opportunities to ensure their success in new positions. In the contemporary, rapidly evolving commercial environment, maintaining competitiveness is imperative for any institution's survival and prosperity. One of the most effective strategies to achieve this is through investment in employee training and development. As articulated in Chapter 3, section 3.4 on Talent Management, such investment not only enhances employees' knowledge and skills but also elevates their morale and productivity, thereby augmenting the organisation's efficiency and profitability.

The responses to Question 15 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.6: Value of learning and development

Do you think the University values learning and development?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	61
No	44
Total	105

While a majority perceive that the University values learning and development, a substantial minority disagrees.

This divergence suggests inconsistency in the implementation and visibility of development initiatives across the institution. The lack of uniformity undermines the credibility of development efforts and weakens their impact on succession planning. The findings indicate that learning and development initiatives are unevenly implemented, reducing their effectiveness in supporting succession planning.

EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT PROMOTION SYSTEM

The following question was posted to evaluate the respondents' opinions on how well the current promotion system recognises and rewards employee performance and potential:

Question 16: *In your opinion, is the current employee promotion system effective?* The respondents were asked to indicate either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. Bonifacio (2024) believes that by providing employees with a transparent path for career advancement, an effective promotion policy contributes to higher job satisfaction, increased engagement, and the development of a skilled and motivated team that propels the company toward its goals. It was confirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1 *Perspectives on and approaches to talent*, that any organisation's promotion policy is the foundation for equitable and steady employee advancement. Most of the respondents (52) were NOT satisfied with the current promotion system at the University. 45 respondents however preferred not to answer this question.

The responses to Question 16 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7: Effectiveness of promotion system

In your opinion, is the current employee promotion system effective?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	8
No	52
Total	60

Based on the responses listed in Table 6.7 where only eight respondents are satisfied with the current promotion system at the University of Namibia, it is evident that there is significant dissatisfaction with the existing promotion policies. The findings reveal widespread dissatisfaction with both the effectiveness and fairness of the promotion system.

From a critical perspective, this is a major structural weakness. Perceptions of unfairness and inefficiency undermine trust in organisational processes, which is essential for succession planning. If employees perceive promotions as inequitable, they are less likely to engage in development initiatives or view succession planning as credible. The findings suggest that a perceived lack of fairness and effectiveness in promotion systems undermines trust and weakens the legitimacy of succession planning.

FAIRNESS OF CURRENT PROMOTION SYSTEM

The following question was posted to assess perceptions of fairness and transparency in the University of Namibia's promotion processes among the respondents: **Question 17:** *Do you think the current employee promotion system is fair?* The respondents were asked to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'. The responses indicate that only 27 of the respondents think that the current promotion system of the University is fair, while 78 opined that the system is not fair. The data therefore confirms that the current promotion system of the University of Namibia is viewed as not fair.

As stated in Chapter 3, section 3.4 *Talent management*, fairness in promotions is a core issue for organisations as it is directly related to some of the most important organisational outcomes. According to Cooks-Campbell (2022) giving a fair chance of promotion to all employees is essential for a promotion policy. This includes removing gender discrimination, ethnic discrimination, or nepotism from the promotion process. Providing a fair opportunity to excel to all employees reveals healthy transparency within an organisation's operations and keeps employees motivated to climb the promotion ladder.

The responses to Question 17 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8: Fairness of current promotion system

In your opinion, is the current employee promotion system effective?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	27
No	78
Total	105

The results shown in Table 6.8 indicate that a large majority of respondents (78) believe the current employee promotion system is ineffective, whereas only 27 view it as effective. This substantial disparity highlights a broad lack of confidence in the institution's promotion processes. Critically, such a strong negative perception points to underlying systemic problems in how promotions are designed, communicated, and executed. These concerns may relate to issues of transparency, fairness, merit-based advancement, or consistent decision-making.

The perceived shortcomings of the promotion system have important implications for succession planning. Promotion mechanisms play a crucial role in identifying, developing, and advancing future leaders. When employees view these processes as ineffective, trust in the system declines, motivation to participate in development activities diminishes, and the internal leadership pipeline weakens. Additionally, ineffective promotion practices may drive high-performing staff to seek opportunities elsewhere, increasing turnover and disrupting leadership continuity.

Overall, this finding highlights more than just an operational weakness; it reflects a deeper strategic disconnect. Instead of serving as a clear pathway for leadership growth, the existing promotion system appears misaligned with succession planning goals. As a result, the data suggest that the current promotion framework does not effectively support the identification or advancement of future leaders, thereby limiting the institution's succession planning capacity.

Implementing clear criteria, providing regular training on fair promotion practices, and establishing mechanisms for employees to voice concerns or grievances can enhance transparency and trust within the organisation. By fostering a culture of fairness, the University

can boost employee morale, encourage productivity, and cultivate a supportive environment conducive to long-term organisational success.

INVESTMENT IN THE RETENTION OF KEY CRITICAL AND SCARCE SKILLS

The following inquiry was posed to assess the perceived level of support and investment by respondents in retaining employees with critical and scarce skills: **Question 18:** *Do you believe the University is investing sufficient time and effort in the retention of key critical and scarce skills?* Respondents were asked to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'. As confirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.4 *Talent management*, scarce skills are disciplines and fields of occupation where an institution finds it difficult to attract, recruit and retain staff. Because the private sector competes with the University of Namibia in the job market and offers better compensation packages and benefits as well as favourable working circumstances, the university could have a challenge in maintaining its skilled workforce (Kutame, Kapueja, Muremela & Lawrence, 2020:75). Unfortunately, most respondents reported that the University is NOT dedicating adequate time and resources to the retention of essential and scarce skills.

The responses to Question 18 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9: Investment in retention of key critical and scarce skills

Do you believe the University is investing sufficient time and efforts in the retention of key critical and scarce skills?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	15
No	90
Total	105

The results show that a very large proportion of respondents (90 out of 105) believe that the University is not dedicating enough time or resources to retaining employees with critical and scarce skills, while only 15 respondents feel that current efforts are sufficient. This significant disparity points to a serious institutional weakness in talent retention. Critically, such strong agreement suggests that retention is not being treated as a strategic organisational priority but is instead approached in a reactive or peripheral manner.

This perception has major consequences for succession planning. Retaining employees who possess scarce and critical skills is essential for maintaining institutional knowledge and ensuring a pipeline of capable candidates for future leadership positions. The evident lack of investment in retention directly weakens the University's ability to build a stable and sustainable leadership pipeline. Without actively retaining high-potential staff, the institution risks ongoing leadership shortages, increased dependence on external recruitment, and a gradual loss of institutional memory.

In addition, the findings highlight a disconnect between organisational intentions and employees' lived experiences. Although succession planning may be acknowledged at a conceptual level, the failure to prioritise the retention of key talent shows that it is not being effectively implemented. This misalignment contributes to organisational instability by diminishing internal capacity and limiting the success of succession planning initiatives.

Overall, the findings point to a critical structural issue: the University's insufficient investment in retaining scarce and critical skills severely restricts its ability to develop and sustain a strong leadership pipeline, ultimately threatening long-term organisational effectiveness and stability.

The University should conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify critical skills gaps and understand the specific needs of its workforce. This involves defining which skills are essential for achieving organisational goals and developing a robust strategy to attract and retain individuals possessing these skills. Furthermore, implementing competitive compensation packages, attractive benefits, and creating favourable working conditions are essential to compete effectively with the private sector. By emphasising these aspects, the University can enhance its appeal as an employer of choice, thereby increasing retention rates among employees with critical skills.

Regularly reviewing and adjusting retention strategies based on employee feedback and market dynamics will ensure that the University remains competitive in retaining its skilled workforce and achieving long-term institutional success.

SUPPORT FOR THE RETENTION OF TALENT

The following question was posted to understand the extent to which the organisation supports efforts to retain talented employees: **Question 19:** *Do you think the University's HR policies and practices support the retention of talent in the institution?* The respondents were asked to

indicate either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. The majority of respondents (81) reported that the University's HR policies and practices do not facilitate the retention of talent within the institution. As noted by Howard (2023:544-545), investing in human capital ensures a strategic, long-term leadership growth plan and the establishment of a talent pipeline of skilled leaders for the future. Ensuring the retention and career development of an internal talent pipeline capable of advancing into leadership positions as they become available is crucial for institutions to remain successful and maintain their competitive advantage in a dynamic workforce

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.3 on leadership development activities, Bano et al. (2022:10) assert that public higher education institutions rely on a highly skilled and competent workforce to maintain their routine operations. Despite this dependence, many institutions lack formalized succession planning mechanisms to prepare for the departure of key leaders due to resignation, retirement, promotion, illness, disability, or death. Consequently, the loss of critical personnel can significantly disrupt institutional operations and, in some instances, impede essential functions. Zamri (2023:37) also suggests that universities need to develop retention strategies that offer competitive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for career growth to retain their staff. By doing so, universities can reduce the costs associated with employee turnover and ensure that they have experienced and talented staff to deliver high-quality education and research.

The responses to Question 19 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6.10: Support for retention of talent

Do you believe the University is investing sufficient time and efforts in the retention of key critical and scarce skills?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	24
No	81
Total	105

The findings show that an overwhelming majority of respondents (90 out of 105) believe the University is not dedicating enough time or resources to retaining employees with critical and scarce skills, while only 15 respondents consider current efforts sufficient. This significant

imbalance highlights a major institutional weakness in talent retention. Critically, such strong agreement suggests that retention is not being approached as a strategic priority, but rather as a secondary or reactive function within the organisation.

This perception has serious implications for succession planning. Retaining employees who possess scarce and critical skills is essential for maintaining institutional knowledge and ensuring a pool of capable candidates for future leadership positions. The evident lack of investment in retention therefore directly undermines the development of a sustainable leadership pipeline. Without keeping high-potential staff, the University is likely to face repeated leadership gaps, increased reliance on external recruitment, and a continual loss of institutional memory.

Moreover, the results point to a disconnect between organisational intentions and employees' actual experiences. Although succession planning may be recognised at a conceptual level, the failure to prioritise retention indicates that it is not being effectively put into practice. This misalignment creates instability, as the loss of skilled employees weakens internal capacity and reduces the institution's ability to implement succession planning successfully.

Overall, the findings highlight a critical structural challenge: inadequate investment in retaining scarce and critical skills severely restricts the University's capacity to build and maintain a strong leadership pipeline, ultimately jeopardising long-term organisational stability and effectiveness.

To address the current challenges, the University should implement a formal succession planning framework to identify and cultivate potential future leaders. Offering competitive salaries, attractive benefits, and clear opportunities for career advancement, as recommended by Zamri (2023:36-37), can significantly enhance staff retention. These measures not only mitigate the risks associated with employee turnover but also ensure continuity in delivering high-quality education and research.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF

The following question was posted to assess perceptions regarding the availability and adequacy of opportunities for staff development and training within the organisation: **Question 20:** *Are HR policies and practices supporting opportunities for the development and training of staff?* The respondents were asked to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'. Fifteen (15) staff

members concur that the university's human resources policies and practices facilitate opportunities for staff development and training. Conversely, thirty (30) staff members disagree, while sixty (60) staff members chose to withhold their opinions on this matter. The findings show that leadership development and training receive limited and inconsistent attention. The results also support research showing that organisations do not devote enough time to training staff members to take on leadership roles.

Given that 44 of respondents previously stated that the University does not value learning and development, one explanation for this could be because there is no need to set aside time for training and development. (See above responses to **Question 15** of the questionnaire.) Individual development planning facilitates institutions in achieving strategic objectives by aligning individual competencies with specific strategic challenges, thereby enhancing institutional adaptability and fostering an objective approach to task assignments. Leadership succession planning is a critical concern for any profession. A succession planning framework should guide an institution in allocating sufficient time for leaders to acquire the tacit knowledge and skills necessary to effectively lead employees (Ali & Mehreen, 2019:218).

As confirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.3 *Leadership development activities*, public institutions must constantly innovate and evolve, including assisting employees with development and training. Making employee development a key part of the culture of public institutions is to ensure employees stay up to date on best practices and learn new skills. This, in turn, boosts staff engagement and attracts top talent to the public sector. According to Ali and Mehreen (2019:219), employers who support staff development enable their staff members to develop new abilities and enhance existing ones, better preparing them for their current positions. This directly promoted effective service delivery and gives employees' work greater value.

The responses to Question 20 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.11 below.

Table 6.11: Opportunity for development and training of staff

Are HR policies and practices supporting opportunities for the development and training of staff?	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	15
No	30

Are HR policies and practices supporting opportunities for the development and training of staff?	
Response field	Number of responses
Total	45

The findings show that most respondents (30 out of 45) believe that current HR policies and practices do not sufficiently promote staff development and training, while only 15 respondents feel that adequate support is provided. This imbalance is noteworthy as it signals a widespread perception that the institution's mechanisms for employee development are either weak or ineffective. From a critical standpoint, this suggests that HR practices may lack coherence, visibility, or alignment with broader organisational development priorities.

This situation has major consequences for succession planning. Since employee development and training are essential for preparing staff for future leadership roles, insufficient support in these areas limits the institution's ability to build internal leadership capacity. The lack of comprehensive development opportunities means that potential leaders are neither systematically identified nor adequately prepared, resulting in a fragile and underdeveloped leadership pipeline.

Additionally, the findings reveal a disconnect between the stated intentions of HR policies and employees' actual experiences. Even if development policies exist on paper, employees perceive them as poorly implemented, inconsistently applied, or difficult to access across departments. This gap can lower motivation, reduce participation in development programmes, and increase the risk of losing talented staff.

Overall, the results suggest that current HR policies and practices do not effectively support staff development and training in ways that strengthen succession planning. This represents a significant organisational weakness, as inadequate development structures hinder leadership readiness and compromise long-term institutional sustainability.

By investing in comprehensive development and training programmes, the University can enhance employee skills, improve job satisfaction, and attract and retain top talent, ultimately reinforcing its competitive edge in higher education.

ATTRACTION STRATEGY FOR CRITICAL AND SCARCE SKILLS

Retaining employees is critical as a strategy to preserve scarce and critical skills. The following question was posted to examine strategies and perceptions related to attracting employees with critical and scarce skills to the organisation: **Question 21:** *Has the university invested in the development of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills?* The respondents were asked to indicate either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. The majority of respondents (76) indicated that the university has not invested in the development of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills. To retain employees, personnel services, personnel evaluation, retirement arrangements, collective bargaining and health and safety measures should be looked at holistically. Keeping staff on board is never easy because they leave for a variety of reasons. Employee turnover disturbs organisations and has a variety of detrimental effects that lower productivity and degrade service performance.

Enhancing the retention of scarce skills can be achieved through the revision of policies concerning employee satisfaction and retention. Notably, only 29 respondents reported that the University has implemented a targeted strategy for attracting critical and scarce skills. This underscores the necessity for the University to reevaluate and modify its retention policy, with a particular focus on succession planning as recommended in this study. Adopting a more comprehensive approach would enable the University to offer clear career progression pathways, opportunities for engagement in technical project implementation, development of managerial competencies, and structured reward systems. As discussed in Chapter 3, *section 3.2 on Succession Planning*, the University of Namibia must implement retention strategies that extend beyond financial incentives to ensure that employees remain committed and integrated within their roles (Zwane et al., 2021:15–16).

The responses to Question 21 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.12 below.

Table 6.12: Attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills

<i>Has the university invested in the development of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	29
No	76

<i>Has the university invested in the development of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Total	105

The findings indicate that a substantial majority of respondents (76 out of 105) believe that the University has not invested in the development of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills, while only 29 respondents perceive that such a strategy exists. This imbalance is analytically significant, as it suggests a systemic gap in proactive talent acquisition and workforce planning. From a critical perspective, the absence of a clearly defined attraction strategy indicates that the institution may be operating in a reactive mode, addressing staffing needs only as vacancies arise rather than strategically positioning itself to attract high-calibre talent in anticipation of future leadership demands.

This has direct implications for succession planning. An effective succession planning system is not limited to internal development but is strengthened by alignment with external talent attraction strategies. The lack of a focused approach to attracting critical skills constrains the institution's ability to build a robust and diverse talent pipeline, particularly in areas where internal capacity may already be limited. As a result, leadership gaps are more likely to persist, and the organisation may become increasingly dependent on *ad hoc* recruitment processes that do not support long-term strategic objectives.

Furthermore, the findings point to a broader misalignment between human resource planning and organisational strategy. Without a targeted attraction strategy, the University risks losing competitiveness in the labour market, particularly against private sector institutions that may offer more structured and appealing talent value propositions. This not only affects the recruitment of new talent but also undermines efforts to retain existing employees who may perceive limited opportunities for growth within the institution.

Consequently, the data indicate that the absence of a focused attraction strategy for critical and scarce skills represents a significant structural weakness. It limits the University's capacity to proactively secure the talent required for future leadership roles, thereby undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of succession planning efforts.

To address this gap, the University should prioritise the development of a comprehensive attraction strategy that includes not only competitive remuneration but also holistic personnel services, evaluation practices, retirement arrangements, collective bargaining, and health and safety measures. These efforts are crucial for retaining employees and preserving critical skills within the organisation. Furthermore, enhancing retention policies with a strong focus on succession planning, as recommended by Zwane et al., (2021:16), will ensure that the University offers clear career paths, opportunities for technical project implementation, managerial development, and effective reward programmes. This integrated approach will help mitigate employee turnover, maintain institutional knowledge, and sustain a skilled workforce capable of meeting organisational objectives in a competitive higher education landscape.

ATTENDANCE OF WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

The following question was posted to evaluate respondents' participation in workshops and seminars aimed at enhancing their knowledge and skills: **Question 22:** *Does the University grant staff members opportunities to attend workshops and seminars to broaden their knowledge and skills needed for their positions?* Respondents were asked to indicate their response as either 'Yes' or 'No.' Most respondents (59) expressed the view that the University provides staff members with opportunities to attend workshops and seminars. As elucidated in Chapter 3, section 3.5.2.2 on *Talent Retention*, employee retention is a systematic effort to create and sustain an environment that encourages employees to remain within the organisation by implementing policies and practices that address their diverse needs. Professional development through participation in conferences, workshops, and seminars is sometimes neglected. Attending workshops and seminars provide opportunities to break away from regular schedule, interact with professionals in particular fields and discover new ideas and perspectives (Zwane, et al., 2021:16-17).

The responses to Question 22 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.13 below.

Table 6.13: Broaden knowledge and skills

<i>Does the University grant staff members opportunities to attend workshops and seminars to broaden their knowledge and skills needed for their positions?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	59

<i>Does the University grant staff members opportunities to attend workshops and seminars to broaden their knowledge and skills needed for their positions?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
No	46
Total	105

The findings show that 59 respondents believe the University offers opportunities for staff to attend workshops and seminars, while a considerable number (46 respondents) feel that such opportunities are not available. Although the majority view is positive, the small difference between the two groups is significant, as it highlights inconsistent access to development initiatives within the institution. Critically, this suggests that although development activities are provided, their distribution appears uneven, likely influenced by departmental differences, managerial practices, or resource constraints.

This inconsistency has important consequences for succession planning. Workshops and seminars are essential for ongoing learning, skills development, and leadership preparation. When access to these opportunities varies, the development of potential successors becomes fragmented, leading to unequal readiness for leadership positions across the organisation. As a result, succession planning may lack cohesion, because not all employees are given equitable chances to gain the competencies needed for career progression.

Additionally, the findings indicate a disconnect between the availability of development initiatives and their effective institutionalisation. Simply offering opportunities is not enough; equitable, well-structured, and strategically aligned access is required to support organisational objectives. The uneven responses suggest that development efforts are not embedded as a standard organisational practice but occur in selective or *ad hoc* ways.

In summary, while the University does provide some staff development opportunities through workshops and seminars, inconsistent access reduces their overall impact. This lack of uniformity weakens the institution's ability to systematically build its workforce and limits the contribution of these initiatives to a strong, sustainable succession planning system.

Implementing a structured approach to professional development aligns with retention strategies aimed at creating a supportive and engaging work environment. By actively encouraging and facilitating staff participation in relevant conferences and workshops, the University can demonstrate its commitment to employee growth and ensure that staff remain motivated and competent in their roles. Regularly evaluating and improving these opportunities based on employee feedback will further strengthen the University's position as a desirable workplace that invests in its staff's continuous learning and career advancement.

ENHANCEMENT OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The following question was posted to understand perceptions of career growth and advancement opportunities available to employees within the organisation:

Question 23: *Do you believe that pursuing further post-matric studies through the University's staff development scheme can enhance one's career opportunities?* The respondents were asked to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'. Most respondents (89) indicated that pursuing additional post-matriculation qualifications through the University's staff development scheme positively influences career progression. This finding is consistent with the argument put forth by Tavares et al. (2023:1149–1150), who contend that an increase in the number of higher education graduates in the labor market exerts an upward pressure on wage levels, regardless of whether a specific employee possesses a higher education qualification. (see Chapter 3, section 3.5 *Leadership development*). Education is an influential step in staying competitive and enhancing employees' skills. Whether they are starting out a career or returning to continue to build upon years of experience, pursuing educational training assist employees, including public servants in pursuing their careers. Successfully attaining a nationally-recognised qualification proves to employers that their employees are both skills-ready and knowledgeable in their field. Obtaining a degree also demonstrate employees' capability to take on higher-skilled occupations your industry, allowing them to command more benefits from their employers.

The responses to Question 23 of the questionnaire are listed in Table 6.14 below.

Table 6.14: Enhancement of career opportunities

<i>Do you believe that pursuing further post-matric studies through the University's staff development scheme can enhance one's career opportunities?</i>	
Response field	Number of responses
Yes	89
No	16
Total	105

The results demonstrate that a significant majority of respondents (89 out of 105) believe that engaging in further post-matric studies through the University's staff development scheme enhances their career prospects, whereas only a small minority (16 respondents) disagrees. At face value, this suggests strong confidence in the developmental value of formal education and existing institutional support mechanisms. However, when interpreted alongside earlier findings presented in Sections B and D, this perception requires cautious consideration.

The predominantly positive response reflects a high regard for formal educational pathways, indicating that employees associate career advancement with academic achievement. This perspective is consistent with traditional human capital development frameworks, which posit that qualifications serve as key enablers of professional mobility. Nonetheless, the finding also signals a potential over-emphasis on formal qualifications as the primary means of advancement, potentially at the expense of other essential developmental processes such as mentoring, coaching, and experiential leadership learning.

When examined in relation to previous findings, notably the reported absence of structured succession planning, weak leadership development systems, and dissatisfaction with promotion practices a clear contradiction emerges: Although employees believe that further studies should enhance career opportunities, the institutional mechanisms necessary to convert these qualifications into actual advancement are insufficient or lacking.

This suggests that the perceived benefits of additional studies may be more aspirational than grounded in organisational experience. Employees may assume that academic development should result in upward mobility, yet the institutional context does not consistently facilitate or

reward such progression. As a consequence, individuals who invest in their qualifications may be inclined to seek external employment opportunities if internal career pathways remain opaque or inaccessible.

Overall, the findings reveal a misalignment between employees' developmental investments and the institution's career progression structures. Employees undertake further studies to advance professionally, the institution fails to effectively integrate or utilise the enhanced competencies acquired and this results in frustration, stagnation, or eventual employee exit. Thus, although there is strong belief in the career-enhancing value of further studies, the absence of corresponding institutional career pathways limits the realisation of these benefits. This misalignment may contribute to employee dissatisfaction and increased turnover.

Aligning educational opportunities with industry demands and emerging trends, as highlighted by Tavares, et al. (2023:1149-1150), ensures that staff remain competitive and adaptable in their respective fields. Moreover, acquiring nationally recognised qualifications through the University's programmes can significantly boost credibility and readiness for higher-skilled roles, ultimately leading to increased earning potential and career advancement opportunities. By continually assessing the relevance and effectiveness of its staff development initiatives, the University can foster a culture of lifelong learning and professional growth among its workforce, contributing to both individual success and organisational excellence.

6.3.2 Quantitative data: Summary of findings

The study revealed that there is a partial understanding of succession planning among staff at the University of Namibia. While the literature emphasises succession planning as a strategic initiative aimed at developing internal talent, preparing employees for leadership roles, and retaining institutional knowledge, respondents primarily associated succession planning with identifying replacements for key positions and retaining talent, with only a small proportion acknowledging its role in leadership development. This divergence suggests a misalignment between current perceptions at the university and best practices in succession planning, indicating that long-term leadership development may not yet be prioritised.

Despite this gap, respondents generally recognised the value of implementing a formal succession planning system. Most agreed that succession planning could improve employee commitment and retention, facilitate career development, preserve institutional knowledge, and reduce turnover among managers with scarce skills. The study also identified key reasons for

the high turnover of managers, including better development opportunities elsewhere, poor job fit or interpersonal relation]s, competitive salaries in other institutions, and retirement. This underscores the importance of integrating succession planning with strategies that address staff retention, professional development, and employee engagement to ensure continuity and organisational stability.

Respondents highlighted that the primary goals of succession planning should be operational readiness through identifying replacements, employee development, achieving strategic objectives, and retaining institutional talent. They expressed the expectation that a succession planning system should not only recognise current skills and accomplishments but also prepare staff for advancement into more challenging roles and foster the development of new skills and abilities. Regarding the development period for potential successors, the majority of respondents recommended a structured period of one to two years, reflecting a balance between focused training and readiness for leadership positions, with some support for longer development periods depending on individual career trajectories.

The study further explored methods for identifying and developing potential successors, revealing strong support for multifaceted approaches such as performance evaluations, management and development systems, supervisor input, and collaboration with human resources. Evaluating development needs through performance ratings, 360-degree feedback, self-assessments, and interviews was also deemed effective, emphasising the need for a structured and systematic approach to preparing employees for future roles. In terms of staff development methods, respondents prioritized formal training and on-the-job training, reflecting a preference for both technical and practical skill acquisition, complemented by mentoring, coaching, and task rotations. These methods are aligned with the literature advocating a combination of technical and soft skills development to enhance overall workforce readiness.

In the context of employee development, respondents indicated strong support for the use of personality tests in assessing potential successors, suggesting recognition of the importance of aligning individuals' attributes with role requirements and organisational culture. While respondents agreed that work experience is valued alongside academic qualifications, they also noted that the university generally supports learning and development, although leadership development opportunities and promotion systems were perceived as ineffective and unfair. A majority indicated that the university does not invest sufficiently in retaining critical and scarce

skills, and HR policies and practices were seen as inadequate in supporting talent retention. Similarly, although professional development opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and post-matric studies were available and valued, their implementation appeared inconsistent and limited in scope.

Overall, the findings suggest that while there is recognition of the importance of succession planning at the University of Namibia, there are significant gaps in understanding, implementation, and alignment with best practices. The university's current approach emphasises operational continuity over strategic leadership development, and insufficient attention is given to talent retention, professional development, and fair promotion practices. Addressing these gaps through a comprehensive succession planning framework that incorporates leadership development, structured training, multifaceted identification and evaluation methods, and targeted retention strategies could enhance employee performance, engagement, and organisational resilience.

The following section discusses the data analysis, interpretation, and findings of the qualitative data.

6.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

The previous section described the questionnaires' results of the study on succession planning practices at the University of Namibia. A detailed analysis, interpretation and findings on the quantitative data was presented. This section presents the qualitative data analysis, interpretation and findings. See Chapter 4, section 4.7.2 *Method of Data Collection from the administrative managers* for details about the data analysis process.

The qualitative data gives the researcher the respondents' point of view and allows for the identification of the strengths and weaknesses. It gave the researcher a more in-depth understanding of the subject being studied by providing additional insights that could not be obtained from the quantitative research. It enabled the researcher to compare results and gain much deeper insights.

6.4.1 Qualitative data: Analysis and interpretation

The interview schedule (Annexure F) comprised a series of questions aimed at delving deeper into themes and subjects. The interviews were transcribed word for word, followed by analysis and interpretation. From the data, two primary themes surfaced: the current succession

planning for leadership development of high-performing staff members at the University of Namibia, and the existing practices in succession planning and management. Table 6.15 summarises the themes and sub-themes.

Table 6.15: Qualitative data – Themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Succession planning for leadership development of high performing staff members staff at the University of Namibia	• Opportunities for leadership development. • Commitment from leaders and human resource department.
2. Succession planning and management practices at the University of Namibia	• Absence of a formal succession plan for leadership development. • Unavailability of a succession planning policy

6.4.1.1 Demographic profile of interviewees

Seven administrative managers willingly took part in interviews to examine and articulate their views on the succession planning processes for leadership development at the University of Namibia. Among these participants, five were women and two were men.

6.4.1.2 Theme 1: Succession planning for leadership development of administrative staff members at the University of Namibia

The findings of this study reveal that succession planning for leadership development among high-performing staff at the University of Namibia is inadequately developed, fragmented, and weakly institutionalised. Within the context of the study's proposed conceptual framework, this reflects a breakdown at the institutional enabling level, where succession planning is not embedded through coherent policies, formal structures, or coordinated human resource strategies. Although participants acknowledged the importance of preparing high-performing employees for future leadership roles, the absence of structured succession planning systems indicates that this recognition has not been translated into strategic and operational practice.

This disconnect undermines the systematic development of internal leadership capacity, which the framework identifies as a prerequisite for sustainable organisational leadership.

Consistent with the framework's emphasis on structured developmental mechanisms, the findings show that leadership development for high-performing staff is largely driven by individual initiative rather than by intentional institutional processes. Participants reported that development opportunities are irregular and predominantly informal, with limited access to structured mentoring, coaching, or leadership training programmes. This reactive and individualised approach signals a weak linkage between talent identification and development pathways within the succession planning system. Such a misalignment is problematic, as it constrains equitable access to leadership development opportunities and compromises the formation of a sustainable leadership pipeline. In contrast, the literature emphasises that effective succession planning depends on deliberate and systematic investment in high-potential employees to ensure leadership continuity and organisational stability (Mhlongo & Harunavamwe, 2017:7; Lowan & Chisoro, 2016:70). The findings therefore demonstrate a clear divergence between the succession planning processes articulated in the conceptual framework and those evident in institutional practice.

The integration of quantitative findings further strengthens this interpretation. Responses to Question 5 indicate that employees clearly recognise the benefits of a structured succession planning system, particularly in enhancing employee engagement and safeguarding institutional knowledge, both of which are key outcome variables within the conceptual framework. Similarly, responses to Question 4 reveal strong support for the establishment of a formal succession planning framework. However, the convergence of qualitative and quantitative findings reveals a central contradiction: while the anticipated outcomes of succession planning are widely acknowledged, the enabling structures and developmental processes required to realise these outcomes remain weak, informal, and inconsistently applied.

Furthermore, the study reveals that leadership positions are frequently filled through external recruitment or competitive selection processes, rather than through the deliberate progression of internally developed high-performing staff. From a conceptual framework perspective, this indicates a failure to link leadership development mechanisms with succession outcomes. The University's approach remains largely reactive, prioritising short-term vacancy filling over long-term leadership continuity. Although such practices may address immediate operational

needs, they neglect the strategic utilisation of institutional knowledge and limit internal career progression, thereby weakening motivation and retention among high-potential employees.

Critically, the absence of a formalised succession planning framework further exacerbates these challenges. Without clearly defined processes for identifying, developing, and supporting high-performing staff, leadership development remains *ad hoc* and uneven across the institution. This reflects broader shortcomings in strategic human resource management, where succession planning is not positioned as an integrated system aligned with organisational planning and leadership sustainability. The literature consistently affirms that succession planning is a strategic function that integrates talent management, leadership development, and organisational planning to ensure long-term sustainability (Yudianto et al., 2023:458). The findings thus highlight a structural misalignment between the University's human resource practices and the systemic relationships proposed in the conceptual framework.

In addition, limited involvement by senior management and human resource practitioners further constrains the effectiveness of succession planning initiatives. Participants reported minimal engagement by institutional leaders in identifying, mentoring, or supporting high-potential staff, weakening the leadership commitment component of the conceptual framework. This lack of shared responsibility undermines the institutionalisation of succession planning and perpetuates its fragmented implementation, despite extensive evidence in the literature that sustained leadership involvement is essential for fostering a culture of mentorship, development, and talent cultivation.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that succession planning for leadership development at the University of Namibia is not only underdeveloped, but also structurally constrained by weak policy alignment, limited managerial engagement, and an overreliance on informal and reactive practices. As a result, the intended outcomes of the succession planning system, leadership continuity, retention of institutional knowledge, and the optimal utilisation of high-performing staff, remain largely unrealised. This theme therefore provides strong empirical support for the study's conceptual framework and underscores the necessity of repositioning succession planning as a structured, strategic, and continuous process. By addressing the identified gaps across institutional enablers, development mechanisms, and leadership outcomes, the proposed conceptual model seeks to facilitate the systematic identification, development, and advancement of high-performing employees into leadership roles, thereby strengthening institutional resilience and long-term sustainability.

Two key sub-themes emerged from the analysis: (i) opportunities for leadership development, and (ii) commitment from leaders and the human resource department. These themes provide deeper insight into the organisational and structural factors that shape the effectiveness of succession planning and are explored in the subsequent sections.

The sub-themes are discussed in the following sections.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the theme 1:

Question 1, *What is the status of succession planning at the University of Namibia?*

Question 3, *How is the University measuring the success of its succession planning?*

Question 4, *What are some of the challenges of the University of Namibia's succession planning?*

Question 7, *Is the management team in your department/functional area (Executive and Senior Management) aware of the succession planning process and are they effectively participating in the process including engaging with staff on career and succession discussions?*

Sub-theme 1: Opportunities for Leadership Development

This sub-theme focuses on the extent to which leadership development opportunities exist within the succession planning landscape at the University of Namibia. Although the findings show that such opportunities are available, they are not systematically structured nor strategically aligned with succession planning processes. Participants noted initiatives such as training, mentoring, and acting appointments; however, these were consistently described as informal, *ad hoc*, and dependent on managerial discretion rather than being anchored in a formal institutional framework. This lack of formalisation is analytically important because it demonstrates that leadership development is not guided by policy and is therefore unevenly distributed, resulting in inconsistent developmental experiences across the institution.

The quantitative data support this interpretation. While respondents expressed moderate agreement regarding the existence of development opportunities, the high proportion of neutral responses suggests ambiguity, limited visibility, and unequal access. In this context, neutrality reflects uncertainty rather than disinterest, implying that employees may be unaware of available opportunities or that such opportunities are not consistently provided. This pattern suggests a fragmented institutional approach where leadership development is neither standardised nor equitably accessible, ultimately constraining the University's ability to

systematically develop future leaders. Consequently, leadership development occurs in sporadic and reactive ways rather than through an intentional and continuous strategic process.

This situation contrasts sharply with the leadership development principles outlined in the literature. Peters-Hawkins et al. (2018:29) emphasise that leadership development should be intentional, systematic, and aligned with organisational goals. The University's current practices demonstrate a significant gap between theory and practice: while some development activities exist, they are not implemented in a way that supports a strategic leadership pipeline. Participant comments further illustrate this disconnect:

“In my department there was no, succession planning in place. So, there was just, we had to perform, we had deadlines and targets that we had to meet. And as a manager I have tried to empower and support subordinates in pulling them in to perform higher on the levels of extreme but not really succession plan and I don't think other departments has that in place either.” (Participant 7)

“It's a bit difficult because I don't think there is any policy in place that is meant to train people to take over. I think people learn on the job. When the job become vacant it's advertised and those who are interested will apply and then of course through the interviewing process, the best performers gets appointed. I'm not sure whether there is a program of that nature at the university.” (Participant 3)

These accounts highlight a prevailing dependence on experiential learning and external recruitment rather than structured internal talent development. Importantly, in this context, “learning on the job” does not represent a deliberate developmental strategy but signals the absence of formal mechanisms for preparing staff for leadership roles. This reflects a reactive organisational approach where leadership development emerges incidentally from operational pressures rather than being purposefully aligned with future leadership needs.

Additionally, the findings reveal a significant disconnect between the identification of potential talent and its subsequent development. While capable individuals may be recognised informally, there is no systematic framework to transition them into leadership roles. This disjointed approach undermines the effectiveness of succession planning, as identifying high-potential employees without developing them renders the process incomplete. As Bano et al. (2022:14) and Manzini and Malatjie (2023:1132) argue, effective succession planning

requires ongoing, targeted development aligned with organisational goals, conditions that are largely lacking in this context.

The implications of this misalignment are far-reaching. Without structured development pathways, employees struggle to envision long-term career progression within the institution. This not only restricts individual growth but also diminishes motivation, reduces organisational commitment, and increases the likelihood of turnover, particularly among high-potential employees seeking advancement. Within a higher education environment, where administrative leadership is central to institutional stability, such shortcomings pose a considerable organisational risk.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that leadership development at the University of Namibia is not integrated into a coherent talent management or succession planning system. Instead, it comprises a series of disconnected, inconsistently applied practices lacking strategic direction. This weak integration significantly undermines the effectiveness of succession planning because leadership readiness cannot be achieved without deliberate, structured, and sustained development efforts. The results highlight a systemic institutional weakness and emphasise the need for a comprehensive, integrated leadership development framework, such as the one proposed in Chapter 7, in which development serves as a core strategic component of succession planning.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the sub-theme 1:

Question 6: *What approach does the University use to nominate its staff members for leadership courses?*

Question 2: *In terms of talent management, which of these key interventions have been implemented?*

Question 8: *The University of Namibia is faced with the large number of experienced staff members who are going on retirement. What strategy will the University use to close the gap that will be left by the retiring senior staff members?*

Sub-theme 2: Commitment from leaders and the human resource department

The second sub-theme concerns the extent to which institutional leaders and the HR department demonstrate commitment to succession planning. Findings indicate minimal engagement from both groups, suggesting that succession planning is not treated as a strategic priority at the University of Namibia. This lack of commitment weakens the institution's ability to build a sustainable leadership pipeline.

Although succession planning is intended to safeguard institutional knowledge, maintain organisational culture, and develop future leaders, the results show that this strategic orientation is largely absent. Instead, the HR department relies mainly on external recruitment, while department heads take limited and informal responsibility for identifying successors. This reflects a broader pattern in organisations where external recruitment is prioritised over internal talent development (Seniwoliba, 2015:4; Maheshwari & Kha, 2023:6).

Qualitative responses highlight this gap. Participants described succession planning as either informal or non-existent, with development occurring mainly through experience rather than structured programmes. For instance, Participant 2 stated:

“I do not think there is any policy in place that is meant to train people to take over... When the job becomes vacant it is advertised... I'm not sure whether there is any program of that nature at the university.” (Participant 2)

Participant 1 echoed similar concerns:

“There is no plan in place that will close the gap... it is only a matter of advertising the position, interviewing the candidates and appoint the best candidate.”

These views indicate a reactive, short-term approach that limits internal growth and increases dependence on external candidates. Some participants also noted resistance to succession planning due to job security fears. As Participant 7 observed:

“Some of them could have seen succession planning as a threat... because you want extension of your own contract... that’s why people have left behind the plan of succession.”

This illustrates cultural and behavioural barriers that undermine effective leadership development.

The data further show limited managerial involvement in career development discussions. Although staff development plans exist, they appear employee-driven rather than strategically led. As Participant 3 noted:

“Management is not very much involved... they will assist you if you approach them... but from their side they are not very effectively participating.”

Overall, the findings reveal a misalignment between leadership’s strategic role and HR’s operational responsibilities. Effective succession planning requires coordinated leadership direction and structured HR systems (Mhlongo & Harunavamwe, 2017:10). Limited commitment not only affects leadership continuity but also reduces employee motivation, engagement, and retention. HR’s role is especially crucial, as its practices shape long-term organisational sustainability (Wonnia, 2021:691).

In conclusion, weak commitment from both leadership and HR remains a major obstacle to building a strong internal leadership pipeline. A more coordinated, strategic, and collaborative approach is required, an approach reflected in the conceptual model presented in Chapter 7.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the sub-theme 2:

Question 10: *Do you have a successor for your current position?*

6.4.1.3 Theme 2: Succession planning and management practices at the University of Namibia

The findings of this study indicate that succession planning and management practices at the University of Namibia are predominantly fragmented, informal, and weakly institutionalised, despite widespread acknowledgment of their importance for leadership continuity and organisational stability. Although participants recognised succession planning as a vital mechanism for professional growth and workforce sustainability, this awareness has not been

translated into practical implementation. This gap highlights a notable disconnect between institutional recognition and strategic execution. As emphasised in the literature, succession planning plays a crucial role in ensuring leadership continuity and organisational stability (Mhlongo & Harunavamwe, 2017:7); however, the lack of a formalised succession planning system within the University suggests that it has not been accorded priority as a core strategic function.

Empirical evidence further reveals the absence of a clearly defined and consistently communicated succession planning framework within the institution. Participants reported that there are no structured processes in place to systematically identify, develop, and prepare high-performing employees for leadership positions. This shortcoming reflects a broader institutional reliance on *ad hoc* and reactive decision-making, particularly in response to vacancies at senior leadership levels. Instead of being guided by long-term strategic considerations, leadership transitions are often managed through short-term responses marked by uncertainty. Such practices are problematic, as they compromise organisational continuity and expose the University to leadership gaps, especially in roles that require accumulated institutional knowledge and experience.

Moreover, the findings show that while middle- and lower-level management positions could function as a pipeline for future leadership, the University has not implemented intentional strategies to cultivate this potential talent pool. This represents a failure to effectively utilise existing human capital, resulting in the underuse of internal talent and lost opportunities for leadership development. The lack of targeted development initiatives for these employees demonstrates a reactive rather than proactive approach, whereby leadership preparation occurs only once vacancies arise instead of forming part of an ongoing developmental process. Consequently, the University risks losing high-performing staff due to limited career advancement prospects, thereby weakening its long-term leadership capacity and organisational resilience.

Critically, the study identifies a lack of alignment between succession planning and broader succession management practices. While succession planning focuses on preparing individuals for specific positions, succession management encompasses a wider, more integrated approach aimed at building sustainable leadership pipelines across the organisation (Yudianto et al., 2023:458). The absence of both structured planning and coordinated management processes suggests that the University lacks a comprehensive strategy for leadership continuity, resulting

in fragmented and inconsistent practices. This misalignment not only diminishes the effectiveness of talent development efforts but also restricts the institution's ability to respond strategically to future leadership requirements.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reveal a clear divergence between established succession planning principles and their application within the University. The literature consistently highlights that effective succession planning requires an integrated, forward-looking approach that aligns talent development with organisational strategy. In contrast, the University's current practices reflect a short-term, reactive focus that prioritises immediate staffing needs over sustained leadership development. This misalignment undermines organisational innovation, diminishes staff morale and motivation, and heightens vulnerability to instability.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that succession planning and management at the University of Namibia are not simply underdeveloped but are structurally constrained by the absence of formal frameworks, weak strategic alignment, and insufficient utilisation of internal talent. As a result, the institution remains vulnerable to leadership disruptions, loss of institutional knowledge, and reduced organisational effectiveness. This theme therefore reinforces the necessity for a comprehensive and integrated succession planning model, as proposed in this study, which repositions succession planning as a continuous, strategic, and institutionally embedded process. Such an approach is essential for strengthening leadership pipelines, improving organisational resilience, and ensuring the University's long-term sustainability.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the theme 2:

Question 4: *What are some of the challenges of the University of Namibia's succession planning?*

Question 5: *How diversified are the current University's talent pools?*

Sub-Theme 1: Absence of a formal succession plan for leadership development.

The first sub-theme derived from the data reveals a pronounced absence of a formalised succession planning to support leadership development at the University of Namibia. Participants repeatedly indicated that individuals often assume leadership roles without prior

preparation or structured developmental support, resulting in a “learn-as-you-go” approach that compromises continuity and organisational effectiveness. As Participant 6 explained:

“I think currently there is no succession planning at UNAM because you would find that even if the position arises, before the person even exit the position, the person that is coming in there is no training, you learn as you go and basically it is not in place at all... I think it runs across the board, all the positions there is no succession planning. So I think in my view it’s not in place and I believe it should be implemented.”

Participant 2 similarly highlighted the institution’s reactive manner of filling leadership positions:

“When the job becomes vacant it’s advertised and those who are interested will apply and then of course through the interviewing process, the best performers get appointed. I’m not sure whether there is any program of that nature at the university.”

Participant 3 reinforced this view by noting that leadership development largely depends on individual effort rather than structured institutional processes:

“I doubt whether the university has any approach since the development of staff members for leadership basically comes from the member him or herself. The university might help them in supporting them financially but I don’t think the university nominate them for leadership courses.”

Collectively, these perspectives highlight a systemic limitation: the University depends on *ad hoc* recruitment practices and individual initiative instead of a strategic, coordinated approach to preparing future leaders. Participant 5 emphasised the risks associated with this gap:

“...UNAM does not have a succession plan...for a big institution like a university I feel it is very important.”

Participant 7 added that although some managers attempt to empower potential successors informally, such initiatives lack institutional structure and support:

“There wasn’t a plan in place for the understudy, and to train the understudy...Some managers had on their own tried to empower...staff to take over with confidence from the senior position.”

From a theoretical perspective, succession planning serves to strengthen organisational continuity, build employee capabilities, and reduce the risks that accompany leadership transitions (Lowan & Chisoro, 2016:70). It functions not only as a procedure for filling vacancies but as a strategic process for cultivating leadership pipelines, particularly important in dynamic environments where competencies required for competitive advantage evolve rapidly. The absence of a formalised succession system therefore exposes the University to significant operational and strategic vulnerabilities. As Ndatshe et al. (2024:206) observe, unplanned leadership departures often result in the reliance on external recruitment, which delays critical decisions and negatively affects continuity, stakeholder trust, and institutional performance.

In response to these findings, the study highlights the urgent need for the University to implement a comprehensive succession planning framework. Such a system would provide a structured means of identifying and preparing potential leaders, ensuring the preservation of institutional knowledge and maintaining strategic direction throughout leadership transitions. Without this, the University faces heightened risks of disrupted leadership continuity, decreased organisational efficiency, and the potential loss of high-performing staff who may perceive limited opportunities for advancement.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the sub-theme 1:

Question 1: *In your view what is the status of succession planning at the University of Namibia?*

Question 2: *In terms of talent management, which of these key interventions have been implemented?*

- *Individual Performance Management*
- *Personal Development Planning*
- *Career Planning*
- *Succession Planning*
- *Staffing Strategy*
- *Staff Retention*

Sub Theme 2: Unavailability of a succession planning policy

The second sub-theme emerging from the findings underscores the lack of a formal succession planning policy at the University of Namibia, particularly with regard to leadership development for administrative staff. Participants consistently highlighted that the institution has no formalised policy to direct or standardise succession planning efforts. Such a policy is essential because it defines procedures, allocates responsibilities, and outlines the interventions required for effective succession planning (Maheshwari & Kha, 2023:6). As Participant 5 explained:

“HR policies are currently not making any plan available or contain anything about the implementation of succession planning.”

Participant 2 reinforced the reactive and unstructured nature of current practices:

“It’s a bit difficult because I don’t think there is any policy in place that is meant to train people to take over. I think people learn on the job.”

Participant 6 further linked the absence of a policy to financial limitations, suggesting that resource constraints hinder efforts to formalise succession processes:

“...perhaps the challenges they are facing, that’s why they are not even having a policy, is the resources...probably they cannot afford to pay two people at the same time...bringing people to train.”

Participant 1 also emphasised the need for stronger institutional commitment:

“We do not have a succession planning policy. I think that human resources needs to take it seriously.”

From a theoretical standpoint, organisational policies function as authoritative frameworks that guide institutional decision-making and distinguish required actions from optional guidelines (Berger, 2022:26). Within this context, the lack of a formal succession planning policy represents a significant shortcoming in strategic human resource management. Without such a policy, the University has no clear structure to anticipate leadership vacancies, identify high-potential individuals, or implement targeted developmental programmes.

The literature further stresses the critical role of a well-designed succession planning policy. Such policies promote continuity by safeguarding institutional knowledge and ensuring that capable individuals are prepared to step into leadership roles seamlessly (Badara, Johari & Yean, 2015:14). They also support coordinated and transparent leadership transitions, thereby enhancing stability and reducing uncertainties associated with unexpected departures (Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018:30). In contrast, institutions that lack systematic mechanisms for identifying and nurturing potential leaders tend to rely on *ad hoc* decision-making, which weakens organisational resilience and hampers leadership continuity.

Additionally, succession planning policies are vital not only for managing transitions but also for retaining talent. By offering structured support mechanisms such as mentoring, training, and clear career pathways, such policies help maintain the engagement and motivation of potential successors and ensure continuity of expertise. Without these structures, high-performing staff may experience limited growth opportunities, leading to decreased motivation and increased turnover, ultimately weakening the organisation's leadership capacity. Implementing a formal succession planning policy would therefore act as a strategic measure to support both leadership continuity and human resource development, aligning institutional practice with contemporary organisational and educational demands.

Relevant interview questions that correspond to the sub-theme 2:

Question 9: *In your view, do the current HR Policies and practices of the University support the implementation and application of succession planning?*

6.4.2 Qualitative Data: Summary of Findings

The qualitative findings demonstrate that succession planning at the University of Namibia is predominantly informal, fragmented, and insufficiently developed, with significant consequences for leadership continuity, staff development, and the overall stability of the institution. Administrative managers recognised succession planning as strategically important for nurturing high-performing employees and facilitating smooth leadership transitions. Participants consistently noted that robust succession planning not only supports leadership growth but also helps safeguard institutional knowledge and strengthens organisational resilience. Despite this recognition, the findings reveal a widespread lack of awareness and meaningful participation among senior leaders and human resources (HR) personnel,

indicating that succession planning has not yet been adopted as a strategic organisational priority. This oversight represents missed opportunities to identify, develop, and retain internal talent capable of assuming future leadership responsibilities.

The study also found that leadership development at the University remains limited, inconsistently applied, and largely dependent on individual initiative rather than institutionalised programming (Chapter 3, Section 3.2). Participants explained that staff often gain leadership skills informally, primarily through experience, while leadership roles continue to be filled through public advertisement and competitive interviews rather than through structured internal development, mentoring, or planned talent pipeline strategies. Such practices place the institution at risk, particularly when retirements or resignations occur, as they may result in the appointment of leaders who are inadequately prepared. These shortcomings pose threats to human capital quality, disrupt leadership continuity, and undermine intentional management of institutional knowledge. The absence of a formal succession planning framework further intensifies these challenges by preventing a systematic approach to identifying, preparing, and supporting high-potential staff members, ultimately placing long-term leadership sustainability at risk (NEOGOV, 2023).

Another key finding concerns the weak involvement of senior management and HR in succession planning. Participants observed that discussions concerning career advancement and future leadership prospects are infrequent, and HR often prioritises external recruitment over the development of internal talent. This limited engagement reflects an organisational culture in which succession planning is not viewed as a shared responsibility and underscores the need for more committed leadership involvement. Participants also highlighted the absence of a formal succession planning policy as a major institutional gap. Without clear guidance, accountability structures, and planned development interventions, succession planning remains inconsistent, reactive, and poorly coordinated. The lack of such a policy undermines the University's capacity to manage leadership transitions effectively and to protect institutional memory, leaving it vulnerable to operational disruptions and knowledge loss when experienced staff leave.

In summary, although the theoretical importance of succession planning is widely acknowledged, its implementation at the University of Namibia remains inadequate and disjointed. Leadership development initiatives, succession planning processes, and supporting policy structures are either missing or insufficiently formalised. As a result, high-potential

employees are not fully developed, and the institution faces ongoing risks related to leadership gaps and unprepared successors. These findings are consistent with the central research problem, which identifies the absence of a formalised succession planning model as a major barrier to using succession planning effectively for leadership development. The study therefore highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive and integrated succession planning framework that combines structured leadership development, formal policy establishment, and sustained leadership engagement. Such a framework would enable the systematic preparation of high-performing employees for future leadership roles, thereby enhancing institutional stability, capability, and long-term resilience.

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provides an analysis of the data and presents the results in relation to the literature review. The findings successfully address the primary objective of the study, which is to ascertain the current succession planning practices employed for the leadership development of administrative staff at the University of Namibia.

These findings suggest that a conceptual plan for succession planning is urgently needed. The planned conceptual plan succession planning could help the University of Namibia create a talent pipeline of successors for future leadership roles, as well as guarantee institutional goals and the team continuity needed to maintain performance. An effective succession plan ensures easier operations for both unexpected and predicted departures. Actions must be made for earlier retirement. Although succession planning is a complex and time-consuming process, it is an essential methodical approach to organisational growth and viability. Sometimes succession plans fail in organisations because employees are not involved in the succession planning process. Succession planning is more effective when it is evident to all employees. Transparency in succession planning procedures is essential for a successful transition. As a result, the human resources department oversees communicating the organisation's succession strategy to foster employee engagement. Personnel should be informed of the succession planning process. Organisations no longer establish succession plans in secrecy.

These findings suggest that the researcher's proposed conceptual plan for succession planning, if put into practice, may act as a manual and help the University of Namibia connect succession planning to the institution's strategic plan, which would ease their challenges. The conceptual

plan may also help in deciding who should oversee succession planning, as well as the tactics and materials required for prospective successors' leadership development.

Finally, the proposed conceptual plan for succession planning may provide an open and ongoing succession planning process.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 offered a thorough analysis and interpretation of the collected data, situating the findings within the context of existing literature. The results from that chapter underscore an urgent need for the development of a conceptual framework for succession planning. This chapter, titled Conclusions and Recommendations, synthesises the insights derived from both quantitative and qualitative analyses and proposes evidence-based recommendations to address the primary issue identified in the study, specifically, the absence of a formalised succession planning model at the University of Namibia. The chapter provides a comprehensive conclusion that answers the research questions, links these findings to the study objectives, and proposes a conceptual model tailored to the university's context. This chapter serves as the culmination of the research, highlighting how the study contributes to knowledge and practical implementation of succession planning in public institutions.

The chapter commences by critically examines the study's **key findings** on succession planning at the University of Namibia, highlighting three main issues: the absence of a formal succession plan, the lack of a guiding policy, and limited managerial involvement in leadership development. It shows that succession planning is fragmented, informal, and reactive, which undermines leadership continuity, employee development, and institutional stability.

The chapter then proceeds with the **Conclusions** section, which revisits the central research problem: the absence of a structured succession planning system at the University of Namibia. Consequently, the extent to which succession planning contributes to the development and advancement of competent, high-performing staff remains undetermined. Addressing the first research question, the study establishes that existing literature on succession planning within public institutions highlights its strategic importance in identifying key leadership positions, nurturing internal talent, and ensuring continuity and stability in organisational leadership. Literature consistently portrays succession planning as a developmental tool, not just a replacement mechanism, highlighting its role in enhancing staff competencies and retention. Regarding the second research question, the study demonstrates that a structured succession planning model holds considerable potential for cultivating high-performing staff. In its

absence, leadership development opportunities are fragmented, and staff career paths are unclear, resulting in potential skills gaps and instability in leadership roles. With respect to the third research question on the research approach, the study illustrates that a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, provides comprehensive insights into succession planning practices, enabling both measurement of current processes and in-depth understanding of staff experiences and perceptions. The fourth research question, which pertains to identifying the most appropriate succession planning model for the University of Namibia, is addressed by recognising the necessity for a conceptual model tailored to the university's unique operational context, culture, and objectives. Finally, the fifth research question on contributions to succession planning models in public administration is addressed by demonstrating that integrating leadership development, formal frameworks, and transparent promotion systems can enhance public sector succession practices and serve as a guide for other institutions.

The **Recommendations** section builds on these conclusions. The study emphasises that the University of Namibia must develop and implement a formal succession planning framework, which clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, processes, and timelines for identifying, nurturing, and promoting high-potential staff. A conceptual succession planning model tailored to the university's unique context should be adopted to provide clear career progression pathways and incorporate regular performance assessments. Leadership development programmes should be institutionalised, offering training, mentorship, and skill-building workshops aligned with strategic objectives and available to staff across all levels. The promotion system should be enhanced to ensure transparency, merit-based advancement, and clear criteria for career progression, while retention strategies must focus on maintaining key talent through competitive packages, recognition, and career growth opportunities. The university must also ensure top management and stakeholder commitment to champion succession planning, allocate adequate resources, and engage continuously with staff to foster a culture of leadership development. Furthermore, succession planning should be integrated into the university's strategic plan, and best practices such as consulting external experts and addressing factors influencing knowledge sharing should be adopted to optimize the outcomes of succession initiatives.

The chapter proceeds to the **Development of a Conceptual Model for Succession Planning**, **culminating** in Figure 7.1, which illustrates the framework for guiding succession planning at the University of Namibia. This model positions leadership at its core while embedding

succession processes within the organisational culture, creating a supportive environment for continuous talent development. It integrates succession planning with talent management to ensure systematic replacement of leaders and mitigation of potential political or operational disruptions caused by leadership changes.

The **Components of the Conceptual Model** are then briefly described in relation to the recommendations. Top management participation and support highlight the critical role of leaders in championing succession initiatives. Committed accountability ensures that responsibilities are clearly assigned, while assessment of present and future development needs identifies gaps and training requirements. Opportunities for professional development and focused individual attention provide pathways for staff growth, and extension to all university levels ensures inclusivity. Incorporating succession planning into the strategic plan aligns initiatives with institutional objectives, while systematic evaluation of the succession program monitors effectiveness and facilitates continuous improvement. Each component is crucial for creating a transparent, structured, and sustainable succession planning process, and these will be elaborated in detail following the illustration of the model.

Finally, the chapter concludes by emphasising that implementing the **recommendations** will enable the University of Namibia to establish a robust leadership pipeline, support institutional growth, and enhance administrative and academic excellence. Succession planning is framed as a future-focused strategic initiative that addresses challenges such as aging staff, skills shortages, and competition for top performers, ensuring the institution can maintain continuity and high performance in its leadership and key functional roles. Recommendations for further studies are also suggested to build on this work and refine succession planning strategies in the public sector.

7.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS

The study revealed several critical insights regarding succession planning at the University of Namibia, highlighting significant gaps in both policy and practice. These findings can be categorised into three interrelated areas: the absence of formal succession planning, the lack of a succession planning policy, and limited engagement of senior management in leadership development initiatives.

7.2.1 Absence of a Formal Succession Plan

Participants consistently indicated that individuals assume leadership roles without formal preparation, depending largely on experiential learning or what was described as “learning on the job” (Participant 6). This informal practice reflects the findings of Lowan and Chisoro (2016:70), who contend that the absence of formal succession frameworks often results in leadership instability and the underutilisation of internal talent reserves. The findings further correspond with Mhlongo and Harunavamwe (2017:7), who underscore the importance of succession planning in maintaining workforce stability and safeguarding institutional knowledge.

Evidence from participant accounts reveals that the University’s existing approach to leadership appointments is predominantly reactive, with positions being filled through competitive selection processes or external recruitment rather than through intentional internal talent development. Participant 5 noted that the lack of a formal succession strategy exposes the University to risk, particularly given the size and complexity of the institution where leadership continuity is essential for effective operations. This concern aligns with Ndatshe et al. (2024:206), who warn that poorly prepared leadership transitions may negatively affect institutional performance and staff morale.

More critically, this absence points to shortcomings not only at the policy level but also in strategic planning and foresight. Although the conceptual importance of succession planning is recognised, its failure to be operationalised suggests that leadership development has yet to be fully integrated as a central strategic function. From a disciplinary standpoint, this highlights a misalignment between human resource management theory and practice within higher education settings, where sustaining leadership pipelines is considered essential (Yudianto et al., 2023:458).

7.2.2 Lack of a Succession Planning Policy

The study revealed that the absence of a formal succession planning policy represents a major institutional shortcoming. Participants reported that existing human resource policies do not explicitly institutionalise succession planning nor provide structured direction for leadership development (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6). Berger (2022:26) and Maheshwari & Kha (2023:6) assert that policies function as authoritative frameworks that shape organisational processes, define

accountability, and promote consistency. In the absence of such a policy, succession planning practices remain disjointed, informal, and reliant on individual discretion.

Beyond its impact on operational effectiveness, the lack of a succession planning policy also constrains the University's capacity to retain high-potential employees. Empirical evidence according to (Badara, Johari & Yean, 2015:14; Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018:30) illustrates that formalised succession planning policies facilitate seamless leadership transitions, reduce the risk of knowledge attrition, and contribute to organisational stability. When these insights are considered alongside the study's findings, it becomes evident that UNAM's policy gap weakens its ability to adopt a strategic approach to succession planning, thereby placing institutional knowledge at risk and heightening exposure to preventable leadership discontinuities.

7.2.3 Limited Managerial Engagement and Leadership Development Opportunities

Participants reported that senior management and human resources seldom involve employees in conversations related to career advancement or leadership preparedness. This low level of engagement is indicative of a broader institutional environment in which succession planning is not regarded as a collective organisational obligation. These findings are consistent with global higher education studies (NEOGOV, 2023), which suggest that leadership pipelines tend to remain underdeveloped when managers do not actively mentor or cultivate future leaders.

Leadership development initiatives at UNAM were further found to be uneven and largely driven by individual effort rather than by formalised and structured programmes. This observation aligns with earlier empirical research (Lowen & Chisoro, 2016:70; Mhlomo & Harunavamwe, 2017:7), which demonstrates that informal and poorly structured development approaches often produce inadequately prepared leaders and may lead to operational challenges. Importantly, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by illustrating that, even where individuals take personal initiative, the lack of institutional support and formal mechanisms significantly constrains the effectiveness of such efforts, thereby exposing a persistent gap between the acknowledged theoretical value of leadership development and its practical execution.

7.2.4 Synthesis of Findings

The findings of the study reveal that although succession planning is conceptually recognised as strategically important at UNAM, its implementation remains fragmented, inconsistent, and largely reactive. The absence of formal succession plans, the lack of a guiding policy framework, and minimal managerial participation in leadership development collectively undermine effective succession planning practices. These shortcomings expose the institution to several risks, including the appointment of inadequately prepared leaders, erosion of institutional knowledge, and diminished employee morale. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the University currently lacks a coherent and structured succession planning model capable of deliberately identifying and developing high-potential employees for future leadership positions.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes by integrating the findings across all research questions, drawing together insights from both the reviewed literature and the empirical evidence. It illustrates how succession planning within public institutions, with specific reference to the University of Namibia, can be enhanced through the application of model-informed frameworks that operationalise theoretical constructs into practical interventions. By aligning the Seven-Pointed Star, Acceleration Pool, and Leadership Pipeline models with the study's findings, the chapter demonstrates how these frameworks collectively respond to institutional shortcomings, foster leadership capacity development, and promote sustainable succession practices. This synthesis reinforces both the conceptual and practical significance of the proposed model, presenting a structured framework for strengthening leadership continuity and organisational resilience within public higher education institutions.

Research Question 1: What does the literature express about succession planning in public institutions?

In addressing the first research question, the literature revealed that succession planning is widely recognised as a strategic human resource function in public institutions, essential for ensuring leadership continuity, preserving institutional knowledge, and enhancing organisational performance. However, the literature also highlighted persistent challenges in public sector contexts, including bureaucratic constraints, lack of strategic alignment, and weak implementation frameworks.

Model integration: The Seven-Pointed Star model provides a systematic, stepwise framework to address these literature-identified gaps. Its first step, Make the Commitment, reinforces the literature's emphasis on institutional commitment as a critical success factor. By adopting this model, the university can translate the general principles in the literature into actionable steps, ensuring that leadership continuity, employee development, and knowledge retention are institutionalised rather than left to *ad hoc* efforts. Similarly, the Acceleration Pool model aligns with literature recommendations by expanding the focus from a few hand-picked successors to a broad pool of high-potential staff, which addresses the literature's call for inclusivity and proactive talent development.

Research Question 2: To what extent can a succession planning model be used as a developmental tool in developing high performing staff?

In response to the second research question, the findings demonstrate that a well-structured succession planning model can serve as a powerful developmental tool for cultivating high-performing staff. Both the literature and empirical evidence confirm that succession planning, when effectively implemented, facilitates leadership development through targeted interventions such as mentorship, coaching, and experiential learning. However, the study revealed that at the University of Namibia, the absence of formalised structures limits the potential of succession planning to fulfil this developmental role, thereby reinforcing the gap between theoretical potential and practical application.

Model integration: The Leadership Pipeline model directly addresses this gap by providing a structured developmental roadmap across six leadership passages. It ensures that employees acquire the right skills, experience, and competencies at each stage of their career progression. Combined with the Acceleration Pool model, which prepares multiple candidates for leadership simultaneously, these frameworks provide concrete mechanisms for the systematic development of high-performing staff, ensuring that internal talent is nurtured to meet both current and future institutional needs.

Research Question 3: What is the most appropriate research approach to investigate succession planning in public institutions?

Regarding the third research question, the qualitative research approach adopted in this study proved to be the most appropriate for investigating succession planning practices within a public institution. The use of in-depth participant perspectives enabled a nuanced

understanding of institutional realities, revealing underlying challenges such as the absence of policy, limited managerial engagement, and reliance on informal practices. This approach provided rich, contextual insights that would not have been captured through purely quantitative methods.

Model integration: While the models themselves are primarily prescriptive frameworks, they benefit from research-informed evaluation. For example, the Seven-Pointed Star model's final step, evaluate the Succession Planning Program, explicitly requires data collection, performance assessment, and continuous improvement, aligning perfectly with the use of mixed methods to gather both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Similarly, the Leadership Pipeline and Acceleration Pool models require ongoing assessment of individual readiness and organisational needs, reinforcing the importance of a robust research approach for practical implementation.

Research Question 4: What is the most suitable succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia?

Regarding the fourth research question, which aimed to determine the most suitable succession planning model for the University of Namibia, the study concludes that a tailored, context-specific model is necessary. The study therefore concludes that the most suitable succession planning model for implementation at the University of Namibia is one that is integrated, policy-driven, and iterative in nature. The proposed conceptual model, grounded in both the literature and empirical findings, emphasises strategic alignment, formal policy development, systematic talent identification, structured leadership development programmes, and continuous monitoring and feedback. This model responds directly to the institutional gaps identified in the study and provides a practical framework for strengthening leadership continuity and organisational resilience.

Model integration: The Seven-Pointed Star model provides a practical sequence of steps to establish, manage, and evaluate succession programs. Its structured approach ensures commitment, alignment of current and future workforce requirements, closing of developmental gaps, and continuous evaluation. The Acceleration Pool model complements this by broadening the talent base, preparing multiple internal successors, and ensuring organisational resilience against sudden vacancies. The Leadership Pipeline model further enhances suitability for the University of Namibia by mapping career passages, ensuring that

staff are adequately prepared for leadership transitions at all levels. Integrating these models allows for a comprehensive and tailored approach that addresses both organisational and individual development needs.

Research Question 5: What contribution can be made to succession planning models in Public Administration?

Finally, in response to the fifth research question, the study contributes to the field of Public Administration by proposing a contextually relevant succession planning model tailored to the realities of public higher education institutions. Unlike generic models, this contribution integrates both theoretical principles and empirical insights, highlighting the importance of aligning succession planning with institutional strategy, resource constraints, and organisational culture. The study therefore extends existing knowledge by demonstrating how succession planning can be operationalised in a public sector context, particularly within developing country institutions.

Model integration: The Seven-Pointed Star, Acceleration Pool, and Leadership Pipeline models collectively provide replicable frameworks that public institutions can adopt. The Seven-Pointed Star offers a systematic program development cycle that emphasises commitment, performance appraisal, and evaluation. The Acceleration Pool encourages broader talent development, avoiding reliance on isolated high-potential individuals, while the Leadership Pipeline ensures a continuous flow of competent leaders at every hierarchical level. Together, these models offer a practical blueprint for Public Administration institutions seeking to develop sustainable, evidence-based succession planning practices while addressing leadership gaps and promoting institutional excellence.

In conclusion, the study affirms that succession planning is not merely an administrative function but a strategic imperative for institutional sustainability. The findings underscore the urgent need for the University of Namibia to transition from informal and reactive practices to a structured, policy-driven, and systematically implemented succession planning framework. By doing so, the University will not only enhance leadership development and staff retention but also strengthen its capacity to navigate future challenges and maintain long-term organisational stability.

Figure 7.1 shows how the three models, Seven pointed star model, Acceleration pool model and Leadership pipeline model interconnect and complement each other for the University of Namibia.

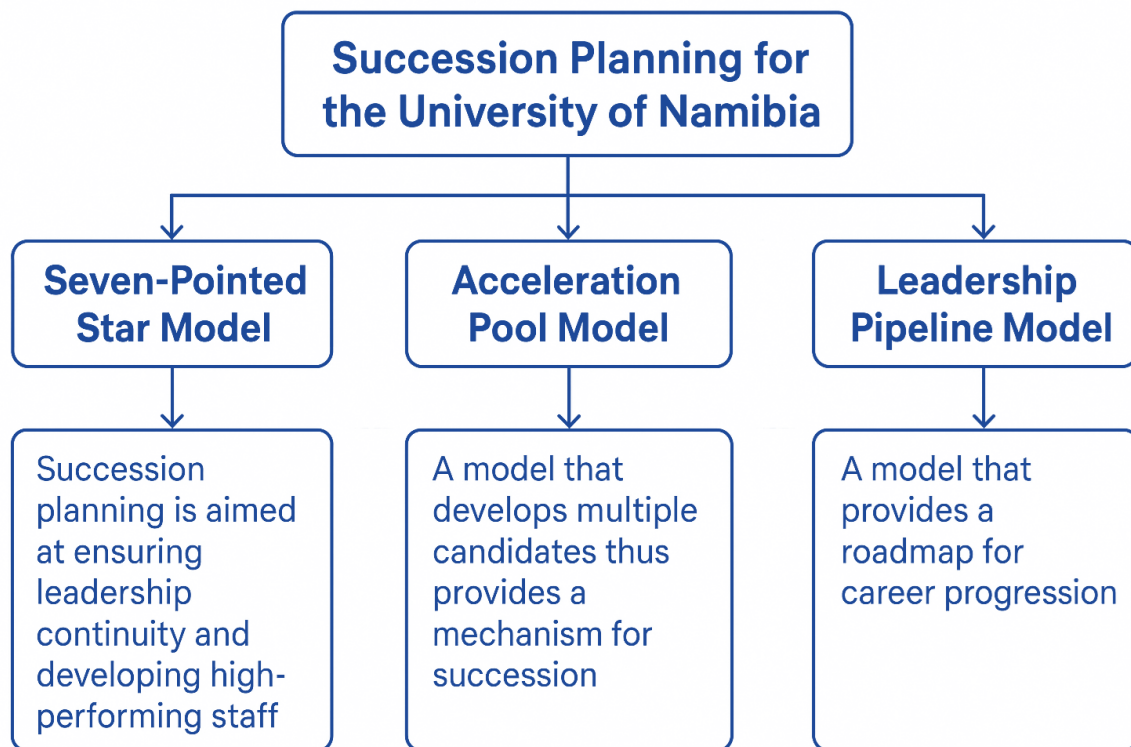


Figure 7.1: Interconnection and Complementarity of the Seven-Pointed Star, Acceleration Pool, and Leadership Pipeline Models at the University of Namibia

Source: (Author's own interpretation).

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the identified shortcomings and enhance succession planning at the University of Namibia, a series of integrated strategic actions are recommended.

Foremost among these is the development of a formal and binding succession planning policy that clearly articulates objectives, delineates roles and responsibilities, and establishes accountability mechanisms. Such a policy should be informed by global best practices and supported by empirical evidence demonstrating that formalised succession frameworks contribute to improved leadership preparedness and greater institutional stability (Badara,

Johari & Yean, 2015:14). In parallel, the University should introduce structured leadership development initiatives, including mentorship, coaching, rotational assignments, and formal training programmes specifically targeted at high-potential employees. These initiatives should be aligned with clearly defined career pathways to ensure the systematic preparation of internal candidates for critical leadership positions.

Succession planning should further be embedded as a core component of strategic human resource management across all levels of the institution. This requires close collaboration between human resources and senior management to identify critical positions, assess internal talent pools, and regularly review succession pipelines. Strengthening managerial engagement is equally essential, with senior leaders expected to actively mentor prospective successors, conduct ongoing development discussions, and advocate for internal talent development. Recognising succession planning as a collective institutional responsibility can enhance employee motivation, engagement, and retention. Additionally, the University should leverage available resources and technology by utilising blended learning approaches, internal knowledge repositories, and digital leadership development platforms to support cost-effective successor preparation. Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of succession planning processes are necessary, through the establishment of measurable performance indicators such as successor readiness, employee retention rates, and the effectiveness of leadership transitions, enabling evidence-based refinement of policies, programmes, and managerial practices.

7.4.1 Applying Leadership Theories to support and advantage succession planning at the University of Namibia

The incorporation of leadership theories establishes a robust theoretical foundation for enhancing succession planning at the University of Namibia and for further strengthening the conceptual model developed in this study. Trait theory provides a structured approach for recognising high-potential individuals by focusing on core attributes such as self-confidence, authenticity, humility, and trustworthiness. In response to the study's findings, particularly the lack of formal systems for identifying leadership potential, this perspective introduces a more systematic and evidence-based method for aligning individual competencies with leadership responsibilities. Integrating trait-based assessments into succession planning processes therefore improves the accuracy of talent identification and promotes closer alignment between individual attributes and institutional leadership needs.

Behavioural theory builds on this foundation by shifting attention from innate characteristics to observable leadership behaviours, especially task-focused and relationship-oriented practices. Given the informal and uneven nature of leadership development at the University, this theory offers a practical framework for standardising leadership preparation through clearly articulated competencies, structured training interventions, and formal mentoring arrangements. By translating leadership expectations into assessable behaviours, behavioural theory strengthens the practical implementation of succession planning and promotes consistency in the preparation of future leaders.

Transformational leadership theory further enriches the model by addressing the motivational, relational, and cultural dimensions of leadership. Within an institutional environment marked by limited managerial engagement, transformational leadership underscores the importance of vision, inspiration, and employee empowerment. This approach highlights the need to foster a leadership culture grounded in continuous development, ethical practice, and organisational commitment. By enhancing engagement and motivation, transformational leadership positions succession planning not merely as an administrative process but as a strategic mechanism for improving institutional performance and cohesion.

Taken together, the integration of trait, behavioural, and transformational leadership theories strengthens the conceptual model by offering a multidimensional and context-sensitive framework for succession planning. The model transcends fragmented approaches by systematically aligning leadership identification, development, and succession with individual capabilities and organisational goals. In doing so, it makes a meaningful contribution to the field of Public Administration by presenting a theoretically sound and practically relevant approach that reinforces leadership pipelines, supports high-performing staff development, and enhances long-term institutional resilience within higher education contexts.

Table 7.1 maps the University of Namibia succession planning recommendations to the relevant leadership theories and specific traits or behaviours.

Table 7.1: Mapping succession planning recommendations to relevant leadership theories

Recommendation	Relevant Leadership Theory	Key Traits / Behaviours	How Theory Supports Recommendation
Establish and execute a structured succession planning framework that delineates explicit processes, timelines, roles, and responsibilities.	Trait Theory	Self-confidence, Humility, Trustworthiness, Authenticity	Traits help identify suitable leaders and ensure selection is transparent, merit-based, and aligned with institutional values.
Design and adopt a customised succession planning model tailored to the university's culture and strategic goals	Transformational Theory	Visionary leadership, Motivation, Ethical conduct	Transformational leaders integrate staff development with the university's vision and motivate participation in succession planning initiatives.
Establish well-defined career advancement pathways, conduct regular performance evaluations, and offer structured opportunities for professional development.	Great Events / Behavioural Theory	Task-oriented behaviours, People-oriented behaviours	Behavioural focus ensures potential successors are trained to perform both operational and interpersonal roles effectively.
Institutionalise leadership development through training programs, mentorship, and skill-building workshops	Transformational Theory	Mentoring, Inspiration, Encouragement	Transformational leadership fosters learning and personal growth, motivating staff to embrace leadership development.

Recommendation	Relevant Leadership Theory	Key Traits / Behaviours	How Theory Supports Recommendation
Enhance promotion systems to be transparent, merit-based, and aligned with succession planning objectives	Trait Theory	Integrity, Trustworthiness, Fairness	Trait assessments ensure that promotions reflect personal competencies, reliability, and ethical standards.
Invest in retention strategies for key staff, including competitive compensation and recognition	Transformational Theory	Enthusiasm, Optimism, Warmth	Transformational leaders cultivate loyalty, engagement, and motivation, improving retention of high-performing staff.
Ensure strong commitment from top management and stakeholders	Great Events / Behavioural Theory	Leadership accountability, Responsibility, Communication	Behavioural focus on clear leadership actions and engagement ensures commitment and follow-through of succession initiatives.
Engage best practices from public service, including external consultants and strategic prioritisation	Trait and Transformational Theory	Adaptability, Strategic thinking, Visionary leadership	Traits and transformational principles guide effective adoption of external insights, aligning practices with institutional goals.

Recommendation	Relevant Leadership Theory	Key Traits / Behaviours	How Theory Supports Recommendation
Consider long-term appointments for top leadership and systematically groom young, competent employees	Trait and Behavioural Theory	Extraversion, Enthusiasm, Task- and People-orientation	Traits identify potential successors, while behavioural focus ensures structured mentoring and development over time.

Source: (Author's own interpretation).

Succession planning is a strategic imperative rather than a peripheral administrative function. This study demonstrates that while UNAM recognises its theoretical value, operationalisation remains inadequate. By implementing a comprehensive, policy-driven, and systematically monitored succession planning framework, the University can ensure leadership continuity, retain institutional knowledge, and strengthen its long-term resilience. Such interventions will transform succession planning from a reactive practice into a strategic organisational capability, positioning the University to respond effectively to future challenges while developing high-performing leaders.

7.5 DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL MODEL: SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

The primary objective of this study was to examine the extent to which succession planning can serve as a developmental tool for high-performing administrative staff and to design a contextually relevant conceptual model for the University of Namibia. The findings reveal a significant gap between the theoretical importance of succession planning and its practical application within the institution. Notably, the University lacks a formal succession planning framework to ensure the systematic and timely filling of critical leadership positions, reflecting a broader weakness in strategic human resource management.

Although human resource instruments such as the Staff Development Policy and the Performance Management System are in place, their implementation remains inconsistent and

fragmented. The study found limited enforcement by line managers and HR practitioners, resulting in weak institutional accountability and a lack of capacity among senior managers to operationalise these frameworks effectively. This disconnect between policy and practice undermines their intended purpose, contributing to inefficiencies, low staff morale, and the potential loss of high-performing employees. Critically, this suggests that the challenge is not solely the absence of succession planning structures, but also the ineffective integration and utilisation of existing systems.

The literature underscores the strategic importance of succession planning in ensuring leadership continuity, preserving institutional knowledge, and sustaining organisational performance (Gallardo, 2018; Wonnia, 2021:693). However, the findings indicate that leadership transitions at the University are largely reactive, exposing the institution to risks associated with unprepared successors and discontinuity. Furthermore, the lack of a structured internal talent pipeline increases reliance on external recruitment and heightens vulnerability to suboptimal leadership appointments.

While the existence of a Performance Management System presents a potential foundation for succession planning, it currently operates in isolation, without integration into leadership development or talent management processes. This represents a missed strategic opportunity, as performance management systems can play a critical role in identifying and developing high-potential employees. The absence of such alignment reinforces the fragmented nature of human resource practices within the institution.

In response to these challenges, the conceptual model developed in this study constitutes a key contribution by providing an integrated and iterative framework for succession planning. As illustrated in Figure 7.2, the model aligns strategic intent with operational processes through interconnected components, including leadership commitment, policy development, talent identification, leadership development, succession management, and continuous feedback. The cyclical structure of the model emphasises succession planning as a continuous and adaptive process, rather than a linear or once-off intervention. By reconfiguring existing mechanisms into a cohesive system, the model shifts succession planning from a reactive, fragmented practice to a proactive and strategic organisational function.

The model highlights the need for a fundamental shift towards integrated and strategically aligned human resource management at the University of Namibia. Its adoption would strengthen leadership continuity, enhance the development and retention of high-performing

staff, and improve the institution's overall resilience and long-term sustainability. This study therefore advances a novel, contextually grounded conceptual model that bridges the persistent gap between succession planning theory and its practical implementation within public higher education institutions. In doing so, it contributes to the body of knowledge in Public Administration by offering a replicable and strategically integrated framework that repositions succession planning as a core driver of leadership development, institutional continuity, and organisational resilience.

The following section presents the proposed conceptual framework for succession planning, integrating the study's empirical findings and theoretical insights.

7.5.1 Proposed Conceptual Model for Succession Planning

Drawing on both the empirical findings and the relevant body of literature, this study advances a contextually tailored conceptual model for succession planning at the University of Namibia. The proposed model responds directly to the structural and procedural deficiencies identified in existing practice by articulating a coherent, transparent, and sustainable framework for leadership development and succession management. In contrast to the fragmented, *ad hoc*, and predominantly reactive approaches currently evident, the model reconceptualises succession planning as a deliberately integrated and iterative organisational process embedded within the University's strategic planning and human resource management architecture.

The model is theoretically informed by established succession planning frameworks, most notably Rothwell's Seven-Pointed Star Model, which is widely recognised for its comprehensive approach to talent identification, assessment, and development within organisational constraints. However, the study's findings critically demonstrate that such generic models, when applied without adequate contextual adaptation, are insufficient within public higher education environments. At the University of Namibia, challenges including weak policy enactment, limited managerial commitment, and fragmented leadership development practices significantly constrain the effective operationalisation of these frameworks, thereby limiting their strategic impact.

In response to these contextual limitations, the proposed model extends existing theoretical frameworks by explicitly incorporating institution-specific realities and foregrounding the integration of critical succession planning components, namely leadership commitment, policy coherence, systematic talent identification, structured development interventions, and

continuous feedback mechanisms. Importantly, the model adopts a multidimensional conceptualisation of leadership readiness that transcends traditional performance-based criteria by incorporating leadership potential, competencies, and personal attributes, dimensions that remain insufficiently institutionalised in current practice. The cyclical configuration of the model further positions succession planning as a dynamic and adaptive process, capable of responding to evolving organisational priorities and contextual demands.

In essence, the proposed model represents a contextually grounded and practice-oriented conceptual advancement that bridges the persistent gap between succession planning theory and institutional application. By strategically aligning succession planning with organisational strategy and embedding it within an iterative and accountable framework, the model offers a sustainable pathway for strengthening leadership continuity, enhancing the systematic development of high-performing staff, and reinforcing organisational resilience at the University of Namibia and comparable public sector higher education institutions.

7.5.2 Integration with Findings

The proposed conceptual model represents a deliberate progression beyond descriptive accounts of succession planning challenges toward a response that is both theoretically informed and empirically grounded, aimed at addressing structural weaknesses within the institution's succession planning practices. Rather than framing the absence of a formal succession plan as a procedural lapse, the model conceptualises it as a governance failure that undermines leadership continuity, institutional accountability, and strategic renewal. Consequently, the introduction of a formalised succession planning policy, supported by clearly defined processes, is positioned not as a purely administrative intervention but as a governance mechanism that institutionalises accountability and reduces reliance on *ad hoc* or personality-driven decision-making.

The model further challenges the assumption that leadership capability develops organically, reframing the absence of systematic leadership development as evidence of insufficient institutional investment in human capital. Through the integration of structured mentorship, coaching, and training initiatives, it advances a deliberate and coordinated approach to leadership development, while critically exposing the limitations of existing practices that have failed to generate sustainable leadership pipelines.

Limited senior management engagement is addressed by repositioning succession planning as a core strategic leadership responsibility rather than a marginal human resources function. By foregrounding executive commitment and continuous oversight, the model highlights the risks associated with managerial disengagement, including fragmented accountability and weak implementation, and underscores the necessity of visible leadership ownership for institutional legitimacy and effectiveness.

In addition, the model reconceptualises institutional exposure to knowledge loss as a structural vulnerability rather than an incidental consequence of staff turnover. Through deliberate talent pool management and continuous feedback mechanisms, it embeds knowledge retention and transfer into routine organisational practice, thereby reinforcing institutional memory and operational resilience. Collectively, these elements demonstrate that the model extends beyond reflecting empirical findings; it offers a critically informed and operationally robust framework that addresses both the underlying causes and systemic consequences of ineffective succession planning and contributes substantively to strengthening leadership continuity at the University.

The different components of the proposed conceptual plan for succession planning are discussed in the following section.

7.5.3 *Components of Conceptual Model of Succession Planning for The University of Namibia*

This section outlines the key components of the conceptual model for succession planning at the University of Namibia. Each component is critically examined in relation to the study's findings and relevant literature, demonstrating how the model provides an integrated and strategic framework for strengthening leadership development and ensuring institutional continuity.

7.5.3.1 *Strategic Foundation and Leadership Commitment*

The strategic foundation and leadership commitment component plays a critical role in embedding succession planning within the institutional agenda. The study's findings indicate minimal involvement from senior management and limited ownership of succession planning initiatives, suggesting that leadership has not sufficiently elevated succession planning to a strategic priority. This observation is consistent with the literature, which underscores that effective succession planning depends on strong leadership commitment to ensure alignment

with organisational objectives and long-term sustainability (Mhlongo & Harunavamwe, 2017:7). In the absence of such commitment, succession planning efforts remain disjointed and largely reactive. This component therefore directly addresses the identified gap by emphasising leadership accountability as a fundamental requirement for institutionalising succession planning and ensuring its integration into strategic human resource management.

7.5.3.2 Succession Planning Policy

The study identified the lack of a formal succession planning policy as a significant institutional shortcoming, with participants noting that current human resource frameworks offer little direction regarding leadership development or succession planning processes. This finding is aligned with Berger's (2022:26) argument that policies function as authoritative mechanisms that shape organisational behaviour and promote consistency. In a similar vein, Maheshwari and Kha (2023:6) emphasise that formal policies are critical for clarifying roles, responsibilities, and implementation structures. The incorporation of this component within the model therefore responds directly to the identified deficiency by institutionalising succession planning practices, minimising dependence on informal arrangements, and reinforcing accountability, transparency, and standardisation across the University.

7.5.3.3 Talent Identification and Assessment

The findings revealed that the University predominantly adopts reactive recruitment approaches, whereby leadership vacancies are addressed through external advertisements rather than through the deliberate identification and development of internal talent. The absence of a systematic talent identification process weakens the establishment of a sustainable leadership pipeline. Existing literature underscores the importance of structured talent identification mechanisms, highlighting that organisations need to intentionally recognise high-potential employees and evaluate their preparedness for leadership responsibilities (Lowan & Chisoro, 2016:70). The inclusion of this component within the model therefore reorients succession planning from a reactive practice toward a proactive strategy, enabling the University to proactively forecast leadership requirements and cultivate a pool of suitably prepared successors.

7.5.3.4 Leadership Development Programmes

Empirical findings from the study revealed that leadership development opportunities at the University are sparse, unevenly implemented, and largely reliant on individual effort rather than institutional support. This observation aligns with Mhlongo and Harunavamwe (2017:7), who contend that the absence of formalised development programmes often leads to inadequately prepared leaders and ineffective succession outcomes. Moreover, existing literature highlights the significance of deliberate interventions such as mentoring, coaching, and training in fostering leadership competencies (Lowen & Chisoro, 2016:70). By incorporating this component, the model addresses the identified gap through the introduction of a structured and systematic leadership development approach, ensuring that identified high-potential individuals are sufficiently prepared to transition into future leadership roles.

7.5.3.5 Succession Management Processes

The study revealed that succession planning at the University is largely absent in practice, as there are no clearly defined mechanisms to facilitate the transition of employees into leadership positions. Leadership appointments are instead predominantly made through competitive recruitment processes, frequently without prior development or preparation of potential candidates. This situation highlights a disconnect between talent development initiatives and leadership placement decisions. According to Yudianto et al. (2023:458), effective succession management requires the creation of structured pathways and talent pools to sustain leadership continuity across organisations. The inclusion of this component within the model therefore serves to operationalise succession planning by ensuring that leadership development initiatives culminate in actual leadership transitions, thereby minimising the risks associated with unexpected or unplanned vacancies.

7.5.3.6 Feedback and Continuous Improvement

The lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within the University's existing practices further constrains the effectiveness of succession planning efforts. The study found no evidence of regular or systematic assessment or enhancement of leadership development initiatives. This finding is consistent with the broader literature, which emphasises that continuous evaluation is vital for ensuring that succession planning strategies remain responsive to evolving organisational demands and maintain long-term effectiveness (Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018:30). By incorporating this component, the model directly addresses this deficiency through the

integration of feedback mechanisms that support ongoing review and refinement, thereby strengthening the model's iterative character and promoting its sustainability.

This study demonstrates that effective succession planning at the University of Namibia is contingent upon the adoption of a deliberately integrated and strategically anchored approach, rather than fragmented or reactive interventions. The analysis establishes that the institution's current weaknesses, evident in limited leadership commitment, the absence of coherent policy direction, disjointed talent management practices, and insufficient evaluative mechanisms, are structurally interconnected and therefore resistant to isolated solutions. By systematically integrating strategic leadership oversight, formalised policy frameworks, proactive talent identification, structured development initiatives, operational succession procedures, and continuous feedback mechanisms, the conceptual model articulates a coherent and sustainable system for leadership continuity. Crucially, the dynamic interdependence of these components reframes succession planning as an iterative and adaptive organisational process, capable of responding to evolving institutional demands while enhancing organisational resilience. Accordingly, the model constitutes both a theoretically informed response to the empirical gaps identified in this study and a substantive contribution to the institutionalisation of succession planning as a core strategic function within the University of Namibia.

Conceptual Model for Planning at the University of Namibia



Figure 7.2: Conceptual Model for Succession Planning at the University of Namibia

Source: (Adapted from Rothwell, 2016:15-22).

7.5.4 Explanation of the Conceptual Model in Sequential Steps

The conceptual model for succession planning at the University of Namibia is structured as a continuous, iterative process consisting of six interrelated steps. Each step builds on the previous one, ensuring that succession planning is not treated as a once-off activity but as an ongoing strategic function.

Step 1: Strategic Foundation and Leadership Commitment

The process begins with establishing a strong strategic foundation, where succession planning is aligned with the University's vision, mission, and long-term goals. At this stage, leadership commitment is critical, as senior management must actively support, champion, and take

ownership of succession planning initiatives. Without this commitment, subsequent processes are unlikely to be effectively implemented or sustained.

Step 2: Succession Planning Policy

Once strategic alignment is achieved, the next step involves the development of a formal succession planning policy. This policy provides a structured framework that outlines roles, responsibilities, procedures, and accountability mechanisms. It ensures that succession planning is standardised across the institution and not left to informal or *ad hoc* practices.

Step 3: Talent Identification and Assessment

The third step focuses on systematically identifying and assessing potential successors within the institution. This includes identifying critical leadership roles, evaluating employee competencies, and recognising high-potential staff members. Tools such as performance appraisals, skills audits, and leadership potential assessments are used to determine readiness and identify gaps.

Step 4: Leadership Development Programs

Following identification, targeted leadership development interventions are implemented to prepare high-potential employees for future roles. These programmes may include mentorship, coaching, job rotation, training workshops, and experiential learning opportunities. The aim is to build the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies required for effective leadership.

Step 5: Succession Management Processes

This step operationalises succession planning by managing talent pools and creating clear succession pathways. It involves placing prepared candidates into leadership roles when opportunities arise, ensuring smooth transitions, and maintaining continuity. It also includes ongoing monitoring of employee progress and readiness for advancement.

Step 6: Feedback and Continuous Improvement

The final step involves evaluating the effectiveness of succession planning initiatives through feedback and performance monitoring. This includes assessing leadership readiness, reviewing development outcomes, and identifying areas for improvement. Insights gained from this stage inform adjustments to policies, programmes, and processes.

Iterative Loop (Continuous Cycle)

The model is cyclical, meaning that feedback and evaluation feed back into the strategic foundation. This ensures that succession planning remains dynamic, responsive to institutional changes, and continuously aligned with evolving organisational goals. The iterative nature of the model reinforces sustainability and long-term effectiveness.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Succession planning is increasingly critical in higher education due to an impending wave of retirements and the need for leadership continuity. Building on this study, the following avenues are recommended:

- Extend research beyond administrative staff at the University of Namibia's main campus to include all personnel across multiple campuses, providing a comprehensive institutional perspective.
- Conduct comparative studies with other universities to benchmark succession planning practices and identify context-specific best practices.
- Investigate additional components that may complement the five-element framework proposed here, acknowledging that succession planning is context-sensitive and non-uniform.
- Examine the interactions among framework components and develop robust monitoring tools to assess the performance of successors and predecessors, ensuring the framework's reliability and practical applicability.
- Explore the adaptation and refinement of this framework in other academic settings, and develop complementary conceptual models to advance succession planning research in higher education.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: DEC FOC/22/27 **Date:** 23/11/2022

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Ethics Committee (REC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the ethics committee.

Title of Project: A Conceptual Model of Succession Planning for the University of Namibia.

Student: Magdalena Johanna Marthinussen

Student Number: 40159493

Supervisor(s): Dr Corlia Alers

Centre for Research Services

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Precious Mushendami'.

Precious Mushendami (Chairperson Ethics Committee)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davis Mumbengegwi'.

Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

ANNEXURE B: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 7 March 2023

PAM/2023/002 (Marthinussen)
Name of applicant: M Marthinussen
Student#: 40150493

Dear Ms Marthinussen

Decision: Ethics Clearance Approval

Details of researcher:

Ms M Marthinussen, student#: 40150493, email: 40150493@mylife.unisa.ac.za, tel: 264 818197446

Supervisor: Dr C Alers, email: alersc@unisa.ac.za

Research project: 'A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA'

Qualification: PhD – Public Administration

Thank you for the application for **research ethics clearance** submitted to the Department: Public Administration and Management: Research Ethics Review Committee, for the above mentioned study. Ethics approval is granted. The decision will be tabled at the next College RERC meeting for notification/ratification.

Full approval: The application was **reviewed** in compliance with the *Unisa Policy on Research Ethics* and the *Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment*.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.



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- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to this Ethics Review Committee.
- 3) The researcher will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
- 4) Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
- 5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study, among others, the **Protection of Personal Information Act 4/2013; Children's Act 38/2005 and National Health Act 61/2003.**
- 6) Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
- 7) Field work activities **may not** continue after the expiry date of this ethics clearance, which is 7 March 2026. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of the ethics clearance certificate for approval by the Research Ethics Committee.

Kind regards



Mr ND Baloyi

Chairperson: Research Ethics Review
Committee
Department of Public Administration and
Management
Research Ethics Review Committee
Office tel: 012 429-6181
Email: ebaloynd@unisa.ac.za



Prof MT Mogale

Executive Dean:
College of Economic and Management
Sciences
Office tel. : 012 429-4805;
Email : mogal@unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: PAM/2023/002

26 November 2022

Title:

**DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING: A
CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Magdalena J Marthinussen, and I am doing research with Prof Corlia Alers, a senior lecturer in the Department of Public Administration and Management towards a PhD in Public Administration at the University of South Africa. We have funding from UNISA Master and Doctoral Bursary Fund. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: A Conceptual Model of Succession Planning for the University of Namibia

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to determine to what extent succession planning can be used to develop and promote competent and high performing staff and (2) to design a conceptual succession planning model for the University of Namibia.

WHY BEING AM I INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You were chosen to participate in the study because you are an administrative staff member at the University of Namibia. I obtained your contact details from the human capital department of the University of Namibia. You were chosen because the purpose of the study is to design a conceptual succession planning model for administrative staff members of the University of Namibia.

200 staff members from the various departments, sections, and units of the main campus will be selected to complete a questionnaire. Seven (7) interviewees will be selected for an interview process.



WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves questionnaires and structured interviews. Indicate what sort of questions will be asked or show the questions on this document. The expected duration of participation will be approximately 20 minutes per questionnaire and 45 minutes per interview.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The potential benefits of the research are expected to include a body of knowledge generated that will inform the succession planning efforts at the University of Namibia. Research scholars can use the information for reference and to guide their future studies in succession planning. Additionally, the study will contribute to the limited body of literature on succession planning in Higher Education Institutions and training in a global context.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

The potential risk that would be experienced by the participant by taking part in the research activity is not greater than what they would be exposed to in their daily lives, e.g. the questions asked during the interview will not require the participant to reflect on traumatic or negative experiences that would increase the risk of discomfort, emotional distress or harm or ask them to divulge personal/sensitive information and experiences they would not normally share with a stranger. The research will collect information that would generally be regarded as non-sensitive, such as opinion rather than personal information. The only foreseeable risk of harm is the potential for minor discomfort or inconvenience, thus research that would not pose a risk above the everyday norm.



WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

The statistician and language editor will have access to the data who will maintain confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable (such as using the data for a purpose unrelated to the initial aim and objectives or the study). Hard copies of the data will be shredded, and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the department of Public Administration and Management, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.



HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mrs. MJ Marthinussen at, 40159493@mylife.unisa.co.za or +264 61 258446. The findings are accessible for five (5) years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Mrs MJ Marthinussen at, 40159493@mylife.unisa.co.za or +264 61 258446. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof C Alers at alersc@unisa.ac.za, or +27 12 429-6286.

Alternatively, you can contact the CEMS Research Ethics and Integrity Advisor if you have any concerns: Dr Marianne Engelbrecht at engelm1@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Mrs MJ Marthinussen

ANNEXURE D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

TITLE:

**DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
- I agree to complete the online questionnaire / the recording of the semi-structured interviews.
- I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name and surname: _____ (Please print)

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name and Surname: **Mrs MJ Marthinussen**

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____



ANNEXURE E: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

UNISA RESEARCH ETHICS 3RD PARTY CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

A. INSTRUCTIONS

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

After completing the required fields, please sign the form. After this form has been signed by the transcriber, co-coder, statistician or fieldworker, it should be given to the principal researcher for submission to the relevant UNISA Research Ethics Committee.

The transcriber, co-coder, statistician and/or fieldworker should keep a copy of the *Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the informed consent documentation) without permission. Confidential information relating to human participants in a research study may include, but is not limited to the personal information listed below:

- a) information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth of the person.
- b) information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or employment history of the person.
- c) any identifying number, symbol, e-mail address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or other assignment to the person.
- d) the biometric information of the person.
- e) the personal opinions, views or preferences of the person.
- f) correspondence sent by the person that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence.
- g) the views or opinions of another individual about the person; and
- h) the name of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person.



As a third party you will have access to research information (e.g., audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that include confidential information. Participants have revealed information to the researcher(s) since they have been assured by the researcher(s) that every effort will be made to maintain their privacy throughout the study. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain confidentiality when conducting your duties as a transcriber, statistician, co-coder and/or fieldworker during the research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to in your role as a third party in this study. Review these expectations carefully before signing this form.*

C. THIRD PARTY EXPECTATIONS

To maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that I collect or that is shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal researcher of this study.
2. Ensure the security of research information (e.g., audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - Keeping all data and/or transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files.
 - Closing any programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer.
 - Keeping any printed transcripts or data in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet.
 - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (e.g., audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal researcher.
4. Give all research information (e.g., audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) and research participant information, back to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties as a transcriber.
5. After discussing it with the principal researcher, erase or destroy all research information (e.g., audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that cannot be returned to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties in this study.



Name of 3rd party involved in research activities: **Ms J Beukes**

Research activity responsible for **Statistical Analysis**

Title of Research Study: **A Conceptual Model of Succession Planning for the University of Namibia**

Name of Principal Researcher: **Mrs Magdalena Johanna Marthinussen**

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality while performing my duties as acquired by the principal researcher. I recognise that failure to comply with these expectations may result in legal action.

Signature of 3rd party

Ms J Beukes

23 November 2024

Date



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**TITLE:
DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

- 1 This interview is based on research about succession planning at the University of Namibia.
- 2 You have been invited to participate in this study because of your extensive experience of the topic.
- 3 You are kindly requested to respond to the interview questions as honestly and completely as possible.
- 4 The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.
- 5 Participation is anonymous: You are not requested to disclose your identity. Your privacy will be respected.
- 6 No one will be able to connect you to the responses you provide. Please separate your participation consent form from the list of questions.
- 7 The information collected from you will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for research purposes only.
- 8 You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time. Hence, your participation is considered voluntarily.
- 9 You will not receive any payment or reward, financial or otherwise, and the study will not incur undue costs to you.
- 10 The survey data will be stored in a locked cupboard and the data in a computer which will be protected by a password.
- 11 The survey data will be destroyed when it is no longer of functional value (after five years).
- 12 An electronic copy of the thesis will be available in the library of the University of South Africa (Unisa), Pretoria.



1. What is the status of succession planning at the University of Namibia?

.....

.....

2. In terms of talent management, which of these key interventions have been implemented?

- ☐ Individual Performance Management
- ☐ Personal Development Planning
- ☐ Career Planning
- ☐ Succession Planning
- ☐ Staffing Strategy
- ☐ Staff Retention

3. How is the University measuring the success of its succession planning?

.....

4. What are some of the challenges of the University of Namibia's succession planning?

.....

.....

5. How diversified are the current University's talent pools?

.....

6. What approach does the University use to nominate its staff members for leadership courses?

.....



7. Is the management team in your department/functional area (Executive and Senior Management) aware of the succession planning process and are they effectively participating in the process including engaging with staff on career and succession discussions?

Yes
No

8. The University of Namibia is faced with the large number of experienced staff members who are going on retirement. What strategy will the University use to close the gap that will be left by the retiring senior staff members?

.....

9. In your view, do the current HR Policies and practices of the University support the implementation and application of succession planning?

Yes
No

10. Do you have a successor for your current position?

Yes
No

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME
END OF INTERVIEW**

Magdalena J Marthinussen

Tel nr: +264 61 258446

Cell nr: +264 818197446



QUESTIONNAIRE: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**TITLE:
DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

GENERAL RULES

- 1 Please complete the questionnaire by marking the appropriate answer with an (X).
- 2 Where indicated provide a brief description.
- 3 Please remember that there is no right or wrong answer as it is your personal experience or opinion that is important for your study.
- 4 This questionnaire is based on research about succession planning.
- 5 You have been invited to participate in this study because of your extensive experience and knowledge of succession planning at the University of Namibia.
- 6 You are kindly requested to answer the questions as honestly and completely as possible.
- 7 It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
- 8 Participation is anonymous: You are not requested to disclose your identity. Your privacy will be respected.
- 9 No one will be able to connect you to the answers you give.
- 10 The information collected from you will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for research purposes only.
- 11 You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time. Hence, your participation is regarded as voluntarily.
- 12 You will not receive any payment or reward, financial or otherwise, and the study will not incur undue costs to you.
- 13 The data will be stored in a locked cupboard and the data stored in a computer will be protected using a password.
- 14 The data will be destroyed when it is no longer of functional value (after five years).
- 15 An electronic copy of the dissertation will be available in the library of the University of South Africa (Unisa).



SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Objective: To get a general background of the person

1 How long have you been employed at the University of Namibia?

- 1.1. 1 – 5 years
- 1.2. 5 – 10 years
- 1.3. 10 – 20 years
- 1.4. More than 20 years

2 How long have you been in your current position?

- 2.1 1 – 5 years
- 2.2 5 – 10 years
- 2.3 10 – 20 years
- 2.4 More than 20 years

SECTION B:

Objective: To determine your understanding of succession planning.

3.	Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of succession planning?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.1	Identifying high-performing, skilled staff for challenging tasks as well as providing them with further training and incentives to keep within the institution.					
3.	Developing internal people with the potential to fill management and leadership positions.					
3.	A systematic review and training process to prepare possible successors for key positions in an institution.					



- 4 How important do you think it is for the University to implement a formal succession planning system?
 - 4.1. Very important
 - 4.2. Important
 - 4.3. Moderately Important
 - 4.4. Slightly Important
 - 4.5. Unimportant

- 5 How do you think implementing a formal succession planning strategy at the University will benefit the University?
 - 5.1. It will improve employee commitment and retention.
 - 5.2. It will assist employees in their career development.
 - 5.3. Preserve knowledge transfer and institutional memory.
 - 5.4. It will reduce the turnover of managers with scarce skills.

- 6 What do you think the reasons are for the University's turnover of managers with scarce skills?
 - 6.1. Better salary elsewhere
 - 6.2. Better opportunities for development
 - 6.3. Poor interpersonal relations
 - 6.4. Retirement

- 7 What do you believe the primary goal of university succession planning should be?
 - 7.1. To easily identify replacements to fill key positions.
 - 7.2. To develop employees
 - 7.3. To achieve strategic goals
 - 7.4. To retain institutional talent

- 8 What are your expectations for a university succession planning system?
 - 8.1. To highlight current skills and accomplishments
 - 8.2. To map out the development of new information, skills, and abilities
 - 8.3. To prepare staff for advancement or promotion into more challenging roles
 - 8.4. To develop employees to reach their potential



SECTION C:

Objective: To assess your opinion on the strategies for identifying potential successors

9 How long do you think the development period for potential successors should be?

- 9.1. Less than 1 years
- 9.2. 1 – 2 years
- 9.3. 2 – 3 years
- 9.4. 3 years and more

10 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following methods of identifying potential successors.

Method	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.1 Performance					
10.2 Management and Development System					
10.3 Job Holder					
10.4 Supervisor					
10.5 Head of Department					
10.6 Human Resource Development					

11 Please rate the effectiveness of the following methods in evaluating development needs.

Method	Most effective	Effective	Neutral	Least effective	Not effective
11.1 Self-assessments					
11.2 360-Degree Feedback					
11.3 Interviews					



12 Please rate the efficiency of the following methods in terms of staff development.

Method	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
12.1 Training					
12.2 Task/job rotations.					
12.3 Coaching					
12.4 Mentoring					
12.5 Workshops/ Committees/ Working-Groups					
12.6 Simulations					
12.7 On-the-job training					
12.8 Conferences					

SECTION D

Objective: General questions intended to assess your opinion of employee development

13. Do you think that personality tests should be used to assess potential successors?

Yes

No

14. Do you think that qualifications are more important than work experience?

Yes

No

15. Do you think the University values learning and development?

Yes

No

16. Do you think the current employee promotion system is effective?

Yes

No

17. Do you think the current employee promotion system is fair?

Yes

No



18. Do you believe the University is investing sufficient time and efforts in the retention of key critical and scarce skills?
Yes
No
19. Do you think the University's HR policies and practices support the retention of talent in the institution?
Yes
No
20. Do you think the University's HR policies and practices effectively support the opportunity for the development and training of staff?
Yes
No
21. Do you think the University has invested in the development of a focused attraction and retention strategy for critical/scarce skills?
Yes
No
22. Do you think the University grants staff members the opportunity to attend workshops and seminars to broaden their knowledge and skills needed for their positions?
Yes
No
23. Do you believe that pursuing further post-matric studies through the University's staff development scheme can enhance one's career opportunities?
Yes
No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE



ANNEXURE H: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING