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Exploring a Person-Centred Approach to Leadership Succession Management

Ingo Susing
University of Wollongong

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Exploring a Person-Centred Approach to Leadership Succession Management

Ingo Susing

Supervisors:

Dr. Anil Chandrakumara

Dr. Gordon Spence

Prof. Mary Barrett

This thesis is presented as part of the requirement for the conferral of
the degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

This research has been conducted with the support of the Australian
Government Research Training Program Scholarship

Sydney Business School

The University of Wollongong, Australia

March 2020

Certification

I, Ingo Susing, declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree Doctor of Philosophy, from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Ingo Susing

20 March 2020

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Abstract

This research provides a detailed investigation of leadership succession management (LSM) practice within a large organisation from the perspective of the individual. LSM describes the “deliberate and systematic effort by an organisation to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future and encourage individual advancement” (Rothwell 2010, p. 6). The literature demonstrates that formal approaches to LSM produce significant benefits to organisations (e.g. Ciampa & Watkins 1999; Huselid 1995; Shen & Cannella Jr. 2003). At the same time, various sources indicate that whilst 90-95% of large organisations consider LSM as important or very important, today at best 60% of them effectively manage the succession of their senior leaders (Cvijanovic et al. 2019; DDI & The Conference Board 2014; Larcker & Scott 2014). This gap, termed here the “Knowing-Doing Gap”, exists despite the fact that LSM has been recognised as important for some time (Grusky 1960; Vancil 1987).

The present research addresses some key issues for the Knowing-Doing Gap to advance LSM knowledge and practice. This includes considering LSM from the perspective of the individual rather than the organisation (Cappelli 2011), considering the complexity involved in LSM (Giambatista et al. 2005) and considering the dimension of context with LSM practice (Brewer & Brewer 2010). While many scholars have written about LSM best practice, a review of the literature shows both similarities and differences in approach. The present research aggregates and builds upon these to form a comprehensive framework for LSM best practice. This will be called the LSM Framework. It also sets out contingent success factors (CSFs) that contribute to LSM outcomes. This supports more-extensive and appropriate implementation of LSM practices, which would narrow the Knowing-Doing Gap.

The research involved a qualitative case-study approach, which included semi-structured interviews with 13 senior executives (research participants) of a large, complex, multinational organisation (Sponsor Organisation) headquartered in Australia. The Sponsor Organisation conducted a group-wide LSM program (Program) in which the research participants took part. The present researcher was one of three senior consultants involved in the delivery of the Program, which used an approach to succession management largely consistent with the LSM Framework set out in this research. On the basis of this relationship, the Sponsor Organisation offered to support the research and permitted access to Program materials and Program participants.

The analysis was conducted in two parts: first, an exploration of each research participant's responses relative to the CSFs, captured in individual case vignettes; and second, an analysis of each CSF across the 13 research participants' responses. Interview responses and a review of Program materials formed the basis for generating insights to inform future LSM practice and extend existing theory. Key findings from these responses identified a wide range of similarities and differences amongst research participants that informed LSM practice with respect to each CSF. Furthermore, the analysis produced additional CSFs that address individual and relationship aspects of LSM. These include intrapersonal aspects that define an individual's leadership succession potential, including their motivation, attitude and ability to develop further to assume a more advanced position. They also consist of an effective social mechanism to support the interpersonal aspects that drive the LSM process and outcomes. This mechanism incorporates the trust and psychological safety required for research participants to engage fully in the LSM process. Research findings are considered within a newly created LSM Taxonomy, which the present researcher derived from the additional CSFs in accordance with contextual and process factors, in addition to three levels of analysis at the organisational, interpersonal and intrapersonal level. The discussion of CSFs within the LSM Taxonomy provided specific practice deductions to inform more-general practice implications. This research output also allowed for the revision and extension of the initial LSM Framework to include the additional CSFs and to more specifically characterise the CSFs identified from the LSM literature.

Overall, the present research contributes to practice and theory by creating the first evidence-based LSM Taxonomy and positioning various LSM success factors within it to create a comprehensive framework for practice and further theory-building and testing.

List of Terms and Abbreviations

Key Term	Definition
CHRO	The Chief Human Resources Officer of the Sponsor Organisation.
CSFs	Contingent success factors: those factors that have been shown to determine the effectiveness of LSM practices and the quality of LSM outcomes.
Consultant	Each one of the external three senior consultants involved in delivering the Program.
Group CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of the Sponsor Organisation.
HR Program Manager	The Senior HR Executive of the Sponsor Organisation responsible for the Program.
Knowing-Doing Gap	The gap between the recognised importance of LSM and the extent to which large organisations consider that they have implemented best practices.
LSM	Leadership Succession Management: an organisation's deliberate and systematic efforts to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future and encourage individual advancement.
LSM Framework	The best-practice framework derived from a detailed review of the scholarly LSM literature, consisting of key phases, activities and outputs as well as contingent success factors.
LSM Taxonomy	The taxonomy for leadership succession management that the author developed from the research findings reported in Chapter 6.
Program	The LSM program of the Sponsor Organisation.
Sponsor Organisation	The large multinational organisation described in the case studies of this thesis, which conducted the Program about which Participants were interviewed for this research.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	9
List of Figures.....	10
Chapter 1: Research Context and Thesis Overview	11
1.1 Chapter overview	11
1.2 Brief overview of the research topic	11
1.3 Research need and justification.....	11
1.4 Research background and context.....	12
1.5 Research-process overview.....	14
1.6 Main research problem and objectives.....	14
1.7 Research questions.....	15
1.8 Research methodology	15
1.9 Significant of the study.....	16
1.10 Overview of the thesis chapters	16
1.11 Chapter conclusion.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework	19
2.1 Chapter overview	19
2.2 Defining Leadership Succession Management (LSM).....	19
2.3 Approach to reviewing the LSM literature.....	20
2.3.1 Sources	20
2.3.2 Scope of the review.....	20
2.3.3 Prior literature reviews on LSM.....	23
2.4 Evidence for the effectiveness of LSM.....	25
2.4.1 Internal vs. external successors	26
2.4.2 Outcome research evaluating the efficacy of LSM	28
2.4.3 The role of leadership development in LSM	31
2.4.4 Outcome studies that link LSM with leadership development	32
2.4.5 Evidence in support of leadership development.....	33
2.5 Understanding the current status quo of LSM.....	34
2.5.1 Recent research findings regarding the status of LSM.....	35
2.5.2 LSM in the Australian context	36
2.5.3 Reasons for the apparent “Knowing-Doing Gap” of LSM	38
2.6 Best-practice approaches to LSM.....	39
2.6.1 What is “best practice”?	40
2.6.2 Key phases, activities and outputs of LSM.....	41
2.7 An integrated framework for LSM best practice.....	50
2.8 What is the opportunity to implement and expand on LSM practices?	51
2.9 Chapter conclusion	54
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	55
3.1 Chapter overview	55
3.2 Justification for the selected paradigm and methodology.....	55
3.2.1 Factors relevant to selecting the research method.....	55
3.2.2 Ontology and epistemology.....	55
3.2.3 General approaches to qualitative research analysis	57
3.2.4 Case-study research as a form of qualitative research	57
3.2.5 Case-study research in the context of studying leadership	58
3.2.6 Research framework for case-study-based research	59
3.2.7 Single case study vs. multiple case studies.....	60
3.2.8 Case-study research in combination with grounded-theory approaches.....	61
3.2.9 Overview of case-study-based research interviews.....	62

3.2.10	Combining the use of manual and software-based analysis	62
3.2.11	Validity of the chosen research methodology.....	63
3.3	Research design and procedures	65
3.3.1	Research sequence and data sources	66
3.3.2	Participant recruitment.....	66
3.3.3	Research instruments and data collection	67
3.3.4	Interview-data coding.....	67
3.4	Ethical considerations.....	68
3.5	Chapter conclusion	69
Chapter 4:	Participant Case Vignettes.....	70
4.1	Chapter overview	70
4.2	Research participants' case vignettes.....	70
4.2.1	Participant 1 case vignette.....	72
4.2.2	Participant 2 case vignette.....	74
4.2.3	Participant 3 case vignette.....	76
4.2.4	Participant 4 case vignette.....	78
4.2.5	Participant 5 case vignette.....	81
4.2.6	Participant 6 case vignette.....	84
4.2.7	Participant 7 case vignette.....	87
4.2.8	Participant 8 case vignette.....	89
4.2.9	Participant 9 case vignette.....	91
4.2.10	Participant 10 case vignette.....	94
4.2.11	Participant 11 case vignette.....	96
4.2.12	Participant 12 case vignette.....	99
4.2.13	Participant 13 case vignette.....	101
4.3	Analysis of Participant key themes	104
4.4	Key implications regarding CSFs.....	106
4.5	Interview-response coding overview.....	108
4.6	Chapter conclusion	109
Chapter 5:	Cross-Participant Contingent Success Factor Analysis.....	110
5.1	Chapter overview	110
5.2	Multiple coding of interview responses	110
5.3	Cross-participant CSF analysis	111
5.3.1	Reflects organisational needs and culture.....	112
5.3.2	Transparent, flexible and continuous process	114
5.3.3	Integration with HR talent management	116
5.3.4	Line-management ownership	118
5.3.5	Visible senior-leader support.....	120
5.3.6	Regular review of progress and process	122
5.3.7	Link to organisational strategy	124
5.3.8	Large, flexible pool of potential successors	126
5.3.9	High-quality assessment data.....	128
5.3.10	Individualised development.....	130
5.3.11	Consider internal and external talent.....	133
5.3.12	Quality of interpersonal interactions.....	136
5.3.13	Effective communication.....	138
5.3.14	Motivation and mindset	139
5.3.15	Psychological safety and trust.....	142
5.4	Summary of similarities and differences for each CSF.....	143
5.5	Chapter conclusion	145
Chapter 6:	Discussion – Implications for LSM Theory and Practice	146

6.1	Chapter overview	146
6.2	Establishing a suitable taxonomy for LSM	146
6.3	Discussion of the CSFs within the LSM Taxonomy: Implications for practice.....	149
6.3.1	Practice implications relevant to the LSM context	149
6.3.2	Practice implications relevant to the LSM process	155
6.3.3	Practice implications relevant at the organisational level.....	159
6.3.4	Practice implications relevant at the interpersonal level	162
6.3.5	Practice implications relevant at the intrapersonal level.....	165
6.4	Revising and extending the LSM-Framework	167
6.5	Chapter conclusion	170
Chapter 7: Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research.....		171
7.1	Chapter overview	171
7.2	Research conclusions	171
7.3	Limitations of the present research	173
7.4	Suggestions for future research.....	175
References		178
Appendix 1: Summary overview of major best practice LSM models		196
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet.....		198
Appendix 3: Consent Form for Participation in Research.....		199
Appendix 4: Interview Guide (incl. telephone/Skype script)		200
Appendix 5: Draft Email Inviting Potential Participants		204

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Overview of the scholarly sources reviewed.....	20
Table 2.2: Summary of demonstrated benefits of LSM.....	31
Table 2.3: Summary overview of LSM best-practice phases and CSFs	42
Table 3.1: Summary overview of interviews.....	67
Table 4.1: Summary of research participants' available demographic and organisational background data	71
Table 4.2: Summary of key themes for research participants	105
Table 4.3: Number of coded responses by research participant	109
Table 5.1: Unique, aggregate and multiple coded responses by CSF	111
Table 5.2: Summary of similarities and differences between Participants by CSF	144
Table 6.1: CSF heading changes to reflect research findings and practice implications.....	168

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Overview of Sponsor Organisation's Program (Source: Adapted from Program materials)	13
Figure 1.2: Overview of the research process (Source: Author)	14
Figure 1.3: Thesis structure (Source: Author)	17
Figure 2.1: The Leadership Succession Continuum (Source: Adapted from Eastman 1995)	19
Figure 2.2: Integrated LSM Best-Practice Framework (Source: Author).....	51
Figure 3.1: Sequence and timing of research activities (Source: Author).....	66
Figure 4.1: Research participants' places within the hierarchy of the Sponsor Organisation (Source: Author)	71
Figure 6.1: Proposed LSM Taxonomy (Source: Author)	148
Figure 6.2: Revised LSM-Framework (Source: Author).....	169

Chapter 1: Research Context and Thesis Overview

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter provides an overview of the research topic, context and background. It justifies the research in theoretical and practical terms and defines its research questions. Finally, it introduces key terms and a brief overview of the chapters of the thesis.

1.2 Brief overview of the research topic

Leadership succession management (LSM) is a key organisational function and an important priority for boards, CEOs and human-resources executives (AICD 2011; Larcker & Tayan 2017). It describes the “deliberate and systematic effort by an organisation to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future and encourage individual advancement” (Rothwell 2010, p. 6). This includes being able to access the most suitable individual whether externally or internally at the time of the succession event. In setting out best-practice approaches to LSM, the literature states that the purposeful development of internal candidates is central to supporting leadership continuity (e.g. Cappelli 2011; Dai et al. 2011; Fink 2011; Fulmer et al. 2009) and benefits organisations significantly (e.g. Ciampa & Watkins 1999; Huselid 1995; Shen & Cannella Jr. 2003).

1.3 Research need and justification

Whilst 90-95% of large organisations consider succession management as important or very important, today at best 60% of them effectively manage the succession of their senior leaders (Cvijanovic et al. 2019; DDI & The Conference Board 2014; Larcker & Scott 2014). This gap, termed here the “Knowing-Doing Gap”, exists despite the fact that the importance of LSM has been recognised for some time (Grusky 1960; Vancil 1987). Recent findings also suggest that many organisations rely on external recruitment to fill senior leadership positions (Davidson et al. 2017; Schloetzer et al. 2017), despite evidence that this practice is associated with inferior outcomes, including individual underperformance and higher turnover (Berns & Klarner 2017; Bidwell 2011; Steingraber, Magjuka, et al. 2011).

The literature indicates three potential reasons for the Knowing-Doing Gap. First, although succession management has been investigated through limited theoretical lenses, it is actually complex and multi-disciplinary (Giambatista et al. 2005). Second, it has largely been considered from the perspective of the organisation rather than individuals, including senior leaders who may be potential successors or “succeedees” (Cappelli 2011; Church et al. 2017). Third, succession management has not sufficiently focused on tacit and context-

specific knowledge, such as the impact of cultural aspects or individual circumstances (Brewer & Brewer 2010; Tichy, NM 2014). The present research addresses these three issues to advance the understanding of what is involved in formal approaches to LSM. While a significant number of scholars have written about LSM best practice, a review of the literature shows both similarities and differences in their approaches. (Section 2.6.2, Table 2.3 and Appendix 1.) The present research aggregates and builds upon the literature to form a comprehensive framework for LSM best practice (LSM Framework). It also sets out the contingent success factors (CSFs) that are relevant in determining LSM outcomes. This supports more-extensive implementation of LSM practices by deeply investigating the very nature of LSM itself.

1.4 Research background and context

The research was conducted with a large, complex, multinational organisation (Sponsor Organisation) that is one of the top 50 listed companies in Australia. The Sponsor Organisation operates in the construction and engineering industry and, at the time of conducting the research, had a number of operating companies with well-recognised brands and approximately 61,000 full-time employees across Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East. In June 2012, the organisation commenced an inaugural group-wide succession-management program (Program) with 74 participants to support strategy implementation and evaluate whether there were qualified individuals able to take up the CEO and other key management roles. Based on the apparent success of the Program – independent, anonymous feedback of 55 Program participants indicated an average of 4.56 out of 5 score regarding their overall experience of the Program – a second cohort of 17 senior executives from Australian and Asian subsidiaries commenced the Program in early 2014. The researcher was one of three senior consultants involved in the delivery of the Program, which used an approach to succession management consistent with the LSM Framework set out in this research. (Figure 1.1 below and Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2.) On the basis of this professional relationship, the Sponsor Organisation's Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) offered to support the present research. Shortly after Cohort 2 completed the Program, the organisation experienced a change in management that effectively discontinued the Program and prevented follow-up. It also created broader uncertainty within the organisation, including strategic decisions and job security. This disruption event represents a unique aspect of the research context within which to consider the research findings. Figure 1.1 outlines the key stages, activities and outputs of the Program.

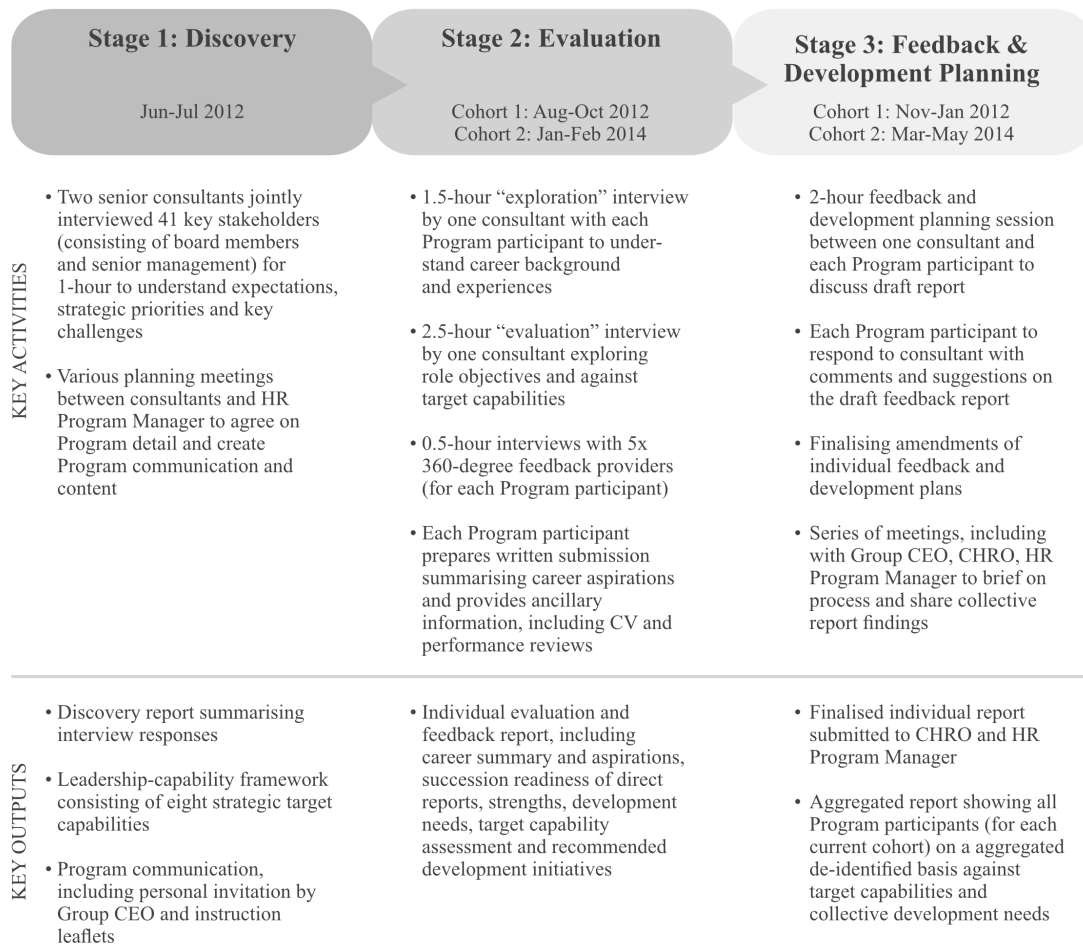


Figure 1.1: Overview of Sponsor Organisation’s Program (Source: Adapted from Program materials)

Access to data and participants has been one of the greatest challenges for any organisational research, especially when it involves the organisation’s most-senior executives (Berns & Klarner 2017). Thus the literature review has identified relatively little research (see Chapter 2) on detailed LSM practices involving senior leaders of large organisations. The present research initially aimed to interview between 10 and 15 participants in the second cohort of the Program. Of the 17 Program participants actually interviewed, 13 volunteered to be part of this research. Response rates were affected by the change in management, with even the four non-participating individuals being directly affected by the event by a change of reporting line and/or business demands. The number of respondents has been determined as sufficient given the chosen research methodology; however, limitations regarding generalisability are acknowledged (Section 3.2.11).

1.5 Research-process overview

Figure 1.2 sets out the different stages of the research process.



Figure 1.2: Overview of the research process (Source: Author)

1.6 Main research problem and objectives

The present research aims to provide insight into the practical application of an LSM Framework. Whereas previous research considering LSM has largely been focused on the organisation as a unit of analysis, the present study is focused on the individual as the unit of analysis. In essence, it poses the following overarching research question: What is the nature of the person-centred LSM process taking place in large organisations? In particular, it explores the experiences and attitudes of research participants who are senior executives in a large organisation. This is intended to narrow the current Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM to inform better theory and practice. Accordingly, the research aims to achieve the following objectives to inform the direction and guide the scope of the study, data collection and analysis:

1. Identify existing best practices as a basis for further research and empirical testing by other researchers, thus contributing to a more specific and comprehensive theoretical base;
2. Advance the understanding of an evidence-based approach to LSM, resulting in better applications of knowledge;
3. Promote an improvement in LSM practices within large organisations, resulting in better processes; and
4. Increase the likelihood of better LSM outcomes within large organisations.

These objectives represent the necessary elements in the development of a research framework (Baxter & Jack 2008). Together, addressing each of these questions deepens understanding the nature of LSM and thereby develop a comprehensive framework for LSM best practice.

1.7 Research questions

To address the main research problem and meet the above objectives, the research investigates the following specific questions:

1. What is the evidence in support of LSM practices in large organisations?
2. What best-practice approaches to LSM have been identified in the scholarly literature?
3. From the literature, what are relevant contingent success factors (CSFs) that affect LSM outcomes?
4. How do these CSFs relate to the research participants' experiences and attitudes?
5. How do the research participants' experiences in relation to each CSF inform best practice?
6. How do the research findings relate to supporting better LSM outcomes?

1.8 Research methodology

This research seeks to address the research problem, objectives and questions through a subjectivist research ontology using a qualitative case study method. While it is understood that the findings are theoretically generalisable, as is the case with qualitative approaches, focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis in this context represents a novel approach that can provide new insights that, to date, have not emerged from existing scholarly research.

1.9 Significant of the study

This study represents a significant contribution to both, the practical as well as theoretical knowledge of LSM by positioning various LSM success factors within the first evidence-based LSM Taxonomy to create a comprehensive framework for practice and further theory-building and testing.

1.10 Overview of the thesis chapters

The thesis consists of seven chapters. In addition to this current Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the LSM literature, including prior literature reviews, outcome studies and best-practice approaches. It highlights that leadership development should be an integral part of LSM programs in large organisations. It also provides a detailed overview of various best-practice approaches and captures the main elements of an LSM Framework.

Chapter 3 provides a justification for the chosen research method and sets out the detailed process activities. It is intended to demonstrate the application of scientific rigour in designing the research, conducting the analysis and developing theoretical and practical implications.

Chapters 4 and 5 set out the content analysis of interview transcripts on the basis of two approaches to exploring the identified CSFs. The first approach, detailed in Chapter 4, considers each research participant as a single case vignette that aims to provide a sense of the experiences and attitudes of each individual, including an understanding of their unique context and the extent to which the CSFs are relevant to them. This is intended provide valuable insights from a practitioner point of view given the detail and nuances conveyed in these case vignettes. The second approach, detailed in Chapter 5, analyses each CSF across the 13 research participants in light of the literature. The analysis of CSFs provides insights that have the potential to inform practice. These have been captured as practice deductions under each variable.

Chapter 6 discusses key research findings in the context of a proposed LSM Taxonomy. It consolidates practice deductions to create a clearer set of LSM practice principles, which in turn redefine the LSM Framework. It extends the framework to represent a more complete and integrated model for LSM practice that incorporates a leader-centric approach to succession management.

Chapter 7 summarises the research findings relevant to the research objectives and problem as well as each research question above. The chapter also discusses the various limitations of the present research and provides suggestions for future research.

The overall structure of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 1.3.

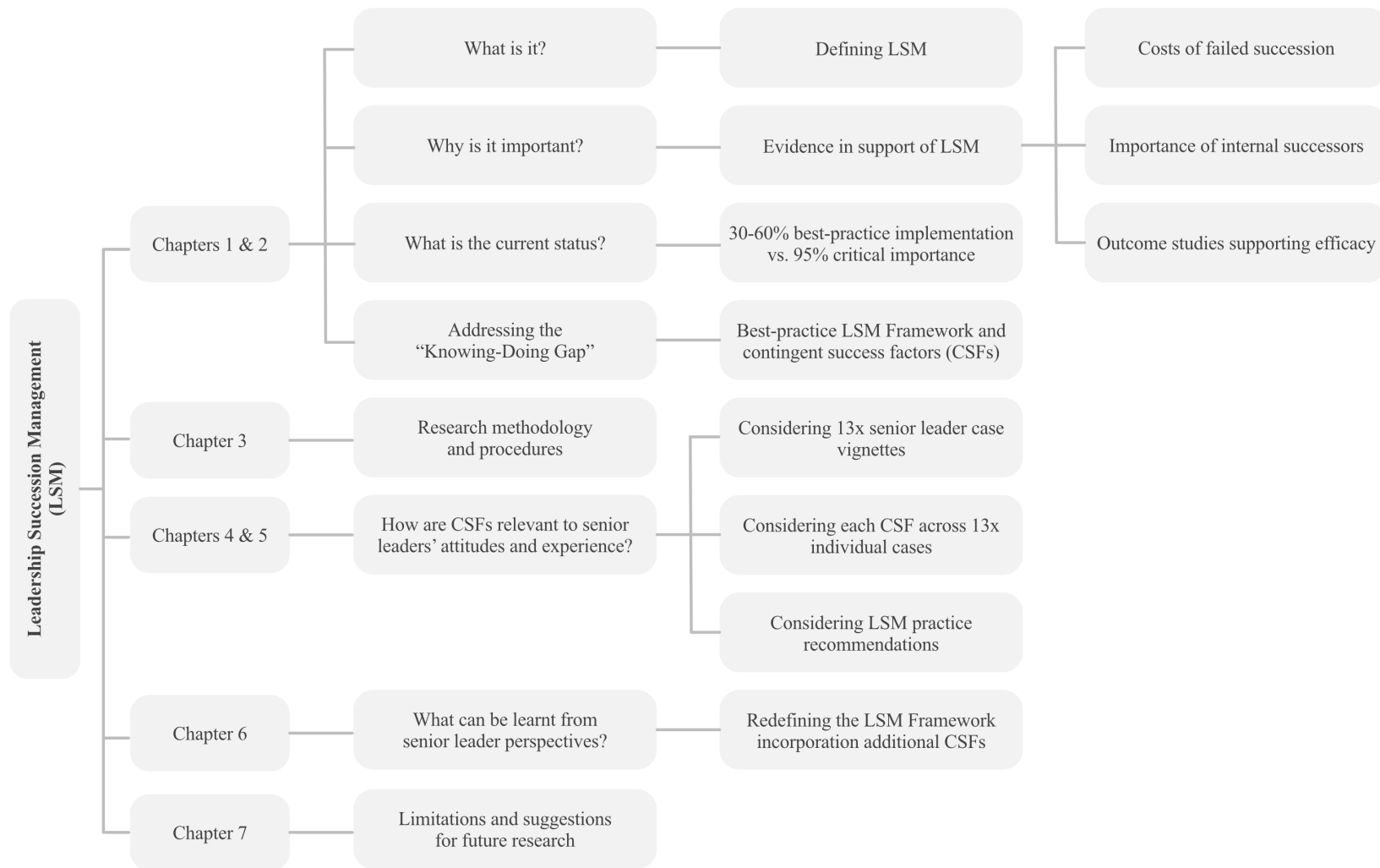


Figure 1.3: Thesis structure (Source: Author)

1.11 Chapter conclusion

This chapter set out the background to the research, including an overview of the research topic, its importance to organisational outcomes and the current research problem that its stated research objectives and questions address. It provided an overview of the research process and the Sponsor Organisation within which the research was conducted, as well as a summary overview of each of the following thesis chapters. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth discussion of the LSM literature, including the available evidence in support of the efficacy of LSM and a summary of major practice approaches.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter investigates the background to LSM and aims to provide an understanding of key concepts and approaches in the context of large, complex organisations. In addition to setting out the approach and scope to reviewing the LSM literature, it aims to identify (a) what LSM is and how it is defined, (b) what evidence exists to support its effectiveness, (c) the current status of LSM theory and practice, and (d) opportunities to progress LSM theory and practice. The chapter is organised in sections that correspond with these aims.

2.2 Defining Leadership Succession Management (LSM)

LSM can be said to exist on a continuum that ranges from simply reacting to a succession event to comprehensive succession management (Eastman 1995). The latter refers to the “more elaborate, integrated, and systematic approach, which includes the identification and development of high potentials, so that when a vacancy occurs in a key position, the organisation does not have just a list of potential candidates but a pool of better-prepared candidates” (Berke 2005, p. 1). LSM predominantly focuses on individuals who are identified and developed internally, although this does not preclude considering external candidates for specific vacancies (Larcker & Tayan 2016). The above definition is helpful because it emphasises the notion of targeted development, which, as will be explained below, forms a critical part of LSM. It is distinct from replacement or succession planning, which focuses on identifying the best-available candidates rather than influencing how well prepared they might be to take on a particular role or level. Figure 2.1 shows the continuum upon which succession events can occur. In considering a definition of LSM within the context of a continuum, it is important to recognise that this may be limited by what Cappelli (2011) identified as “artificially dichotomizing a very complex, and perhaps multidimensional construct” (p. 983).



Figure 2.1: The Leadership Succession Continuum (Source: Adapted from Eastman 1995)

2.3 Approach to reviewing the LSM literature

2.3.1 Sources

This review provides an overview of pertinent information that the researcher has identified through a systematic review of the available literature on LSM, including its evidence base, practices and outcomes. A number of different sources have been accessed, including the University of Wollongong online library catalogue, Google Scholar and a variety of databases including Business Source Complete, Proquest Central, PsycInfo and Scopus. Search terms have included “succession planning”, “succession management”, “CEO succession” and “leadership succession”; searches which were limited to peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and books. In addition to reviewing these broader search results (Table 2.1), more-detailed reviews were performed by limiting the search to document titles, as well as combining the search terms with additional terms including “leadership development”, “executive development”, “outcomes”, “results”, “process”, “practice”, “approaches”, “theories”, “measures” and “Australia”. In aggregate, 3,180 search results were identified, and approximately 341 relevant articles, books and dissertations were reviewed.

The focus of this review has been on scholarly articles (355), books (92) and dissertations (54), although a small number of practitioner reports have been included due to their relevant content and research findings. Given the extensive succession-management and leadership-development literature, the selected articles, books and dissertations were selected to capture seminal theoretical and essential best-practice approaches involving senior executives and large, complex organisations.

Table 2.1: Overview of the scholarly sources reviewed

Database	Time period	Search terms and limits	Accessed	Reviewed
Business Source Complete	1958-2019	("succession planning" or "succession management" or "CEO succession" or "leadership succession")	1,273	501
Proquest Central	1968-2019			
PsycInfo	1989-2019	limited to peer-reviewed	228	
Scopus	1968-2019	journal articles, books and dissertations	1,458	

Source: Author

2.3.2 Scope of the review

The review was organised to reflect the international interest in LSM (including Australian perspectives) within large organisations spanning multiple industries and sectors, and to involve succession events specifically at senior leadership levels.

Geographical focus: The review focuses in particular on the Australian context; however, most of the literature and associated research has been established in the North-American and European contexts. As explained below, there is a clear research gap in the global scholarly literature with respect to published research involving Australian organisations. At the same time there is no evidence to suggest that the limited research findings established in other geographies, particularly those examining large organisations in developed economies with similar cultures are not applicable to the Australian context. Hence, research established in the North-American and European contexts has been included in the review.

Organisation size: Research findings indicate that larger organisations are more likely to rely on internal succession and that this places greater importance on the processes and activities of managing succession optimally (Schloetzer et al. 2016). Research has linked a greater reliance on identifying internal successors with large organisations' greater complexity and more-extensive bureaucracies, which offer a greater pool of resources for internal recruitment (Finkelstein et al. 2009). Although findings may also be applicable to smaller organisations, this review considers LSM in the context of large organisations.

Organisation type: Most of the organisations considered in this review are public, although LSM has been found to be equally relevant to private companies (Topper 2006), including family-owned businesses (Dalpiaz et al. 2014), as well as not-for-profit entities (Landles-Cobb et al. 2015). Given that private companies are typically not subject to the same governance requirements, they have not been subject to the same focus on formal LSM practices as public organisations (Wasserman 2003). Furthermore, there is much less research on these types of companies given their lesser obligation to be transparent.

Industries and sectors: LSM research has been conducted in a variety of industries and sectors. Particularly noteworthy is the substantial and recent body of succession-management knowledge developed in the context of healthcare and nursing (e.g. Brunero et al. 2009; Collins 2007; Corso 2002; Griffith 2012; Hampel et al. 2010), education and academia (e.g. Fink 2011; Hargreaves 2005; Reynolds et al. 2008; Terry 2002; Zepeda et al. 2012), government and the public sector (e.g. Boyne et al. 2011; Bradshaw 2001; Brian 2007; Jarrell & Pewitt 2007; Reeves 2010), professional-services firms (e.g. Morris & Pinnington 1998; Robert et al. 2012; Steven 2003; Stumpf 1999; Stumpf 2007) and the not-for-profit sector (e.g. Froelich et al. 2011; Gothard & Austin 2013; Noser 2011; Santora & Sarros 2001). The following review does not examine the extent to which some of the key research findings from these areas are potentially applicable to large, complex organisations, as some of the commercial objectives, and thus the outcomes studied, are different in other sectors (Collins

& Holton 2004). For example, succession management in the context of nursing or education is carried out in a different corporate environment to the selection of a senior executive in a publicly listed company. Additionally, there is already a substantial amount of research that illuminates the key questions underlying this review. As a consequence, only a small selection of the work associated with these sectors has been included here. The selected work focuses on the findings most relevant to the current research, aiming to capture a representation of the key practice knowledge in the field, rather than capturing empirical findings comprehensively.

Functional focus: LSM needs to be distinguished from succession issues at other hierarchical levels of an organisation as well as technical-expert succession (Friedman 1986; Lamoureux et al. 2009). Although a comprehensive succession-management system in an organisation will include managerial and technical-expert succession (Rothwell 2010), the present review focuses on senior leadership positions because the increased complexity of more-senior roles typically makes succession management more critical as well as more challenging (Naveen 2006). In support, Garman and Glawe (2004) and Saporito (2013) showed that despite the convergence of best-practice principles with other levels of employees, there are a number of differences and unique requirements in managing the succession of an organisation's most senior leaders. Similarly, Kesner and Sebora's (1994) comprehensive literature review of LSM distinguished between CEO succession, senior-leader succession and succession at other employee levels. Notwithstanding these findings, it is argued here that many of the findings from the extensive research investigating CEO succession are applicable to other senior leadership positions, as LSM at these levels considers what constitutes leadership effectiveness in addition to addressing the "succession event" and decision-making process. There are however important differences to CEO succession, including the extensive involvement of the chairman and board of the organisation (Cikaliuk et al. 2018).

Contextual focus: Succession management focusing on senior-leader continuity needs to be separated from the issue of ownership succession, which has been examined extensively in the scholarly literature but incorporates different challenges and dynamics, particularly in the context of buying and selling businesses (e.g. Ip & Jacobs 2006; Venter & Boshoff 2007). Furthermore, the LSM event needs to be distinguished from both its consequences on one hand, and the process and practices that seek to optimise the outcomes of the event on the other. The literature, particularly in respect to CEO succession, has distinguished between the type of succession (relay or horse race), circumstances (planned, forced or emergency)

and successor origin (insider or outsider from within or outside the same industry). This review will address these contextual factors with reference to understanding practice implications.

2.3.3 Prior literature reviews on LSM

Before examining detailed aspects of LSM in the literature, it is helpful to provide a high-level overview of prior literature reviews focusing on senior-leader succession. Examples include Gordon and Rosen (1981), Kesner and Sehora (1994), Eastman (1995), Giambatista, Rowe and Riaz (2005), Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011) and, more recently, Berns and Klarner (2017). An overview of these prior literature reviews provides an understanding of how LSM knowledge has developed over time in the context of the current research.

Gordon and Rosen (1981) initially considered the “critical factors in leadership succession”, paying particular attention to the dynamics of the succession process and their indirect implications for leadership and group effectiveness. Their review of the literature covers earlier studies in various research domains including “organisational correlates” with features of succession events (Birnbaum 1971; Gordon & Becker 1964; Grusky 1960, 1961, 1963, 1964; Kriesberg 1962), “actuarial studies” (Allen et al. 1979; Eitzen & Yetman 1972; Gamson 1964; Grusky 1963, 1964; Helmich 1974; Lieberman & O'Connor 1972; Merri 1949; Salanick 1977; Weiner 1978), “laboratory studies” (Daum 1975; Goldman & Fraas 1965; Grusky 1969a, 1969b; Hamblin 1958; Hollander & Julian 1978; Trow 1961) and “experimental field studies” (Jackson 1953; Lieberman 1956; Rosen 1970a, 1970b). Gordon and Rosen’s (Gordon & Rosen 1981) review concluded that more-positive outcomes are achieved, including improved senior leadership group dynamics, when succession processes are actively managed. They do not however, set out what practices constitute such active management.

Kesner and Sehora (1994) conducted an in-depth review of the key succession literature from 1964 to 1994. They considered three broad knowledge categories: what is known, what is not known because of inconclusive results and what has not yet been studied. They explain why succession management is important and provide special consideration for CEO succession, which they regard as distinct from other succession events due to the governance process involved. Their review largely focuses on the dynamics and consequences of the succession event rather than on the development of internal candidates within the system of the corporation. At the same time, however, their review points to a gap in the research literature regarding measuring the benefits of proactively managing succession events.

Eastman (1995) compiled the first published annotated bibliography that also included identified best-practices of succession-management programs. Her review, although comprehensive, is limited because it did not critically analyse findings nor synthesise these from various sources.

Giambatista et al. (2005) point to the “emerging maturity” of LSM, from “evaluation and augmentation” to “consolidation and accommodation”. With reference to key findings from Kesner and Sebor’s (1994) previous literature review, they review the subsequent literature with respect to theoretical contributions and outcome studies, as well as discussing the current state and future directions of succession research. Similar to previous literature reviews, this review is limited by emphasising the phenomenon of the succession event rather than considering the broader context of the process of LSM.

Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011) provide a chronological overview of the key literature and research studies involving succession planning and management as well as leadership development. Their conclusions trace the progression from the origins of replacement planning to comprehensive succession management systems that integrate a number of strategic human-resources functions. They also conclude that the literature suggests there is no single model or approach, and that a solution will need to meet the unique context of each organisation. Their approach provides a valuable contribution in representing the integration between talent management, leadership development and succession management.

With a more narrow focus on CEO succession, Berns and Klarner (2017) examine the literature in the context of a framework for practice. They point to findings from multiple disciplines, including strategic management, corporate governance, strategic leadership and organisational behaviour. They highlight that the literature increasingly recognises the importance of an ongoing process of succession management, particularly as 20% of CEO succession events are unplanned, based on a longer-term average (Davidson et al. 2017).

In considering prior literature reviews on LSM, it becomes apparent that the research has focused more on the event of succession and its consequences, and less on the practices and contingent factors that are relevant to achieving better outcomes. A notable exception is the recent literature review by Berns and Klarner (2017), which aims to advance the practice of LSM by setting out some of the key factors relevant to CEO succession processes. Notwithstanding their contribution, there is still a significant gap in the literature, which is addressed in the present review by exploring and aggregating a comprehensive set of best

practices derived from previous scholarly research. First, however, it is necessary to explore why LSM is actually important, including what the evidence is for its effectiveness.

2.4 Evidence for the effectiveness of LSM

Disruptions to leadership continuity have been well documented. Some past high-profile examples of major failures of CEO leadership amongst Fortune 500 companies include Dennis Kozlowski at Tyco, Bernard Ebbers at Worldcom and Kenneth Lay at Enron. More recent examples include Carol Bartz and, subsequently, Marissa Mayer at Yahoo, Chuck Prince at Citigroup, Ken Lewis at Bank of America, Leo Apotheker at Hewlett Packard, Steve Ballmer at Microsoft and Bob Iger at Disney. These represent cases where major organisations have been confronted with leadership that, by all accounts, failed quickly following appointment and was associated with billions of dollars of lost shareholder value (Strebel 2013). The cases of Yahoo, Citigroup, Bank of America, Hewlett Packard and Microsoft, and, more recently in Australia, David Jones, Leighton Group, Investec Bank and AMP Limited arguably represent examples where the organisation has been caught unprepared without the availability of a candidate who could be appointed permanently, or, alternatively, at least function as an emergency successor. In the case of Disney, observers remarked that despite planning and preparation, the process fell down because of poor handling of the actual transition (Bradt 2016). What these examples have in common is that leadership transitions, particularly at CEO level, are fraught with significant risk. In fact, current research suggests that in the US alone, forced CEO turnovers run at approximately 13% (Davidson et al. 2017), with up to 40% of all newly appointed CEOs seen to be “failing outright” within the first 18 months (Riddle 2009). The annual cost of poorly managed successions has been estimated at well over US\$100bn (Fernandez-Araoz 2015). Beyond the CEO level, failure rates of new senior executive hires are estimated at between 40 and 60% (Charan 2005). Such excessive failure rates are associated with significant direct and indirect costs estimated at 1.8 times the annual costs of executives’ compensation (Center for Leadership Development and Research 2013). As the outcomes-based LSM research shows, in addition to better selection practices and on-boarding support of new hires (Hollenbeck 2009), LSM is argued to represent a key mitigant to these high failure rates. This is because it enhances the probability of appointing the best-suited individual through the purposeful and targeted development of internal candidates even if the selection at the time of the actual succession event considers both internal and external candidates. The differences between the two have been considered in various research studies and are set out below as influences on LSM practice.

2.4.1 Internal vs. external successors

A key question relating to LSM is whether it matters whether successors come from inside or outside the organisation. The response to this question has important implications for LSM practice. If, for example, hiring senior leaders from outside of the organisation is advantageous, efforts should be directed to identify the best possible candidates at the lowest possible cost, optimise the decision-making process and implement structures to support their successful transitioning into the organisation. If, on the other hand, it is generally better to hire internal candidates, then the question is what the organisation can, and needs to, do to have the best possible internal candidates available and ensure their success after promotion to a new, more senior role. And if, as appears to be the case, available findings are inconclusive, this argues for combining an emphasis on both internal and external successors. The following sections set out the available research data and suggest that although the evidence supports the selection of internal candidates, research findings are inconsistent.

Evidence for internal successors: Available findings suggest that internal successors are associated with a range of advantages. Data published by Booz & Company (Favaro et al. 2013) that examines CEO turnover in the world's largest 2,500 companies indicates that total shareholder returns are marginally higher for internally appointed candidates than for external ones: about 10% and 8% per annum, respectively. The same report also shows that the average tenure for external appointments is 3.6 years, compared to 4.9 years for internal candidates, suggesting that internal appointments show greater stability. In further support, Karaevli (2016) suggests that outsider CEOs are 44% more likely to fail than insider ones, which has implications beyond performance, such as hiring costs and impacts on other key management team members. Moreover, a 2011 study by the Kelley School of Business (Steingraber, Magjuka, et al. 2011) examined the leadership of the most successful S&P 500 companies for a 20-year period to 2007, finding that all of the 36 most highly performing companies relied on internal CEO appointments. Finally, a meta-analysis of CEO succession studies by Schepker and colleagues (2017) suggests that there are long-term financial performance benefits associated with internal CEO successors. These benefits were measured in terms of return on equity and return on assets over a three-year period. Although these research findings are compelling, Cappelli (2011) argues that it is not realistically possible to demonstrate a clear causal link between internal successors and organisational high performance because of the complexity and interdependence of the multitude of factors involved in producing financial performance. Additionally, there are limited findings

applicable to leadership positions below CEO level. One example is Bidwell's (2011) study of personnel in the US investment banking arm of a financial services organisation, which found that internal appointments are significantly more successful during an initial two-year period even though external hires have significantly higher salaries, some 18% on average, and higher educational qualifications.

Mixed findings: Although internal successors are associated with better performance as measured by annual median shareholder returns (Favaro et al. 2013), this is inverted for the Australian context, where outsiders have been associated with greater shareholder returns (Davidson & Gravestock 2012). Georgakakis and Ruigrok (2017) found that external successors can be associated with positive organisational performance depending on their origin and demographic backgrounds. In two studies of emerging economies in Southeast Asia, it was found that external CEO successors are associated with greater post-succession organisational performance (Chung & Luo 2013; Helmich & Gilroy 2012). It is possible that this reflects the less developed governance and talent-management practices of organisations in these markets, which benefit from materially more capable external CEO-successors. Irrespective of findings that consider the performance consequences of internal and external successors, the latest report by consulting firm strategy& points to an increasing global trend of appointing external CEOs, at about 22% of all CEO successions of the world's largest 2,500 organisations for the most recent four-year period (2012-2015), compared to the previous four-year period (2004-2007), during which about 14% of all CEO successions were external (strategy& 2016). In contrast, the most recent data on CEO succession events of S&P 500 companies shows that in 2016 85% of 63 succession events involved internal candidates; the authors argue that this supports a long-term trend towards appointing internal candidates amongst this group of organisations (Schloetzer et al. 2017).

Despite the lack of unequivocal findings regarding performance implications and trends of internal and external successors, current data on the CEO turnover of the world's largest 2,500 companies indicates that the vast majority of CEOs – approximately 75 per cent of all new CEO appointments – are hired from inside the organisation (strategy& 2016). Consequently, optimising the availability of internal candidates is clearly an important component of the overall processes and practices that optimise the outcomes of hiring or promotion events. Importantly, it is one aspect that organisations can control, or at least influence, in contrast to the availability of external candidates, which is subject to market supply. In light of this research, it needs to be considered to what extent research findings

have been able to demonstrate the positive impact and benefits associated with LSM practices.

2.4.2 Outcome research evaluating the efficacy of LSM

The following section sets out the research findings that evaluate the effectiveness of LSM practices. Although the section focuses on peer-reviewed academic research, the comparatively limited scholarly research that considers outcomes associated with LSM practices makes an overview of the available practitioner research useful.

Practitioner research support: A significant number of private-sector research and consulting organisations have reported a positive relationship between succession management and organisational performance, including The Hay Group (2001), Development Directions International (Bernthal et al. 1999), Booz Allen Hamilton (Booz Allen Hamilton Sydney & Business Council Of Australia 2003) and McKinsey & Co (Michaels et al. 2001). Apart from the empirical links to better financial performance, LSM has been associated with higher employee retention (Hughes & Rog 2008; Michaels et al. 2001), more effective performance management (Lamoureux et al. 2009), reductions in the adverse impact of labour and skills shortage (Freyens 2010) and, in combination with other talent management practices, greater employee engagement (Hughes & Rog 2008). Overall, practitioner research almost exclusively reports positive findings that must be considered in light of the limited rigour of such research compared to peer-reviewed academic research.

Scholarly research: It can be argued that the most critical aspect of conducting research on the efficacy of succession-management initiatives is their impact on organisational performance. It is important, however, to recognise that the performance of the successor is not synonymous with that of the organisation; whereas a CEO and senior leadership team arguably represent the group of individuals ultimately responsible for organisational performance, in reality a vast number of interrelated and random factors can affect shareholder returns, as can time lags between cause and effect. Individuals' performance is only one aspect of this. Despite this, a number of seminal research works have attempted to gauge the importance of leadership to business and organisational performance outcomes, with estimates of the impact of leadership ranging between 0 and 40% depending on a number of variables that determine the relative importance of the socio-cognitive and behavioural "human element" (Day & Antonakis 2012; Derue et al. 2011; O'Reilly et al. 2010; Wasserman et al. 2010). This contrasts with other scholarly research that argues, for example, that the impact of a CEO on organisational performance is "almost indistinguishable from chance" (Fitza 2017, p. 802). Whether such views are correct or not, it can be said with

certainty that it is impossible to establish accurate causality between leadership and organisational performance even though few people would argue that leadership is inconsequential.

LSM outcome evaluation challenges: Scholars investigating the phenomenon of leadership concluded quite some time ago that it is problematic to attribute organisational performance outcomes to the effectiveness of a single leader, or even a group of senior leaders. For example, Gordon and Rosen (1981) identified that the relationship between succession and performance is unlikely to be effectively measured within a short time period. The specific challenge of accurately correlating performance outcomes with succession events has also been highlighted in early research by Lieberson and O'Connor (1972), who analysed 20 years of data from 167 organisations in 13 different industries to examine the impact of a new CEO on major financial performance indicators, including sales and profit. They found that a change of CEO accounts for relatively little of the financial-performance variance, which is more heavily influenced by other factors such as organisational and industry variables. Examining some of the early data and findings by Lieberson and O'Connor (1972), Weiner (1978) demonstrated that statistical analysis examining the impact of leadership on performance greatly depends on the statistical methodologies used. They showed that the data used by Lieberson and O'Connor (1972) indicated a significant impact of the CEO successor on major financial-performance indicators. This again highlights that findings regarding the performance impact of CEOs and senior executives needs to be viewed with caution.

Similarly, Giambatista et al. (2005) comment that any evaluation of succession outcomes is fraught with challenges regarding the “type of metric”, as well as the “time frames considered” (p. 966). They state that many studies have considered share-price movements based on short-term market reactions rather than multiple performance metrics. Addressing the difficulty of evaluating LSM outcomes, Cappelli (2011) commented that it is extremely challenging to infer causation because of “problems of endogeneity and omitted variables” (p. 674). In other words, because of the complexity and consequential “unknowable unknowns”, causation cannot be established. This does not mean, however, that there is no value in investigating the relationships between a range of known or possible variables, but it does mean that a descriptive qualitative approach can shed further light on the complexity of this causation. This will promote more-effective solutions that reflect both generalisable best practice and adaptation to individual contexts and needs (Chapter 3.)

LSM outcome studies: Notwithstanding the above limitations, reviewing available outcome studies with reference to organisational performance is an important starting point as, ultimately, superior and sustainable creation of economic value is at the heart of managing leadership succession. As shown below, the weight of evidence in favour of LSM leading to better financial and non-financial performance outcomes is overwhelming. Early empirical research that shows a positive link between succession management and organisational effectiveness has been scarce (Huang 2001), but research has accelerated during the last decade (Berns & Klarner 2017). At the same time, existing research is heavily focused on financial performance, and does not necessarily reflect a broader, more balanced set of factors associated with long-term, sustainable performance, such as employee turnover or client satisfaction feedback. This is arguably a shortcoming of the extant LSM literature and therefore an opportunity for further research.

In one of the early noteworthy studies, Friedman (1986) showed that organisations that implemented succession systems also performed better from a financial perspective. In another key study, Huselid (1995) demonstrated the link between human-resource best practices, including succession management and organisational performance. More specifically, this study identified a superior value performance of organisations with more sophisticated HR approaches equivalent to \$42,000 per employee.

Other significant outcome-based studies include those by Lamoreux (2009), who highlights the overwhelming perceived importance by senior decision-makers of LSM to organisational outcomes, and Reid (2005), who points to the importance of succession management for public organisations and describes key benefits of succession management initiatives. This latter finding is similar to a major survey conducted by Bernthal and Wellins (2006b) that confirms that organisations with formal succession planning and high-quality leadership-development programs have the best business performance as measured by a variety of metrics including financial performance, productivity, quality, employee and customer satisfaction and retention of employees. These results echo findings from a large-scale survey of 800 senior leaders in 276 international organisations (Corporate Leadership Council 2003).

Table 2.2 summarises these findings and other research relevant to identifying the importance and benefits of LSM. Notwithstanding the challenges associated with measuring LSM outcomes, the aggregate findings of these studies provide overwhelming support for LSM.

Table 2.2: Summary of demonstrated benefits of LSM

Demonstrated benefits	Author(s) and area of investigation
Improves the availability of internal candidates, which avoids the significant costs of external hiring and other disadvantages	Corporate Leadership Council (2003): Succession-management outcomes Stahl et al. (2009): Expatriates and talent mobility Bidwell (2011): External vs. internal hiring Day (2017): Talent development
LSM produces better prepared internal candidates, which is associated with lower failure rates	Helmich & Brown: (1972): Succession and organisational change Zajac (1990): CEO succession and organisational performance Karaevli (2016): Successor origin vs. change performance
Internal CEO appointments are associated with greater shareholder returns	Carlson (1961): Executive succession and its consequences Allen et al.(1979): Managerial succession and organisational performance Schepker (2017): CEO succession meta-analysis
More extensive LSM supports greater employee retention	Michaels et al. (2001): Organisational performance Barnett & Davis (2008): Best-practice succession model D’Amato & Herzfeldt (2008): Learning orientation and retention Kim (2010): Evaluating succession outcomes
LSM informs more-accurate performance-management data	Lamoureux (2009): Talent management in organisations Fulmer (2009): Development best practice Church et al. (2017): Development outcomes
LSM ameliorates limitations of labour and skills shortages	Freyens (2010): Leadership in the public sector Wiblen (2015): Value of customised approach
LSM is critical to talent management and helps organisations successfully deal with increasing complexity	Hugh & Rog (2008): Talent management in hospitality Newhall (2015): Talent management and succession
LSM helps counter shortening tenures of CEOs over time as well as on a comparative basis in Australia	Taylor & McGraw (2004): Succession management in Australia Watt & Busine (2005): Succession management in Australia Richards (2008b): Leadership succession in Australian corporations
LSM benefits the quality of leadership and organisational culture	Bradshaw (2001): Succession management in the public sector Valentine (2011): Organisational culture
LSM benefits an organisation’s ability to respond to strategic changes	Fulmer & Conger (2004): CEO succession and strategy Barron et al. (2010): Organisational strategy Goldman et al. (2015): Development of strategic thinking

Source: Author

2.4.3 The role of leadership development in LSM

The literature covering LSM shows that leadership development is an integral part of LSM, but that this awareness has only developed gradually over the last 25 years (Berns & Klarner 2017). The following sets out various key studies that have established a strong link between the two. Friedman (1986, pp. 192, 211) published one of the earliest LSM outcome studies identifying “executive development” as a “backbone of succession systems” (p. 211) and

demonstrating that more-extensive succession systems are associated with superior organisational performance. In their review of succession-planning practices in 60 organisations, Mahler and Gaines (1983) identify LSM as a critical corporate process that requires a strong focus on leadership development to help individuals master the skills and understanding associated with their new roles.

Similarly, Byham (2002) outlines an approach to LSM that emphasises the identification of leadership talent and what can be done to develop leaders' potential. Similarly, Austin and colleagues (2006) examine how effectively the learning from an executive-development program is transferred to skills in the workplace and how this affects career planning, mentoring and succession planning. Their results demonstrate that leadership-development programs benefit succession-planning outcomes; however, their findings are largely focused on the factors that are relevant to the transfer of learning based on chronological stages (before, during and after the development program).

More recently, a research report authored by Steingraber and colleagues (2011) has identified the deliberate development of internal CEO successors as a critical factor in consistent outperformance of S&P 500 organisations by reference to key financial metrics such as stock-price performance, earnings growth, return on assets and revenue. Other studies that have shown an association between sophisticated succession-management processes and executive-development interventions include those by Purcell (1995), Bernthal, Rioux and Wellins (1999), Tyson (1995), Leavitt (2001) and Conger and Fulmer (2003).

Although a relative scarcity of scholarly literature has considered the role of leadership development on succession outcomes, much of the research centres on the notion that LSM involves the development of internal candidates (Bower 2007; Charan 2005). There is some evidence that large organisations are actively linking the development of senior leaders to succession outcomes. For example, a 2014 study by The Conference Board (Schloetzer et al. 2014), a member-based research organisation, suggests that about one-third of S&P 500 organisations use temporary job assignments to test the suitability of potential CEO candidates.

2.4.4 Outcome studies that link LSM with leadership development

In one of the few studies that explicitly links leadership-development initiatives with succession management, Groves (2007) conducted qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews with 30 senior executives across 15 different organisations to evaluate

a variety of development initiatives, including executive coaching, mentoring and action-learning projects. The results provide empirical support for the relevance of development initiatives to succession outcomes as well as the requirement for senior management to take responsibility for succession management, including the development of potential successors.

Supporting the importance of development from the employee's perspective, Kim's (2003) survey-based research of employee attitudes showed that employees view succession-management practices that incorporate clear guidelines for assessment and development as effective career-advancement options. From the organisation's point of view, development initiatives need to address the general skills, knowledge, experience and characteristics that are required at a more senior level, as well as the specifically skills for particular roles (Charan et al. 2011). But what exactly are these development practices, particularly as they are used for senior leaders as a part of deliberately managing succession?

Development practices listed in Kim's (2003) research include cross-functional and cross-sector assignments, training, executive coaching and mentoring, which can use either internal or external expertise. Byham (2002) identifies a variety of development initiatives in the context of succession management and managing leadership talent pools, including stretch and special project assignments, executive education, coaching, mentoring and specific skills-based training. Other effective development strategies identified in the literature include new job assignments and short-term transfers (Watt & Busine 2005). Fulmer and colleagues (2009) consider how two "best-practice" organisations, Caterpillar and PepsiCo, are managing succession planning and leadership development, and identify stretch assignments, targeted learning programs, action learning and coaching and mentoring as key development initiatives. The authors explicitly link succession-planning best practice with leadership-development best practice.

In light of the relative scarcity of specific research that considers leader or leadership development in the context of LSM, it is relevant to consider the empirical evidence in support of leadership development per se.

2.4.5 Evidence in support of leadership development

In one of the more recent reviews of the leadership-development literature from 1988 to 2012, Day et al. (2014) considered the longitudinal research on leadership-development outcomes. Similar to the comments of scholars investigating succession-management outcomes, the authors found that measuring the impact of leadership development is fraught

with challenges given the complexity and time frames involved. This difficulty has not prevented a range of scholars from providing suggested frameworks for measurement methodologies that can reliably capture causality between such initiatives and relevant outcomes (e.g. Avolio et al. 2010; Black & Earnest 2009; Church et al. 2017; Orvis & Ratwani 2010; Packard & Jones 2015).

In one of the early meta-analyses, Burke and Day (1986) examine outcomes associated with different training methods, content areas and learning types. Their study indicates that management training is moderately effective. However, in other meta-analyses, Collins and Holton (2004), and, separately McAlearney (2008) determine that there are substantial benefits to the knowledge and skills of participants in leadership-development initiatives. At the same time, other authors such as Ely et al. (2010), in considering meta-analyses, acknowledge the difficulty of considering leadership-development outcomes longitudinally given the lack of evaluation frameworks. Notwithstanding this challenge, the weight of meta-analytical research overall provides confidence that material positive outcomes can be achieved from leadership-development initiatives. This includes Avolio et al.'s (2009) meta-study of 200 leadership-development impact studies, which indicated a 66% probability of positive outcomes.

Other noteworthy outcome studies that have considered the impact of leadership development include Coloma, Gibson and Packard's (2012) six-year longitudinal study of 140 participants in a leadership-development program; the participants demonstrated, amongst other aspects, increased work performance and higher rates of promotion. Similarly, in an examination of the impact of mentoring on 303 participants using a combination of self-assessed and 360-degree feedback evaluations, Solansky (2010) finds that mentoring is effective, particularly when objectives are defined upfront.

With the establishment of the evidence base in support of LSM and, separately, leadership-development initiatives, the question arises: to what extent have large organisations implemented LSM practices?

2.5 Understanding the current status quo of LSM

In light of the above evidence of the benefits of deliberately managing leadership succession, as well as supporting succession outcomes through targeted development, key organisational stakeholders have demanded greater transparency and accountability as part of increasingly stringent governance standards. For example, regulators in the US have introduced, and subsequently upheld in legal proceedings with key shareholder groups, guidelines that require

companies to disclose their activities relating to CEO succession planning (NYSE 2003). Importantly, these and other corporate-governance requirements also include the identification and development of internal candidates (LSE 2012). The significance of LSM as a risk-mitigating factor is also reflected in the requirements of leading credit-rating providers, such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's, to consider succession risk as one of the factors in their credit ratings (Larcker & Tayan 2010).

In Australia, which has been lagging behind other markets such as the US (NYSE 2003) and the UK (LSE 2012), a recent version of the ASX Corporate Governance Guidelines (ASX 2014) has pointed to much more explicit requirements for Australian company boards to oversee leadership succession in their organisation, including at CEO and key senior executive level. This is a fundamental shift from the previous version of the guidelines five years earlier, which merely referred to succession at board level.

2.5.1 Recent research findings regarding the status of LSM

Despite increased focus on and accountability for leadership succession, there appears to be a dramatic gap between espoused standards and the extent to which major organisations actually implement succession-management practices (Cvijanovic et al. 2019; Larcker & Scott 2014). Even though there is a dearth of primary data, various associated research supports this assertion. For example, a study by The Institute of Executive Development and the Rock Center for Corporate Governance (Larcker & Scott 2014) suggests that only 46% of North American companies have a formal process for developing successor candidates, and only 25% are considered to have an adequate pool of "ready now" internal successors. The research also contains suggestions on how to improve succession readiness, including the strategic development of internal leadership talent. Similarly, in a two-yearly survey of more than 2,000 organisations across 48 countries, global HR consultancy DDI and The Conference Board (2014) report that, across all responses, only 46% of critical roles could be filled immediately by internal candidates. This already low figure does not indicate the likely success of those internal candidates. The study further states that those organisations that can fill a larger percentage of their positions internally are associated with significantly higher leadership strength and financial performance. Hooijberg and Lane's (2016) survey of 124 directors of global, largely US-based organisations found that many boards do not plan adequately for CEO succession. In their survey results, 58% of respondents stated that their organisations did not have emergency succession plans in place, and 54% stated that there were no long-term succession plans. Furthermore, about 52% suggested that they would be more likely to hire an external candidate as part of their next CEO appointment. In light of

the overwhelming evidence in support of LSM practices, it is surprising that organisations do not seem more prepared to actively prepare internal candidates as potential successors.

With respect to specific succession-management practices, The Conference Board (2012) provides some insight. Their survey of 334 general counsel and company secretaries of public US organisations between April and June 2011 found that less than 30% of organisations test potential CEO candidates in other roles prior to considering them as potential CEO successors, indicating that internal candidates are not visible to the majority of boards. The same research identified 55 CEO successions during 2011, with about 19.2% involving external appointments. Somewhat surprisingly, results indicate that of those 55 successions, only 50% of the successors had participated in their organisation's formal succession program. A survey of 178 North American organisations by consultancy Right Management (Schroeder-Saulnier 2010) indicates that 40% of respondents have identified candidates for none of the organisation's critical roles (19%), or only for some (21%). The same survey also suggests that only 30% of organisations identify candidates all critical leadership positions.

Although senior leadership succession goes beyond the role of the CEO, much of the research has focused on this position, providing valuable insight into the extent to which large organisations proactively manage CEO succession. In the most extensive and longest-running study of its kind, consultancy PwC (strategy& 2016) examined annual CEO succession and turnover of the world's largest 2,500 public organisations. Their most recent report (strategy& 2016) shows that 76% of all CEO changes between 2012 and 2015 involved appointments of internal candidates. The report also shows that a global CEO annual turnover rate of 14.9% in 2016 was close to the all-time high of 16.6% in 2015. This data shows evidence of LSM's increased importance and its reliance on the availability of internal candidates. However, the data does not provide insight into whether these planned successions are well managed, which is a general gap in the succession literature. It also highlights that there are still a significant number of CEO turnovers associated with unforeseen, unplanned events because of forced succession (18.6%) and as a result of mergers and acquisitions (9.3%); this emphasises the importance of perpetual and ongoing, rather than event-driven, approaches to succession management.

2.5.2 LSM in the Australian context

In Australia, current research on the extent to which major organisations implement LSM practices is scarce. Evidence from global data leads suggests that Australian organisations' LSM practices lag significantly behind those of North America, Europe and the United

Kingdom; this may be because, as stated above, Australian governance requirements have themselves been lagging (ASX 2014; LSE 2012; NYSE 2003). For example, while a study by management consultancy Booz & Company (Davidson & Gravestock 2012) examining the CEO succession events of the 200 largest Australian listed organisations between 2000 and 2016 found that about 74% of succession events were planned. This does not necessarily mean that appointments followed a rigorous process of succession management in which internal candidates were developed as potential successors. Other available data for Australian organisations indicates that about 47% of Australian organisations have succession-management programs, with the majority perceiving that their approaches to incorporating developmental initiatives need improvement (Watt & Busine 2005). Consistent with these findings, Taylor and McGraw (2004) found that 43.7% of Australia's organisations reported having succession-management plans, and a further 28% intended to implement succession management within the next two years. This is a marked increase from earlier research indicating that only 3% of organisations intended to continuously manage succession (Gutteridge et al. 1993).

Despite the extensive empirical research established in the North American context described above, succession management is not necessarily more prevalent in North America, where 50% of all organisations have some form of succession-management plan, compared to Europe and the United Kingdom (64%) and Australia (44%) (Bernthal & Wellins 2006b). Because most research is positioned within the North American context, it is worthwhile to consider this body of knowledge in attempting to understand the reasons for the apparent gap between the recognised importance of LSM practices and the actual extent to which they are currently implemented. There is no evidence to suggest that findings in the North American context would not be applicable to Australian organisations, given their similar governance and business practices.

It is important to recognise that surveyed organisations vary widely irrespective of their geography: some organisations have implemented and are maintaining leading, best-practice approaches whereas others address this issue only superficially, if at all (Lamoureux et al. 2009). As one author remarks, the fact that a "list" of potential successors is maintained does not necessarily mean that the succession plan is actually operational (Larcker & Tayan 2010). To better understand the extent to which large organisations engage in effective development that supports succession outcomes it is worthwhile to consider how common leadership development is amongst them. Although research findings appear to indicate a trend of more organisations incorporating LSM practices (Davidson et al. 2017), the data relies on

organisations' public announcements and, importantly, lacks detail regarding approaches. Considering all the available sources, the available data suggests that at best about half of large organisations, including those in Australia, currently maintain some type of best-practice approach to LSM. Irrespective of the exact figure, it is apparent that there is a significant gap between the recognised importance of LSM initiatives and the extent to which they are currently implemented. This is referred to as the “Knowing-Doing Gap” of LSM.

2.5.3 Reasons for the apparent “Knowing-Doing Gap” of LSM

A question that emerges from this review is: why are not more organisations actively managing the succession of their senior leaders? Research indicates that there are three apparent areas that contribute to the Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM. First, LSM is often not considered important. Second, the disciplines that enable the proactive management of succession are not always effective. And third, expectations placed on organisations' leaders are frequently unrealistic. Stanford University polled 160 CEOs and directors of North American public and private organisations, finding that only a 5% weighting was given to a CEO's responsibility for the development of leadership talent, compared to 41% per cent to financial performance metrics and 17% to strategy development (Center for Leadership Development and Research 2013). The survey also suggests that 10% of CEOs have never been formally evaluated, which further highlights this misalignment, as such evaluations are needed to identify development needs, and are therefore central to deliberately managing leadership succession through targeted development. Similarly, a 2010 Stanford Graduate School of Business survey (Larcker & Tayan 2010) indicates that, on average, boards of North American organisations only dedicate two hours per year to the issue of succession planning, a figure that is likely to average the hours of the numerous organisations that spend very little time and the few that prioritise succession management as a critical board agenda item.

In exploring why so many CEO successions seem to be unsuccessful, 2010 survey research findings by Heidrick and Struggles and the Rock Center for Corporate Governance at Stanford University (2010) suggest this is due to inadequate talent development. The research found that only 51% of board directors surveyed felt their organisation could currently name a permanent successor, and 31% had not identified an emergency successor. About 39% suggested that they did not have even one viable internal candidate. In considering the causes of succession processes' poor success rates, Tichy (2014) identifies a number of factors that lead to “succession failures”. These include the lack of a replacement in case of a sudden, unforeseen succession event; succession plans that are outdated or poorly

conceived to the point where they cannot be implemented; a domineering CEO who resists letting go; and many decision-makers' demonstrated bias toward external candidates despite their increased likelihood of unsuitability.

Another key reason for the Knowing-Doing Gap is that too many organisations still do not appreciate the distinction between replacement planning and succession management. This argument was made some time ago by Beeson (1998), who identified an overemphasis on replacement planning as one of the key obstacles to succession management. The author points out that this prioritises consequences rather than longer-term career management, and it thereby does not sufficiently reflect internal candidates' interests and motivations, which he considers to be a major factor in succession outcomes. Cappelli (2011) also highlights the distinction between succession management and activities that are focused on managing the succession event, with the former being "built on the notion that internal development and work-based learning will prepare candidates for more senior positions" (p. 674). He comments that research on outcomes and consequences of succession events has been more extensive than succession practices themselves, and that this has impeded succession-management theory and practice.

To further investigate the apparent Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM, it becomes necessary to understand what constitutes best practice, as a gap cannot be identified until the two ends of the spectrum defining that gap are explained. In other words, any "gap closing" needs to involve the clarification of the desired state against which the current status quo can be evaluated.

2.6 Best-practice approaches to LSM

Succession consulting has become a significant industry with the potential to expand still more, due to increasing regulatory, governance and reporting requirements (Miller 2013). This highlights the requirement to subject evidence-based approaches to appropriate scrutiny and rigour prior to accepting them as best practice.

In the non-academic arena, there are literally hundreds of consultants and firms espousing "their" version of best-practice principles and approaches to succession management. A number of high-profile examples of best-practice approaches include those of Carey and Ogden (2000), the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) in collaboration with Mercer Delta (Directors 2006), Bersin & Associates in collaboration with The Centre for Creative Leadership (Lamoureux et al. 2009), Right Management (2010) and RHR International (Saporito 2013). On closer examination, these and others offer largely

similar approaches emphasising, amongst other key principles, the importance of integrating individual development plans with succession objectives, reviewing development plans regularly, and ensuring that the organisation's most senior leaders actively support succession-management initiatives and are held accountable for outcomes.

In the scholarly literature there are a number of well-known and much-cited examples of best-practice approaches to LSM, including those by Rothwell (2001), Conger and Fulmer (2003), Berger and Berger (2010), Charan (2011) and Tichy (2014). Appendix 1 summarises these and others. Before setting out detailed practices, it is important to clarify what “best practice” actually means in the context of LSM.

2.6.1 What is “best practice”?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2018), best practice is defined as “a method or set of working methods that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described formally and in detail”. A high-level review suggests that “best practice” has been explored extensively in the context of business, including human-resources management, education and healthcare, but much less so in the context of LSM. Thus it appears valuable to advance the academic understanding of LSM best practice, not just for the purposes of addressing how the Knowing-Doing Gap can be closed, but also as a contribution to the research that sets out LSM best-practice methods.

A review of LSM best-practice methods suggests that it is most important to focus on potential and how to develop the required skills, abilities and knowledge needed for successful advancement to a more complex, senior position. Conger and Fulmer (2003) emphasise this point, but do not elaborate extensively on how it is best applied in practice. Although they provide an example to highlight the importance of “on-the-job” development, i.e., an international assignment, they do not provide an integrated understanding of best practice, such as how the assessment of development needs is optimally conducted. They also do not capture the complexity of what is involved in designing and implementing LSM processes. For example, senior individuals’ willingness to engage in an assessment process may be difficult to obtain if there is a climate of distrust, including about how the collected data will be used. Furthermore, senior executives are often not open to feedback and change, and either do not recognise value in development initiatives or see them as a distraction from their priorities, even though there is ample evidence that the competencies required for senior leadership roles vary significantly from managerial competencies (Dai et al. 2011; Eddy 2012; Edwards 2009; Gillis 2012). Conger and Fulmer’s (2003) overview of best practice

LSM does not capture these aspects, which represent significant risks to successful LSM outcomes.

A further example of how best-practice approaches fall short of providing the necessary insight relates to translating business strategy into leadership competencies (Eastman 1995; Leavitt 2001). In practice, the selection of candidates for a role goes beyond a mere focus on competencies to include other qualities and characteristics, including personality and character traits, as well as cultural fit with the organisation (Tichy, NM 2014; Zajac 1990). Yet another example of the lack of clarity of these espoused approaches concerns the extent to which promotion potential is determined and assessed, and how current performance is evaluated (Church et al. 2017; Church et al. 2015). These and other examples of authors setting out best-practice approaches to LSM gives rise to a comprehensive review and summary of the various contributions to establish an integrated framework of practice, which can then be further explored to identify how the Knowing-Doing Gap can be addressed. The following section sets out the key phases with their activities, inputs and outputs, as well as an overview of the key success factors that together constitute an integrated best-practice LSM framework.

2.6.2 Key phases, activities and outputs of LSM

Barnett and Davis (2008), with reference to the academic literature, provide one of the most comprehensive overviews of LSM best practice, including setting out the CSFs and key activities associated with each phase of the process. However, they do not capture some of the detail set out by other scholars, including how to manage the actual succession event, as well as the type of transition support that can be offered to successors, both of which are argued to be important to achieving the best possible succession outcomes (Schepker et al. 2017; Schloetzer et al. 2017). Table 2.3 provides a brief outline of each of these key phases, based on the detail provided by Barnett and Davis (2008) as well as a number of other authors who have identified similar phases, along with relevant CSFs.

Table 2.3: Summary overview of LSM best-practice phases and CSFs

LSM key phase and contingent success factors	Representative literature source
<i>Phase 1: Setting up the process</i>	Barnett & Davis (2008); Lamoureux et al. (2009)
Reflects organisational needs and culture	Leavitt (2001); Fancher (2007); Lamoureux et al. (2009); Berger & Berger (2010); Charan et al. (2011); Tichy (2014)
Transparent, flexible and continuous process	Eastman (1995); Conger & Fulmer (2003); Garman Glawe (2004); Watt & Busine (2005); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Morris & Rogers (2013); Church et al. (2017)
Integration with HR talent management	Eastman (1995); Leavitt (2001); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Larcker & Scott (2014); Tichy (2014); Silzer et al. (2016)
Line-management ownership	Eastman (1995); Leavitt (2001); Day (2007); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Rothwell (2010); Morris & Rogers (2013); Church et al. (2017)
Visible senior-leader support	Eastman (1995); Karaevli & Hall (2003); Watt & Busine (2005); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Tichy (2014); Berns & Klarner (2017)
Regular review of progress and process	Eastman (1995); Leavitt (2001); Conger & Fulmer (2003); Sobol et al. (2007); Barnett & Davis (2008); Lamoureux (2009); Berger & Berger (2010); Rothwell (2010); Charan et al. (2011); Tichy (2014); Berns & Klarner (2017); Church et al. (2017)
<i>Phase 2: Defining leadership needs and key roles</i>	Leibman et al. (1996); Barnett & Davis (2008); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Larcker & Scott (2014)
Link to organisational strategy	Eastman (1995); Leavitt (2001); Karaevli & Hall (2003); Reid (2005); Watt & Busine (2005); Day (2007); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Berger & Berger (2010); Rothwell (2010); Tichy (2014); Berns & Klarner (2017)
<i>Phase 3: Identifying potential successors</i>	Leibman et al. (1996); Leavitt (2001); Conger & Fulmer (2003); Reid (2005); Watt & Busine (2005); Day (2007); Sobol et al. (2007); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Cappelli (2011); Charan et al. (2011); Silzer et al. (2016); Berns & Klarner (2017) (Rhodes & Walker 1984; Byham 2002; Reid 2005; Barnett & Davis 2008; Rothwell 2010; Charan, Drotter & Noel 2011; Tichy 2014)
Large, flexible pool of potential successors	Leavitt (2001); Karaevli & Hall (2003); Lamoureux (2009); Larcker & Scott (2014)
High-quality assessment data	Leibman et al. (1996); Karaevli & Hall (2003); Reid (2005); Morris & Rogers (2013); Day et al. (2014); Bracken et al. (2016); Silzer et al. (2016); Church et al. (2017)
<i>Phase 4: Developing potential successors</i>	Leibman et al. (1996); Leavitt (2001); Conger & Fulmer (2003); Day (2007); Fulmer et al. (2009); Lamoureux (2009); Rothwell (2010); Cappelli (2011); Berns & Klarner (2017)
Individualised development	Eastman (1995); Leibman et al. (1996); Reid (2005); Watt & Busine (2005); Barnett & Davis (2008); Fulmer et al. (2009); Berger & Berger (2010); Rothwell (2010); Larcker & Scott (2014); Silzer et al. (2016)
<i>Phase 5: Optimising the succession event</i>	Schloetzer et al. (2017); Berns & Klarner (2017)
Considering internal and external talent	Leibman et al. (1996); Berger & Berger (2010); Tichy (2014); Berns & Klarner (2017)
<i>Phase 6: Supporting successor transition</i>	Conger & Fishel (2007); Byford et al. (2017) {

Source: Author

2.6.2.1 Phase 1: Setting up the LSM process

Barnett and Davis (2008) set out the first step of implementing a best-practice LSM process: relevant stakeholders are to “agree on the key aspects of the succession planning system and process” (p. 730). This requires defining the purpose and rationale for the process, allocating key roles, defining concepts such as performance and potential, ensuring integration with the wider management and HR systems and extending the process down to levels below the senior leadership team. Key roles for the process are allocated between HR, which typically facilitates the process and engages the board, and the CEO and other executives in determining the detail and ensuring alignment with business priorities. A number of authors have highlighted that CEO successions need to be the responsibility of the board, which ensures that the incumbent CEO is accountable for developing viable internal options (Barnett & Davis 2008; Cappelli 2011; Garman & Glawe 2004; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Rothwell 2010). The principle of primary ownership by the board and the organisation’s senior leaders is one of a number of CSFs that various authors have identified as part of LSM best practice. As shown in Table 2.3, others include:

Reflects organisational needs and culture: Eastman (1995) was one of the first authors to recommend that LSM processes need to be simple and tailored to the unique future business needs of the organisation. Leavitt (2001) suggests that the methods by which LSM processes are monitored depend on the business goals and company culture. Various other authors have also identified company culture as an important contextual factor in LSM outcomes (Charan et al. 2011; Fancher 2007; Lamoureux et al. 2009). Finally, Tichy (2014) highlights the importance of addressing adverse cultural issues as part of successfully implementing LSM best practice. A consideration of organisational needs is also linked to the recognised importance of evaluating outcomes of LSM programs and their role in organisational performance. For example, Shen and Cannella (2003) investigate investor reactions to CEO succession events and highlight the financial benefits of deliberate succession-management practices.

Transparent, flexible and continuous process: Best-practice LSM processes should be transparent (Conger & Fulmer 2003; Garman & Glawe 2004; Lamoureux et al. 2009), flexible and adaptable to the needs of the organisation (Conger & Fulmer 2003; Eastman 1995; Fulmer et al. 2009), and should ensure that LSM becomes an ongoing discipline rather than an infrequent planning exercise (Fulmer et al. 2009; Garman & Glawe 2004; Lamoureux et al. 2009; Rothwell 2010). Larcker and Tayan (2016) highlight the importance of transparency as part of high-quality governance processes. Also, Groves (2018) asserts that transparency

of succession-management processes is associated with organisational cultures that promote leadership development, and that such organisations have better succession outcomes. Church et al. (2017) refer to the importance of balancing rigour with flexibility; a number of other authors have also stated the importance of incorporating flexibility and a responsiveness to changed conditions (Conger & Fulmer 2003; Garman & Glawe 2004; Lamoureux et al. 2009). Similarly, Karaevli and Hall (2003) suggest that succession-management program flexibility can be achieved by decentralising the process and encouraging “local creativity and ownership” (p. 73). The authors also describe program flexibility in terms of meeting individuals’ professional and personal development needs. Similarly, Conger and Fulmer (2003) point to the importance of maintaining flexibility, including in the process of determining which individuals are considered as talent. They also highlight that the succession-management “system” needs to be able to respond to users’ needs and emphasise the importance of considering the individual.

Integration with HR talent management: One of the most significant differences to traditional succession planning is that best-practice LSM processes are characterised by their integration into the wider talent-management and HR processes. Barnett and Davis (2008) describe this as “spanning several levels” and being part of the wider “talent review” (p. 726). This also includes LSM processes being integrated with the organisation’s wider leadership-development initiatives (Lamoureux et al. 2009; Larcker & Saslow 2014; Rothwell 2010; Silzer et al. 2016).

Line-management ownership: One of the most critical elements of best-practice LSM processes is that line managers have primary responsibility for the identification and development of potential successors (Barnett & Davis 2008; Karaevli & Hall 2003). Fulmer et al. (2009) expresses this as a part of “senior executives’ responsibility to develop the next generation” (p. 21), and Rothwell (2010) suggests that “Human resources is typically responsible for the tools and process associated with successful succession planning. Business or line units are generally responsible for the “deliverables”” (p. 32). This extends all the way to the incumbent CEO, who “plays an important role in the development of internal candidates” (Berns & Klarner 2017, p. 84). Morris and Rogers (2013) highlight the importance of engaging and leveraging line managers, whereas Church et al. (Church et al. 2017) raise the importance of “clear and visible sponsorship” of senior leaders (p. 771).

Visible senior-leader support: Leavitt (2001) and Karaevli and Hall (2003) were amongst the first authors to highlight the importance of the organisation’s most senior leaders visible support of LSM processes. Similarly, Garman and Glawe (2004) highlight the need for

“active and visible involvement of senior leadership” in support of achieving a tighter integration between succession-management processes and the organisation’s strategic objectives. Prior to these, Rhodes and Walker (1984) found that “without CEO involvement or sponsorship, management development processes generally fail” (p. 161). The concept goes beyond the responsibilities of managers for the identification and development of potential successors and captures the concept of setting the right cultural tone “from the top”, including “executive commitment and engagement” (Lamoureux et al. 2009, p. 99). Tichy (2014, p. 1) frames the concept as part of ensuring that succession is seen as a strategic priority, and Church et al. (2017) raise the importance of senior leaders’ “clear and visible sponsorship” (p. 771). Rothwell (2010) goes further in suggesting a need for the “hands-on involvement by the CEO and other senior leaders” (p. 33). An example for such active senior management was reported by Groves (2007) who refers to supporting development initiatives, including through “organisational-wide forums” in which they “teach classes and facilitate workshops” (p. 252).

Regular review of progress and process: A number of authors (Berger & Berger 2010; Garman & Glawe 2004; Rothwell 2010; Sobol et al. 2007) have identified the importance of ensuring regular reviews of progress toward targeted outcomes and the LSM process itself. Whereas some authors consider this aspect in the context of the organisational LSM process (e.g. Berger & Berger 2010; Garman & Glawe 2004), others extend it to assessing progress against the development plans of potential successors (Berns & Klarner 2017), including as part of regular “talent reviews” (Lamoureux et al. 2009, p. 199). Importantly, the follow-up and regular reviews need to be prioritised to ensure they are considered frequently and taken seriously (Charan et al. 2011) as part of establishing “clear accountability” mechanisms (Church et al. 2017, p. 775). The best-practice literature also points to ensuring that LSM initiatives define specific and measurable outcomes at the organisational, collective and individual levels (Barnett & Davis 2008). For example, Conger and Fulmer (2003) highlight the importance of applying outcome measurements to ascertain whether “the right people are moving at the right pace into the right jobs at the right time” (p. 1). The authors refer to metrics including “how many important positions have been filled with internal candidates”, “how many succession plans have two or more ‘ready now’ candidates” and “how many of the same employees are ‘ready now’ candidates more than three different succession plans”.

A review of the above process phase and associated CSFs makes it apparent that the LSM process is a series of activities and outputs alongside other organisational activities. Much of the process phase is associated with initial and one-off activities that are not relevant

as part of the ongoing maintenance or improvement of the LSM process. Within this clear organisational context, the process is future-focused and linked to achieving business outcomes; this is further embedded in the subsequent phase.

2.6.2.2 Phase 2: Defining leadership needs and key roles

The second phase involves the identification of leadership needs and the key roles that are most critical to ongoing organisational performance. These need to be prioritised as part of the LSM process. Barnett and Davis (2008) include this as part of the set-up phase; however, the contribution of other authors makes it apparent that it is an important and distinct process that follows from setting up the LSM process. For example, Leibman and others (1996) describe this as a combination of defining “position requirements” to cover “managerial, interpersonal, leadership, team and technical” aspects of a role reflecting “future plans and people requirements” (p. 19). Typical activities associated with this phase include identifying critical roles and capturing the skills, knowledge and experience that is required to be successful in those roles. Numerous authors refer to the use of competencies or capabilities to establish a rigorous set of objective standards against which to evaluate potential successors (Eastman 1995; Lamoureux et al. 2009; Rothwell 2010). Some authors promote the concept of a “success profile” (Bernthal & Wellins 2006a; Newhall 2015), which goes beyond a traditional position description and sets out key traits and attributes a person needs to be successful in the position.

Link to organisational strategy: An important feature of best-practice LSM approaches is the concept of reflecting criteria that address current and future business needs and challenges (Berns & Klarner 2017; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Leavitt 2001). In practice, this “future focus” refers to strategic priorities in determining the critical competencies and capabilities that senior executives require to achieve them (Eastman 1995; Lamoureux et al. 2009; Reid 2005). The concept can be considered either role-specific or relevant for a particular leadership level (Charan et al. 2011), as well as incorporating well-established competencies that have been shown more generally to be associated with managerial and leader effectiveness (Barnett & Davis 2008; Eastman 1995).

2.6.2.3 Phase 3: Identifying potential successors

Barnett and Davis (2008) refer to two separate steps: “Step 2: Preparing for succession planning and talent review” and “Step 3: Talent review” (p. 731). The former includes “identifying participants”, “communicating the process”, “establish[ing] evaluation criteria” and “collect[ing] data for talent review”. The latter refers to “conducting the talent review

meeting”, which the authors describe as “a day-long meeting” facilitated by “internal HR or an outside consulting partner” where “nominated participants are discussed in-depth”. Most other authors, however, combine these steps within a single phase, which describes how potential successors are identified (Cappelli 2011; Fulmer et al. 2009; Leavitt 2001; Leibman et al. 1996; Reid 2005; Sobol et al. 2007; Watt & Busine 2005). Further examination of the practices involved makes it apparent that the phase constitutes an evaluation of succession candidates’ potential. Lamoureux (2009) describes this as “assessing high potential” (p. 57), Rothwell (2010) as “assessing future work requirements and individual potential” (p. 215) and Charan et al. (2011) as “evaluating succession candidates through a combined potential-performance matrix” (p. 215).

The concept of “potential” has had significant attention in the succession-management literature (Bernthal & Wellins 2006a; Brant et al. 2008; Conger & Fulmer 2003; Eastman 1995; Fulmer et al. 2009; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Lamoureux et al. 2009; Leavitt 2001; Leibman et al. 1996; Reid 2005; Sobol et al. 2007; Watt & Busine 2005) as well as the wider leadership-development literature (Church et al. 2015; Day et al. 2014; Silzer & Church 2009). Although definitions of potential typically vary significantly between organisations (Karaevli & Hall 2003; Silzer & Church 2009), the concept can describe an individual’s future capacity to be successful with respect to different roles, levels or breadth of responsibilities (Silzer & Church 2009). The concept of potential is of central importance to LSM, which is fundamentally about developing potential to perform successfully in an advanced role (refer to the amended definition of LSM in Section 2.2 above). The focus on potential rather than performance forms part of a number of CSFs that are relevant to this particular phase, and includes establishing a “large, flexible pool of potential successors” and “high-quality assessment data”.

Large, flexible pool of potential successors: Rather than having one individual identified to take on a particular role, various authors suggest that it is better for organisations to identify a larger pool of potential candidates and to develop these individuals more broadly as potential successors (Barnett & Davis 2008; Conger & Fulmer 2003; Fink 2011; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Reid 2005; Watt & Busine 2005). This pool is also categorised as being “flexible”, which means that “pool membership” can change depending on whether individuals are seen to be maintaining their potential status by progressing with their development goals (Conger & Fulmer 2003). The concept of flexibility also refers to the ability to access potential successors across functions or divisions (Barnett & Davis 2008).

High-quality assessment data: A number of authors refer to the importance of using high-quality assessment data from multiple sources, including performance appraisals, 360-degree feedback and competency and psychometric assessments (Barnett & Davis 2008; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Reid 2005; Silzer et al. 2016). Best-practice LSM frequently stresses the importance of 360-degree or “full-circle multi-rater” feedback, identifying it as a central component of LSM (Rothwell 2010; Tichy, NM 2014). Benefits of this particular type of assessment data include providing more objective, accurate and meaningful results, thereby motivating participants to change (Rothwell 2010). It has also been suggested that 360-degree feedback can provide greater context-specific data that can be more readily translated into successful change (Tichy, NM 2014). Other authors challenge the reliability of 360-degree feedback, and suggest using multiple assessment methods to identify development needs with greater accuracy (Bracken et al. 2016; Church et al. 2017; Hollenbeck 2009).

2.6.2.4 Phase 4: Developing potential successors

As already established above, LSM best practice essentially concerns targeted development of internal leadership talent at numerous levels of the organisation (Conger & Fulmer 2003; Garman & Glawe 2004). This involves using development techniques including coaching, training and mentoring, special projects or assignments, job rotations, group-wide leadership-development programs and development centres that provide targeted opportunities for action learning (Fulmer et al. 2009; Leavitt 2001). Whilst the above authors provide some detail regarding the activities involved, others simply state that once the evaluation has been completed and development needs communicated, LSM “effectively merges with leadership development” (Cappelli 2011, p. 675). Barnett and Davis (2008) capture the development aspect as part of “Step 4: Providing feedback and facilitating developmental action planning” and highlight the importance of “development planning”, which needs to be “realistic and attainable” (p. 729). However, they do not elaborate on what this entails.

Individualised development: Various authors point out that LSM-focused development needs to reflect leadership competencies (Leibman et al. 1996) and assess development against these criteria to establish individual development plans (Rothwell 2010). A further key component underpinning effective succession-focused development is the concept of “work-based learning” (Cappelli 2011, p. 678). This is linked to action learning, which, in combination with job assignments, a number of authors identify as one of the key enablers to effective leadership development (Bernthal & Wellins 2006b; Conger & Fulmer 2003; Day 2000; Fulmer et al. 2009). Charan et al. (2011, p. 271), for example, refer to “on the job stretch experiences”. These, in combination with competency-based development needs and

development initiatives that are integrated with the individual's existing role, form a best-practice variable that can be termed "individualised development".

The above shows that LSM involves a continuous process that prepares internal leadership talent to take on a more advanced role. Whereas the skills, knowledge and experience are a combination of strategic priorities and work level, LSM best practice assumes that these can be learned through a combination of training that occurs away from the job and incorporates general skills, specific skills that are addressed through personalised coaching and mentoring, and on-the-job development that is linked to action learning. The literature does not generally provide detail of the types of development content because this is generally a function of the specific context of the organisation based on its strategy, organisational hierarchy and specific roles, which will always be unique. Additionally, it implies a degree of linearity in that the succession event occurs once successors are developed. The reality is that succession events are unpredictable, and that the rate of development will differ for each individual based on their individual qualities and characteristics and the resources that are available to support their development.

2.6.2.5 Phase 5: Managing the succession event

It is surprising that most of the best-practice succession-management literature does not provide much detail about the activities surrounding the succession event as a distinct step or phase. Instead, much of the detail concerning the phase following development of internal successors focuses on measuring progress and outcomes, including "monitoring and assessing the program" (Leavitt 2001), "measuring progress" (Conger & Fulmer 2003), "measure and learn" (Sobol et al. 2007), "measuring effectiveness" (Barnett & Davis 2008), "implementing talent review workshops" (Lamoureux et al. 2009), "evaluating results of the program compared to goals" (Berger & Berger 2010), "evaluate the succession planning program" (Rothwell 2010) and "reviewing the plans and progress of the entire pipeline frequently and seriously" (Charan et al. 2011).

Although it makes sense that, until the time of the actual succession event, there are frequent reviews that assess the status and progress of the LSM processes, the literature seems to confound the process of regular status reviews with reviews of the outcomes of succession events to consider improvements to the overall process. One notable exception is Tichy (2014), who covers event-related activities by setting out the responsibilities of the different roles, including HR, CEO and Board. Another exception is Schloetzer, Tonello and Aguilar (2017), who set out some of the practical aspects of CEO succession, including how to communicate about it to the external market. Notwithstanding these contributions, there

is a general lack of detail concerning the practices surrounding the succession event (Berns & Klarner 2017; Schloetzer et al. 2017). This is problematic, as it neglects a critical element that is important but challenging to get right, given that it is often affected by bias and politics (Charan 2005; Tichy, N 2014). In addition to contributions within the LSM literature, much of the best-practice literature on the assessment and selection of senior executives is also relevant to this phase (Church et al. 2017; Hollenbeck 2009; Scott & Reynolds 2010).

Considering internal and external talent: Nearly all of the major best-practice approaches to LSM suggest that at the time of the succession event, organisations need to consider the best possible successor from the pool of available internal and external candidates (Berger & Berger 2010; Berns & Klarner 2017; Tichy, NM 2014). This principle is supported on the basis of the findings in Section 2.4.1. Interestingly, Barnett and Davis (2008) do not explicitly refer to this principle, although other authors provide very clear guidance on it. For example, Leibman et al. (1996, p. 23) set out that one of the distinctions between succession planning and succession management is that the latter “more readily balances“ the combination of internal promotions with external hires of senior leadership teams. Failing to reflect the higher failure rates and significant transaction costs of external hires (Bidwell 2011; Byford et al. 2017), they argue that external hires promote different thinking and support transformation whilst internal appointments contribute to stability and represent an important signal to employees that internal talent is valued. Tichy (2014, p. 185) sets out a best-practice principle of “benchmarking against both internal and external candidates”, which suggests that such benchmarking precedes the succession event and informs the formation of the pool of internal candidates during the second phase of the LSM process.

2.6.2.6 Phase 6: *Supporting successor transition*

Some authors setting out LSM best practice highlight the importance of onboarding successful candidates, including internal appointments, as part of the succession event (Berns & Klarner 2017; Byford et al. 2017). Groves (Groves, K. S. 2018), for example, sets out a succession-management capabilities framework that includes “transition capabilities”, which in turn includes “new leader onboarding” and “role based leadership development” (p. 4). The CSF is applicable beyond internal successors and applies as much as, if not more than, to externally hired successors as well.

2.7 An integrated framework for LSM best practice

The aggregate of the above phases and CSFs can be represented as an integrated framework for LSM best practice (Figure 2.2). In considering the overall approach of LSM, it is apparent

that existing best-practice approaches centre on the alignment between organisational strategy and talent development.

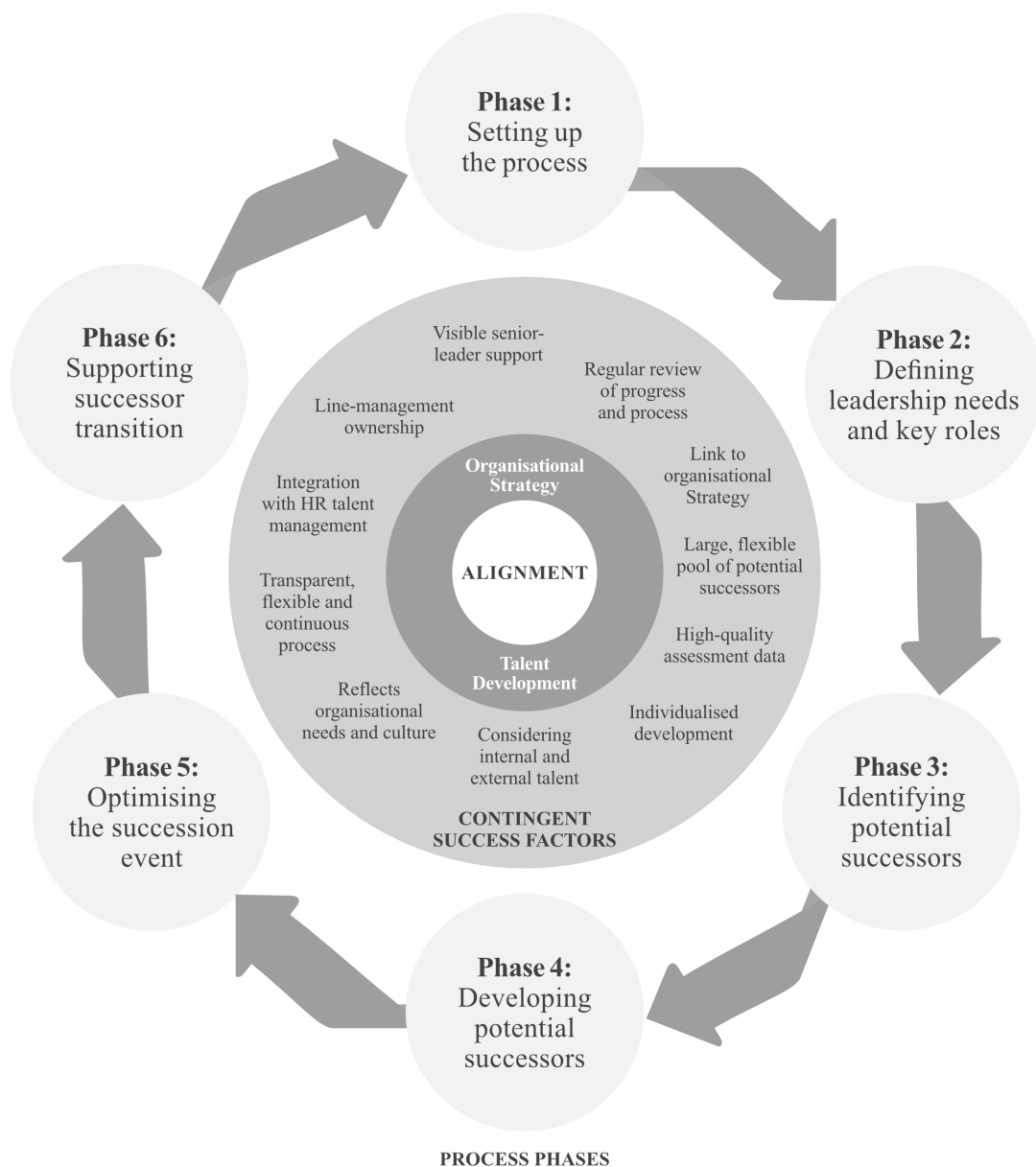


Figure 2.2: Integrated LSM Best-Practice Framework (Source: Author)

2.8 What is the opportunity to implement and expand on LSM practices?

The existing literature makes a compelling case in support of implementing LSM processes, yet a review of best practices does not explain the current Knowing-Doing Gap. An investigation of the literature suggests three key causes:

1. *Investigating LSM involves multiple disciplines and complexity*: Giambatista et al. (2005) comment that LSM is a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional construct, which has suffered from researchers often approaching it as a dichotomy, for example, in relation to “insider outsider succession” (p. 983). Making a similar argument, Cappelli (2011) comments that “the competencies needed to develop effective succession solutions come from quite different fields” (p. 675). Also, Giambatista et al. (2005) point to research emanating from different lenses, including sociology, social science, organisational behaviour, HR and strategy, and note the “fragmentation of the development of both theory and methodology” (p. 965) identified by previous scholars such as Kesner and Sebor (1994). Finally, another recent literature review espoused the requirement to consider LSM in an integrative way: Berns and Klarner (2017) consider CEO succession findings from the areas of “strategic management, corporate governance, strategic leadership, and organisational behaviour research” (p. 83), arguing that this complexity has hindered research progress, including the development and testing of theoretical models and the conducting of outcomes research. As stated by Giambatista et al. (2005), “scholars often seem to be artificially dichotomizing a very complex, and perhaps multidimensional construct” (p. 983).
2. *LSM has largely been considered from the perspective of the organisation*: Church et al. (2017) highlight that limited scholarly research has focused on senior leadership talent. Cappelli (2011) makes a similar point that most research on LSM and its corresponding practices is considered from the perspective of the organisation, in terms of optimising outcomes and generating value, and that it does not adopt the perspective of the candidates. The consequence is that organisations lack knowledge about how to implement LSM practices to address the needs of the individuals who are arguably at the centre of LSM. This normative approach of reflecting organizational practices rather than individual needs appears to explain part of the existing Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM. The present research addresses this by exploring more qualitative detail surrounding LSM practices, particularly as they are relevant to individuals.
3. *LSM research has focused on explicit rather than tacit and context-specific knowledge*: Much research about LSM outcomes and best-practice approaches has focused on explicit knowledge in the form of high-level generalised descriptions, which are sometimes inconsistent. This makes it difficult to understand how these

approaches are applied to reflect the unique context of organisations, groups and individuals. For example, a number of authors suggest that LSM best practice needs to involve forming a “large, flexible pool of potential successors” (Berns & Klarner 2017; Conger & Fulmer 2003; Groves, K. S. 2018; Karaevli & Hall 2003). Whereas it is helpful to know that it is generally better to consider a larger group, the literature does not describe in much detail what this involves, including the circumstances that make it advisable. It may be, for instance, that future succession events rely more on internal candidates, which makes their availability through development more critical. At the same time, there may be significant uncertainty regarding the organisation’s future needs, such that it is very difficult to identify development needs. Although not all of these complex factors can be captured through a codified model or approach, the existing LSM does not provide sufficient detail to understand some of the key differences in context. In addressing this challenge, the present research involves a focus on tacit knowledge, in that it is typically personal, context-specific and difficult to capture and describe (Brewer & Brewer 2010). It uses this perspective to inform the codified knowledge that exists in the form of the best-practice approaches to LSM identified in the scholarly literature. The rationale for this is grounded in the complexity of the phenomenon of succession management (Giambatista et al. 2005). The analytical process followed in this research provides two benefits: it conveys a more nuanced understanding of the practical aspects of LSM and it creates greater consistency in the existing tacit knowledge so that it can be applied more reliably in similar processes.

Addressing the above three aspects will provide an opportunity to materially narrow the identified Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM. First, considering the perspective of the individual rather than the organisation may provide further insights into implementing best-practice LSM processes. The present research considers the perspective of an individual who is a potential successor. Second, reflecting the complexity associated with LSM and considering diverse disciplines, particularly as they relate to the individual, will be valuable in making it possible to apply LSM in a wider variety of contexts. The current research considers various theories and applied knowledge emanating from social sciences and psychology, rather than from the more-specific LSM knowledge domain. Third, the present research considers the explicit as well as the tacit and context-specific knowledge to illuminate practical examples, which may be specific to the individual or more broadly applicable. The

research aims to draw the distinction between them and identify the extent to which aspects of LSM may be either individual or generalisable.

2.9 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a definition of LSM, explained key phases and activities and identified CSFs associated with best-practice LSM approaches. Major contributions to LSM best practice have been critically analysed as part of a comprehensive review of the LSM literature and summarised in an integrated framework. This framework represents one of the most complete descriptions of LSM best practice, as it aggregates a number of leading approaches, all of which, although similar, also appear to be missing one or more of the aspects of other contributions. They also use different terminology and ways of describing LSM processes and practices. The aggregation of various approaches provides additional rigour with respect to the various practices, akin to a qualitative meta-analysis. Finally, the identification of various CSFs provides the basis for further review and exploration as part of the case-study approach to the research.

This chapter has also set out why LSM is important. It includes evidence for the effectiveness of LSM approaches, LSM outcome studies and outcome-based research in leadership development, the last of which plays a central role in LSM. This data provides compelling support for the importance of LSM practice and leadership development within it. Finally, data considering the current status of LSM practices with large organisations indicates a significant gap between organisational leaders' knowledge of the importance of LSM and the extent to which such practices have been implemented. The LSM literature provides a number of suggestions for addressing this gap. The current research will explore the identified CSFs with potential successors who are participants in a group-wide leadership-development program. The following chapter sets out the research approach and methodology to demonstrate that sufficient rigour was applied in designing and implementing the research initiative.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter outlines the qualitative research methodology used to guide how research data was collected and analysed. The aim is to demonstrate the application of scientific rigour in designing the research, conducting the analysis and interpreting the results. The chapter is divided into two sections: the justification for the research methodology chosen to address the research questions, and the research design and procedures that were conducted to generate the findings. The chapter builds on the research background set out in Chapter 1: Research Context and Thesis Overview.

3.2 Justification for the selected paradigm and methodology

3.2.1 Factors relevant to selecting the research method

There are a number of considerations in selecting the appropriate research method to address the research questions set out in Section 1.7. These include: (a) availability of and access to data and participants; (b) the resources required in undertaking this work; (c) the time available compared to what is needed to adequately undertake the research; (d) the quality of available information, including its validity, reliability and generalisability; (e) potential ethical issues; and (f) the intended uses for, and users of, the research findings. The following sections set out the reasons for the chosen research methodology – a qualitative, interview-based case study – starting with the justification for the selected paradigm.

3.2.2 Ontology and epistemology

At the broadest level, the proposed research topic deals with leadership, essentially as a category or aspect of human behaviour, which, although it can be observed objectively, is relational to and subjectively perceived by other human beings (Aguinis 1993). As such, leadership can be argued to be largely a function of a socially constructed reality. It has also been described as a complex social phenomenon that cannot be fully captured quantitatively (Gloster 2000). Consequently, qualitative approaches play a critical role in leadership research and this supports the subjective ontology and epistemology of the present research.

In contrast, much of the existing research into LSM practices has been conducted from within a positivistic paradigm, using quantitative data and seeking to identify generalisable findings. For example, Huselid (1995) used a quantitative methodology to show the correlation between HR practices and a number of organisational performance measures as

part of a study to validate deliberate approaches to managing human capital, including leadership succession. In another example, Shen and Cannella Jr. (2003) considered the effect on stock prices of CEO successions that involve heir-apparent successors. They identified a positive correlation between the two, which is likely due to the heir-apparent appointment signalling a considered succession plan. Notwithstanding the importance of these and other studies, they are limited in their ability to demonstrate causation due to the multitude of factors affecting stock prices and financial-reporting outcomes, as well as the information asymmetry involved. To illustrate information symmetry, Shen and Cannella Jr.'s (2003) study needed to rely on announcements from the organisation, which do not provide any data on the quality of the succession plans for internal heir-apparent successors.

Although, clearly, quantitative studies such as Huselid and Becker's (1997) or Shen and Cannella's (2003) provide valuable insights regarding the importance of succession-management practices, they also rely on large data sets and statistical averages. In relation to LSM, however, it becomes critical to inform practices so that better knowledge can contribute to maximising positive LSM outcomes. For example, it may be unacceptable to organisations to incorporate approaches to LSM that are perceived as effective with only 70% or 80% of individuals. Therefore a much higher success rate needs to be targeted; a better understanding of the qualitative factors is key to this. Indeed, the existing literature on the topic acknowledges that this is in part what has been hindering progress (e.g. Barnett & Davis 2008; Lamoureux et al. 2009). To overcome this challenge, the literature recommends using ideographic approaches, which are more suitable where the focus needs to be on understanding the individual context, rather than nomothetic ones, which seek to identify generalisable rules. This addresses the criticisms made by Cappelli (2011) and Church et al. (2017) that research to date has lacked the lens of the individual. Hence, there is a compelling case to investigate the application of the LSM Framework from the participant's point of view. This implies the need for a qualitative research approach. Moreover, there are limitations to generating the large data sets required for any quantitative investigation of LSM best practices that involve tools such as standardised questionnaires exploring senior executives' attitudes toward and experiences of aspects of LSM. This represents a significant limitation because access to sufficient numbers of senior executives in large organisations is difficult to procure given most organisations' emphasis on profitability and the limited resources available, including the senior executives' time.

3.2.3 General approaches to qualitative research analysis

A wide variety of resources provide techniques for conducting qualitative research analysis in organisational contexts and leadership. (See for example, major contributions by Bryman et al. 1988; Burgess & Bryman 1999; Cassell & Symon 1994; Creswell 2013.; Denzin & Lincoln 1994)

In general terms, qualitative research approaches are used when a precise, contextualised understanding of the research topic is required (Yin 1994). For qualitative research to be valuable it needs to: (a) explore a phenomenon; (b) explain why it occurs; and (c) evaluate the benefits of applying the knowledge to other situations (Heron & Reason 1997). In this context, the value of the research lies not in confirming hypotheses or establishing general laws, but in producing empirical knowledge to inform and illuminate an important area of research to further scholars' and practitioners' understanding about how it has been applied in a specific situation. This can enable them to progress their understanding about what to research and how to work in other specific and unique situations. What makes this knowledge empirical is the substantial rigour involved in understanding how the findings were produced and, ideally, can be replicated by others. Any prior professional relationship the researcher may have had with the organisation and research participants has further implications on the types of research methodologies that can be considered. This is because of the inherent conflict and potential bias that would make it very difficult for the researcher to be objective in evaluating outcomes. Instead, the research approach relies on deriving deductions from empirical observations. This principle, which has been applied successfully in various action-research studies, frequently involves the same individual incorporating the role of consultant and researcher (Archer 2009; McGivern 1983) to form what Vangen and Huxham (2003, p. 63) term "practice oriented theory".

The following review sets out the key aspects underpinning the proposed research methodology and considers the use of a case-study approach to investigate the identified research gap.

3.2.4 Case-study research as a form of qualitative research

Yin's (2014) definition of a case study refers to "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly visible" (p. 2). Similarly, Meyer (2001) commented on the suitability of case-study design to investigate the "context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study" (p 329). Case studies have been used

in various domains, including investigating organisational knowledge in social sciences (e.g. Hartley 1994; Richards 2008a) and leadership (e.g. Blattner & Bacigalupo 2007; Bryman 2004; Heller 1989; Jantti & Greenhalgh 2011; Neumann 1995).

There appears to be a relative lack of uniform agreement on when to use case-study-based research in contrast to other qualitative research methodologies such as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967), ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994), phenomenology (Schutz 1967) or field research (Adler & Adler 1987). At the same time, the lack of uniformity of case-study research reflects its flexibility, similar to action-research approaches (Lewin 1997).

Flyvbjerg (2006) examined common misconceptions about qualitative case-study research and highlighted the need for examples to illuminate the practical aspects of a topic. He also emphasised the importance of case-study research to create context-dependent practical knowledge, arguing that this type of research is fundamental to helping individuals learn to apply such knowledge. Given that the intention of the research is to understand more-optimal uses of LSM practices, the methodology is consistent with this objective.

3.2.5 Case-study research in the context of studying leadership

Qualitative research on leadership has become increasingly popular during the last 20 years (Bryman 2004). This has arguably contributed to a change in the general perception of this type of research from having limited utility to making a much more significant and meaningful contribution. Conger and Kanungo (1998), for example, commented on the importance of using qualitative methods when studying leadership due to the complexity of human behaviour. Previous reviews investigating the different approaches used to study leadership suggest that about one-third of all studies rely solely on qualitative methods (Lowe & Gardner 2000).

Bryman and colleagues (1996) point to the importance of considering contextual factors when conducting research in relation to leadership. They set out different types of qualitative research designs for the study of leadership, including multiple case studies of individual leaders involving semi-structured interviews. They also highlight a benefit when conducting such research in a single organisation or similar organisations: it illuminates variations in leadership processes and impact. The value of this approach then clearly lies in its ability to draw out different contextual factors, but also to reveal how the same contingent factors are perceived and how they affect different leaders in a similar context. This allows the present research to consider, on the one hand, each Program participant as a single case

study, and on the other, the Program itself as a single case study of the different contextual factors.

Much of the qualitative case-study research in the literature focuses on leadership models, individual characteristics and the impact of behaviours. In contrast, the present research is focused on individual leader experiences and attitudes with respect to aspects relevant to succession outcomes. Bryman's (2004) review of qualitative studies of leadership identified interview-based research as the main approach: of the 66 studies he reviewed, more than 80% used this approach, with nearly half of those (25 of 55) relying solely on interview data. These included semi-structured, in-depth, unstructured and biographical interviewing. Where qualitative interviewing is not the only method, research data is often complemented with observation and a review of other ancillary information, such as supporting documentation. Consistent with these precedents, the present research primarily relies on semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 Program participants, but also considers ancillary information such as their feedback and development plans, as well as program materials. These provide some of the context relevant to their individual cases.

Bryman (2004) identified the unique ability of qualitative research to provide an understanding of the realities of leadership and the context in which it occurs, even though qualitative findings are generally more limited in their applicability than those derived from quantitative research approaches. In fact, he identifies qualitative research studies as essential in providing a better understanding of how leadership actually occurs because they make a meaningful and material contribution to the cumulative knowledge that illuminates the particular area of investigation. In the context of the present research, this is the area of leadership succession, and the research uniquely contributes through an exploration of the experience and attitudes of senior executive who participated in a leadership-development program.

3.2.6 Research framework for case-study-based research

The importance of a research framework for case-study-based research has been identified by Yin (2014) and emphasised in the context of organisational research, including by Hartley (1994), who stressed that a research framework is necessary to ensure meaningful analysis. Much of the case-study research involving interviews requires the development of a research framework to ensure that the investigation remains within appropriate boundaries (Meyer 2001). In the context of the present investigation, this was developed through the literature review and the analysis of recommended approaches to LSM, which have been synthesised to form the LSM Framework. In addressing the specific challenge of the impact of LSM

practices on senior executives, a part of the research framework is considered in combination with the CSFs that have been identified in the literature review as relevant to LSM outcomes.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual research framework serves to identify the elements of the phenomena being studied and how they relate to each other, and allows different constructs to be grouped and integrated. The conceptual research framework of the present study is closely related to the LSM Framework, which represents a practice framework. It constitutes a subsection of the LSM Framework because the Program only covered the initial stages of the LSM Framework, i.e. up to, but excluding, “Phase 4: Developing potential successors”. Despite this difference, which arguably represents a relevant limitation, the present research can provide a better understanding and refinement of relevant aspects of the LSM Framework, thus enhancing the value of the process for senior executives.

3.2.7 Single case study vs. multiple case studies

Even though it has been presented above that each research participant represents a single case study, ensuring rigour requires a closer consideration of whether the present research involves a single case study with 13 research participants or an amalgamation of 13 individual case studies. Whether it is one or the other, the key requirement for a valid research methodology is to have sufficient representation to allow comparison, and thus to allow theoretical inferences being drawn in turn (Eisenhardt 1989).

Baxter and Jack (2008), for instance, point to the environment as an important variable affecting the choice of single or multiple cases. They suggest that it is relevant whether the environment is unique or close enough to other environments to allow inferences or generalisations. The relevant environment within which the research was conducted is the Program conducted within the Sponsor Organisation. It is representative of other large, complex, multi-national organisations’ succession-focused leadership development programs, given that it closely followed key phases of the LSM Framework. Therefore it can be stated that the research environment is representative of other environments in the context of implementing a best-practice succession-management approach. It follows that it is more appropriate to consider each Program participant as a single case study.

At the same time, given that the research participants were employed by different business units and in different geographic locations, they were likely to experience material differences with respect to their environments. Although this does not detract from the argument that the research is considering multiple case studies, it is also appropriate to say

that the Program represents a single, holistic case study, which considers CSFs across 13 sub-units. The present research essentially provides for both, based on the need to be able to infer insights into better theory and practice. Furthermore, because it is not a choice of “either-or”, the methodology justification is arguably strengthened by virtue of this dual approach.

3.2.8 Case-study research in combination with grounded-theory approaches

An important aspect of the research framework pertains to exploring additional CSFs, which requires a degree of neutrality and open-mindedness in combination with a “manual” review. This is akin to using a modified grounded research approach (Strauss & Corbin 1990) whereby an evidence-based framework has been utilised to make sense of the emerging data to adapt and revise the theory. Specifically, it involves the researcher analysing the interview transcripts and designating statements as “topics” or “variables”; this included those identified through the literature review but also considered additional factors and variables that arose as a result of the discussion. Buchanan and Jones (2010) referred to a similar approach, which synthesised grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) and case-study research (Yin 1994).

Grounded theory is an inductive theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data (Martin & Turner 1986). According to Buchanan and Jones (2010), grounded theory provides a detailed, rigorous and systematic method of analysis, which has the advantage of reserving the need for the researcher to conceive preliminary hypotheses, thus providing greater freedom to explore the research area and allow issues to emerge (Bryant 2002; Glaser 1998, 2001).

A blended approach does not require a pure application of grounded theory, which would otherwise suggest that the researcher conducts the data collection without significant prior knowledge. Apart from the fact, as argued by Goulding (2005), that no researcher conducts such research without any prior knowledge or experience, prior subject knowledge does not preclude the researcher from identifying previously unknown issues. It therefore represents a reliable method for providing insight to phenomena about which not enough is known. The approach is reflected in the present research to identify additional CSFs that are relevant to the research participants’ individual experiences and attitudes. This is done to address the gap identified by Cappelli (2011) that research should reflect the individual’s perspective on LSM practice more than the organisation’s.

3.2.9 Overview of case-study-based research interviews

The use of multiple semi-structured interviews has become more popular as a research approach in connection with a single case study (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Bensimon 1989; Birnbaum 1990; Brown & Gioia 2002; Dillon 2001; Gaines 1993; Rantz 2002; Statham 1987; Tierney 1989), as have the use of qualitative interviews as part of multiple case studies (Alexander 2001; Bogotch et al. 1995; Bryman et al. 1988; Card 1997; Feyerherm 1994; Kekale 1999; Neumann 1992; Neumann 1995; Parry 1998) and the explicit use of interview transcripts as a primary source for analysis (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Knights & Hugh 1992; Rigano & Ritchie 2003).

Many case-study approaches rely on multiple sources of data, which Baxter and Jack (2008) argue enhance data credibility. At the same time, the authors acknowledge that multiple sources of data carry the risk of flooding the research process. The present study relies primarily on semi-structured interviews in addition to secondary data in the form of research-participant feedback and development plans and Program materials. Interviews have been transcribed verbatim by the researcher to preserve authenticity and meaning (Halcomb & Davidson 2006). In addressing the issue of generating the right balance of data – not too little to lack rigour and insight, and not so much as to flood the research process – one helpful indicator of striking the right balance is the extent of saturation that is experienced in identifying variables and findings, as discussed below.

3.2.10 Combining the use of manual and software-based analysis

Yin's (2014) six techniques for analysis – pattern-matching, linking data to propositions, explanation-building, time-series analysis, logic models and cross-case synthesis – have been considered in the analysis of interview data. The approach to analysis also reflects Stake's (1995) suggestion of categorical aggregation and direct interpretation in a two-stage process that includes an initial manual review of transcripts with a subsequent analysis using qualitative data analysis software (QDAS).

A number of influential researchers have critically engaged with the use of software-based approaches to content analysis, concluding that they can provide compelling benefits to qualitative research processes (Berg & Lune 2012; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Miles & Huberman 1994; Morse & Richards 2002; Patton 2015; Silverman 2001). At the same time, the use of QDAS has attracted some criticism, including the risk of abstraction, manipulation and over-coding (Blismas & Dainty 2003), and of distancing the researcher from the data (Welsh 2002), which can all detract from the effective interpretation and accuracy of the

research process. The benefits of using QDAS, particularly when using sophisticated software programs (Crowley et al. 2002) are generally accepted to outweigh these challenges. In fact, dedicated QDAS programs have been argued to enable more rigorous, comprehensive and accurate, yet flexible and fast, approaches to data analysis (DeNardo & Lever 2002). They provide benefits that would not be possible with manual ways of analysing qualitative data, including the gradual addition and dynamic editing of information. The use of QDAS provides the opportunity not just to retrieve and code data, but also to build theory by establishing relationships between categories and items, defining hierarchical levels of categories and developing and testing hypotheses (DeNardo & Lever 2002).

3.2.11 Validity of the chosen research methodology

Druckman (2000) has discussed research in the context of consulting work as part of a major issue: while research in commercial settings often provides the best opportunity to ensure that practical implications are considered, it sometimes lacks theoretical rigour. The potential lack of objectivity or bias is a valid concern in the present research, given the role of the researcher who was also an external consultant leading the Program. King (1994), however, states that qualitative research does not require the researcher to strive for objectivity if the purpose is to inform. The present research fits this criterion because it relies on describing research participants' responses with respect to their attitudes and experiences to inform LSM theory and practice.

Conducting research that informs does not imply that subjectivity cannot adversely affect the research process and outcomes. Inherent challenges exist in connection with qualitative case-study research, including the potentially adverse impact of bias as well as limitations inherent in the research design and methodology. Other authors have identified potential techniques that mitigate these challenges, including a third-party review of the interview script (Chenail 2011), awareness and disclosure of potential conflicts of interest (Mecca et al. 2015) and, more generally, the researcher's awareness of their own biases (Miles & Huberman 1994; Smythe & Giddings 2007). The risk of bias has been mitigated in the present research through regular self-reflection, transparency regarding the dual role and supervision by two senior academics. In light of these measures, and to further examine the validity of the research, the context and choice of research methodology warrant a brief examination of its generalisability, predictive ability, reliability and saturation.

Theoretical generalisability: Theoretical generalisability refers to the ability of theory to be applied to other, similar situations (Maxwell 1992). Theoretical generalisability is relevant to the present study in evaluating the extent to which CSFs are found to affect the attitudes and

experience of Program participants in similar ways – positively, negatively or neutrally. At the same time, it is also relevant to better understand the extent to which such variables are associated with individual differences and unique contexts. Although the present research can support theoretical generalisability by using multiple case studies (Leonard-Barton 1990) it is also limited in a number of ways. First, the study does not seek to evaluate the efficacy of the initiative implemented in the Sponsor Organisation, including whether the identified leadership behaviours lead to sustained improvements in organisational performance and succession outcomes. Second, Program participants were recruited from a single organisation and therefore a particular context; however, this limitation was somewhat mitigated by the fact that research participants came from different subsidiaries and geographic locations. Ultimately, generalisability is not a relevant objective of the research as there can be value in studying the phenomenon of LSM in the context of there being a lack of extensive knowledge (Cikaliuk et al. 2018).

Predictive ability: Predictive ability is generally considered to be of limited relevance in relation to investigating human behaviour through qualitative case-study research. For instance, Flyvberg (2006, p. 7) explored this issue and concluded that “predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals”. Notwithstanding that generalisability is considered an irrelevant objective, Giddens (1986) suggested that where multiple cases are combined into a single study, as in the present research, this provides a basis for overcoming limited predictive ability and generalisability. Accordingly, the primary focus of the present research is to inform theory and practice through illumination of individual executives’ attitudes and experiences relating to LSM, rather than to predict cause and effect in the relationship between CSFs and Program participants’ experiences. At the same time, the research is intended to inform the application of the LSM Framework in other contexts, which requires that the best-practice LSM knowledge have some predictive power. Where additional CSFs that may inform LSM-practice are considered with respect to the attitudes and experiences of senior leaders, limited predictive ability can be addressed by considering established theories.

Reliability: Reliability describes the extent to which findings are stable over time. In the context of qualitative research, Sykes (1990) stated that this involves either two researchers producing similar findings in the same context or the same researcher producing similar findings in different contexts. Given that the present research is investigating the subjective experiences and attitudes of Program participants who are senior executives in a large,

complex organisation, reliability is produced through exploring similarities and differences amongst different contexts; in the present study, different research participants rather than different organisations. This represents an important benefit of the present research, as it effectively holds one of the relevant variables, the organisation, constant. In this respect it needs to be noted that even though the research participants were part of the same group, they were, in fact, executives of different subsidiaries and worked in different environments. Given the nature of the research and the similarities in the senior executives' priorities and tasks, it is apparent that findings generated in this organisational context are relevant to the contexts of other similar-sized organisations, including in different industries and geographies.

Saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that the concept of saturation is important in the context of multiple case study research as it provides some measure of whether a sufficient number of cases have been included to show that the topic being examined is sufficiently explored. At the same time, the applicability of saturation as an indicator of research quality has been criticised because its original notion in grounded research does not translate into case-study research, in which qualitative factors can vary significantly depending on the overall research objective (O'Reilly & Parker 2013). In relation to the present research, saturation is relevant with respect to the initial manual analysis of the research interviews, which seeks to identify the themes emanating from the conversations in addition to the CSFs.

3.3 Research design and procedures

Components of the research design and procedures, which were identified by Baxter and Jack (2008) on the basis of work by Yin (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994), include (a) propositions or issues, (b) the application of a conceptual framework, (c) the development of research questions, (d) the logical linking of data to propositions and (e) criteria for interpreting the findings. In this context, Meyer (2001, p. 332) highlights the importance of deliberate choices in designing particular case-study research. In her research on organisational mergers, she identified choices with respect to “(1) the selection of cases; (2) sampling time; (3) choosing business areas, divisions, and sites; and (4) selection of and choices regarding data collection procedures, interviews, documents, and observation”. In line with these elements, the following sections set out how the interview-based case-study research was approached and conducted. This follows on from the introduction in Chapter 1, particularly Figure 1.2, and the discussion above, which sets out relevant requirements for

interview-based case-study research. The procedures also reflect the unique context of the research in line with accepted qualitative case-study research.

3.3.1 Research sequence and data sources

The research investigated two key areas by accessing distinct data sources. First, it explored the descriptive part of the Sponsor Organisation's LSM Program by reviewing Program materials, including interview notes, reports and communication. Second, it investigated the CSFs identified in Section 2.6.2 as contingent factors relevant to the implementation of an LSM program.

As shown in Figure 3.1, this research project, including data collection and analysis, spanned 36 months:

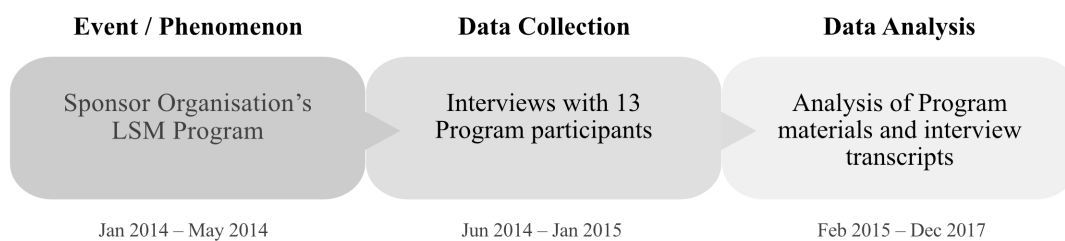


Figure 3.1: Sequence and timing of research activities (Source: Author)

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

Participant recruitment commenced on June 18, 2014 with an email from the CHRO of the Sponsor Organisation to 17 of the Program participants. This email set out the background and intentions of the research and invited participation, stressing the voluntary and confidential nature of involvement. This email was complemented with a second email from the present researcher on the same day to allow potential research participants to respond directly and to perceive that the Sponsor Organisation would not be involved in gathering the research data. (Appendix 3.1 contains the text of both emails.) Initially, 12 people responded directly to the present researcher indicating their willingness to participate in the research. One additional person indicated their willingness at a later stage (in January 2015). (Given the significant delay between the time of completing the Program in June 2014 and scheduling the interview, it was carefully considered whether the interview data would be negatively affected and whether this risked disrupting a consistent approach to collecting data. After a review, it was decided to include this additional research participant, given that their responses did not appear to have been affected by the delay and that the data was collected in a manner consistent with that from the other research participants.)

3.3.3 Research instruments and data collection

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to explore each of the CSFs identified in the scholarly literature in relation to LSM best-practice approaches. This interview guide corresponds with the key phases of the LSM Framework and the CSFs. Data was collected using the interview guide through a combination of telephone and face-to-face interviews. A de-identified version is included in Appendix 4. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher to preserve meaning and context. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the timing, mode and duration of the interviews.

Table 3.1: Summary overview of interviews

Participant	Date of interview	Mode	Duration
1	15-Jul-14	Face-to-face	01:27:56
2	18-Jul-14	Telephone	02:12:56
3	18-Jul-14	Telephone	01:14:37
4	24-Jul-14	Telephone	01:15:33
5	21-Aug-14	Face-to-face	01:02:28
6	21-Aug-14	Telephone	01:20:20
7	22-Aug-14	Telephone	01:08:56
8	25-Aug-14	Face-to-face	01:21:24
9	02-Sep-14	Telephone	01:05:47
10	04-Sep-14	Telephone	01:07:20
11	10-Sep-14	Face-to-face	01:11:14
12	18-Sep-14	Telephone	00:50:30
13	16-Feb-15	Telephone	01:21:44

Source: Author

3.3.4 Interview-data coding

Manual coding existing as well as additional CSFs: Sykes (1990) highlights a key advantage of interview-based qualitative case-study research in that enables the researcher to engage with flexibility and responsiveness. This is particularly relevant as it allows criteria to be amended throughout the research process. Bryman and Stephens (1996), for example, demonstrated this in their research on leadership styles. This suggests approaching the analysis with two aspects in mind: evaluating each research participant's case study with respect to the CSFs underlying the LSM Framework, and identifying additional CSFs relevant to the attitudes and experience of individual Program participants. This essentially represents double coding, which has been found to enhance the rigour of the research process (Krefting 1991). It also addresses a potential limitation arising out of the identification of pre-conceived list of CSFs from the literature review given the extent to which they may provide contextually rich data relevant to the research questions.

Combining manual and computerised approaches: Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested two methods for coding, which were combined in the present research. The first involves an inductive approach in the form of a manual review of each interview – in other words, a process of reading transcripts and allocating topics to individual textual segments in such a way that they retain their full contextual meaning (Jones 2007). These include topics identified with question topics as well as additional ones. In the present study, the process resulted in additional categories beyond those associated with CSFs, and had the added benefit of allowing the researcher to become more familiar with the data.

The second method involves the use of a computerised approach to coding individual interviews using the categories identified through the first, manual method. In the present research, a review of available options for qualitative data analysis software programs, including Atlas.Ti (Hwang 2008), HyperRESEARCH (Alexa & Zuell 2000) and Maxqda (Oliveira et al. 2016), nVivo was chosen because of its advanced ways of coding and conceptualising as well as its data-management functions.

3.4 Ethical considerations

The paramount ethical consideration of research is the objective of “no harm” to research participants, including all physical and psychological aspects. The approach involved full disclosure to research participants about the type of data collected about them and how it would be used so that they could consent with full knowledge of the facts. To ensure that research participants were briefed in a consistent and comprehensive manner, a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Participant Consent Form (PCF) were developed. (De-identified versions of the PIS and PCF are included as Appendices 1 and 2, respectively.) The material and other relevant aspects of the research, such as confidentiality, informed consent and independence, were presented to the University’s Research Ethics Committee, which approved the study on 10 June 2014.

All interviews were subject to strict confidentiality, with data de-identified at the corporate and individual level so that there would be no risk of data being used by third parties to the detriment of the individual or the Sponsor Organisation. Individual performance and feedback data and details of discussions pertaining to personal issues did not need to be captured in detail for any part of the study because of the descriptive nature of the research. To achieve the research aims, it was sufficient to describe in general terms when and how these types of discussions unfolded throughout the process and to provide examples to demonstrate what types of content were typically captured as part of the LSM process.

A relevant aspect of the ethical considerations is any perceived conflict of interest of the researcher, who could have an incentive to demonstrate a positive impact of the Program that is being implemented within the Sponsor Organisation. This is avoided in the present research because it does not seek to evaluate the outcomes of the Program, instead primarily focusing on the description of a process that is consistent with existing approaches identified in the LSM research literature. Participants were not in a dependant relationship with the researcher, as the research was conducted following completion of the Program. The PIS and PCF explicitly state that each research participant can withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time, and that a decision to participate is voluntary and will not have any positive or negative consequences. Furthermore, the change of management control and subsequent shutting down of all existing Program activities provided further assurance that relationships and data became less relevant at the time of inviting Program participants into the study and conducting the interviews.

3.5 Chapter conclusion

This chapter describes the approach and methods used to conduct the research. It demonstrates that the research questions could be best addressed through interview-based qualitative case study research, given the need for greater empirical knowledge of how LSM processes are implemented, in particular with respect to the Program participants' attitudes and experiences. The selected approach, methodology and design are well accepted in qualitative research and have been demonstrated as suitable, particularly in the context of research on leadership, to which the particular form of succession management relates. Whereas available approaches to qualitative research often recommend accessing multiple sources of data and a representative sample from which to recruit participants, the present research does not require this, as it seeks to inform about detail rather than provide a basis for generalisation. The existing scholarly literature focusing on case-study-based qualitative research suggests the use of content analysis, which has been applied manually and in the form of computer-based content analysis using nVivo software. Rather than aiming to explain universal causal relationships and provide predictive abilities, which could be considered as one of a number of limitations of the present research, findings are intended to provide rigorous knowledge that informs future research to provide better theory, better knowledge, a better process and better outcomes in relation to LSM.

Chapter 4: Participant Case Vignettes

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter investigates the CSFs identified in the LSM scholarly literature as they relate to each research participant. The perspective of each research participant is presented in the form of a “case vignette”: a brief characterisation of each research participant’s background, context and interview responses (Barclay & Stoltz 2016; Lewis 2015). The purpose of describing these case vignettes is to understand how key issues relevant to each research participant may inform LSM practice and theory.

4.2 Research participants’ case vignettes

Each case vignette has been de-identified to protect anonymity in accordance with the agreed research protocol and ethical guidelines. Each section includes each research participant’s development priorities and key implications as they are broadly relevant to the CSFs. CSFs have been aligned with interview responses to reflect the interview questions and, given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the natural flow of the conversation. The following headings capture the interview responses for each research participant: (a) Participant program expectations; (b) Understanding of potential and succession; (c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings; (d) Follow-up and impact of disruption; and (e) Other success factors. The heading “Other success factors” captures interview responses relevant to the CSFs that have not been covered under the other headings. Examples include the role and support of senior leaders, the Program supporting a research participant’s role priorities and the organisational culture.

Evaluation ratings: Performance data about each research participant was not consistently available, and therefore has not been included. However, to provide additional context, performance as it relates to the Program’s assessment of each research participant with respect to the eight leadership capabilities has been included as an evaluation rating, which is expressed in a simplified and aggregated way as “low”, “medium” or “high”, rather than the 1-5 rating the Program used for each capability. Specifically, aggregate average scores above 4.5 are expressed as “high”, scores from 4 to 4.5 as “medium to high”, scores from 3 to 4 as “medium”, scores from 2.5 to 3 as “low to medium” and scores below 2.5 as “low”.

Where research participants sit in the organisational hierarchy: To provide insight into where the 13 research participants are positioned in the organisational structure, Figure 4.1 shows the hierarchy of roles associated with each of them.

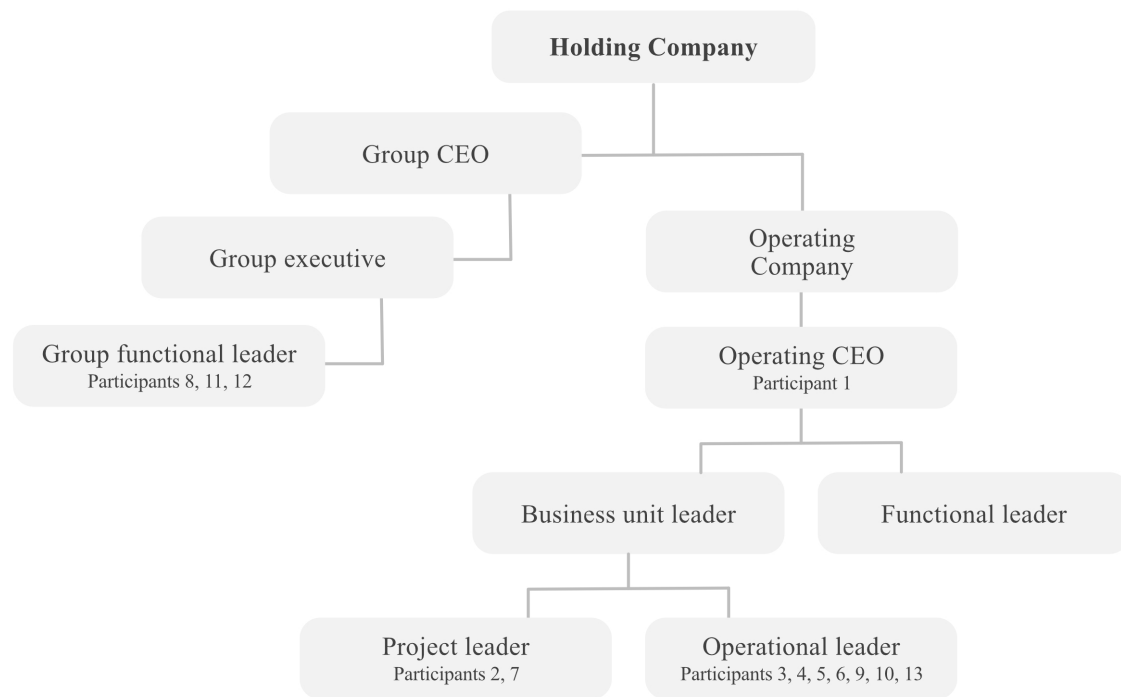


Figure 4.1: Research participants’ places within the hierarchy of the Sponsor Organisation (Source: Author)

Participant demographics: Table 4.1 provides a summary of key demographic data for the research participants:

Table 4.1: Summary of research participants’ available demographic and organisational background data

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Current role	Tenure	Location	Manager	Evaluation
1	59	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operating CEO	9 months	Sydney	Group CEO	Medium to high
2	51	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Project leader	1 year	Perth	Business unit leader	Medium to high
3	48	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	20 years	Perth	Business unit leader	Low
4	38	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	12 years	Hong Kong	Business unit leader	Medium
5	41	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	7 years	Perth	Business unit leader	Medium to high
6	48	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	12 years	Sydney	Business unit leader	Low to medium
7	43	Male	European	Project leader	8 years	Darwin	Business unit leader	Medium to high
8	52	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Group function leader	5 years	Sydney	Group executive	Medium
9	41	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	7 years	Sydney	Business unit leader	Low to medium
10	38	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leaders	3 years	Hong Kong	Business unit leader	Medium
11	42	Female	Anglo-Saxon	Group function leader	4 months	Sydney	Group executive	Medium to high
12	39	Male	European	Group function leader	1 year	Sydney	Group executive	Medium
13	43	Male	Anglo-Saxon	Operations leader	11 years	Sydney	Business unit leader	Low to medium

Source: Author

As the table shows, there is a distinct lack of diversity amongst the research participants. There is only one female and the ethnicity is nearly exclusively Anglo-Saxon. This is not unusual in the construction-engineering industry within which the Sponsor Organisation operates. At the same time, this arguably represents a limitation of the study (as discussed in Section 7.2).

4.2.1 Participant 1 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 1 is the managing director of an operating company that arranges leasing and equipment finance for construction projects. He has spent most of his career in financial services, previously in managerial roles and as a principal and shareholder of a finance conglomerate that collapsed as a result of the global financial crisis in 2009. His current role involves overseeing the financing of \$1bn of construction and mining equipment, which is typically leased to another of the Group's operating companies. The role reports directly to the Group CEO and oversees about 80 staff.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 1's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 1's expectations for the Program were non-specific. Given his age and career status, he was surprised to be included in an organisation-wide, high-profile senior leader development program. Notably, he reported, that he had not been part of any other leadership-development program in his entire 40-year career, and therefore had no basis for comparison. He commented that the 360-degree feedback component was "*very different*" to other experiences. He did not consider Program confidentiality to be an issue because feedback was communicated in a constructive way by a skilled and experienced external consultant. His comments indicated a degree of perceived safety. The Program was communicated clearly through the HR Program leader and the leadership capabilities were "*second nature*" and "*not unexpected*" to Participant 1. He did not comment on the link of the Program to group strategy even though this was one of the intended key Program messages.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 1 stated that he had no knowledge of how senior-leader succession was typically managed in organisations. He did, however, make the link between the data generated as part of the Program and the organisation's improved ability to support succession by being able to select internal candidates. He indicated that the Program provided useful insight as to how the succession-

development process works, as well as insight with respect to his own potential to take on a more senior role.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: For Participant 1 the 360-degree feedback was a unique and valuable experience, which he described as *“very cathartic and very humbling”*. He saw the 360-degree feedback as an opportunity to *“understand weaknesses and improve”* via the opportunity to *“drill down, through commentary, around certain things which you would never get from a clinical form-filling exercise”*. Additionally, he viewed it as an opportunity to support existing stakeholder relationships.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 1 stated that he was highly motivated to benefit from the Program, particularly by implementing board feedback to *“improve yourself personally”*. He identified that linking development objectives with an executive’s performance contract was also a positive way of promoting timely follow-up on development initiatives. In response to questions about what actually occurred in follow-up to the Program, he reported *“deliberately trying to work on my weaknesses”*, including *“becoming a lot more assertive around my beliefs and feelings”*. He also felt frustrated that the Program did not have any official follow up, stating, *“Now I have this wonderful report and it’s probably only going to be seen by the [CHRO name] and [L&D Manager name].... I’ve lost the opportunity to have the benefit of that process.”*

In light of the disruption and future uncertainty caused by the change of management control, Participant 1 also commented on his willingness to share his feedback and development report with potential employers. This implies that he considered himself to be conveyed positively in the report.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 1 explicitly referred to the Group CEO and Group CFO as being *“great stalwarts of the Program”* and pointed to the need to have *“buy-in from the senior executives”* for a Program to be taken seriously. He was not aware that 74 other leaders had participated in the Program previously. He believed that the Program was able to achieve something *“at the corporate level”*. He also commented on the importance of developing future leadership talent to support the unique culture of the organisation, and said that this would be difficult to achieve through hiring externally. Finally, he noted that the Program would have significant recruitment cost savings given the greater capacity to access internal leadership talent.

Participant 1 noted that a valuable element of the Program was its flexibility; the ability to incorporate a variety of activities to support his development process. The skills of the

consultant were also relevant to how useful the Program was to him. For example, the Program was deemed valuable because of the consultant's ability to deliver feedback in an engaging and constructive way.

Key insights from the interview: The interview responses of Participant 1 suggest that he had no particular expectations from the Program. Part of what determined the impact for him was a function of the Program representing a high-profile initiative and the ability to consider future career ambitions. Key factors that contributed to the Program's success included senior leaders' support and the consultant's ability to work flexibly with Participant 1 to personalise the development approach.

4.2.2 Participant 2 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 2 is a Project Leader with 31 years' experience in the construction industry. He left school at the age of 15, qualifying as an engineer with the armed forces and completing a master's degree in engineering at the age of 24. After reaching a ceiling as a chief engineer, he moved to general project- and business-management roles, and completed an MBA at the age of 41. Prior to his current role, Participant 2 was managing director of a large UK engineering firm, reporting to the Group CEO. In his current role, he reports to the Business Unit Leader and is in charge of one of the largest and most significant projects of the entire Sponsor Organisation, a \$1.4bn port-construction project.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises the interview responses of Participant 2, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 2 recalled his initial reaction to being invited to the Program as being hesitant because of the demands placed on his role and how these conflict with having sufficient capacity to engage in the Program. In this regard, he commented that it was a positive that the Program required a relatively few number of hours of participants' time as part of their formal interactions. He stated that he expected to be able to benefit from gaining a broader understanding of the Sponsor Organisation given he had only joined 12 months earlier. He recognised that ultimate ownership of the Program rested with the Group CEO but pointed to the importance of the direct line manager being supportive by prioritising a development initiative.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 2 commented that every individual, no matter how successful, had an opportunity to learn and develop. He recognised that the Program helped with creating greater transparency of strengths and weaknesses. He also commented on his understanding of succession management, pointing out that the

importance of preparing individuals to acquire the skills needed for a successful promotion is frequently misunderstood.

His commentary on succession also highlighted the challenge of reliably evaluating an individual's gaps, and noted that succession-focused leadership-development programs provide an opportunity to mitigate risk by gaining a better understanding of potential future successors. He associated succession development with more reliably driving business results because of the dynamic of more frequently refreshing senior roles.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 2 highlighted the value of 360-degree feedback interviews providing different perspectives in an engaging way. Conversations provide an opportunity to raise a broad range of issues that are relevant to the relationship and business outcomes. At the same time, he commented on the risk that feedback data can be ignored or glossed over.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 2 stated that he expected follow-up to involve some type of low-intensity mentoring or coaching support that would help him reflect and clarify priorities and opportunities. He recognised that motivation relies on intrinsic rather than extrinsic factors, particularly what individuals "*aspire to*" and the associated "*self-motivated drive*". He perceived the disruption to the Program because of the change of management control as an "*effective foreclosure*" that "*curtailed the experience*" of the Program.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 2 highlighted the challenges of integrating development KPIs into a performance contract because they can be manipulated. However, he characterised the link between the investment in leadership development and organisational performance as a "*win-win*" between the benefits for each individual and support for "*all-changing organisational improvement*". He considered ownership and accountability for follow-up to rely on the direct manager, while the overall success of a leadership-development program would benefit from the involvement and visibility of the most senior HR executive as well as the direct manager.

Participant 2 stated that the Program was not communicated openly as being linked to succession. Based on his experience, he considered being transparent about succession as negative because of the risk of losing valued leadership talent that had missed out on being promoted. He expressed a similar view with respect to having a large pool of potential successors, which he considered as "*creating a risk of politics*". He commented on the fact that the Program offered an individualised approach, and that this worked well in light of the

challenging demands of a senior executive. He commented very positively on the flexibility that the Program was able to provide, particularly its individualised approach relevant to current role priorities.

Key insights from the interview: Participant 2 demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of leadership development and what is required for this type of initiative to add value. Furthermore, he demonstrated a positive, growth-focused mindset in how he engaged with his development on the basis that this represented important role modelling for others and benefited the organisational culture. His responses indicated that he recognised some trade-off or conflict between leadership development and fulfilling the demands and priorities of a specific role. There was also some insight that the Program was an opportunity for self-promotion, which did not sit comfortably with Participant 2. This was despite a strong recognition of the value that development initiatives bring to the organisation, including improving performance and supporting smooth transitions at senior-leader levels. This case demonstrates that the way the Program was set up provides an opportunity to address individual needs, including those of someone who is new to a senior project role.

4.2.3 Participant 3 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 3 had just been appointed to an operational general manager role within a geographically focused business unit. This represented a promotion and followed six months in an acting capacity. Participant 3 left university prior to completing his degree and commenced his career as a cadet for a contracting organisation. He obtained a trade-specific qualification at a later stage. After joining one of the Sponsor Organisation's operating companies some 20 years ago, Participant 3's career progressed steadily through a variety of increasingly large and complex construction projects. His current role represents a substantial step up in responsibility and complexity within the context of being new in the role, significant organisational disruption and challenging market conditions.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises the interview responses of Participant 3, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 3 stated that he felt "*happy*" to get invited to the Program given that he was new in the role, and that he was "*enthusiastic and willing to make the most of it*". He commented that he hoped to benefit by identifying development areas that would contribute to him being successful in his current role. He explained that he had never had the opportunity to be part of a leadership-development program and that he had not experienced "*going into something new*" for the last 20 years of his

career. He expressed that he had clarity regarding the rationale of the Program and the fact that capabilities were supporting effectiveness at the senior-leader level. He stated that he was not concerned with the confidentiality aspects of the Program, including the evaluation data that was generated about him.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 3 expressed an intuitive understanding of his leadership potential, which he linked to the importance of *“making the best of opportunities that can provide learning”*. He did not make any statements about his own potential beyond the current role, but commented that the feedback provided him with confidence that he has the *“potential and capability to fulfil the role successfully”*. With respect to others, he commented that the concept of potential is vital for individuals to be able to positively engage with an environment where role changes are much more frequent.

Participant 3 commented that an indication of an individual’s potential for a more senior role should be part of regular performance-review discussions. Even though succession was not an immediate priority, his commentary suggested his support for developing potential successors for his role.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 3 explained that he had never previously experienced 360-degree feedback and would have preferred more detail than the *“snapshot of key issues”* that was actually provided. He stated that he experienced the 360-degree feedback component as *“refreshing”*, providing new insights as well as confirming aspects he was already aware of. He highlighted that the 360-degree feedback had the impact of providing greater confidence in his leadership ability, which he linked to future leadership potential, stating, *“Progressive feedback that I get from people is giving me more confidence that I do have the potential and the capability to fulfil the role successfully.”*

Participant 3 confirmed that he was using the report to work on his development priorities, which implies that he considered the findings of the report as valid and useful.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 3 commented that he equated follow-up with improving his chances to succeed in the role, and therefore was highly motivated to follow up, including through separate coaching support. It is noteworthy that he did not explicitly refer to the discontinuation as a major negative event, instead stating that he *“would not personally have any issues with any of the proposed areas of development being set as part of my plan and being measured against that”*.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 3 commented that he perceived the Program to have been sponsored by the Sponsor Organisation's senior leaders, and that this was consistent with its "*approach to doing business*". He mentioned that there have been "*various programmes throughout my life at*" the Sponsor Organisation even though he hadn't participated in any. With respect to the rationale of the Program, he stated that "*the capabilities are different to those I have been used to being measured against in the past*" and that he associated this with "*being reflective of senior leadership requirement*". He considered that "*it is probably fundamental that organisations have programmes that identify potential leaders to help it steer in the right direction*".

Participant 3 did not consider that the Program was visible in the organisation to anyone beyond the participants, and commented on the potential downside in creating inequality between Program participants and employees who had not been recognised as talent. He also identified the risk of competitors becoming aware of the highest-performing employees, who might then be targeted for recruitment. He highlighted that the Program could be flexible in considering his individual circumstances, which he described "*as a bit of a fork in the road as far as my career was concerned*". He commented that the ability of the consultant to have that conversation effectively was an important factor in creating a positive impact for him.

Key insights from the interview: The case vignette represents a useful characterisation of a mid- to senior-level manager and how a succession-focused leadership-development program can be useful to that individual. Participant 3 clearly considered the Program to represent an opportunity for personal and professional development as well as supporting success in his current role. The Program appeared to have tapped into his values and strong intrinsic motivation to want to make the best of the opportunity, which he demonstrated by using external coaching support to implement his development plan. Whilst Participant 3 demonstrated little sophisticated knowledge or expertise with respect to talent management and succession (which is not unusual for a more junior leader), his underlying values seemed to energise him to support this initiative and take responsibility for his own development.

4.2.4 Participant 4 case vignette

Personal background and context: Originally from the UK, Participant 4 is an operations manager in one of the international operating subsidiaries of the Sponsor Organisation. He has approximately 24 years' industry experience, his career commencing in quantity surveying, which was part of his employer-sponsored studies. His responsibilities now include primary carriage of a number of large infrastructure projects. Prior to his current role, he was involved in turnaround projects as well as being in charge of pre-contracts, in which he developed a

strong track record in bidding and winning construction projects ranging between \$0.5 and 1.9bn. He appeared highly committed, ambitious and successful, and very focused on ensuring that the evaluation data reflected positively on him.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 4's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 4 explained that his inclusion in the Program was complicated by mixed messages regarding his involvement at the outset. His positive expectations were informed by being a participant in prior leadership-development programs. Confidentiality of discussion content was important to him, and therefore he preferred an independent and external consultant to someone internal. He commented on the "*excellent*" communication that explained the purpose and activities of the Program. He recognised the focus on target leadership capabilities as being "*highly relevant*" and "*very useful*", but not to the extent that it demonstrated a clear link to specific Group strategic priorities. Overall, he considered the Program as being "*very relevant*" to the Sponsor Organisation.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 4 considered that the Program expanded his leadership potential, but also stated that future promotions rely on strong performance. He stated that ensuring a viable successor for his current role was a key criterion for his own promotion, and that the Program stands in positive contrast to prior experiences, where the talent pool consisted of a small number of people, in contrast with "*many other people who were overlooked*", and that this had a negative impact. He considered this Program to be more open and inclusive, and therefore more likely to have a positive impact on the organisation.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 4 considered the semi-structured interview-based approach to conducting 360-degree feedback "*very effective*", and framed this in light of his extensive experience. He pointed to the limitation of computer-based questionnaires because of his perception that respondents get "*mised*" by questions and "*people filling those in quickly*". He considered the information generated to be appropriate and rigorous even though he acknowledged that he wanted to change some of the wording of his feedback and development report to "*get it right*" and "*not to oversell myself*". He also indicated that the report would be useful in situations where there was a change of senior staff, as was the case with the Sponsor Organisation. Participant 4 qualified the rigour and accuracy of the data in terms of its validity being limited to "*about 12 months*".

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Highlighting the risk of inaction, Participant 4 considered periodic contact, about every two or three months, with an external coach or mentor to be the best way to provide follow-up. He commented that he had attached the development report to his performance plan to ensure that there would be some follow-up. He considered that the disruption to the Program affected follow-up, and diminishing its long-term benefits; he expressed this as having “*cut it short*”, and the information having “*been lost*”, with the impact being “*detrimental to the business, not short term but in years to come*”. He considered that achieving the development goals would be “*hugely beneficial*”, and that incorporating development objectives into the performance plan was positive on the condition that it bring about improvements for the business.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 4 did not necessarily recognise that the Program, rather than solely evaluating his suitability for a future promotion, was also designed to support his performance in his current role by addressing existing priorities. He considered that the board of the Sponsor Organisation was seen to be driving the Program. The fact that his manager had participated in a prior cohort was evidence of the “*investment and seriousness*” of the initiative. He recognised that the Program was relevant to the Group, but did not explicitly comment whether the concept of a leadership-development program was consistent with the culture of the Sponsor Organisation. He commented that the Sponsor Organisation “*is very poor at doing training in the region*” and that it “*hasn’t made any significant investment*”, which has coincided with “*losing a lot of people because of the recent events*”. He identified a very clear link between the investment in leadership development and organisational performance. On one hand, he stated that “*these programs should not be done too often, perhaps every two or three years*”; on the other hand, he highlighted that it is important to “*continuously*” have “*health checks*” to be able to improve.

Participant 4 commented on the fact that the Program was visible within the organisation, and that participation was critical to ongoing career success. He considered the concept of Program flexibility with respect to reflecting cultural differences, such as Asian cultures typically being more hierarchical and less comfortable with giving feedback about a more senior individual. He also suggested that more task-oriented cultures would likely struggle with, what he considered, the Program’s relatively elaborate process. He also discussed flexibility in relation to being able to respond appropriately to the competing demands of the role: “*When I got involved it was one of the busiest times. Time was an issue and I probably didn’t put enough time into it myself. It could have been my number one priority but it wasn’t at the time.*”

Participant 4 raised the importance of the consultant being able to understand his context as a senior leader of the operating company.

Key insights from the interview: The case provides a good example of how the Program was able to meet the needs of an individual who is highly ambitious and very conscious of his impact, and therefore requires a sense of control over the process and outputs. Participant 4 appeared to view the Program as an opportunity to position himself for further career advancement, which created some tension regarding the rigour and validity of the evaluation data. In this respect, it would appear to be important to consider the trade-off between on the one hand, making it psychologically safe for senior leaders and engaging them in the process, and, on the other, having valid and reliable data with which to make promotion decisions. The case also demonstrates the importance of needing to deal flexibly with individuals to engage with a leadership-development initiative to different degrees depending on their current capacity to do so.

4.2.5 Participant 5 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 5 is an operational leader who reports to the business-unit manager. He had joined the operating company some seven years earlier after a rapid career rise with another organisation, which had been acquired by the Sponsor Organisation and where, since joining five years earlier, Participant 5 had held various project-leadership roles from his late twenties onwards. Following secondary school, he had completed a civil engineering undergraduate degree and two years before the present research had completed an MBA. He reported that he had been identified by his employers as having high potential very early in his career, moving to a supervisory role within six months of commencing his graduate employment; he first became a project manager at the age of 27. After commencing his employment with the Sponsor Organisation, he was credited with winning a trophy project with a client in the mining industry. At the time of the Program, he was effectively seconded to oversee a large project that had underperformed because of significant operational issues. This situation reportedly placed significant stress on Participant 5 and others involved in the project.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises the Participant 5's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 5 explained that he had received the initial information positively, but then wasn't clear what the Program was trying to achieve, given it involved a "*very different structure to what I have historically been used to*". He reported that

he eventually recognised that the Program involved a *“good approach”*. He pointed out that although the evaluation data was stated to inform development, he assumed that this was also going to be used to make decisions about succession appointments, and that he was *“very open”* to the process even under the assumption that data would be used for such decisions. He stated that this was promoted through the consultant’s ability to *“engender trust”* and was *“ultimately of value to the organisation”*.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 5 linked being identified as *“high potential”* as *“recognition for the hard work being done today”*. He also distinguished between the *“current skill-set”* and the *“potential capability required for various roles”*. He perceived that the organisation was historically very poor at succession planning, and that there was a challenge with transparency about what actually had been done. In regard to succession, he commented on his responsibility to develop potential successors for his own role: *“[Developing a successor is] certainly a natural thought process, but my execution of that has been poor. It comes down to my accountability and structuring my team and developing my team. I put more emphasis on my accountability to make that happen rather than the business.”*

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 5 commented that the 360-degree feedback approach was different to standardised feedback surveys he had experienced before, but that the conclusions were not *“drastically different”* to those he would have expected. At the same time, he drew the distinction that the feedback was meaningful because there was more information about context. He also commented that the Program provided reliable data with respect to capabilities relevant to success in more-senior roles.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 5 commented that he had not taken any development initiatives due to the disruption caused by the management control of the Sponsor Organisation, but also due to a change of personal circumstances. He considered that effective development would require a detailed action plan, which relies on formal support from the manager, as well as the *“manager once removed”*. He considered integrating development objectives into annual performance plans to be *“appropriate”* and that such structure is required to be able to *“realise change”*. With respect to the disruption, Participant 5 stated that he was not aware that any of the Program output had been used by the organisation, and that the *“culture is getting turned on its head”* with *“the commitment to leadership development potentially non-existent”* under the new management.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 5 commented that the Program *“definitely helped”* with his current role priorities, specifically by providing clarity with respect to aspects of the

role that are enjoyable, for example developing talented employees. He further stated that the process enabled him to consider and plan for future career options. He stated that the rationale for the Program was clear and that the leadership capabilities were “*meaningful*”. He considered the latter as “*general leadership capabilities*” rather than as serving the specific strategic objectives of the Sponsor Organisation, and reported that he became clear about them once he was able to “*step through them*” to understand their detail. He recognised that the Program was supported by the Group CEO, but that this stood in contrast to the business lines, which did not appear to be fully supportive. He commented that the Program followed “*a massive void for many years in terms of developing people through the right capabilities and values to promote leadership*”. Although he stated that he had not been aware that a large number of people had participated in the Program – the Program was not openly communicated to the organisation at large – he considered an opportunity to connect with other Program participants as very attractive in principle. He made a clear link between organisational performance and the Program, as well as leadership development initiatives more generally, but highlighted the challenge of accurately measuring the benefits.

Participant 5 stated that the Program made “*good business sense*”, and that it was “*specific to the individual need*” as well as “*strategic*”, as opposed to a “*cookie cutter*” – a standardised and formulaic – approach. According to Participant 5, the structure of the Program was sufficiently flexible and the reporting output tailored effectively to individual needs. At the same time, his feedback indicated that suggested development initiatives could have been more pragmatic and targeted to the individual. He considered the Program not to be very visible within the organisation, but regarded this as appropriate given the sensitivities related to succession management and the inequalities of having some employees identified as high-potential talent.

Key insights from the interview: The case is an example of a senior executive who was provided with an opportunity to step back and reflect on his situation, and, as a result, devised a change in his career approach. More specifically, Participant 5 was responsible for the restructuring of an underperforming project that caused a significant amount of stress, which triggered him to question his commitment to staying with the organisation. One conclusion he drew as a result of the Program discussions was to come to a clearer understanding with his manager regarding his next career move following the completion of the project. The insights gained from this proved positive and energising, and gave him perspective on the challenges experienced in the current role. Notwithstanding the disruption that may have negatively affected any follow-up, it appears that the Program had a significantly positive

impact on Participant 5's motivation. The case also highlights the challenge of effectively communicating aspects of a leadership-development program, such as this case, where the participant stated that he was initially unsure about the Program's objective.

4.2.6 Participant 6 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 6 is an operational leader who, he said, was considered “*a very competent and committed leader of his business with foundations for further leadership roles*” within the operating company. He commenced his career as a site engineer with another organisation where he had spent 14 years across various project and engineering-related roles. These positions involved experience across a number of different fields, including construction and exploration. Participant 6 joined the Sponsor Organisation as a project manager of a joint-venture project, and subsequently worked for one of the Sponsor Organisation's operating companies as a construction manager. His career ambitions reflect a desire to eventually rise to operational leadership and a divisional, or even operating-company executive, leadership role.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 6's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 6 stated that his expectations from the Program were to raise self-knowledge regarding strengths and development needs, as well as receive practical suggestions of how to operate more effectively. He commented that he had had a number of prior, largely positive leadership-development program experiences. He explained that he was not concerned with confidentiality and argued that the Sponsor Organisation should use information about participants gathered from the Program to inform appointment and promotion decisions. Participant stated that he considered the Program to have been communicated very well and that he was able to understand the rationale for both the Program as a whole and the eight group leadership capabilities, as well as the activities involved. He commented that part of the challenge of development programs is that they can be artificial when they do not reflect the day-to-day realities of the organisation.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 6 stated that he had not proactively sought to engage in professional development in his career, but had recently completed a leading American university's formal executive-education program. His motivation was to benefit from “*other influences*” that were different to the industry-specific development provided by organisations for which he had worked throughout his career. He

provided a detailed explanation of potential, which he acknowledged to be “*a difficult area to define because potential is measured by intellect or capacity, but it’s as much influenced by desire*”. He further commented that the desire, essentially referring to the motivation of individuals, can vary significantly depending on individual circumstance. He also explained that motivation is difficult to align with particular senior roles, as it is often unclear what those roles require, and what the environment looks like. He stated that succession- and talent-management programs are a core part of any organisation, and that this will eventually be reinstated within the Sponsor Organisation.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 6 commented that his prior experiences with 360-degree feedback initially led him to conclude that “*these are generally a bit thin*”, indicating they provide too little detail to be useful. He specifically highlighted “*computer-based ones which often require completion for a number of people*” such that “*the responses get affected negatively, including because of politics*”. He suggested that the Program’s 360-degree feedback process offered a better approach:

[The interview-based approach to the 360-degree feedback] was pretty good because it went deeper than the previous computer-based style. By having some feedback based on reasonably detailed conversations, you could see the truth in that. It was a much better process by being able to discuss it to understand quotes and the context of that quote.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 6 pointed out that organisational politics can often affect findings and prevent an accurate understanding of the data. He commented that for him the Program was less about informing role priorities, and more about addressing “*relevant issues that were going on in my mind*”. He essentially described the value of self-reflection and, through the Program, being able to step back from his day-to-day role. He commented on the uncertainty regarding some form of continuation of the Program due to the change of management and the HR staff involved. In his comments, He pointed to the “*general challenge of ensuring follow-up*” given the “*competing requirements*” of many senior roles. A critical part of ensuring follow-up, he said, involves a “*formal plan with activities, goals and deadlines*”, which he is still intending to put in place. He suggested that the ideal follow-up would additionally involve a “*quarterly one-hour meeting with an external coach*”. He explained that he had shared the feedback and development-planning report with his manager and manager-once-removed, and that he intends to share it with his direct reports as well. He also considered that reflecting on development objectives in the performance contract is possible, but might lead to unhelpful behaviour to manage impressions, as well as add to an already high number of KPIs that are difficult to manage.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 6 stated that the involvement of the Group CEO signalled “*some real value*”, in contrast to many programs that “*might just be one of those flash-in-the-pan things*”. He pointed to the “*natural challenge*” and limited capacity of the most senior leaders to get involved in leadership-development initiatives, which was further complicated because of the “*egos*” involved. He indicated that the Sponsor Organisation’s culture promoted regular performance and development conversations between boss and manager and that, as a result, formal requirements were considered “*artificial*” and “*box-ticking*”. He commented: “*Managing people is an ongoing, constant process. It’s not twice a year you sit down to have a discussion. If that’s what it is, it’s a waste of time.*”

At the same time, Participant 6 commented that the Sponsor Organisation had historically not been integrated across the different operating companies and divisions. He considered that this contributed to senior executives’ limited awareness and understanding about the Sponsor Organisation’s holding company. He identified having a large pool of Program participants with an opportunity to achieve more-meaningful change outcomes. He stated that he had had no first-hand knowledge in the past regarding any of the initiatives of the Sponsor Organisation’s holding company. He commented that the Program offered flexibility, including conversations that explored relevant topics deeply. He considered that this provided more-meaningful and rigorous data and understanding, particularly in comparison to his experience in another program, which he considered to reflect a “*superficial, one-size-fits-all approach*”.

Key insights from the interview: Participant 6’s responses indicate the value of offering an opportunity for a senior executive to step back and reflect on the bigger picture of their career, not necessarily the narrow focus of evaluating step-up potential and supporting role priorities. His comments indicated that he valued the opportunity to have challenging conversations that explore a number of key issues deeply. Despite the disruptive impact of the management-control event, Participant 6 demonstrated a high level of motivation to ensure follow-up but tied this to his relationship with his direct manager. He highlighted that he had not considered his own development for the past 18 years, despite having been exposed to other programs throughout his career. This response may possibly highlight the difference in views regarding perceived training compared to leadership development, particularly in light of his apparent negative view of HR and its processes, as shown by his statement “*the HR practices and processes most of us think are rubbish*”.

4.2.7 Participant 7 case vignette

Personal background and context: Originating from the UK, Participant 7 leads a \$1.5bn infrastructure project, one of the Sponsor Organisation's largest. He commenced his career as a graduate engineer with a UK-based construction company and rose quickly to become a project manager with significant responsibility. Subsequent career experiences supported him in learning about complex business and project environments. He also completed a postgraduate master's degree in science and commenced PhD studies, which were discontinued due to family and work demands. He joined the Sponsor Organisation as a manager of a construction alliance, and become an operations manager immediately prior to his current project-leadership role. It is noteworthy that the project had previously encountered key challenges that, unrelated to the Program, had seen significant improvements at the time of the Program.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 7's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 7 commented that he had had positive experiences of prior leadership-development programs. He stated that his expectations centred on "*getting additional insight and perspective in how to improve*", and that he had confidence in the process, including having the opportunity to "*have a right of reply*" prior to finalising the feedback and development-planning report. He considered that the link between the Program's rationale and the Sponsor Organisation's group strategy had been "*100% clear*". He did not consider confidentiality as an important requirement.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 7 pointed out that "*different types of development resonate with different people at different times in their career*". He explained that the relationship with one's manager is critical in realising potential through effective mentoring and providing exposure to aspects of the more senior role as part of this:

Practice is quite different: there are opportunities for me to do part of my boss's job and in the same way that there are opportunities for the people who report to me to do part of my job. Effective development is where you take full opportunity of that chance to try and step into that next role and try on the shoes, walking in your boss's position.

Participant 7 considered development to be a part of the "*fabric*" of what the organisation is doing or needs to be doing, and considered succession management to be synonymous with this.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: In contrast to prior experiences, which included a number of standardised feedback and psychometric tools, Participant 7 considered the Program “*a happy medium of some of those approaches*” and highlighted the value of the semi-structured interviews, which provided more contextually relevant insights despite the subjective nature of this type of feedback. More specifically, he commented, “*I’ve done a few different types of 360-feedback over the years; what you get is a perspective offered by the person who has a particular worldview. It’s all useful information but none of it itself is the truth because it’s all coloured by people’s own perceptions and their value system.*”

Participant 7 stated that he considered the process rigorous and its findings reliable. He was therefore comfortable releasing this confidential information about his strengths and development needs.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 7 stated that he benefited most from the discussions with the consultant, rather than the written report. He did not necessarily consider a major benefit of the Program to be an “*opportunity to improve*”, but valued access to additional information on the organisation that would help him optimise his behaviour. He stated that he had had discussions with his manager about follow-up actions to the Program, but that this had been affected by the change of management control. However, he also commented that he is self-motivated to address the feedback. He pointed to the importance of integrating development-plan initiatives within the individual’s operational context to achieve outcomes. He highlighted the challenge of creating formal accountability by integrating development objectives in the annual performance contract because performance discussions typically are focused on achieving more-balanced outcomes such as “*profit or safety*”.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 7 commented that the current Program as well as previous programs were consistent with the organisational culture and generally supported by the “*business*” and its senior leaders. He did not recognise or attach significance to the Program being part of a large initiative. He commented on a very clear link between raising the “*leadership capability*” through development programs and “*organisational effectiveness*”, and stated that, in contrast to other programs, the Program provided the right level of flexibility. He also highlighted the importance of any successful initiative needing to create contextual relevance by bringing “*the coach or facilitator back into the operational environment*”. He explained that he was able to gain “*an instant level of referential trust about how the process was going to work*” because of the “*cognitive and structured*” way the consultant was able to describe the Program.

Key insights from the interview: Participant 7's responses highlight the potential for close integration between accomplishing leadership-development objectives and achieving day-to-day operational business outcomes. His comments also demonstrate that roles in the Sponsor Organisation were not clearly delineated. Therefore, LSM approaches can incorporate flexibility regarding aspects of a future role as a way to develop a potential successor. The approach that Participant 7 outlined appears to support business performance even though his comments suggested that implementing such an approach is challenging. At the same time, he also pointed out that promotion decisions in the Sponsor Organisation had not been optimal, which raises the question of how better (i.e. more predictive or reliable) judgement can be achieved.

4.2.8 Participant 8 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 8 is an executive general manager in charge of business risk. His role is responsible for risk management of new business, projects and clients on a group-wide basis. He was appointed to his current role some six months before the Program, and had previously held a similar role at one of the operating companies. His career commenced as a graduate with one of the Sponsor Organisation's operating companies, which he re-joined five years ago. This involved a "step back" in his career to return to Australia with his family. Relevant career experiences, as determined by the target profile that was established as part of the Program, include project management, business development, governance and general management roles with a number of international top-tier construction firms.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 8's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 8 stated that he saw the Program as an opportunity to become more visible as a senior leader, particularly as he was new to the organisation. He commented that the start to the Program was slightly unusual, as he had been invited to attend the group leadership forum before formally commencing the individual component, unlike the other participants, because he joined after the commencement of the first cohort. Participant 8 made no specific comments regarding confidentiality.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 8 made a distinction between performance and potential by commenting that he had seen successful people fail at the next higher level, indicating that performance at the current level is not predictive of

potential for promotion. At the same time he stated that an individual's understanding of their future succession potential may require their being over-promoted. To mitigate this, he suggested promoting greater self-awareness on the part of the individual regarding their potential and the proactive support that the organisation offers:

Just because you are good at the next rung down doesn't mean that you are good at the next rung up. That's what makes it all the more important that it's a planned event, that everybody around you understands your strengths and weaknesses and there's a support structure there. I don't think that's done very often.

Participant 8 also explained that the operating company emphasises having credible successors in place as a pre-condition to being considered for promotion, which, he stated, “*makes you think twice about just concentrating on your own career and not concentrating on who's going to step into your shoes*”.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 8 viewed 360-degree feedback as “*confronting but necessary*”. He stated that he was not surprised by any of the content. He commented on preferring the semi-structured interview approach over online surveys because they are less ambiguous and provide more-specific detail on development areas to address.

Participant 8 argued that reporting accuracy is secondary to having useful data that informs a senior leader's development, stating that “*even if you grant the argument that it's not accurate and that it is influenced by the individual, that's okay to a certain extent*”. He suggested that the report was “*largely reflecting the 360-degree feedback data*”, which he also considered subjective but informative and useful in providing “*contextual data in the form of examples*”.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 8 identified a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the organisation, with the organisation providing the opportunity for development and the individual following up on key development opportunities. His expectations for follow-up also focused on succession-specific aspects, including clarity for individuals regarding the extent of their succession readiness and potential next moves. He considered the concept of integrating development objectives into an individual's performance contract as “*appropriate*” and supporting better development outcomes. He also suggested the use of a mentor to help with specific development objectives that are relevant to being considered for a future promotion. He highlighted the detriment of the disruption, stating that he was unsuccessful with his attempt to share his report with his new manager. He commented that the disruption caused the Program to fall

short of his expectations in being able to become more visible within the organisation, as well as causing a lack of follow up which he contrasts with other, more rigorous development program initiatives of the operating company.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 8 considered the opportunity to connect with other senior executives to be “*very positive*” and a way to promote opportunities for collaboration. He stated that he was involved in other programs of the Operating Company, which suggests a supportive learning and development culture. He commented that the strategic leadership capabilities that were introduced as part of the Program were largely clear, although he was not able to recall them. He also explained that it would be challenging, in his opinion, to identify direct links between the Program and organisational performance. At the same time, he pointed to Program participants’ increased motivation and engagement, saying that this would have material benefits with respect to performance.

Participant 8 commented that there was no transparency with respect to any criteria for selecting Program participants, and noted a lack of rigour in that part of the process. He also commented on the flexibility of the Program approach: “*It didn’t ever feel to me as if it was a mechanical process. I particularly liked the opportunity to tell my story from the beginning. That gave the impression that it was personal as opposed to ‘give me a CV and I’ll ask the questions about what you’ve done’. I liked it.*”

Key insights from the interview: Participant 8 raised a number of important points that are relevant to considering how a senior executive can perceive the value of a development opportunity. For example, he discussed the positive correlation between the organisation’s active support of its senior leaders’ development and the extent to which these individuals will be motivated to change and engage with their development. His comments point to the opportunity to look at supporting such motivation, or enhancing it where it is lacking as an important antecedent to investing in development. He also raised the issue that merely making senior leaders responsible for developing credible successors is not sufficient. Rather, the organisation needs to support senior leaders in learning how to do this and to put in place systems and processes that enable senior leaders to do it effectively.

4.2.9 Participant 9 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 9 is the national head of an operating division within one of the Sponsor Organisation’s operating companies. Originally from the UK and an electrical engineering graduate, he spent 10 years in project-management and operations roles with another organisation before joining the Sponsor Organisation seven years ago. Career

foundations involved a number of field engineering and line-management positions. Immediately prior to taking up his current role, which he has held for three and a half years, he worked as a regional operations manager for the same division. He was recruited through a former boss who had worked with the Sponsor Organisation's Operating Company as the business unit head.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 9's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Regarding his expectations for the Program, Participant 9 said he had been unsure what to expect but *"very positive"* in light of being recognised as leadership talent. He described the reported data as *"definitely quite personal"* but was not concerned with confidentiality. This was reportedly a function of the Program being dedicated to the individual's development, which requires a senior executive to be *"honest and mature"*. He went further to state that the more honest the engagement in the Program, the greater the benefit for the individual. He considered the opportunity to review a draft of the report prior to finalising it as *"really great, and necessary"*. He understood the rationale for the Program as supporting the group of senior leaders tasked with strategy execution. He did not necessarily recognise the target leadership capabilities as unique to driving the Sponsor Organisation's relevant strategic objectives, but rather considered them to be *"logical statements about what are seen as the core competencies of a leader"*.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 9 commented that the Program provided a new perspective on his potential as a senior executive and what a further step upwards in his career would entail. He stated that he clearly identified the Program to be about succession. He considered an explicit approach to LSM as important because it provided an opportunity for individuals to become clearer about what is involved in being successful at the next level, as well as providing greater confidence about how the requirements compare to possible promotion candidates' own capabilities.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 9 commented that the 360-degree feedback uncovered a blind spot regarding the opportunity to become more effective in developing others. He also stated that the way the consultant conducted the interviews was *"intense and challenging, but in a good way"*. With regard to the reported findings, he commented that these triggered how he needed to start thinking about short-, medium and long-term goals.

Participant 9 pointed out that although participants had an opportunity to influence the reporting, he considered that the skill of the consultant ensured the reliability of the report that would otherwise be in question. Feedback was perceived as “*pretty accurate*” with “*one or two surprises*”, but in a way that it was consistent with an understanding of self. He perceived the way the interviews were conducted as extremely detailed, stating, “*I’ve never seen anyone take so many notes in my life!*”

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 9 stated that he expected to follow up on development feedback. He commented that he was keen to share the report with his manager, but that this had not happened as a result of the change of management, which left Participant 9 “*pretty disappointed*”. He stated that he has a mentor to “*bounce ideas off*”, and that this will include sharing the development report. With respect to being motivated to engage in the Program and address development opportunities, he commented that he was “*resolute*” to make changes despite “*the things that are going on at the moment*”. He suggested that despite his motivation, the outcome will also depend on whether the “*environment is right*”, about which he is unsure. He also indicated that despite the environment, he was becoming more involved in the Sponsor Organisation as a direct consequence of the Program.

Participant 9 considered integrating development objectives and KPIs into annual performance plans would support follow-up where the organisational culture does not support it. Additionally, he viewed this as representing alignment between the organisation and the individual because he believed that individuals would naturally want to ensure that there is follow-up to their development.

(e) Other success factors: Although the Program aims were not explicitly communicated, Participant 9 acknowledged that the Program aimed to support current role priorities as well as future-focused development. He noted that the Program enabled the Group CEO to have better conversations about what motivates the senior executives of the Sponsor Organisation. He associated the Group CEO and Group HRD as the key sponsors of the Program. He considered the advantages of having a large group of Program participants including providing an opportunity for interaction, learning about the wider organisation and providing a “*systematic process*” to address leadership development. He considered the Program to be directly linked to organisational performance through enabling the leadership of the organisation to align around “*a single goal*”.

Participant 9 considered the Program to have offered a unique and personalised development experience. He characterised it as “*terrific and challenging*”, particularly with respect to “*probing*” by “*living through your experiences, your thoughts and your views in all the deep dark*”

corners of your psyche". He said that much of being able to achieve this outcome depends on the ability of the consultant.

Key insights from the interview: The case vignette provides a good example of an individual who values the highly personalised and challenging nature of the Program approach, including its psychological aspects. It is apparent that Participant 9 perceived value in gaining a better understanding of his own assumptions and beliefs, which points to a deeper developmental aspect of succession. The case vignette also stresses the importance of balancing current with future priorities as well as balancing the needs of the individual, including their motivation, with the needs of the organisation. Although the follow-up was negatively affected by the management-control event, it is clear that the individual is highly motivated to engage with his development even though there is no support from the Sponsor Organisation.

4.2.10 Participant 10 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 10 had been appointed to his role as operations manager 12 months earlier. Discontinuing initial studies in architecture, he began his career working with a construction company for five years whilst studying engineering part-time. This provided exposure to a variety of projects, and culminated in a joint venture with a European-based company. After subsequently establishing a successful project-consulting business, he took up an international role with another construction company covering a number of European countries and South Africa. He joined the Sponsor Organisation about three years before the start of the present research as a project director.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 10's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 10's expectations were informed by his awareness that the Program was "*tailored around succession*", which he viewed positively because of the implied opportunity to support career growth. He spoke of a clear link between the Program and the strategy of the Sponsor Organisation, and identified the Group CEO as the main sponsor of the Program. He also mentioned that at the start of the Program he expected "*exposure to more senior people within the organisation*" and the benefits of their career advice. At the same time, he commented that he was not quite sure about how the Program would work, but that he was "*excited to explore what it was about*". He stated that he was not concerned about being assessed or about the use of information, as he sees this as a normal aspect of organisations' development initiatives at senior levels.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 10 reported that he had left a previous position because of a lack of opportunity for further career progression. He commented on his responsibility to ensure that *“people on my team are feeling challenged”* and *“have opportunities to shine and grow”*. He commented that the biggest challenge in relation to succession is timing; specifically, the inability to be clear about timelines for individuals to progress. He also mentioned that flexibility is important to provide high-potential staff with more senior role opportunities to support their growth and development.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 10 commented on the benefit of 360-degree feedback through providing some insight about how other people perceive him in his role. He stated that the benefit of the process came from *“having somebody you don’t know challenge you on the things that come out of the feedback”*. He considered the development report to be useful in discussions with his manager. He expected the Sponsor Organisation to use the reporting information to make succession decisions.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 10 highlighted the tension between his motivation to ensure follow-up and the challenge of achieving this in light of *“getting quickly back into day-to-day life”*, with *“these types of things being the first to drop down the list”*. He considered the concept of formalising development objectives as part of a performance contract as an *“absolute positive”* that was aligned how he and senior leaders are used to working. He expected to follow up as part of regular discussions with his direct manager, but noted that this has not yet happened. He also stated that the change of management control affected follow-up and that, as a consequence, the follow-up became more of a personal objective.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 10 commented that the Program helped him *“stop and think”*, pointing to the benefit of self-reflection. He reported not having learned anything new about his *“behaviours and what I needed to improve”*, given that he considers himself to be *“pretty aware”* of himself. Rather, he commented that he benefited from the opportunity to learn about *“technical skills at the next leadership level”*. He pointed to the effect on his motivation from participating in the Program: *“You feel good if you’ve been asked to participate in something like that. Naturally, anyone who is ambitious and who wants to progress their career, that’s a good positive thing to get to have some feedback that you’ve been identified to go on a Program like that.”*

Participant 10 was aware that his direct manager had previously participated in the Program. However, he also reported that they had not had direct conversations about the Program even though they regularly met to talk about Participant 10’s career-planning considerations. Participant 10 recognised that there were a large number of Program

participants, and that this signalled being valued as leadership talent. He linked the Program to organisational performance by virtue of having a more highly motivated group of senior leaders: *“If you have people in an organisation who are motivated to perform and who want to progress and who are aware of themselves and who are looking at the people working for them, as well and seeing how they can support and grow them, that’s positive for an organisation.”*

Participant 10 highlighted that although the Program was transparent regarding succession, it was missing more-specific information regarding *“timelines and prospects”*, which he experienced as *“frustrating”*. He contrasted his experience to a previous organisation where promotion depended on national, social and educational backgrounds, which ultimately caused him to leave the organisation. His comments exemplify a tension in LSM between the expectations of potential successors and how these can be optimally aligned with the availability of advancement opportunities. Participant 10 considered the Program *“quite well structured, with the actual conversations within that structure flexible”*.

Key insights from the interview: The case vignette provides some valuable insights into a number of aspects of succession-focused leader-development programs, particularly with respect to an individual’s motivation, information signalling and political aspects. For instance, Participant 10 stated that he considered being invited into the Program important, given that it signals potential for further career progression and provides exposure to senior leaders. He also raised the challenge of succession-focused leadership-development programs setting expectations for promotion, including time frames and specific positions. This might imply that linking a development program overtly to succession might present a disadvantage that could be avoided by communicating that a program is focused on professional development and operational and strategic business performance.

4.2.11 Participant 11 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 11 is a functional leader with significant responsibility as the newly appointed leader of one of the Sponsor Organisation’s major shared functions. She had experienced rapid career advancement, having previously been appointed to a functional management role, part of the country leadership team of a US organisation, within a 10-year period. Career progress continued during the subsequent 10 years, with Participant 11 moving from IT services into aviation and then retail financial services, and covering diverse roles such as procurement, customer service, shared services and group finance. She was recruited as a result of an existing relationship with the Group CFO of the Sponsor Organisation, to whom she had reported in prior roles.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 11's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 11 explained that she expected the Program to provide an opportunity to formalise a development plan that would be informed by high-quality 360-degree feedback and to become more visible and recognised for prior learning and experience, and to provide an opportunity to gain her manager's active support to achieve specific development goals. She stated that she found the rationale for the Program to have been clear and that she experienced "*good context-setting*" as part of the initial communication for the Program. She stated that the perceptions of the organisation regarding the Program objectives of the Program must align with those of the individual. She recognised that psychological safety is required for an individual to open up as part of a development process, and identified "*trust, rapport, and a good process*" as key ingredients.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 11 referred to her "*huge need to learn*", which has been a characteristic of her entire career. This also caused her to seek out the opportunity to work for a manager who supported this priority and from whom she could learn. She also provided a broader context for her career approach to maximising her leadership potential: "*I've been really clear about my purpose and over the last 10 years have been choosing and turning down jobs because they weren't going to meet that kind of trajectory of what is success to me. And it's not just about the money; the role has to be able to make a significant difference.*"

Participant 11 commented that initiatives such as the Program have provided her with opportunities to work through what other roles could potentially look like and whether they would provide the necessary satisfaction. She considered that the Program provided a "*check-in mechanism*" that enables "*ongoing succession and leadership discussions*".

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 11 commented that the 360-degree interview process "*captured a good level of depth*". In contrast, prior 360-degree feedback experiences included a "*lighter touch*" or an "*extensive online survey*", and that other programs had not provided a "*strong constructive-feedback loop*". She stated that feedback providers reported to her that they were happy to participate in the process but found the 360-degree interviews "*intense*". Participant 11 explained that the assessment findings generated very clear development objectives for her. She saw the report as representing "*an honest assessment*" that she felt comfortable with, and stated that the language used "*seemed rigorous enough for me to be confident that the output would have meaning*". An important factor that she raised was the consultant's ability to be "*diligent, constructive and empowering*" in working through the feedback and identifying the "*key things to work on*".

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 11 commented that ideal follow up would have included a “*check-in*” with her manager every six or 12 months, and greater visibility with the board of the Sponsor Organisation. She identified the board’s “*commitment to grow and develop talent over the long term*” as critical to effective follow-up. She pointed to her highly structured and rigorous career-planning process, and a formal “*self-regulation*” process that supports her progress. She expected the information generated from the Program to be used for talent identification and development planning, as well as succession decisions. She stated that she was comfortable sharing her report with her manager but that this had not yet happened. She identified that a critical ingredient to effective follow-up is to ensure that development objectives are tangible, measurable and realistic. Regarding the disruption event, she commented that “*the Program was cancelled and I never got a chance to practically apply the leadership skills*”.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 11 pointed to the strong support of her manager, who, despite being “*demanding and tough*”, is very strong at “*finding growth and development opportunities*” for his people. She explained that she enjoyed working for managers who were “*interested in my development so took time to understand my goals, short term and long term, and how they could support me*”.

Participant 11 stated that it was significantly more valuable to her to be part of a pool of individuals whom the senior leadership recognised as potential talent for future senior roles, rather than engaging in isolated development. She considered the Program to be aligned with the culture of the Sponsor Organisation. She drew a distinction between standard best-practice competencies that the Program could support and context-specific ones that are unique to the organisation’s current situation. She considered the specific capabilities introduced as part of the Program to be “*obvious*”, but not specifically associated with the strategic objectives of the Sponsor Organisation.

Participant 11 pointed to a potential negative impact on team performance when the organisation is transparent about who is identified as talent, as this may cause “*competition*” and tempt people to “*stop sharing information*”. On the other hand, she pointed to the importance of “*being honest with people*”, which requires being transparent. She also identified the importance and value to the organisation of understanding an employee’s intentions and potential choices. She pointed to the importance of creating the “*right experience*” through a “*highly professional*” consultant who can “*build rapport*” and has “*high integrity*”.

Key insights from the interview: Participant 11 represents a high-performing, high-potential senior executive who was evaluated very strongly amongst her cohort of Program

participants. It is apparent from her responses that she is very sophisticated with respect to her own development as well as leading the growth and development of others. Somewhat unique amongst the cohort is her explicit approach to long-term strategic career planning that is focused on her core values. She discusses the embedded nature of effective development support, both through her manager and through ongoing organisational structures and processes such as regular board reviews, rather than through external coaching support or support through the HR function. An interesting inconsistency arises from the fact that, on the one hand, she expected that the Sponsor Organisation would use information generated by the Program for development support and succession decisions, and on the other, she emphasised the importance of a confidential and trustworthy process. This points to the importance of being clear about boundaries, including the access and usage of such information.

4.2.12 Participant 12 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 12 was recently appointed to lead a Group function when his predecessor was transferred within the group. At the time of the current research, he had spent less than 12 months in the role, which followed more than 12 years working for a top-tier international consulting firm. Originating from Europe, he had gained a PhD and was transferred to Australia to open a new capital-city office. Career experiences provided exposure to a variety of industries, including construction, automotive, industrial goods, building materials and resources.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 12's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 12 commented that he expected the Program to provide “*a customised assessment and recommendation for my future development to help identify opportunities on where to next from my current position*”. He characterised the focus on leadership capabilities as an “*essential element to be successful*”, but did not explicitly acknowledge the capabilities' role in supporting strategy execution. Rather, he considered them to be a “*helpful framework through which to identify areas of strengths and development*”. He stated that he was not clear about whether the Program was an assessment of performance or solely focused on development, and that this caused some concern about the Sponsor Organisation's intention. He explained that this concern had been reinforced by the large group approach of the Program.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 12 associated his own functional role with the opportunity to be well positioned for other roles within the Sponsor Organisation independent of the Program. He defined “*potential*” as offering an opportunity to consider other roles.

Participant 12 commented that he associated succession with assessment rather than development, as it informs appointment decisions. At the same time, he stated that he associated a focus on “*talent*” more with the concept of development.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 12 stated that he was surprised by the number of positive comments he received as part of the 360-degree feedback. He said that he had not had any follow-up conversation with any of the feedback providers. He considered the Program approach to provide sufficient standardisation to achieve a reliable and repeatable process, but also to allow for enough customisation to the specific position and capabilities of each individual. He highlighted the importance of taking into account personal motivation in identifying appropriate development-plan objectives that are linked to potential future roles. His response indicated that he considered the process and reporting output to be of high quality. At the same time, he felt that the Program’s method of tapping into personal motivation could have been more effective by considering more strongly “*where I want to be in the future*”.

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 12 stated that he is motivated to follow up on the development plan irrespective of whether the Sponsor Organisation supports this. He commented that he had “*picked out of that long list those things that I found most relevant*”. He shared his view that “*forcing someone*” to engage in follow-up is likely to be “*less effective*” than being “*personally interested in making those things happen*”. At the same time he confirmed that he would be okay with “*picking one, two or three development objectives and creating some accountability in my performance contract*”. He considered suitable development support to be provided through either external coaching or a senior internal mentor who was not his direct manager. He did not see sharing the report as necessary, and indicated a preference to use it as a personal document to inform his own development planning.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 12 stated that he strongly considered the Program as an initiative of the Sponsor Organisation’s senior leadership, but saw greater opportunity for the Group CEO to communicate a vision in support of the overall organisational strategy. He considered an approach that focuses on a “*pool of talent*” rather than “*pool of succession candidates*” as an important difference because of the expectations that are created when referring to succession. He also explained that once he was aware of the large pool of

participants, he regarded the Program more as an assessment than a development initiative. He stated that he considered that the reporting could have been more focused and specific with regard to future opportunities. He considered the Program to represent an initiative that is consistent with the way the Sponsor Organisation works. He commented that whilst the link between the Program and organisational performance was “*not easy to explain*”, he considered a positive return to depend on the organisation’s ability to achieve development outcomes with existing internal resources. He considered the Program to have offered a highly customised and personalised experience compared to his prior experiences with leadership-development programs, which he associated more with “*standardised training*”. He considered that it would have been preferable to have “*more [and] smaller steps*”, as the scheduled two- and three-hour meetings meant that the process was “*more difficult to integrate*” with his “*typical day*”.

Key insights from the interview: The case vignette makes it apparent that Participant 12’s more limited availability and the resulting shorter interview time resulted in fewer data points than with other research participants. This also had an impact on the content that was generated as a result of possibly rushing some of the questions and topics to ensure that the interview could be completed within the allocated time. It is noteworthy that Participant 12 had quite specific expectations to receive “*recommendations regarding development and career options*”. He made an interesting comment regarding the opportunity to more specifically identify future role opportunities with reference to current role capabilities. It is relevant that Participant 12 was relatively new in the role, about 12 months; this is likely to have informed the focus on current role capabilities. Responses highlight that Participant 12 appeared to be less trusting of the organisation and its senior leaders and expressed more caution than had other Participants. He provided a potentially valuable insight of associating “*succession*” with an expectation for timing and roles, whereas “*talent*” implies ongoing growth and development in a more general sense.

4.2.13 Participant 13 case vignette

Personal background and context: Participant 13 is the operational leader for a national business of one of the Sponsor Organisation’s operating companies. He commenced his career following undergraduate engineering studies 23 years ago and, since then, has gained a wide range of exposure and experience in different industries covering projects as well as ongoing operations. Projects under his leadership have included some of the highest-profile infrastructure projects in Australia. After joining the Sponsor Organisation’s operating company some 11 years ago, Participant 13 held further project-management roles, as well

as alliances and joint ventures with the current functional area. He has been in his current role for the last four years.

Participant interview responses: The following summarises Participant 13's interview responses, as they are relevant to the CSFs:

(a) Participant program expectations: Participant 13 explained that he considered the Program primarily as an opportunity to network and “*get exposure to senior managers in the organisation*”. He stated that he considered the purpose as two-fold: first, “*to help the individual get a commitment to future development*”, and second, “*to inform the organisation about the potential of the individual*”. Participant 13 explained that he recognised the “*politics in it*” because of the focus on the future and the implication of decisions. He stated that his manager communicated that he himself had participated in the Program and that he recommended it. Participant 13 commented that he had the impression that the Program was not “*highly publicised*” because it was focused on the senior leaders of the Sponsor Organisation. He associated the Program with the Group CEO and Group HRD, and recognised that the operating company's HR leader also endorsed the Program.

(b) Understanding of potential and succession: Participant 13 expressed his view that the concept of “*potential*” captures “*continuously improving*” and “*focusing on gaps*”. He linked the ability to address this successfully to having high-quality information. He also commented that he is prepared to move to another organisation if the role he is interested in is not offered to him within the Sponsor Organisation.

Participant 13 considered that in the Sponsor Organisation, succession is dealt with independently of the Program. He further commented that, in his view, there are few opportunities at the most senior levels, which represented “*a bit of a glass ceiling*”. He explained that he had had a conversation with one of his superiors and the HR leader regarding future opportunities.

(c) 360-degree feedback, reporting and rigour of findings: Participant 13 commented that he considered the 360-degree feedback to have provided valuable information that supported the intent to “*continuously improve*” and identify the “*gaps you can focus on*”. He raised the concern that 360-degree feedback is by definition subjective, and therefore may be limited in informing appointment decisions. He expected that the Sponsor Organisation would use the information generated about him, but recognised that this might not happen because of the management control change event. He viewed the reporting data as “*very valuable insight and information on a person*” and that sharing it was “*in the best interest of the*

individual” because of the importance and challenge of having “the organisation and boss understand the person in the best possible way”. Specifically, he commented, “The only danger with this process is in the 360s, in whether they were objective. So this is just a piece of information to inform decisions. It’s not the whole story but it’s very useful.”

(d) Follow-up and impact of disruption: Participant 13 explained that the Program reinforced the importance of ongoing learning and prompted him to enrol in a leading, locally based governance-education course, feeling that ongoing external coaching support would be of value. He stated that one possibility for follow-up would be to provide experiences in different roles, and referred to a limited opportunity to develop general management skills in a project-leadership role. As a function of the change of management control and the subsequent disruption, Participant 13 commented that he shared his report with another organisation as part of a recruitment process because it *“provided a deeper understanding of where I’m at”* and to inform *“whether you are aligned with that organisation”*. He stated that *“regardless of formal follow-up”*, there is a valuable benefit emanating from the Program. Participant 13 explained that he supports including development objectives in his performance contract, and actually stated that his short-term incentives included one of the development priorities. He noted that for this to work well, objectives need to be *“really clear and simple”*.

(e) Other success factors: Participant 13 considered that the Group CEO of the Sponsor Organisation was ultimately accountable for the Program, and that the communication for the Program made this clear. He considered that the group approach to the Program was more powerful than would be an isolated development initiative at the individual level, because *“it’s linked into the organisation”* and *“becomes a lot more serious”* and *“important as part of a big-picture strategy”*.

In talking about how the Program supported his current role priorities, Participant 13 commented that the limited time commitment as well as discussion content that was specific to his business challenges represented *“some good things”* that were a *“pretty big net positive”*. He commented that although the Program was not something the Sponsor Organisation had done much of before, it *“made sense”* for the Sponsor Organisation to conduct such as Program. He explained that he considered the leadership capabilities to be *“relevant”*, even under current *“changed circumstances”*. His commentary also suggested that these capabilities provided clarity in light of these being *“adopted as priorities”*. He considered the Program to offer benefits to the Sponsor Organisation despite the failure to complete it. He commented that there is a clear link to the *“performance of the organisation and the individuals”*, but that this was difficult to measure given the *“many factors, including intangibles”*, that affect performance.

Participant 13 did not consider transparency to be helpful; rather, he considered it more important that the process support “*getting to the right answer*”; that is, providing a reliable assessment of candidates’ suitability. He considered that given the “*focus on future opportunities*”, the Program might trigger someone to look for employment externally, but that this was likely to be done in a more constructive way than would have been done otherwise. He commented that much of the “*learning and development is through actually experiencing the role*”.

Key insights from the interview: Participant 13 appeared very focused on the organisational politics and the opportunity to be visible to the Sponsor Organisation’s senior leadership. His responses seemed to imply that “succession” signals an event, which requires decisions, and that these elevate and escalate competition and politics. His commentary did not associate deliberate development with succession events; to him the two appeared to be separate concepts. At the same time, his responses indicated that he is not sensitive to information being shared or used within the organisation; this implies a degree of trust and confidence. Participant 13 did not list a significant number of benefits resulting from the Program. This and his commentary regarding external job opportunities may have been a function of the interview having been conducted at a later stage.

4.3 Analysis of Participant key themes

The following examines the key themes that emerge from the individual case vignettes. Specifically, the analysis distinguishes between aspects that can be characterised as enhancing or detracting from the experience of a particular research participant. The objective is to better understand the elements that are relevant in optimising LSM outcomes based on a participant’s individual experience. Table 4.2 summarises the key themes that emerged from each case vignette.

Table 4.2: Summary of key themes for research participants

Key influences on research participants' experience		
	<i>Enhancing</i>	<i>Detracting</i>
Participant 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity to reflect on career, interaction with and visibility to senior leaders and flexible, individualised development approach facilitated in engaging way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt frustrated by lack of follow up to the Program
Participant 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued development opportunity and individualised, flexible and efficient approach, including in the context of being relatively new to the role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted tension between development and short-term role performance demands; also recognised management-control event as negative
Participant 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity for personal and professional development and supporting success in his new role rather than any future opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would have preferred more detailed 360-degree feedback commentary
Participant 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued control over the content and opportunity to become visible to senior leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced tension because of limited ability to engage given work demands and role of reporting data in influencing future promotion opportunities
Participant 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity for career reflection and how to manage conflict and what would determine success in his current role compared to a more senior role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pointed to tension because of lack of clarity and limited communication, as well as limited practicality of development needs
Participant 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity to reflect on career, creating awareness and strategies to overcome limitations, and valued the clarity the Program brought to business priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted challenge of LSM initiatives that are removed from day-to-day realities and follow-up to address development priorities
Participant 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued the interactions with consultant and other leaders as well as context-rich feedback to inform understanding and support current role effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted difficulty of aligning development with performance expectations and challenge of reliably determining potential and development needs
Participant 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued organisational commitment, group interactions and the person-centred process that provided detailed context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted tension with setting expectations for promotion and maintaining consistent senior-leader support, as well as lack of transparency for selection
Participant 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued being recognised as talent and the opportunity to learn about himself, which benefited motivation for career advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived change of management as disrupting follow-up, including manager support
Participant 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity for self-reflection, political influence and recognition, and found the Program motivating to considering career progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt challenged by potential lack of career-progression opportunities and clear time frames
Participant 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued alignment with core values and a long-term career strategy, manager support, context-rich feedback and integrated on-the-job development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced tension as a result of Program disruption, competition between research participants and use of confidential assessment information
Participant 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued high-quality feedback and the opportunity for self-reflection regarding career options and how to approach them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was not clear about the intention of the Program and had concerns about the focus on assessment and succession
Participant 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued opportunity to network with senior leaders of the organisation, preparation to take on a more senior role and clarity of organisational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised challenge of potentially subjective 360-degree feedback in making objective assessment decisions

Source: Author

As the table shows, participants valued the opportunity for reflection and career planning and the nature of the interactions. Some also valued the recognition their participation in the Program signalled and the opportunity to become more visible to senior leaders. Participants also appreciated the personalised nature of the Program approach. Some also valued the opportunity to develop greater self-knowledge, receive feedback and be challenged in a supportive way. Overall, what stands out is a consistent appreciation of “self” aspects and a tendency to link these to improvement and development.

Participants identified challenges with respect to engaging in development and simultaneously meeting the demands of their current role. They pointed to a potential lack of manager support and the negative impact of the change of management control in disrupting follow-up. Some voiced concerns about being judged through a covert assessment process and the tension that arose out of the data being used not only for development but also potentially for performance appraisal. Overall, responses highlighted the tension that comes with LSM-focused development initiatives and the challenge to prioritise them to enable follow-up and the achievement of tangible outcomes.

4.4 Key implications regarding CSFs

The above cases provide practical insight into how CSFs were relevant to each of the research participants. They also highlight a number of aspects that are pertinent to each individual and how they experienced the Program. This provides an opportunity to consider additional variables beyond those set out in the LSM best-practice literature. These variables are hypothesised to influence LSM outcomes by determining aspects of an individual participant. They can be linked to relevant established seminal theories, and thereby provide an evidence base from which to generalise these aspects to inform better LSM practice. This strong application of the perspective of the individual addresses one of the major shortcomings of the existing best-practice LSM literature, and thereby expands LSM theory and practice. The following provides a brief overview of each of the additional CSFs that support this objective:

Quality of interpersonal interactions: It is apparent from the research participants' responses that a major factor determining how they experienced the Program is the quality of interpersonal interactions. This is central to the role of the consultant (McGivern 1983) but also relevant to interpersonal interactions between each research participant and other individuals, such as the direct line manager, the HR Program Manager or any other stakeholder. The quality of interpersonal relationships has been identified as "critical in distinguishing between more and less successful processes" in the context of family-firm succession (Cabrera-Suárez 2005, p. 71). It has also been linked to well-established theories such as social capital (Burt 1997) and identified as a key element of an effective coaching alliance (Kemp 2012). It has received little explicit attention in the context of best-practice LSM.

Effective communication: Participant responses demonstrate the importance of the various communication aspects of LSM practice, including how the program is communicated and what interactions contribute to it. The aspect of communication has had some, albeit limited,

acknowledgment as a success factor in LSM outcomes (e.g. Kasper 2008; Reid & Gilmour 2009). Leibman, Bruer and Maki (1996) highlight that succession management ideally incorporates open and transparent communication that includes a focus on achieving better performance outcomes from executives. In the context of family-business succession, Dalpiaz, Tracey and Phillips (2014) state that “succession is not just about rationality; language and meaning also play an important role” (p. 1377). Their research examines the role of narratives in the context of family-business succession. In the context of management succession, Kasper (2008) states that “communication from the senior management stewards down to the lowest levels of selecting managers should be continual and consistent, and should also define the purpose of succession planning within the organization as well as the expectations for selecting managers within the process of the program” (p. 74). It is noteworthy that Kasper’s study explores the effectiveness of the communication processes and concludes that “organizations need to perform critical internal examinations of their current methods and strategies for the communication of their succession planning programs” (p. xii). At the same time, in contrast to the present research, the author’s study explores the role of communication from the perspective of the organisation, not the individual.

Motivation and mindset: The cases highlight the importance of the research participants’ motivations, particularly in relation to follow-up and change. The majority of research participants expressed a willingness to learn and grow, and an intention to be proactive in pursuing a structured approach to their development. In relation to LSM, the aspect of motivation has not been covered in detail. For example, Charan et al. (2011) highlight that many senior executives are reluctant to change, and that this detracts from LSM outcomes, but do not discuss how to address this. Similarly, “self-motivation” has been identified as a relevant intra-personal factor in leadership-development outcomes (Day 2000, p. 584) without further explanation of how this shapes development outcomes. In exploring this aspect within relevant frameworks of established seminal theory, it is worth considering the existing literature on motivational theories such as self-determination (e.g. Deci & Ryan 1985), social learning (Bandura 1991), self-regulation and goal-setting (Locke 1989), models of human change (e.g. Boyatzis 2008), developmental mindset (e.g. Dweck 2000) and adult development (e.g. Kegan & Lahey 2010). Particularly noteworthy are findings regarding the conditions that promote motivation, including a perceived sense of autonomy, competence in one’s ability to achieve a task or goal and positive relationships (Deci & Ryan 1985). Similarly, Dweck (2017) identifies individuals’ motivational patterns as a key aspect to successful change in connection with their overall learning orientation. Relevant research

also includes the role of mindset based on underlying assumptions about changeability (Dweck 2017; Heslin & VandeWalle 2008) and developmental beliefs (Eagleson & Susing 2014).

Psychological safety and trust: Somewhat surprisingly, most research participants were explicit about not being concerned about confidentiality and expressed trust in the process. They stated that they were willing to share their feedback reports with their manager and other relevant stakeholders. Some even indicated that they were planning to share the report with their direct reports. At the same time, some research participants prioritised becoming visible to the more senior leaders of the Sponsor Organisation, as well as expressing concern about how the reporting output portrayed them, including their performance and potential. This indicates a political dimension of the process which, together with the cultural aspects, Tichy (2014) identifies as a relevant part of succession processes that need to be “tackled head on” (p. 183). In understanding these aspects within the framework of established theory, it is worth considering the existing literature on psychological safety and trust. Day (2000) highlights the importance of psychological safety, which he defines as a belief that a particular environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking, as a support for leadership-development outcomes. According to the author, it describes. Argyris (1991) observes that senior executives may not engage in learning and development, and instead react defensively to feedback when there is a lack of psychological safety. Psychological safety has also been proven to be a relevant mediator in relation to team performance (Edmondson 1999) and action-learning initiatives (Schein & Bennis 1965). Linked to the aspect of psychological safety is the role of trust in organisations (e.g. Kramer & Tyler 1995), which has been raised as a determinant of organisational effectiveness, as well as leader-follower outcomes (Ballinger et al. 2009). A better understanding of psychological safety and trust in relation to LSM is likely to inform better practice and outcomes.

4.5 Interview-response coding overview

Table 4.3 summarises the coding responses for each of the CSFs by research participant. (Section 3.3.4 details how the coding was done.) It demonstrates the rigour that has been applied to generating and analysing the data: 484 coded responses in total. Responses per CSF varied between 13 and 65, with at least one response per variable for each research participant. Responses per research participant varied between a low of 30 for Participants 5 and 10 and a high of 48 for Participant 11, indicating that some of the research participants generated more relevant data than others. The wide range of responses for different CSFs is explained by some of these CSFs covering multiple aspects. For example, “High-quality

assessment data” includes responses that considered the degree to which research participants perceived the rigour and usefulness of the findings communicated through the feedback and development report, and their perceptions of the 360-degree feedback process and data. Similarly, responses coded to understand “Motivation and mindset” include responses that explored each research participant’s understanding of their leadership potential and motivation to engage in follow-up.

Table 4.3: Number of coded responses by research participant

Key LSM CSF variable	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10	Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Coded Responses
Reflects organisational needs and culture	1	1	4	2	2	4	5	1	1	1	4	1	1	28
Transparent, flexible and continuous process	5	4	3	7	3	2	3	4	2	4	4	4	3	48
Integration with HR talent management	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	20
Line-management ownership	3	2	4	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	5	2	3	36
Visible senior-leader support	4	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	1	2	23
Regular review of progress and process	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	18
Link to organisational strategy	1	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	4	1	4	3	2	26
Large, flexible pool of potential successors	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	21
High-quality assessment data	8	2	5	5	4	5	4	8	9	2	6	3	2	63
Individualised development	4	4	2	3	3	5	2	4	2	3	3	4	4	43
Consider internal and external talent	1	4	3	1	2	1	5	5	2	2	3	1	2	32
Quality of interpersonal interactions	4	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	4	2	5	1	1	27
Effective communication	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
Motivation and mindset	5	6	11	2	4	5	3	3	3	4	6	7	6	65
Psychological safety and trust	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	3	2	1	21
Total coded responses	43	31	43	32	30	40	40	38	39	30	48	35	35	484

Source: Author

4.6 Chapter conclusion

In addition to addressing research question 4 and explaining how CSFs relate to the experiences and attitudes of individual research participants, the chapter has provided a better understanding of how varied the circumstances and perspectives of different senior executives can be. Furthermore, the cases provide a basis for identifying additional CSFs that are likely to be relevant to LSM outcomes. In considering how the observations and findings can inform better LSM practice, the following chapter will consider each of the CSFs, including the additional ones identified from the 13 case interviews.

Chapter 5: Cross-Participant Contingent Success Factor Analysis

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter examines the contingent success factors (CSFs) identified in Chapters 2 and 4 to develop a more nuanced understanding of how each CSF relates to the research participants' experiences. It considers how similarities and differences between the research participants' responses may inform LSM practice and theory. This provides the basis for an approach to LSM that considers the needs and preferences of individual executives, and thereby contributes to closing the Knowing-Doing Gap identified in Chapter 2. It is achieved in two parts: by considering how the research participants related to each CSF and by identifying how additional CSFs can inform LSM practice.

5.2 Multiple coding of interview responses

There were 116 interview responses that represented data for two or more CSFs. The following provides an example of a research participants' comment that represented data for more than one CSF: *"[Consultant] was saying how it's all kept confidential and it's not a rating process and I said 'I'd be pretty disappointed if that is the sole outcome'. I mean in an organisation like this, you hope the inputs are actually being used for a greater overall performance of the organisation."*

This comment represents data for four different variables: "Integration with HR talent management" (regarding the use of inputs), "Quality of interpersonal interactions" (regarding the consultant's way of engaging), "Reflects organisational needs and culture" (regarding what the organisation is like) and "Psychological safety" (regarding confidentiality). Table 5.1 summarises the aggregated and multiple coded interview responses according to each CSF.

Table 5.1: Unique, aggregate and multiple coded responses by CSF

Contingent success factor (CSF)	Reflects organisational needs	Transparent, flexible and continuous process	Integration with HR talent	Line-management ownership	Visible senior-leader support	Regular review of progress and process	Link to organisational strategy	Large, flexible pool of potential successors	High-quality assessment data	Individualised development	Consider internal and external talent	Quality of interpersonal interactions	Effective communication	Motivation and mindset	Psychological safety	Total multiple coded responses
Reflects organisational needs and culture	28															8
Transparent, flexible and continuous process	1	25														10
Integration with HR talent management	1	1	20													11
Line-management ownership	1	0	0	23												7
Visible senior-leader support	1	0	1	1	23											3
Regular review of progress and process	0	0	0	0	0	18										1
Link to organisational strategy	0	0	0	0	0	0	26									3
Large, flexible pool of potential successors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21								1
High-quality assessment data	1	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	34							17
Individualised development	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	26						7
Consider internal and external talent	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	32					5
Quality of interpersonal interactions	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	27				20
Effective communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	13			2
Motivation and mindset	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	28		7
Psychological safety	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	0	0	21	14
Total aggregate coded responses	36	35	31	30	26	19	29	22	51	33	37	47	15	35	35	

Source: Author

As demonstrated above, coded responses that applied to multiple CSFs varied between each of the CSFs. For example, the highest number occurred with “Quality of interpersonal interactions” which had 20 responses that also applied to other variables. This includes nine responses that also applied to “Psychological safety” because of the likely connection between interpersonal trust and intra-personal psychological safety (as discussed in Section 5.3.12.) “Quality of interpersonal interactions” also had three coded responses that applied to “Transparent, flexible and continuous process” and “High-quality assessment data”. To the extent relevant, the analysis below explains such links between variables.

5.3 Cross-participant CSF analysis

The analysis builds on the detail, including the relevant literature, set out in Chapter 2, as well as the additional CSFs identified in Chapter 4. CSFs appear in the order of the key phases of the LSM Framework and the additional CSFs relevant to individuals. In accordance with the research methodology set out in Chapter 3, each cross-participant CSF analysis contains a brief explanation of the context and relevance for including the variable in the overall analysis, an overview of responses specific to the particular CSF and key observations from various research participants as they are beneficial to LSM practice. Relevant findings are summarised in the form of an “LSM Practice Deduction”. In essence, the practice deductions describe the “so what” of the research participants’ observations.

The analysis of the research participants' responses does not consider quantitative measures of qualitative responses; for example, it does not specify the number of research participants who provided a particular response. Rather, it distinguishes between unique responses and those that were provided by "some" or "many". Where responses have been categorised generally as provided by "research participants", this was completed based the similarity between a significant number of participants, typically at least seven of 13 responses, and where there were no conflicting responses. Working within these broader distinctions, rather than basing the analysis on specific numbers of responses, was necessary to convey sufficient detail of known practices and thereby meet the objectives of this research.

The following sections discuss each CSF in order of the key phases of the LSM Framework, identified in Section 2.6.2.

5.3.1 Reflects organisational needs and culture

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a key aspect determining LSM outcomes is whether the Program meets the needs, and is consistent with the culture, of the organisation. The present research therefore explored the research participants' perspectives regarding the extent to which the prevailing culture of the organisation supports the Program. In addition, the analysis includes the research participants' perceptions of the Program's benefits and its link to organisational performance. These additional aspects are pertinent to the needs of the organisation, particularly the Sponsor Organisation's investment of money, senior executives' time and resources. Research participants' responses on this topic covered general descriptors of the culture, positive as well as negative aspects, prior experiences and their views on how culture can best support leadership development and succession management. The responses also covered observations that the LSM program would likely benefit the future performance of the Sponsor Organisation.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants described the culture of the Sponsor Organisation as "unique", "strong", "focused on continuous improvement", "absolutely walking the talk with development" and "not at odds with how they generally go about business in terms of their approach to people and how we can improve". They commented that although the Program was different to other experiences, it was generally consistent with the Sponsor Organisation and its leaders' approach to leadership development. At the same time, some research participants commented on "talent identification [being] all over the place", there being "a massive void for many years in terms of developing people" and "the organisation [being] very poor at training". It is noteworthy that the majority of these negative comments were made in reference to only one of the five

Operating Companies. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that one research participant contrasted his negative comment with a positive statement about the organisation having “*finally gotten the point*” where they “*recognise people who have the right values and capabilities, and support them to be future leaders*”. This is consistent with a number of responses from other research participants that suggest that the organisational culture did not historically support LSM, but that this has been changing in line with a new strategy and the LSM Program. Overall, responses suggest an inconsistent view of the Sponsor Organisation’s existing culture. Research participants effectively differentiated between a historical view of the culture and a future-oriented view, which is considered more positive toward and supportive of LSM practice. This suggests that the Program represents a positive signal regarding the culture of the Sponsor Organisation.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Research participants demonstrated an intuitive understanding of the interactions between strategy, capabilities, leadership talent and culture. They also drew a natural link between capabilities, learning and organisational effectiveness. The following representative comment describes this: “*We’ve really got to understand what capability and what expertise do we already have in this organisation that allows us to properly train and nurture and influence culture within that next series of managers that are going to be running this place.*”

Research participants also highlighted the importance of numerous senior leaders aligning around a single goal. They considered that the Program provides important clarity and energises the collective to achieve this goal. One research participant commented: “*Homogenising the business is a big thing and the speed of that happening and the relationships and the senior teams worshipping a single goal.*” Alignment with the required capabilities is also important. For example, if a key strategic priority is for the organisation to be more connected, this requires senior leaders to be both willing and able to collaborate.

Practice deduction #1: Align the organisation’s senior leaders around a shared strategic goal and its corresponding capabilities.

Research participants pointed to a disconnect between the Sponsor Organisation’s formal and informal practices. As an example, one research participant commented on the annual performance review, which stands in contrast with ongoing conversations about performance and development: “*I talk to my boss every day and we fill out a form to tick a box in some HR process. Managing people is an ongoing, constant process. It’s not twice a year you sit down. If that’s what it is, it’s a waste of time.*”

Practice deduction #2: Consider actual practices such as ongoing performance and talent conversations between research participants and their managers.

Research participants commented that the organisational way of operating should support embedding development in their day-to-day environment. One explained that after functional training, *“people walk out of the room and carry on with their normal life”* He added that when development can be brought into the operational environment *“that’s where development really occurs”*. Another talked about the culture of sharing information with a wide group of people so that *“we can all learn a bit from that”*.

Practice deduction #3: Embed development in the organisation’s work practices to support action learning.

5.3.2 Transparent, flexible and continuous process

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM includes ensuring that the LSM process is transparent, flexible and continuous. Whilst this has been explored in the scholarly literature from the perspective of the organisation, the attitudes of participants toward these aspects have not. The literature suggests that there are two distinct aspects of transparency: the LSM processes that exist within the organisation (Garman & Glawe 2004; Karaevli & Hall 2003) and the status of potential successors (Conger & Fulmer 2003). The literature also points to different dimensions of flexibility, including designing the LSM program to suit the organisation’s requirements as well as the individual participants’, and adjusting a program in line with organisational changes, including those that occur during the program (Conger & Fulmer 2003; Garman & Glawe 2004). These dimensions are distinct from the flexibility that a number of authors have identified by focusing on large pools of potential successors, which affords flexibility in filling potential vacancies (Section 2.6.2.1). Furthermore, the concept of ensuring an ongoing, continuous process is also linked to the concept of integrating LSM processes within other HR talent-management practices, as discussed in the next section.

General responses related to CSF: Participants did not consider that the Sponsor Organisation was transparent with respect to its LSM processes. Representative responses included *“not transparent”*, *“not very visible”*, *“not generally happening”* and *“no transparency”*. With respect to the Program as a specific initiative, as opposed to the overall LSM process, the research participants’ responses varied in terms of how visible they considered the Program to be. Some commented that it was clearly visible and others had the opposite view. One

said, *“I’m not sure that there’s any real recognition that the Program exists other than for the people that are invited to participate in it”*. Another stated that there are frequent program initiatives within the organisation that are not easily distinguishable. Some demonstrated awareness of other individuals, usually their manager, having participated as part of a prior cohort of the same Program. Of these, some recognised that it was the same Program and others did not.

Overall, research participants’ impressions suggested that flexibility was relevant and important. Crucial was the reportedly personalised approach of the consultant, who sought to engage with each Program participant by first understanding their backgrounds and prior experiences (Section 5.3.12). The Program approach included a reflective writing exercise that required its participants to consider relevant prior career experiences and future career ambitions. Instructions for this activity emphasised the flexibility of being able to respond in ways ranging from “high-level bullet points” to “extensive and detailed explanations”. Flexibility was also expressed in terms of the process, which could be used to enhance performance in the current role, or identify areas for development relevant for success in a more senior role. Numerous comments noted the Program’s flexibility with respect to content, ranging from personal to practical, workplace-oriented challenges.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: The research participants’ responses suggest that the Sponsor Organisation should be transparent about their LSM processes but not openly disclose who is considered a potential successor. One research participant described the impact of a lack of visibility of how decisions are made as potentially diminishing the authority of the individual who is appointed, and this being demotivating to others. Another commented, *“I don’t think there needs to be detail around the individuals, there needs to be transparency around the process”*. Indeed, responses suggest that it is unhelpful for others in the organisation to have transparency regarding who are being considered as potential successors. Adverse consequences included unhealthy competition amongst executives, a perception that appointments were not necessarily based on merit, the risk of losing high-performing leaders who miss out and potential distraction from achieving important business outcomes. This is also consistent with the concept of having a “large, flexible pool” of succession candidates (Section 5.3.8).

Research participants commented that the selection of Program participants was not clear, and they questioned the rigour of this part of the process. One research participant commented that the issue of selecting Program participants was the subject of discussion and created some tension. Another research participant commented:

There were 70 selected. Just because they're the most senior ones, does that make them the right ones? I knew of some that didn't get selected that in my opinion should have, and certainly a whole heap that did get selected that you wouldn't. So the program itself is one thing but putting the right people is another, or at least having some filtering process to see who qualifies.

Practice deduction #4: Make the process and the criteria used to determine potential transparent but keep the identity of potential successors confidential.

Overall, responses suggest that it might be problematic for a leadership-development program to be perceived as an exclusive high-potential talent initiative, as this may create divisions and become demotivating to individuals who are valued but not necessarily considered to have potential to move to a more senior role. Some research participants suggested that it might be better to be transparent with individuals about their assessment of potential and how this relates to future career options. For example, one said, *"Always fall on the transparent side. If you're being honest with people then at least they know their choices"*. Another indicated that transparency was not important because the priority was to have sufficient information to make a reliable appointment decision rather than to inform individuals about career options.

Practice deduction #5: Emphasise leadership development and consider different development needs depending on the extent to which individuals are being identified as high-potential.

5.3.3 Integration with HR talent management

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM ensures that the process is integrated with the organisations' existing HR talent-management practices. The two aspects most relevant to this in the current research are how the research participants viewed succession management and their perceptions regarding the use of the assessment data that was generated as part of the Program. Interview responses covered these two aspects, with research participants adopting the perspective of the organisation as well as their own, and naturally linked the data generated from the Program to how it is relevant to individual development, organisational performance and strategic change priorities. As discussed below, some responses to this CSF are also linked to other variables, including transparency of the succession-management process, considering internal and external talent, flexibility of process, senior leader support and high-quality assessment data.

General responses related to CSF: Participants generally expected senior management to use the reported feedback and development data to make better-informed decisions,

including about succession appointments. Notwithstanding, data was primarily seen to inform development priorities.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Even though the Program communication stated that the information was not intended for use in succession decisions, research participants stated that they would expect the information to affect such decisions, at least informally. Other comments similarly implied that it would be impossible to ignore the data in making succession decisions, and that it therefore would be better to make this a transparent and explicit part of the process. Some research participants stated that even though the data might be used in this way, the report only represented one of a number of sources of data for succession decisions. Overall, the research participants' responses indicate that they were comfortable with the Sponsor Organisation using available information as an integrated part of the talent-management strategy, including in succession decisions.

Practice deduction #6: Be clear and transparent about how the organisation is using assessment information, including its use in succession decisions.

Research participants' responses implied a distinction between formal and informal uses of the Program data. On the one hand, the data represented the foundation for individuals' ongoing development; on the other, it was seen as informally supporting line-management relationships. Responses emphasised the opportunity to help research participants' direct line managers understand them better. One research participant commented, *"What's in my interest is to have my organisation or my boss understand me in the best possible way, and, actually, this piece of data can serve that purpose quite well."* A number of research participants also stated that they intended to use their feedback reports with incoming management because the Program itself was not going to go forward. As another example, one research participant commented on his approval of the outgoing Group CEO using the data to understand the motivation of senior executives of the Sponsor Organisation.

Practice deduction #7: Use assessment data formally, for reporting and for making decisions about development and succession, as well as informally, to support better line-management relationships and interactions.

Responses indicated that integration with HR talent management applies at the individual as well as organisational level. At the individual level, research participants acknowledged that the Program data was intended to support each person's development. At an organisational level, Program data was seen to benefit successful execution of strategic change through a focus on leadership capabilities. The Program aggregated the various scores

of all Program participants to inform the target leadership capabilities of the Sponsor Organisation. For example, the Sponsor Organisation was surprised to find out that the majority of its 93 Program participants were strong on commercial acumen, but that they collectively lacked an understanding of what it takes to be seen as a senior leader in the business. In this context, the change of management control was perceived as a detriment to the organisation. One research participant commented, *“My expectation was that the information would be used. It hasn’t been used. That’s a failing, but not necessarily the Program’s fault.”*

Practice deduction #8: Use aggregate data to inform overall succession readiness as well as collective organisational leadership capabilities.

5.3.4 Line-management ownership

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM ensures that line management has primary ownership of and accountability for LSM activities and outcomes. This includes the support offered by the relevant line manager to achieve development outcomes (Kuvaas & Dysvik 2010). It also includes ensuring accountability and follow up to the 360-degree feedback process (Young et al. 2016), which is relevant to the Sponsor Organisation’s Program. Hence, exploring the research participants’ attitudes and perceptions in relation to line-manager support and accountability is an important contribution to a better understanding of best-practice LSM.

Responses on this topic covered the status of the research participants’ follow-up with their managers, expectations about their manager’s role in supporting the Program, the relevance of their manager’s involvement and the impact of the change of management control on manager relationships. They also addressed the research participants’ perceptions of the roles of different individual stakeholders, including the Program participants’ line manager. At a group level, responses covered distinctions between the board, Group executive team, Operating Company leadership and the group of Program participants. The analysis of responses indicated links to a number of other variables, including, as would be expected, visible senior-leader support and regular review of progress and process.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants recognised that the primary responsibility to act on the evaluation and feedback reporting data was theirs, but highlighted that the full support of their direct line manager was fundamental to their ability to do so. As one research participant stated, *“The process makes me accountable for my career and the organisation is invested in my career. I’m talent and that has to align with what is good for me as an individual.”* Overall, responses suggest that it is critical for the direct line manager to be supportive of the LSM

program, whilst also ensuring that there is a shared sense of ownership and accountability with each program participant.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Some responses suggest that it represents a powerful endorsement if the line manager and any other more senior leader can talk about their own positive experiences with the Program. One research participant described the importance of the manager relationship and how this translates into informal development opportunities: *“Getting the tap on the shoulder from your boss – ‘This is important, I really want you to do this and it can really help’ – is a much better way.”* Similarly, research participants considered managers who could share their own development plans with their direct reports to be more effective in supporting their reports’ development, and saw them as authentic and better able to build trust and rapport.

Practice deduction #9: Cascade programs from the top down starting at the most senior executives, who can then share their first-hand experience as a form of endorsement.

Nearly all research participants expected to share their evaluation reports with their manager, but only some reported that they had actually done so or had had recent discussions on their development. They expressed that following up with their manager was highly desirable, but that it was up to the manager to initiate such engagement. One research participant stated:

It’s important that your line manager is fully supportive of this and is driving this as well. If someone like [Group CEO] called you up and said, ‘Wanna do it?’, it would still have the same importance to me. But it’s probably more important, more valuable, if your line manager has been through it and understands it.

Some research participants reported that they had had mixed experiences and that it depended on the individual manager whether they would proactively raise development plans. One commented that sharing the report with the manager might not have been needed because the manager’s *“input to the 360-degree feedback is what is valuable”*. Another stated, *“Follow-up always depends on the interest of our direct manager. If he had an interest in your career progression, he would have made sure that that there is follow through.”* Responses recognised the importance of the line manager in ensuring follow-up but they suggest significant differences in how research participants viewed their line manager’s support.

Practice deduction #10: Ensure line-manager accountability, but also encourage program participants to initiate conversations with their manager.

Responses suggest that the extent to which a manager was motivated to support the development varied in the Sponsor Organisation. This also implies more generally that managers need to have the motivation, skills, knowledge and experience to support the development of program participants.

Practice deduction #11: Ensure that managers have the motivation and ability to support the development of potential successors.

5.3.5 Visible senior-leader support

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, visible senior-leader support has been widely identified in the LSM literature as a key variable in best-practice approaches. Exploring this variable as part of the research provides an opportunity to illuminate how the research participants experienced the involvement of the Group CEO and other senior leaders of the Sponsor Organisation. This variable differs to manager support in that it captures a wider concept beyond the direct manager-subordinate relationship. It describes whether the leadership of an organisation, represented by certain roles, such as the Group CEO and members of the group executive team, are supportive of a particular initiative or program. As such it is related to, and arguably an indicator of, the organisational culture.

Conversations with research participants on this topic covered different aspects of senior-leader support, including how visible it was, who was associated with it and how it was relevant to them. Data was somewhat more limited relative to other CSFs because of the overlap with the variable “Line-management ownership”, which had a number of combined responses associated with each other.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants considered the support of the senior leadership as very important, in part because it signalled the relevance and value of the Program. This visibility was largely achieved through direct and indirect communication, including a direct personal invitation from the Group CEO to each research participant. On this basis, the research participants clearly recognised the Program as a n initiative sponsored by the “business leadership”, rather than an HR-led one. Nearly all research participants drew a clear connection to the Sponsor Organisation’s Group CEO. They associated him with being a visible supporter of the Program, but not responsible for its outcomes. He was described as “*a great stalwart of the Program*”, “*using the information to have meaningful conversations*”, “*relatively new and the Program being one of the things he wanted*” and “*using the Program to inform himself about the depth and strength of leadership talent in the organisation*”. Research participants recognised that the Group HRD had primary responsibility for the success of the Program, but that this

was also shared by virtue of being “*led by the business*”. In some cases it also became apparent that the relevant Operating Company MD’s support was visible to and valued by the research participants, including the fact that the MDs had previously participated in the same Program. Some identified the board as one of the sponsors, which was consistent with how the Program was communicated. Others identified the Group CFO as well as the Operating Company MDs and their HR leaders as having actively supported the Program, even though this was not part of the official Program-related communications.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Responses suggest that senior support seemed personally relevant to the research participants in a number of ways:

- a. The availability of senior leaders was considered highly constrained, such that any priority they were seen to support signalled its importance and value;
- b. The support of senior leaders represented an opportunity for participants to become more visible to them, which represented a perceived political advantage; and
- c. Senior-leader involvement in the Program represented an opportunity to gain greater clarity regarding operational and strategic priorities, and to inform relationships and personalities. For example, one research participant suggested that the Program personally benefited the Group CEO by providing clarity, which he would need because of having been thrust into the role.

Overall, the research participants’ responses point to a challenge of involving senior leaders, and suggest that this can be mitigated by focusing on how the LSM program is supporting important business priorities.

Practice deduction #12: Involve senior leaders by supporting strategic business outcomes, and ensure this is visible to participants.

Research participants also identified interactions with peer leaders as a valuable support mechanism. Responses suggest that these may be formal and structured or informal and unstructured. One research participant stated, “*I know six people who I didn’t know and we meet once a month and we talk about what goes on in our world and we share stuff.*” The research participant added that peer interactions are not necessarily associated with direct outcomes; rather, they are based on a collective desire to improve. Other research participants’ responses suggest a potentially valuable support benefit through group-based interactions.

Practice deduction #13: Extend senior-leader support to group and peer-based interactions.

Responses need to be considered in the context that, in general, the HR function was not highly valued, with one research participant stating, “*Now most of us think the HR practices and processes are rubbish.*” Another commented, “*That it was not just another HR exercise was very obvious from the beginning.*” Although the concept of HR-led programs was generally not seen as positive, the research participants were clear about the need to involve the HR function in addition to line management. One commented, “*I get plenty of things from HR and it’s often a box ticking exercise. HR do lots of surveys, but it wouldn’t have had the same impact and it wouldn’t have got my attention, to be honest.*” At the same time, many research participants spoke very positively about the role HR played, particularly the Group HRD and the HR Program Lead, who were seen as instrumental in designing the Program as well as managing the process, including communications. Comments suggested that the HR function provided the technical expertise and input to design the program and manage the process, whilst business leaders were responsible for execution and outcomes. The research participants also indicated that the quality of the personnel involved and their ability to engage with participants were relevant.

Practice deduction #14: Ensure a business-led approach involving experienced, commercial, pragmatic and credible HR personnel.

5.3.6 Regular review of progress and process

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM ensures regular reviews of progress and process. The rationale for investigating this CSF is to understand the research participants’ perceptions and attitudes relating to the importance of following up on evaluation processes and creating accountability for outcomes, with a particular focus on linking development objectives to performance expectations. This is consistent with Van Velsor and colleagues (2007), who highlight the importance of measuring individual outcomes to leadership development, including “action plans and goals” (p. 261).

Interview responses in relation to this CSF covered the appropriateness and actual experience of formalising development goals and, importantly, the range of practical challenges associated with reviewing progress from the research participants’ perspective. As would be expected, responses grouped under this CSF were closely linked to other variables including “Individualised development”, “Integration with HR talent management” and “Line-manager support”.

General responses related to CSF: In exploring attitudes to incorporate development objectives in their annual performance plan as a form of creating accountability, research

participants used phrases such as “*positive*”, “*a good idea*”, “*not a worry to me*”, “*not an issue for me*”, “*entirely appropriate*” and “*the right thing to do but inherently difficult to do*”.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Research participants generally recognised that formalising development objectives as part of the annual performance plan would promote a focus on outcomes and create accountability. As one suggested, “*Having a development component to your performance with two to three priorities and define some very specific goals and outcomes that are measurable would be a positive, absolutely*”. Another stated, “*To realise change, you need to have a bit of structure around it and a performance development plan*”.

Practice deduction #15: Promote accountability for development outcomes by incorporating development objectives within annual performance plans.

Even though many research participants considered the inclusion of development objectives as part of performance plans as a positive, many also raised challenges with doing this:

- a. Measures linked to development outcomes are not necessarily tangible, and may be better dealt with as part of the informal discussions;
- b. Time frames involving development are often longer, which is inconsistent with annual plans;
- c. Set development objectives potentially imply a lack of flexibility to reflect changing conditions;
- d. There may be trade-offs or mutually exclusive objectives between the organisation and the individual, which represent obstacles to defining the individual’s specific development objectives;
- e. Over-reliance on too many KPIs as part of the performance process, which makes it too cumbersome to track them; and
- f. Performance reviews often not being managed consistently.

To address these challenges, research participants highlighted a number of solutions. For instance, one suggested the use of balanced scorecards that are aligned with organisational strategy, which have been found useful in ensuring development objectives are included. To address the perceived challenge that many development objectives are intangible, another research participant stated that development objectives should adhere to the principle of “*BOOM – bloody obvious, observable and measurable*”, and that this implies a focus on behavioural outcomes. Similarly, a research participant highlighted the need to prioritise discussions to overcome the inherent difficulty of dealing with qualitative data, and to be

“intentional about what is to be achieved at the same level as the ‘rigour’, which is applied to the ‘hard system’”. Another suggested that development objectives can focus on incorporating development in achieving business outcomes; for example, achieving greater profitability by educating and empowering staff to achieve cost efficiencies.

Practice deduction #16: Ensure that development outcomes are specific and measurable, yet that development plans are personally relevant and flexible to changing circumstances.

5.3.7 Link to organisational strategy

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM reflects the strategic priorities of the organisation. In practical terms this involves identifying specific leadership capabilities that support such outcomes and targeting development initiatives to raise awareness and skill in these areas. The output of this process is commonly captured through the leadership-capability frameworks of competency models (Hollenbeck et al. 2006). In the case of the Sponsor Organisation, eight leadership capabilities made up the capability framework, including, for example, “living Group values”, “collaborating across the Group” and “driving transformational change”. These were then used to assess the research participants’ responses, which covered the relevance of capabilities with respect to the Sponsor Organisation’s strategy and each individual’s specific context.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants commented that they were clear about the concept of “capability” as well as the identified leadership capabilities. Phrases to describe this included “*second nature*”, “*very relevant*”, “*certainly meaningful*” and “*quite clear to me*”. Other somewhat qualified responses referred to “*most being obvious*”, “*once spoken about, they were clear*” and “*they made sense once they were explained in detail*”.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: The capabilities were generally regarded as helpful in providing clarity about the type of behaviours on which a successful leader needs to focus. Research participants’ responses suggested a number of distinctions relevant to the capabilities:

- a. The individual compared to the organisation – responses differed between the extent to which capabilities were seen to be relevant to supporting organisational outcomes and to identifying leadership behaviours that help each individual to be more effective;
- b. The strategic compared to operational needs of the Sponsor Organisation – although research participants did not generally link capabilities to strategic

priorities, responses generally acknowledged that the capabilities were aimed at supporting strategic priorities rather than progressing “*day-to-day performance issues*”; and

- c. Different work levels, including differences of leadership and managerial responsibilities – research participants’ comments indicated that all capabilities are relevant to an extent, but some are more relevant given the context of a particular role or level.

Overall, the capabilities appeared useful to the research participants; however, their responses suggested that this usefulness could be improved by creating a clearer link between individuals and organisational outcomes.

Practice deduction #17: Consider capabilities within different dimensions including (a) at the organisational, group and individual level, (b) strategic and operational capabilities and (c) different work-levels.

Capabilities were generally considered to represent standard or “generic” leadership capabilities rather than being context-specific. For example, one research participant commented, “*How I made sense was that these capabilities were just logical statements about core competencies of a leader.*” At the same time, some responses indicated that the capabilities provided a helpful organisational context at a group-wide level. It is noteworthy that, in response to asking research participants to name the capabilities, none could recall the eight capabilities in detail, and only two referred to two or three of them by name. This finding must be considered in the context of the Program disruption and the delay between the Program conclusion and the research interview.

Practice deduction #18: Incorporate a strong contextual link between leadership capabilities and organisational strategy, and make explicit how the capabilities are personally relevant to participants.

Some responses indicated that the capabilities were limited in their usefulness because they focused more on group strategy and less on operational capabilities. At the same time, one research participant commented that despite the apparent focus on group strategy and senior-leader impact, capabilities nevertheless provided an opportunity in other contexts, including at the operational project level. He suggested, for example, that “governance” could easily be framed to be relevant at both the strategic and operational levels by defining different behaviours. In a response that suggested a link to “Organisational needs and culture” (Section 5.3.1), another research participant commented on the importance of

ensuring that the rationale for each capability was consistent with the culture and values of the organisation. The above responses may be influenced by the fact that the vast majority of research participants were not part of the Holding Company, and none were members of the Group executive.

Practice deduction #19: Be flexible by emphasising a range of operational and strategic priorities and associated leadership capabilities depending on need and context.

5.3.8 Large, flexible pool of potential successors

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM considers a large and flexible pool of leadership talent whose members are potential successors. The rationale for investigating this variable is to explore to what extent research participants' perceptions regarding this aspect were relevant to informing LSM best practice. Berns and Klarner (2017) point to the importance of having a pool of qualified CEO succession candidates as part of a pipeline of potential leaders. They refer to research by Helmich and Brown (1972) that demonstrates that large organisations tend to naturally have larger numbers of internal successor candidates. This however is different to LSM practice that deliberately promotes a large pool of candidates who are developed as potential successors without having to identify specific roles (Karaevli & Hall 2003; Reid 2005). Similarly, Watt and Busine (2005) associate the concept of large pools with accelerating the organisation's development of potential leadership. More recently, Groves (2018) refers to strategic talent pools, which represent groups of individuals who are characterised as having potential in capabilities that support specific strategic priorities.

Responses on this aspect covered the extent to which research participants were aware of the Program being a large LSM initiative and to which they perceived the value of focusing on a large-group approach, and how this compared with what was personally important to them. Given that the research participants covered related aspects, some of the responses coded under this variable also provided data for "Transparent, flexible and continuous process" and "Integration with HR talent management".

General responses related to CSF: Some research participants were not aware of the large number of Program participants, but many suggested that this was appropriate given the organisation's size. They considered the advantages of a large pool to be consistency in how leadership talent is recognised in the organisation and in the organisational understanding of what a successful leader looks like, the existence of a benchmark for leadership development

and support for organisational change and strategy execution. One research participant commented:

There's an analogy that says "do you want to get one individual to move 100 feet forward or do you get 100 individuals to move one foot forward?" Where do you get the best improvement? I would suspect a hundred individuals moving one foot forward as a group is better than one individual going 100 feet.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: The research participants saw value in understanding how they compared to other senior leaders. Whilst emphasising how personally relevant the Program was in addressing individual needs, nearly all the research participants explicitly commented on the value that group interactions provided to them. One commented, *"The opportunity to interact with those people and hear about some of the experiences that they had through the Program was useful."* Similarly, another said, *"That would be terrific – to meet people from other [operating subsidiaries]."* Yet another commented that an individual coaching program would have been significantly less valuable than being recognised as part of a group of talent. Participants also recognised the value of the diversity and different perspectives that group interactions enable. Representative comments included: *"What I've learnt is that people deal with very similar issues but have very different approaches because they're trained differently. People gave me different views as to guide my own thinking"* and *"Inevitably it is always useful to go and connect with the other leaders that you haven't had exposure to before because you learn things from them. You get different perspectives."*

Practice deduction #20: Incorporate group interactions within talent pools to enhance social connection and participant motivation.

Some research participants contrasted their perceptions with prior large-group program experiences. Some had less-positive experiences and identified a lack of trust that prevented them from being able to engage openly in group interactions. This indicates the relevance of psychological safety and trust (Section 5.3.15). One research participant commented:

As part of another program, one of the interesting observations was that for the first couple of days, there was a lot of posturing, defensiveness, guardedness. The quality of the conversations was quite poor over a short timeframe, and the real benefit came from working together on a project with those people. It was through the prolonged engagement with a small number of people that you're actually getting more productive genuine insights. You need a certain level of rapport and intimacy with people and one or two days is just not enough.

Practice deduction #21: Create psychological safety in group interactions for individuals to be able to engage in development.

Some noteworthy observations and differences between research participants' responses include the following:

- a. Some said that a large pool created the impression of the Program being a performance-management exercise.
- d. One expressed concern about the impact of creating a competitive dynamic between potential succession candidates, stating, *"You may cause politics if you make too big a pool."*
- e. Another highlighted that focusing on a talent pool reduces the risk of creating unrealistic expectations, stating, *"A talent pool offers a wide range of opportunities as opposed to a certain role."*

The different responses suggest that a large talent pool that is highly visible is not necessarily a positive and needs to be considered carefully in LSM initiatives.

Practice deduction #22: Focus on organisation-wide strategic-development pools based on a shared purpose rather than on promotion to specific roles.

5.3.9 High-quality assessment data

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM relies on generating high-quality assessment data that can inform the potential and readiness of a possible successor. The variable is investigated to explore the perception of participants in relation to the approach used to generate assessment data. Specifically, the research is focused on understanding participant responses regarding 360-degree feedback as a key form of generating assessment data within LSM programs (Barnett & Davis 2008; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Reid 2005; Silzer et al. 2016). The approach used in the Program included multiple forms of assessment data. It involved a two-hour semi-structured assessment interview as well as 30-minute semi-structured, generally phone-based, one-on-one interviews with five feedback providers nominated by each Program participant. The approach to 360-degree feedback is different from standardised online surveys. Whilst a detailed discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of different 360-degree feedback approaches is beyond the scope of this research, literature on the topic demonstrates that there are challenges with generating high-quality 360-degree feedback at senior levels (Bracken et al. 2016).

Responses covered participants' prior experiences in relation to 360-degree feedback, their understanding of the experiences of the feedback providers and the quality and

relevance of the data generated from the 360-degree feedback, including what this represented to the participant. There were some linkages in relation to the flexibility of the process as well as the quality of interpersonal interactions, which were part of the feedback process.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants considered the assessment data as having been useful and rigorous, and the way it was generated as efficient. They found the 360-degree feedback to be valuable. They commented on the interview approach being much more conversational than previous experiences involving 360-degree feedback.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Responses suggest that research participants were concerned about subjectivity in what was a complex evaluation that, although rigorous, might not have been totally reliable. They suggest that assessments ideally rely on multiple sources of data to enable reliable and informed decisions on individuals' potential and development needs.

Practice deduction #23: To improve reliability and acceptance by participants, incorporate multiple sources of data in assessing potential successors.

Some research participants commented that the 360-degree feedback process represented an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of feedback providers and inform mutual expectations of their relationship. As one participant remarked, *"The feedback helped me understand what some of my peers were expecting from me and made me think about how I needed to engage with them."* Participants also considered it important that feedback providers receive recognition for their contribution. They indicated that a 360-degree feedback approach, which involves personal interaction, has the advantage of signalling the importance of the providers' opinion.

Practice deduction #24: Use 360-degree feedback to enhance relationships with participants by asking providers about their expectations for the individual.

Participants expressed a number of advantages of the interview-based 360-degree feedback approach, including being able to *"drill down, through commentary, around certain things which you would never get from a clinical form filling exercise"* and overcoming the limitation of *"getting misled by questions on computers and people filling those in quickly"*. One research participant highlighted the value of the *"interesting conversation"* that was *"pretty engaging"*, but that this depended on the skill of the *"people doing it"*.

Practice deduction #25: Create context-rich feedback through a dialogue-based approach to improve understanding.

Most research participants indicated that the 360-degree feedback did not provide significant new insights or surprises, but rather confirmed what they already knew about themselves. This may be due to research participants' protecting their ego; as example of the potential challenge of undergoing the 360-degree feedback process, one research participant explained that it enabled him to understand that his self-view was inconsistent with the view that others had of him. In this specific case the outcome was positive: he stated that the Program helped him understand that his lack of confidence was unfounded in light of the 360-degree feedback data and that this resulted in his having greater confidence. Other comments suggested that participants are more open to taking on challenging negative feedback when this is balanced by positive feedback.

Practice deduction #26: Balance 360-degree feedback by asking about strengths and development needs to make the process safe and improve the probability of individuals accepting the feedback (Section 5.3.15).

Some of the participant comments are noteworthy because of their uniqueness and inconsistency with others' responses:

- a. Some participants stated that they would have liked to have better access to the results of the 360-feedback to get a more complete picture of people's views, whilst others implied that the feedback provided a complete set of information;
- b. Only one research participant commented that the feedback process provided awareness of "*another blind spot*";
- c. Research participants had different views regarding the reliability of data. Some questioned the "biased views of others", while the majority of responses indicated that they considered the interview-based approach to represent a reliable and highly valued aspect of the Program.

Practice deduction #27: Rely on an experienced, credible and skilled evaluator (Section 5.3.12) to generate high-quality assessment data whilst simultaneously engaging individuals positively.

5.3.10 Individualised development

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM incorporates development that meets each individual's unique needs and context. The rationale for investigating this CSF is to better understand the attitudes and perceptions of the research

participants towards their development. Development has received comparatively little explicit and detailed attention in the LSM literature, which has generally identified “development” as an important step without closely examining the factors that contribute to development outcomes. For example, Conger and Fulmer (2003) highlight the challenge of ensuring development happens within “the reality of corporate life” (p. 3). Charan et al. (2011) state that a lack of “incentives and support” often interferes with development. Whilst the Program itself did not cover the development phase, the present research can focus on how the research participants’ expectations and past experience have affected their development. The emphasis is on how development relates to each individual’s current role. This is based on the integration between development and work-based learning (Cappelli 2011), which represents an important distinction in this CSF.

Conversations on this topic covered research participants’ expectations prior to commencing the Program and specific examples of how the Program was relevant to their current roles. The conversations also cover distinctions between more optimal functioning in their current role and developing capabilities for being successful in a more senior role. Responses to exploring this variable were linked to a number of other variables, including a flexible process, integration of individualised development within HR talent-management systems and the quality of interpersonal interactions. These are all informed by each research participant’s specific needs and contexts.

General responses related to CSF: Responses relating to this variable differed among the research participants. Some did not see the Program as being useful to their current role. Others recognised from the outset that the Program would prove useful to their role. One commented that the Program did not have a negative impact on his current role, because of the “*pretty limited time constraints of this Program*”. Overall, the research participants’ responses indicate that development initiatives are best integrated in the context of their current role with the support of the organisation, particularly their line managers (Section 5.3.4).

There are a number of other noteworthy observations in relation to the CSF of ensuring development reflects individual needs and contexts:

- a. Research participants were aware that follow-up represents a critical step, but they were not sure how development could potentially unfold;
- b. Some research participants contrasted the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation, recognising that they may not always be aligned; and
- c. Research participants were aware of the risk of inaction and raised a number of obstacles to follow-up, including competing priorities, a lack of clarity concerning

who was responsible for follow-up and the time frames required to achieve outcomes.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Numerous examples demonstrate the Program focused on enhancing current role performance; comments included “greater clarity of the current context”, “coming up with the latest strategy at moving the business further as a result of the conversations”, “taking a step back and thinking about current priorities” and “a discussion on risk-reward balance which [the research participant] could immediately relate to and take into the day job”. One research participant commented, “The Program focused more on my current role and how to be successful there and less on future options and opportunities because being successful in my current role is the precondition to be successful longer term as well.”

In addition to the benefits related to their professional role, a number of research participants also highlighted the personal benefit they received from the Program, in contrast to its not necessarily providing benefits to the Sponsor Organisation as a consequence of the change of management.

Practice deduction #28: Distinguish between and be flexible about focusing on development relevant to a participant’s current role compared to a more senior level.

Research participants generally recognised that they had areas to develop in their current roles. Some articulated how their role required different capabilities to those needed in the past. One commented that development is ideally “customised to his specific position and capabilities”. Individuals who were new in their roles, and therefore in the process of figuring out the critical priorities and key areas to focus on, particularly emphasised the Program’s relevance to the priorities that were part of their current roles. The responses indicate that the Program provided an opportunity to establish greater clarity in relation to what was supporting performance in their current role, including making decisions and managing relationships. One research participant described this as “gaining an additional perspective on what is resonating with people in terms of effective leadership qualities or capabilities” and using this perspective to “shape and guide how you engage with people on a daily basis”.

Practice deduction #29: Include participants who are new to their roles rather than excluding such participants because they are less relevant to more-immediate succession outcomes.

Research participants’ responses also suggest an important link between their current role priorities and incorporating action-learning principles to implement development. In a

practical sense, this involves setting specific objectives that support role effectiveness while considering how these can be achieved in a developmental way. For example, one research participant's objective of devising a strategic plan for his business unit involved establishing such a plan after a process of extensive socialisation and listening, which represented that individual's development priority. This also included demonstrating greater decisiveness and courage in determining this plan.

Practice deduction #30: Approach planning by integrating development objectives with current role priorities to promote action learning.

Consistent overall with the concept of “work-based” development (Cappelli 2011, p. 673), one research participant suggested that bringing the development process into the operational environment provides a much more effective way of supporting meaningful development outcomes. Some research participants talked about the importance of having a development plan, with one suggesting that it would be valuable to link the detail of the development plan to the “*context of the work environment*”. Another used the phrase “*looking at developing a capability in the context of that person's day-to-day operating environment*”, and commented that this allows participants to “*create the linkage between their default operating mode and the capability they've been exposed to*” and enables “*people to see how it will be relevant and contextually appropriate for the day job*”.

Practice deduction #31: Approach execution by bringing development activities into the participant's operational environment.

Some research participants inferred a trade-off between development and focusing on their current role, and therefore considered that development initiatives needed to be implemented over time. Responses also indicated another trade-off in relation to the effort required for the Program and the benefits was likely to provide. A number of research participants articulated a belief that the greater the investment in time and effort, the more likely it was that individuals would change their behaviours to achieve a more optimal impact as senior leader. One research participant pointed to the “*relative economy*” with which the initiative was executed.

Practice deduction #32: Highlight the relationship between effort and reward to set realistic expectations for effective development.

5.3.11 Consider internal and external talent

Rationale: As set out in Section 2.6.2, a best-practice approach to LSM considers internal and external talent at the time of the appointment decision. The current research therefore aims

to explore participants' attitudes toward and perceptions of succession management, which includes considering internal and external candidates at the time of the succession event. Interviews focused beyond the narrow issue of considering internal and external talent, to explore how research participants viewed LSM in the Sponsor Organisation. Responses covered various aspects of LSM, including practices and how these relate to the research participants' prior experiences, particularly with the Sponsor Organisation. Some of the responses naturally linked to other variables, including how succession relates to integration with HR talent-management systems and LSM as a transparent, flexible and continuous process.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants considered LSM as very important to the sustained success of the Sponsor Organisation. They expressed this as *"aligned with improved business results"*, *"providing clarity"*, *"important at certain levels"*, *"part of our fabric of doing things"* and *"providing a consistent marker of the layers of management depth so you could then prioritise based on risk"*. They generally implied that this involved filling positions with internal candidates. One research participant commented that *"there was quite a history of conversations around the succession planning for the [current role]"*, which highlights the informal nature with which the organisation had approached LSM in the past. Responses also suggest that roles are not necessarily easy to define in reality. As one research participant commented, *"Roles within organisations aren't clearly delineated; they are on org charts and position descriptions but not in the way that we actually work."*

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Some of the participants highlighted a number of differences:

- a. LSM is more relevant for some roles, such as key management positions or technical positions that are difficult to recruit for, than others;
- b. Some roles are difficult to define as they are not clearly delineated and position descriptions do not necessarily capture how they work;
- c. Some research participants had some knowledge of how the Sponsor Organisation approached LSM, whereas others had little prior knowledge;
- d. Some research participants highlighted the practical, operational and often immediate nature of succession, whilst others framed it as a long-term strategic priority that can span 10- or 20-year time frames.

Notwithstanding these points, research participants stated that the Program provided a better understanding of LSM, commenting that they *"gained greater appreciation"*, that the *"Program gave clarity about succession"* and that they *"found it very useful because it did give confidence"*

that, at group level, we are operating in the same way as well". Overall, the research participants' responses point to a limited understanding of the formal aspects of LSM.

Practice deduction #33: Educate senior leaders about the formal aspects of LSM, thereby creating greater alignment, consistency and personal responsibility in how succession is approached.

The time frames involved with LSM were seen to conflict with the expectations of research participants, who often seemed motivated to move into a more senior role more quickly than the organisation was considering. As one research participant commented, *"When you find yourself on a program like this one, you have some expectation that has to be managed."* Another stated that LSM programs need to provide a channel of communication to create clarity about what can be done to align career expectations with the Sponsor Organisation's succession planning. Research participants also pointed to the importance of supporting individuals when they miss out on a promotion opportunity. One commented that this involves *"arming them with some of the skills that might help them if things don't turn out that way"*. In summary, responses suggest that research participants expected the Sponsor Organisation to be proactive in managing executives' expectations to ensure a common understanding of realistic time frames and capabilities required to be successful.

Practice deduction #34: Manage participant expectations, including the possibility of missing out on a promotion.

Research participants stated that succession planning requires an effort by the organisation to systematically support potential successors by identifying potential positions for them to move into. They also observed that LSM sometimes involves the over-promotion of individuals. As one research participant stated, *"I've had this conversation with peers, and some opinions are that unless you are over-promoted you're never ever going to know whether you're capable or not."* The idea that potential over-promotion is a necessary part of well-functioning LSM programs also implies that there is a possibility of failure. This seems to conflict with the culture of many organisations, including the Sponsor Organisation, in which mistakes are frequently considered a negative that triggers punitive consequences. Research participants commented that LSM can mitigate some of the risk of appointing a successor. They indicated that no individual is likely to be fully ready for a new role, and that to mitigate the risk of failure, organisations need to support newly appointed candidates. At the same time, comments suggested that organisations need to consider the possibility of a newly appointed individual not succeeding, and design contingency plans accordingly.

Practice deduction #35: Support newly appointed participants but recognise that some participants will be over-promoted and fail.

5.3.12 Quality of interpersonal interactions

Rationale: As set out in Section 4.3, research participants' responses point to the importance of the quality of interpersonal interactions to LSM outcomes. In the context of the current research, this refers to the role of the consultant as a relevant factor in how research participants experienced the Program. It is important to acknowledge the inherent conflict of the present author given his dual role as a researcher and consultant contracted to deliver aspects of the Program. Hence, this analysis does not seek to evaluate the efficacy of the consultants conducting the Program. Rather, it seeks to illuminate the aspects that participants highlighted as relevant. It does not intend to imply that those were actually addressed or incorporated by the consultants involved with the Program. Furthermore, although there were relevant interactions between participants and other stakeholders, these are not examined in this research. Notwithstanding this limitation, it is likely that insights generated by considering the interactions between participants and consultants also benefit an understanding of interactions with other stakeholders.

The impact and relevance of consultants has received relatively little consideration in the scholarly literature, with some notable exceptions. For example, Archer (2009) highlights the different and often paradoxical qualities that a consultant needs to exhibit, such as being challenging whilst being supportive. Boyatzis (2008) refers to the different roles of the consultant within the context of leadership development. He highlights, amongst other things, that the consultant is critical in helping participants find a safe setting within which development opportunities can be explored and addressed. He identifies trust in the consultant as an essential pre-condition to an effective relationship. Research participants' responses covered this aspect of trust as well as some aspects of the consultant's style. It also involved relating the interactions with the consultant to the various individual priorities, including career considerations, challenges in the role and within the organisation, stakeholder relationships, business strategy or operational and project issues and, of course, development priorities.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants described the various roles of the consultant as that of "mentor", "advisor", "coach", "confidant", "agent", "helper", "connector", "expert" and "influencer". Distinctions were drawn with relation to interactions with participants and feedback providers. The consultants' styles were described as "engaging", "skilful", "trustworthy", "rigorous", "diligent", "professional" and "intense".

Specific responses related to practice deductions: The most critical aspect of the consultant's effectiveness was widely identified as the ability to rapidly build rapport and engender trust. Responses indicate that this requires credibility and a sense of "caring connection". As one research participant said, *"The style of the person doing the interview can actually engender trust to be open. [Consultant] and I had a good rapport early on which drove me to be comfortable about being open."* The commentary on trust also points to the importance of the consultant being able to challenge participants and feedback providers. This was described as *"being able to frame messages positively"* whilst also communicating the implications of development needs. Research participants emphasised that it is important for the consultant to challenge in a supportive way: to, in the words of one, *"look deeper than the superficial"*, and that this results in *"getting more meaningful stuff"*. One research participant stated, *"There were some challenging questions; we dug deep and we really got to the heart of it. I felt supported and not judged."* Another commented that *"this is the first time anyone has been able to put a light on my blind spot"* and that *"this is testament to the consultant, and the team, and the process"*. In exploring how uncovering his blind spot actually occurred, the participant responded that this was achieved by *"identifying a theme and then targeting questions to explore it further"*. The consultant's ability to challenge in an encouraging way arguably stands in contrast to providing safety and therefore requires careful balancing by the consultant.

Practice deduction #36: Challenge participants in a way that is perceived as supportive and non-judgemental.

A number of research participants also highlighted sensitivity to negative feedback and that the way this is communicated is critical to acceptance by the recipient. One suggested, *"It's the skill of the consultant to, no matter what the outcome of the review is, deliver the good aspects in the best positive light and negative aspects in a constructive light."* Another highlighted the benefit of being able to have conversations about *"opportunities and possibilities"* rather than negative or reactionary ones. Research participants also mentioned that conversations needed to be flexible, solutions-oriented and focused on the individual. Their responses further suggest that such conversations also involve exploring the deeper issues underlying an individual's performance, potential, strengths and development needs.

Practice deduction #37: Promote coaching-style conversations between participants and consultants.

A number of responses suggested that the research participants held different intentions about how they wanted to use the Program. For example, one commented that he did not expect the Program to be personally relevant, but appreciated that the interactions

with the consultant provided a personal benefit from what he saw as mentoring. Another highlighted the importance of being able to clarify issues with the consultant, including a better understanding of the leadership capabilities. Yet another said that the Program was well structured but that actual conversations within this structure were flexible. One contrasted this with another approach involving standardised behavioural interviews, which “wouldn’t have worked”. Overall, responses point to the need for a consultant to be highly flexible in addressing individual participants’ needs and expectations, which vary widely and are often unique. This needs to be balanced with overall program objectives and required outputs such as evaluation reports and development plans.

Practice deduction #38: Incorporate high degrees of flexibility regarding how participants engage with the program whilst ensuring that it can also produce the required reporting outputs that enable LSM decisions.

5.3.13 Effective communication

Rationale: As set out in Section 4.3, communication represents a critical aspect of LSM programs, particularly in relation to how participants experience LSM processes in their organisation. The Sponsor Organisation incorporated an extensive communications protocol as part of the Program. First, there was a personalised written invitation from the Group CEO to each participant, setting out the importance and scale of the Program. Second, the HR Program Manager contacted each participant personally to outline the Program, including steps, timing and output. Third, each direct line manager of a Program participant was requested to communicate his or her support to the individual. Finally, each consultant, in their initial interactions with a participant, focused on consistent messaging regarding the Program, including that it served three objectives: (a) to help the board of the Sponsor Organisation understand the “succession health” with respect to key management positions; (b) to support the strategic priorities of the Sponsor Organisation, in particular the changing role of the Holdings Company; and (c) to inform development priorities that each research participant would see as personally relevant and valuable given their individual circumstances and career aspirations. Interview responses were limited, but captured research participants’ perceptions of how the Program was communicated.

General responses related to CSF: Research participants generally perceived Program communication to have been effective, using words like “clear”, “consistent”, “concise”, “well done” and “efficient”. Responses indicated that the context of the Program was clearly communicated.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Participants pointed to a variety of different sources of information, including their direct line manager, the HR Program Manager and the external consultant. Some mentioned the multiple ways they received information and suggested that this was helpful in reinforcing the messaging. Few research participants spontaneously mentioned the written invitation by the Group CEO, even though several of them seemed to value this once prompted. Most preferred direct face-to-face conversations to other, less-personal mediums such as email communications. A number of the research participants pointed to communication providing an explanation of the process and the approach, and stated that they valued the “*individualised approach*” of the Program being communicated. Responses suggest that communication ideally reflects a personalised approach through formal and informal means, and that it best emanates from multiple sources. The Program approach incorporated a detailed communications protocol to ensure that messages were consistent between these various sources.

Practice deduction #39: Use multiple communication sources, including a personalised and informal approach, to educate participants about the LSM process and context.

A number of responses pointed out that senior executives will be quick to judge whether a Program is likely to be valuable to them. This highlights the importance of creating a positive first impression. Other responses also emphasised that the explicit endorsement of more-senior leaders, including the direct line manager, was important. Although the research participants generally suggested that the Program was communicated well, one commented that after being initially clear and “*excited*”, he then became less clear because “*it was a very different structure to what [he] had historically been used to*”, but that this dissipated once the Program commenced. A number of research participants’ comments suggested that it was best to avoid the use of jargon and theoretical concepts, and instead focus on the practical and applied aspects, including highlighting the connection to business outcomes as well as the relevance to the individual’s role and/or an individualised approach.

Practice deduction #40: Focus on clear, consistent and compelling communication that is actively supported by senior leaders to create a positive first impression.

5.3.14 Motivation and mindset

Rationale: As set out in Section 4.3, the motivation and mindset of participants seemed to be important to their ability to participate in, and benefit from, LSM programs. This includes a

particular focus on an individual's willingness to engage in development. Therefore, an examination of the aspect of research participants' motivation and mindset is likely to be valuable in identifying better LSM practice. The research investigates two key aspects of the Program from the research participants' perspective: their motivation to follow up on development, and their own leadership-development potential. Specific to LSM, potential is considered in relation to leadership potential. For example, Silzer et al. (2016) examine the approaches associated with identifying "future leaders with the greatest potential for enhanced development and succession" (p. 200). Day (2000), on the other hand, highlights the importance of development potential for different jobs, which can be tested in "stretch job assignments" to support better LSM outcomes.

General responses related to CSF: Participants consistently described follow-up as very important to them and recognised that the primary responsibility for this lay with them, irrespective of circumstances. As one research participant stated, *"Those areas that we identified that were worth developing are still worth developing irrespective of the Program discontinuation because, in the end, you still have to take control of your own destiny to some extent."*

Notwithstanding personal accountability, research participants' responses indicated that they relied on the organisation to set the conditions for development, and that this was a shared responsibility. Participant responses point to a social contract between the employee and the organisation that reciprocates sponsored development with a commitment by the individual to genuinely engage with their own development.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Some research participants drew a distinction between the learning aspects – knowledge or skill acquisition – and the development aspects –personal change. They also highlighted the self-focused aspect of the evaluation, including their career aspirations potentially outside of the Sponsor Organisation. One commented: *"One take-away is that I'm focused on realising a change in what I'm doing career-wise going forward."*

Practice deduction #41: Consider that participants who reflect on their career aspirations may explore opportunities outside of their organisations.

A number of responses suggest that individuals require not just the support of their direct line manager and a positive organisational culture, but also additional resources to ensure development, including development plans, internal or external coach/mentor opportunities, projects and peer support groups, which need to be coordinated by the HR function as the internal subject-matter experts.

Practice deduction #42: Rely on the internal expertise of the HR function to ensure the provision and management of resources needed for successful LSM-focused development.

The research participants' responses indicated that the evaluation data, especially the 360-degree feedback component, represented a motivating factor. This was primarily focused on addressing deficits, with the objective of improving their interpersonal impact. Examples the research participants mentioned included *"being more assertive"*, *"better listening"*, *"more effective communication"*, *"more engagement"* and *"scheduling more time for people"*. Notwithstanding the focus on interpersonal skills, responses indicate that they did not naturally make the connection between these aspects and being a more effective leader.

Practice deduction #43: Create a more explicit link between assessment data, development and being more effective.

A number of the research participants pointed to the intrinsic aspect of motivation in contrast to "imposed" or "forced" goals that often arise in the context of organisational aspects. They generally seemed to consider the personal aspect as separate from the organisation, and did not appear to make the connection between these inter- and intra-personal aspects easily or naturally. One research participant, for example, referred to the opportunity coming from the change of management control and the likely associated turnover of senior executives as being a motivating factor for him. Overall, the research participants highlighted a focus on future-based opportunity.

Practice deduction #44: Create a strong link between personally important future opportunities and the development initiatives available within the organisation.

Participant responses identified a number of factors that were likely to detract from their motivation to achieve successful development outcomes:

- a. The fact that training and development are often not seen as positive given organisations' common experience that individuals who demand it often don't demonstrate the motivation or ability to change;
- b. The reality of competing priorities and the corresponding lack of time to follow up on their development plans; and
- c. A lack of structure and discipline, including not having time-specific goals or not creating a scheduled plan to achieve them.

Based on research participants' responses overall, there appear to be two broad categories of obstacles: the individual's own motivation and mindset, and the external environmental factors supporting or detracting from development activity.

Practice deduction #45: Support participants by identifying and removing potential obstacles to their development.

Perhaps not unexpectedly for a cohort chosen for a LSM program, the research participants largely demonstrated a positive, optimistic, growth-focused attitude towards potential and change. Indicative comments include *“change brings opportunity”*, *“we are all work-in-progress”*, *“it's okay not to be perfect, and sharing this with your people means it's okay for them not to be perfect”*, *“we're all capable of continuing to grow”*, *“I have this huge need to learn; it doesn't stop”* and *“I've had that opportunity to try and develop”*. This suggests that overall, the research participants had a positive view of the concept of potential, including their own. Some of their comments went even further to suggest that the opportunity to grow was fundamental to their motivation.

Practice deduction #46: Normalise the concept of personal and professional growth as an important aspect of a successful individual to support the motivation of participants.

5.3.15 Psychological safety and trust

Rationale: As set out in Section 4.3, psychological safety and trust are important conditions for participants to engage in LSM programs. Specifically, exploring the research participants' views regarding the importance of confidentiality highlighted the role of psychological safety and trust. There was a significant overlap with responses that explored the quality of interpersonal interactions, given the central role of trust in relationships. A more nuanced and contextual understanding of these concepts appears relevant to ensure that participants in a LSM program engage positively with the process, particularly in relation to being motivated to address development priorities.

General responses related to CSF: The research participants' responses suggested that there was a risk that the Program was being seen as a covert performance appraisal and judgement of individuals' performance. This was despite Program communication emphasising that evaluation and feedback data would only be used to inform development. Participants also expressed concern that negative feedback might be perceived as criticism rather than highlighting opportunities for development. Participants talked about the sensitivity to *“being criticised”* and that most executives are *“living in denial most of the time”*. These responses are

consistent with the principle that creating psychological safety is important to enable individuals to take on feedback and engage with their development.

Specific responses related to practice deductions: Notwithstanding these considerations, the research participants were generally not concerned about confidentiality even though this was emphasised as part of the Program communication. Representative comments included: “I haven’t had any concerns because I see it very much as a reference point for myself”; “I was very open; if you’re going to get the most of this type of Program you have got to be open”; and “It’s not really important, to be honest. They know who I am and I’m just not tactical about this type of stuff”. These comments suggest that trust and psychological safety can vary significantly between individuals. The responses may also suggest that, once psychological safety has been created and trust with the process and individuals established, there is less sensitivity regarding confidentiality and the use of information.

Practice deduction #47: Ensure that the foundations for LSM programs support psychological safety and recognise that attitudes to trust vary widely between different individuals.

As discussed in Section 5.3.12, “Quality of interpersonal interactions”, some research participants mentioned the importance of the external consultant’s skill in delivering feedback in a constructive manner, creating rapport quickly, having credibility and engendering trust. In addition, one research participant also highlighted that the consultant’s ability to articulate the Program in a “*cognitive, structured, thorough and rigorous*” manner helped with creating “*referential trust*”. Another contrasted this with the challenge of being able to rely on confidentiality when engaging with an internal mentor, whereas they did not consider this an issue with an “*independent external person*”.

Practice deduction #48: Support referential trust through structure and rigour as well as credible independent external support.

5.4 Summary of similarities and differences for each CSF

Table 5.2 summarises the key similarities and differences among the research participants with respect to each CSF. The implications of these similarities and differences will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table 5.2: Summary of similarities and differences between Participants by CSF

Contingent success factors (CSF)	Similarities between research participants	Differences between research participants
Reflects organisational needs and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed that LSM program is a positive signal in support of LSM Had an intuitive understanding of link between LSM and organisational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different views on culture and LSM-focused talent development Had different views on formal and informal practices
Transparent, flexible and continuous process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw transparency (of process/decisions) and flexibility as important Saw transparency of individual potential status as unhelpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different preferences how to engage in the LSM program Had different views on communicating potential status to individuals
Integration with HR talent management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected Program information to be integrated within HR talent management Highlighted the importance of informal data uses and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different emphasis on relevance of data between individuals and the organisation Had different opinions on whether Program information was useful to communicate informally
Line-management ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw the support of the line manager as fundamentally important to development Considered line managers who were supportive to be high-performing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had mixed experiences regarding their line managers' support Pointed to a variety of different reasons for line managers not being supportive
Visible senior-leader support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered visible senior-leader support as very important to implement the Program Valued a business-led approach that was supported by the HR function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw different senior leaders involved to different extents Valued visibility of senior leaders for different reasons
Regular review of progress and process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were open to creating formal accountability to achieving LSM outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw a number of different challenges to creating formal accountability
Link to organisational strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted and understood the concept of "leadership capabilities" Wanted to understand how leadership capabilities apply to individual context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not consistently draw the link to the Sponsor Organisation's strategy Saw capabilities as relevant in different dimensions
Large, flexible pool of potential successors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw a large pool as positive in implementing organisational change Valued formal and informal group interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different levels of awareness of the Program size Had different levels of comfort regarding how to engage within the large group
High-quality assessment data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued context-rich data and saw feedback as a relationship opportunity Suggested a need for multiple assessment methods to ensure reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gained different degrees of insight from the assessment process Had different views regarding the reliability of the assessment data
Individualised development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered it as positive for the Program to address individual needs Saw bringing development into the operational environment as important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different views regarding how personally relevant the Program was Had different abilities to engage in development depending on priorities
Consider internal and external talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered LSM as an important priority for organisations Considered it important to have career conversations as part of LSM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different levels of knowledge and understanding of LSM and decisions Had different views on what it means for internal candidates to be considered
Quality of interpersonal interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pointed to the importance of building rapport to engage openly Valued a balance of being supportive but also challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different Program requirements that need to be supported flexibly Had different thresholds regarding receiving challenging messages
Effective communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified clear communication from a variety of sources and media Valued conversations as informal aspects of communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised different sources and media to different extents Demonstrated different degrees of openness in judging the Program
Motivation and mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw follow-up as important and a personal responsibility requiring support Had a positive "continuous improvement" perspective on development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different understanding about how development involves learning skills Had different perspectives on what motivated them
Psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewed a lack of safety as detracting from LSM program outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had different views and sensitivities regarding psychological safety and trust

Source: Author

5.5 Chapter conclusion

In addition to highlighting key similarities and differences among the research participants' responses, this chapter has considered the responses for each of the CSFs to illuminate how the CSFs relate to the research participants' perceptions, attitudes and experience. The analysis of responses has produced a large set of practice deductions that can inform the nuances of implementing LSM practices. These have the potential to inform and define possible modifications to the LSM Framework identified in Chapter 2. The following chapter discusses this in detail.

Chapter 6: Discussion – Implications for LSM Theory and Practice

6.1 Chapter overview

This chapter provides a discussion of the key findings from the research participants' case vignettes (Chapter 4) and the analysis of CSFs across the 13 cases (Chapter 5). It aims to identify key implications for LSM practice as a basis for revising and extending the LSM Framework set out in Section 2.7. In doing so it also addresses the three key causes for the Knowing-Doing Gap identified in Section 2.5.3. First, it provides suggestions for additional disciplines and constructs that can more effectively address the complexity that LSM involves. Second, it provides a focus on the individual, as well as the organisation, to identify aspects relevant to their attitudes and experience. And third, it distils some of the tacit, i.e. context-specific, knowledge to demonstrate how approaches to practice can more flexibly address the unique circumstances of each organisation and its needs with respect to LSM. Before discussing key findings, it is helpful to position the CSFs within a suitable taxonomy for considering LSM theory and practice.

6.2 Establishing a suitable taxonomy for LSM

Framing the discussion within a taxonomy aims to enhance clarity and move towards greater completeness (Anderson 2008). The use of a taxonomy as an effective way of categorisation in support of theory-building has been identified in the context of organisational and social-science research (Lambert 2015). For the present research, positioning the CSFs and practice implications within a taxonomy targets four specific objectives: (1) enhancing definitional clarity for each CSF rather than being limited by the labels that flowed logically from the literature review and interview data; (2) validating each additional CSF (identified in Section 4.3) by referencing established constructs; (3) highlighting the potential for other underlying theoretical constructs that can more reliably inform extending LSM theory and practice as part of future research; and (4) providing the basis for a more holistic view of LSM that can be used for future research, including testing hypotheses and potentially establishing the causal relationships between CSFs and LSM outcomes.

There appear to be only two studies that have referred to a taxonomy within LSM. Berns and Klarner (2017, p. 86) suggested a research framework with “multilevel predictors” of CEO succession at environmental, organisational, board and individual levels and considered these within “predictors”, “contingencies” and “outcomes” of the succession event. Although useful in the context of CEO successions, the approach does not sufficiently allow for the individual aspects that have been identified as part of the present research.

Cappelli (2011, p. 674) also sets out “a taxonomy of succession planning”, and more appropriately positions LSM as part of talent management. His approach, however, limits the taxonomy to the “several distinct processes” of which it consists and does not reflect other aspects, including those relevant to the individual, the interactions between individuals and the context. Outside of LSM, Yukl, Gordon and Taber’s (2002) influential hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviour distinguishes between the three meta-categories of task, relations and change behaviour. However, their approach does not lend itself to LSM, which is process-based and incorporates other dimensions beyond the behaviour of a leader. Consequently, a different approach is needed that more appropriately reflects the processes and CSFs that are part of LSM best practice.

Chapter 4 identified additional CSFs based on the responses of the 13 research participants: the quality of interpersonal interactions; effective communication; motivation and mindset; and psychological safety and trust (Section 4.3). These qualitative descriptors from the interview data broadly fit within two major categories: (1) interpersonal aspects relevant to relationships and interactions; and (2) intrapersonal aspects of the individual such as personality, mindset and motivation.

The categorisation of intra- and interpersonal aspects has previously been used by Day and colleagues (2014) in their 25-year review of the leadership-development literature. According to the authors, intrapersonal aspects relevant to leader development include prior experiences, individual preferences, skills and abilities, personality, motivational characteristics and self-development orientation. They further identify interpersonal aspects relevant to leadership development, including “social mechanisms” and “authentic leadership” (p. 65). In an earlier publication, Day (2000) sets out a similar distinction and captures “self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation” as key intrapersonal skills, and “social awareness and social skills” as key interpersonal skills (p. 584). Although the additional CSFs identified in the present research are not limited to skills, given the long-recognised explicit link between LSM and leadership development (Gordon & Rosen 1981; Rhodes & Walker 1984), this broad characterisation of intra- and interpersonal aspects is useful in the context of understanding LSM beyond the organisational and in relation to individual aspects.

There have been other contributions in the literature relevant to the distinction between intra- and interpersonal aspects, including those by Park et al. (2017) in relation to children’s character development, MacBeath and Townsend (2011) in relation to educational leadership knowledge and Hogan and Kaiser (2005) in relation to defining a domain model

of leader competencies. However, it appears that no other scholarly contribution has considered the unit-level distinction between intra- and interpersonal, and organisational-level aspects of LSM within a holistic taxonomy. In light of this, the most suitable approach is the distinction offered by Day (2000) in relation to leadership development, which captures key elements of the additional CSFs identified in the present research: motivation, trust and adaptability.

In addition to the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, there is a third category that describes the organisational aspects within the LSM Framework. This tripartite distinction is consistent with the levels of analysis of “person, dyadic, group and/or organisation” used in describing and developing theoretical approaches to leadership (Dinh et al. 2014, p. 43). Dinh and colleagues’ (2014) approach also highlights the importance of considering processes and context in combination with these units of analysis to more fully capture reality. It becomes apparent that the CSFs identified in the present research fit within these various categories. Importantly, it provides the basis for a taxonomy to consider LSM in a holistic sense, here termed “LSM Taxonomy”, consisting of the following categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organisational, process and context (Figure 6.1). With this established, each CSF will be examined below.

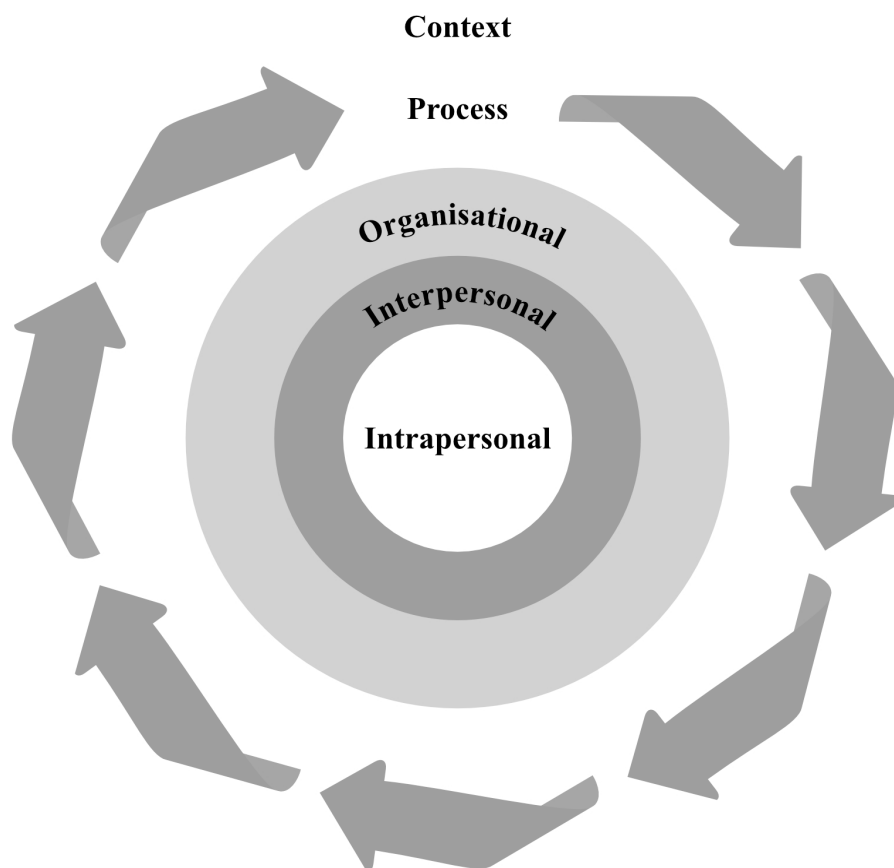


Figure 6.1: Proposed LSM Taxonomy (Source: Author)

6.3 Discussion of the CSFs within the LSM Taxonomy: Implications for practice

Using the proposed LSM Taxonomy, practice implications can now be considered in accordance with (a) context, (b) process, (c) organisational, (d), interpersonal, and (e) intrapersonal aspects of LSM.

6.3.1 Practice implications relevant to the LSM context

A number of CSFs correspond primarily to the context aspects of LSM:

- a. Effective communication;
- b. Reflection of organisational needs and culture;
- c. Link to organisational strategy;
- d. High-quality assessment data; and
- e. Individualised development.

These CSFs are relevant to the context because their content is unique and specifically reflects the circumstances and particular situation of the organisation, relationships and individuals. Informing LSM practice in accordance with these context aspects addresses the criticism raised by Giambatista et al. (2005) that LSM practice has not sufficiently recognised the importance of context-specific, tacit knowledge. Identifying the CSFs that are particularly relevant to capturing this context is therefore likely to lead to better practice.

Effective communication: As stated in section 4.3, effective communication has been recognised in the context of LSM (Leibman, Bruer & Maki 1996; Kasper 2008; Reid & Gilmour 2009) primarily as a CSF of the LSM process. The present research highlights the importance of these previous findings and extends this understanding to the effects of communication at the individual level. For example, the analysis of all research-participant responses in Section 5.3.6.2 suggests that because communication is subject to individual preferences and perceptions, multiple sources will raise the effectiveness of the communication regardless of how consistent the communication is. Furthermore, personalised and informal communication will help participants understand how the LSM program may be relevant to each individual.

The analysis also suggests that it takes significant effort to communicate effectively and that capturing the context of the LSM program as part of the communication is an important way to create a positive environment for participants. Additionally, communication is linked to the visible support of senior leaders and, of course, is a key element of the interactions between the research participants and other stakeholders,

including the consultant, the participants' direct line manager and even other participants of an LSM program. In summary, the CSF of effective communication can be seen as determining the context within the different levels of the LSM Taxonomy. It is thus central role to the success of LSM outcomes.

The present research produced limited new insights and LSM practice deductions in relation to effective communication. This is because of the implicit nature of communication and the fact that communication was not a CSF identified from the literature review. Notwithstanding this, effective communication is a core component of the LSM Framework because it essentially interconnects many of the framework's different parts. Findings set out in Section 5.3.6.2 point to the importance of clear communication that can incorporate multiple channels, given that individuals appear to respond differently to the same communication. As reflected in Practice Deduction #40, a particularly important channel is the senior leaders of the organisation, who ideally endorse the messages of the LSM program. This also includes the research participants' direct line managers, given the typically close relationship characterised by significant dependence. In summary, organisations need to ensure that LSM practice focuses on a clear, multi-tiered communications protocol that supports individual participants as well as LSM activities and outcomes.

Reflection of organisational needs and culture: The practice deductions set out in section 5.3.1.1 indicate that LSM processes need to reflect organisational needs and culture. This includes aspects such as alignment of the senior leadership around a shared strategic goal, an understanding of informal talent practices and embedding development into the operational culture. As these deductions are developed out of the specific context of the Sponsor Organisation, it is necessary to consider whether they would be applicable independent of this context. Some key aspects of the context of the Sponsor Organisation include the following:

- a. The history of a long-time Group CEO who led the organisation for more than 25 years and who had not implemented any succession-management practices;
- b. A change in the way the government entities contracted for construction work and the resulting structural change, which did not require subsidiaries to operate independently; and
- c. A strong technical context of engineering and construction where the vast majority of senior executives were males who generally valued technical excellence and achievement above relationships.

Based on these aspects, the Sponsor Organisation was very focused on major strategic change and lacked historical experience and knowledge regarding LSM and talent development. This would not necessarily apply in other situations where an organisation might have experienced less significant strategic change and more fully developed its talent practices. At the same time, the deductions demonstrate clear links to other CSFs including strategy and integration with HR talent management, which are recognised in the literature as generally relevant. It is therefore not possible, within the limitations of the present research, to conclude to what extent the findings are applicable beyond the context of the Sponsor Organisation. However, the case study provides a good example of the tacit knowledge that Giambatista et al. (2005) identified as missing from the LSM literature. Notwithstanding the above, research findings suggest the importance of distinguishing between the context of a supportive organisational culture and future business needs. The latter is largely captured by the CSF “Link to organisational strategy”, but also includes the types of resources, knowledge and experience required to support better LSM outcomes. These research findings suggest that it would be desirable to create a stronger delineation with respect to LSM practice. Therefore, the CSF of “Reflecting organisational needs and culture” is separated into “Supportive organisational learning culture” and “Required organisational resources”. The latter represents an organisational, rather than a context-relevant, success factor, and refers to aspects such as funding, expertise and systems to support the LSM process. Identifying key aspects of organisational needs and culture as part of the unique context in LSM approaches is clearly necessary to achieve the best possible LSM outcomes. For example, based on the analysis of responses in Section 5.3.1.1, research participants viewed the culture of Sponsor Organisation as supportive, but noted that the approach to LSM was inconsistent and immature, and that the HR function was not highly valued.

As set out in Section 2.6.2.2, LSM practice needs to take into account the organisation’s future business needs and prevailing culture (Leavitt 2001; Fancher 2007; Lamoureux, Campbell & Smith 2009; Charan, Drotter & Noel 2011). These aspects are unique to each organisation, as demonstrated by the analysis of the Sponsor Organisation. It is not clear from the data how this might affect LSM outcomes, even though the literature review in Chapter 2 showed that more sophisticated LSM and talent-management processes are associated with better LSM outcomes (Reid 2005; Bernthal & Wellins 2006) and superior organisational performance (Friedman 1986; Huselid 1995). Although the discussion above provides some indication of relevant context aspects, in reality there are innumerable other influences, some obvious and visible and others not. The consequence is that LSM practices

can never fully capture the relevance of the particular context. To overcome this, LSM approaches need to incorporate a practice framework that helps identify the knowledge relevant to the particular context to ensure that this becomes more explicit as part of the LSM process. For example, LSM practice could adopt approaches that support operating within complex environments, such as complex adaptive approaches to leadership (e.g., Lichtenstein et al. 2006; Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey 2007) and leadership development (e.g., Boyatzis 2008). Although a detailed discussion of how complexity theory can inform LSM practice is beyond the scope of this research, incorporating this concept is likely to be valuable; therefore it forms one of the suggestions for future research discussed below.

Link to organisational strategy: Practice deductions suggest that the concept of ensuring a link between LSM practice and organisational strategy can create tensions for individuals regarding their focus on current operational performance versus future strategic goals. This is because, frequently, individual performance does not incorporate collective goals such as those linked to strategic change. The Program aimed to create greater clarity about the strategy and introduced specific behaviours, expressed as leadership capabilities, in support of this strategy. However, none of the research participants spoke about the relevance of the Sponsor Organisation's strategic goals to how their own performance was evaluated. The tension resulted from the disconnect between their performance contracts and the development plan, which created a starting position for accountability. Related to this, a further tension arose from the time horizon with which performance was considered, and the fact that operational outcomes were more immediate than strategic ones. This challenge is relevant regarding the types of leadership qualities and behaviours that support such operational strategic outcomes. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that it may be challenging for participants to make a link between their own capabilities and the organisation's strategic objectives.

As explained in Section 2.6.2.2, best-practice LSM involves ensuring that leadership qualities and criteria reflect the organisation's future needs, principally the execution of strategic priorities. In contrast, the findings of the current research highlight that these competencies and capabilities also need to focus on the individual. For example, the group strategy of creating greater coordination between various subsidiaries may require greater collaboration; however, how this collaboration can be applied depends on the role, responsibilities and circumstances of each individual. For example, one Program participant ran a mining operation that was closely aligned to the operation of another subsidiary. The Program encouraged each site manager to collaborate, including sharing mining-equipment

spare parts, which freed up millions of dollars of capital. This example is clearly unique to the circumstances of those particular individuals. Therefore, the present study's findings suggest that strategic organisational-leadership capabilities need to be applied to the unique context of the individual. The research also demonstrates that even multi-tiered and repetitive communication may not be sufficient to embed strategically focused competencies and capabilities. This process appears to require additional activities and processes to ensure that these competencies and capabilities are meaningful. This also extends to successfully integrating the competencies and capabilities in development plans, including through a work-based approach founded on action learning. In conclusion, it is proposed to clarify the terminology of the CSF and refer to "Translating organisational strategy into individually relevant leadership capabilities".

High-quality assessment data: Research findings suggest that high-quality assessment data is personally relevant, balanced between positive and negative aspects, and includes 360-degree feedback data. Findings further highlight the differences in generating the data and the experience this represented for the research participants. In the case of the Sponsor Organisation, most of the data was generated through one-on-one interviews with Program participants and feedback providers. Responses highlighted that the research participants experienced this as positive and enjoyable compared to past experiences in which data was generated through standardised online questionnaires. The latter was perceived to be less reliable and relevant because of the generic nature of the content. Instead, the approach used for the Program was personalised and interactive, yet was perceived as reliable and rigorous in most cases. Practice deductions captured these aspects of using multiple sources and focusing on the social mechanism of inter-personal interactions, including through the 360-degree feedback interviews. Although each case also involved making the assessment process as safe as possible, including providing the opportunity for individuals to review a draft feedback report, responses did not necessarily indicate that this was considered to be critical. As stated above, this may be due to the Program communications having promoted safety by emphasising confidentiality. This is likely to have contributed to the research findings demonstrating a clear connection between high-quality assessment data and individuals' motivation to engage with their own development.

The present research indicates that assessment data is an important and challenging aspect of LSM best practice. The assessment of potential successors is difficult because of the complexity associated with human behaviour. This is exacerbated by the requirement underlying LSM to capture the potential of an individual and to predict their hypothetical

performance in a future role. As set out in Section 2.6.2.3, the LSM best-practice literature addresses this challenge by recommending multiple sources of data to achieve results that are more objective, accurate and meaningful and strongly motivate individuals (Rothwell 2010; Tichy, NM 2014). Research findings provide an opportunity to build on best practice by integrating approaches with key components of LSM leader potential and the social mechanism. This means emphasising the developmental nature of the assessment processes and ensuring that it is perceived as safe, rigorous, reliable and relevant to each individual. This represents a dual objective to ensure that it serves the needs of the organisation as well as the individual by reliably informing decisions and development support, as well as supporting the motivation of potential successors. This research proposes to reflect these findings and implications in a revised CSF named “Multi-source, context-rich assessment data relevant to specific LSM development needs”.

Individualised development: Practice deductions suggest that the research participants experienced a tension in relation to development, seeing it as conflict between preparing themselves for a future promotion and focusing on their current role responsibilities. Findings suggest that this tension also matters in relation to the research participants’ motivation to engage in their own development. Three aspects of the Program addressed this tension. First, the approach to development planning considered a balance between development that addressed short-term (that is, current) role performance improvement objectives and the capabilities required in the longer term to be successful at the next level. Second, the Program focused much of the development on improving competencies and capabilities linked to organisational strategy. Third, the Program explored the career ambitions and motivation of individuals to aspire to longer-term objectives relevant to succession outcomes. Additionally, research participants experienced other motivating aspects, such as the involvement of the most senior leaders of the organisation, including the Group CEO, and some integration with HR talent-management practices through formalising development plans.

LSM practice has an opportunity to be more specific about how development can best support LSM outcomes instead of just referring to development in a general sense. As Cappelli (2011, p. 675) noted in relation to the development phase of LSM, “At this point succession management essentially merges with leadership development.” Although development is clearly central to LSM, pointing only to leadership development does not capture the specific needs and objectives of LSM; essentially, this is because development in the LSM context needs to focus on raising a potential successor’s suitability or readiness.

Other authors frequently list the various solutions that are used to address leadership development, such as coaching, mentoring, special projects and cross-sector or function assignments (Byham, Smith & Paese 2002; Kim 2003; Watt & Busine 2005; Fulmer, Stumpf & Bleak 2009). Many also refer to action learning as a key component of these various development solutions. This is consistent with the concept of work-based learning highlighted by Cappelli (2011, p. 673) in the context of LSM: “Virtually all succession planning is built on the notion that internal development and work-based learning will prepare candidates for more senior positions.” Research findings provide a more detailed understanding of how development can occur, including dynamically if an individual’s manager is deliberate and thoughtful about creating ad-hoc development experiences for their staff. Finally, research findings suggest that LSM practice needs to address the conflict that program participants experience by creating greater alignment between development and performance expectations.

In light of these implications, a more nuanced understanding of individualised development translates into work-based action learning that is actively supported by the manager and aligned with the performance expectations for the individual. To improve clarity, this is termed “Individualised development that involves work-based action learning and is aligned with performance expectations”.

6.3.2 Practice implications relevant to the LSM process

Three CSFs “Transparent, flexible and continuous process”, “Regular review of progress and process” and “Consider internal and external talent” – describe important criteria relevant to the LSM process. They inform the six process phases set out in Section 2.6.2.

Transparent, flexible and continuous process: Practice deductions point to a tension between the idea of LSM being a transparent and flexible process and the research participants’ experiences. Specifically, their responses highlighted sensitivity regarding potential successors engaging in competition for limited promotion opportunities. This extended to their concern about whether others were considered succession talent and whether sufficient rigour had been applied to determine this. To overcome this, findings suggest that transparency needs to be balanced with confidentiality of individual data and status. It also points to the importance of helping potential successors have confidence that the process, including selection and evaluation criteria, is rigorous and objective. The research highlights how this aspect is linked to individuals’ sense of safety. Notwithstanding this, findings reveal an interesting paradox in that the research participants were generally not concerned with confidentiality, and felt comfortable sharing their own reporting data. This may be due to

their essentially representing high-performing succession talent and the fact that confidentiality was explicitly stated to be an important part of the Program. Findings suggest that process flexibility is linked to addressing individual needs, including development. This extends to differences in leadership succession potential depending on individuals' motivations and abilities. For example, an individual who is highly motivated and has a greater ability to address development needs can be supported more actively by LSM processes than can other individuals. Finally, the research findings support the principle identified in the LSM literature that LSM can be considered to be a continuous process that supports strategic HR talent management rather than being focused on planning for the succession event.

As set out in Section 2.6.2.1, the LSM literature is clear about the importance of transparency and flexibility during the LSM process. However, few scholars have set out in detail how transparency looks in practice. Conger and Fulmer (2003) refer to being transparent with individuals “where they stand on the performance and potential ladder, and what they need to do to advance” (p. 1). Lamoureux et al. (2009) promote transparency in a number of LSM aspects, including the overall process, the potential and development of individuals and the actual succession plans. Similarly, explorations of how flexibility is incorporated within LSM have typically lacked a detailed description of practices and refer to flexibility in general terms, largely as being responsive to changed circumstances and meeting individual needs. The present research supports recognised best-practice principles of transparency and flexibility, but qualifies these in important ways. First, it supports being transparent about the process and criteria but does not recommend identifying the status of LSM program participants beyond the participants themselves and those with a need to know. Second, it suggests that it is better to emphasise individuals' ongoing development than to focus on preparation for a specific position. Third, flexibility also needs to consider the different levels of participant motivation to engage in the LSM process, including development. Overall, the present research supports a focus on ongoing strategic talent management, part of which incorporates LSM through identifying the critical roles and key qualities that support success as well as identifying individuals with the potential to succeed in them. To reflect the above findings in a clearer description, it is proposed to replace “Transparent, flexible and continuous process” with three CSFs “Process transparency regarding individual status and talent identification criteria”, “Process flexibility reflecting individual needs and circumstances” and “Process continuity focused strategic talent development”, which also covers succession readiness as a key aspect of the process.

Regular review of progress and process: Key findings relevant to the research participants' experience regarding the best-practice principle of a regular review of the LSM progress and process relate to reviewing the development progress of successor talent. It also identifies the challenge and importance of following up on development once evaluation findings have been reported and development-plan objectives set. Follow-up is considered to be critical, but challenges arise because of the conflict participants experience concerning the need to focus on immediate role-related tasks. Findings suggest that formalising accountability by tying development objectives to performance agreements seemed appropriate and useful to the research participants. They identified the support of the organisation, including the direct line manager, as critical. The case study of the Sponsor Organisation provides a powerful example of changing circumstances where the research participants largely expected a lack of support going forward due to the change of management control.

Section 2.6.2.1 makes it apparent that this CSF only partially applies to understanding the research participants' experiences and how they inform LSM practice. This is because the literature largely considers the overall LSM program from the perspective of the organisation, rather than adopting the perspective of the individual. As an exception, Berns and Klarner (2017) highlight the importance of assessing progress against formal development plans. Participant responses provided some insight into how these plans can be set up. Accordingly, this involves the application of good goal-setting and the consideration of work-based approaches to promote development through action learning, aligned with role expectations and priorities. Research participants' responses also pointed to the importance of ensuring there was accountability for follow-up. Based on this, LSM practice needs to ensure that development plans incorporate specific and measurable outcomes with flexibility to ensure that they can be implemented within real or perceived constraints. This also includes reflecting informal ways of working, as identified above in relation to reflecting organisational needs and culture. In conclusion, reflecting the combination of best-practice LSM knowledge from the scholarly literature and the findings of this research, the CSF can be expressed more clearly by distinguishing between the LSM process and an individual's development progress. To reflect this distinction, it is proposed to split the CSF into two: "Regular review of process effectiveness" and "Regular review of individuals' development progress".

Consider internal and external talent: A review of practice deductions suggests that the research participants expected promotion opportunities to be available internally. This meant that they would be affected by how the organisation approached appointment decisions. This

represents a major tension of LSM: the expectations of individuals relative to their potential and readiness versus the availability of suitable positions. To address this tension, research findings suggest that senior leaders would benefit from acquiring greater knowledge regarding the technical aspects of LSM. This also extends to the principle of transparency regarding the status of potential successors. The research participants' experiences suggest that it is preferable to be clear and explicit regarding the criteria that are relevant to potential successors provided they have the ambition and potential for career advancement. Overall, there appears to be an advantage in emphasising development in a general sense rather than focusing on succession-specific development. It is therefore best linked to the overall talent-management practices of the organisation and the internal HR experts tasked with managing this system.

Although the consideration of internal and external talent is largely relevant to the succession event, it also informs how relevant LSM is to an organisation in the first place. If, for example, the existence of abundant talent available in the market lessens the need to invest in internal resources. When leadership talent is scarce there is a greater need to develop internal candidates (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones & Welsh 2001). LSM practice therefore typically also considers the likely availability of external talent, at least at a high level, at an earlier stage when identifying potential successors. As set out in Section 2.4.1, the literature is not necessarily conclusive, but seems to suggest that internal candidates are generally associated with higher performance and lower risk. Irrespective of these findings, it is likely that considering both internal and external candidates is likely to optimise LSM outcomes. This has different implications for different types of succession. These include “horse-race succession”, where a number of internal candidates are competing for a role, and “relay succession”, where a single individual is being groomed for a specific role, generally in the context of CEO succession (Berns & Klarner 2017). The latter arguably has less relevance to the CSF of considering external talent because relay succession is focused on a single individual and deemphasises other internal as well as external candidates. Considering these findings, it is recommended that the CSF be amended to clarify the consideration of external talent when forming the initial pool of succession talent. Accordingly, it is proposed to revise the CSF to be more explicit. This involves creating an additional CSF as part of Phase 3: “Considering the availability of external talent to inform the importance of an internal one”. It also provides a basis for revising the existing CSF to reflect the relative risk involved with external appointments, renaming it “Consider internal and riskier external talent to optimise the appointment decision”.

6.3.3 Practice implications relevant at the organisational level

A number of CSFs are relevant at the organisational level because they capture aspects of the groups and individuals that operate within the organisation. These include the following:

- a. Line-management ownership;
- b. Visible senior-leader support
- c. Integration with HR talent management; and
- d. Large, flexible pool of potential successors.

Line-management ownership: Practice deductions in Chapter 5 suggest that line managers play a critical role in LSM processes. In LSM best practice they have primary responsibility for the development of potential successors. They need to be supportive and ensure follow-up on development. They are key to ensuring that participants can engage in work-based development. Research responses also suggest that line managers represent an important communication channel that informs program participants regarding the details and context of the LSM program, including how it is relevant to the organisation's strategic priorities. Finally, it is apparent that line managers represent an important factor in how psychologically safe participants can feel.

As stated in Section 2.6.2.1, best-practice LSM requires line managers to be responsible for the identification and development of potential successors. As discussed in Section 2.6.2.3, the identification of potential is challenging and requires extensive technical expertise outside of line managers' skills and experience. It therefore necessitates accessing subject-matter experts who typically form part of the HR function. For line managers to be effective in their role as developers of succession talent, they need to have the motivation and skills to develop successors. Optimally, they lead by example and engage in their own development, thus contributing to a broader development culture within the organisation. In light of the above findings, it is proposed to rename the CSF "Line-management ownership of successor development". This more clearly delineates the concept of supporting succession-talent management and LSM processes more generally; this is captured in the following section.

Visible senior-leader support: Earlier sections have discussed the importance of senior leaders within LSM regarding effective communication, supporting strategic priorities that are reflected in defining desired leadership qualities and fostering a supportive development culture in the organisation. Beyond this, the present research demonstrates that senior leaders have an opportunity to provide their support of the LSM process through a focus on business

outcomes, principally as a way to address the tension introduced by the limited capacity for development. They also need to ensure that capable and credible HR personnel support the LSM process and integrate it with HR talent-management practices. Another strong theme that emerged suggests that senior leaders have an opportunity to support peer interactions, which the research participants consistently valued. In the Sponsor Organisation case study, it became clear that the Group CEO was recognised (albeit not universally) as a key sponsor for the Program. The extent to which this is important is likely to vary according to the reputation and standing of the particular group CEO.

Keeping in mind that the CFS “Visible senior-leader support” is primarily about the CEO and executive management team actively supporting LSM processes, the present research informs the two key principles underlying existing LSM best practice: first, senior leaders set the cultural tone and, given that LSM best practice relies on a culture that is supportive of development, senior leaders need to be the drivers of LSM processes. Second, senior leaders are tasked with the execution of strategy and, given the best-practice principle of linking LSM with organisational strategy, they need to be aligned on clear strategic priorities. Although they need to understand the mechanism of how leadership qualities and behaviours can support such strategic priorities, they do not need to be the experts who determine the detail. Rather, they can rely on credible HR experts to achieve this. Finally, it is important to remember that senior leadership is involved even more directly: as direct line managers and potential successors themselves. Consequently, focusing on those roles and responsibilities is likely to support LSM practice across the entire process. Given these findings, it is recommended to provide additional clarification regarding the role of senior leaders and rename the CSF “Visible senior-leader support of LSM processes linked to strategy execution”.

Integration with HR talent management: Deductions in Chapter 5 suggest that LSM practice needs to be embedded within an organisation’s HR talent-management system. This is particularly because LSM itself is a function of ongoing leadership development, which incorporates raising succession readiness alongside other talent-management objectives. It also applies to assessment data that informs the “readiness” status of potential successors as well as their development needs. Within the Sponsor Organisation, research participants criticised talent-management practices as having fallen short of required standards; however, the existence of the Program was considered very positively in its support of such practices. At the same time, there was little sensitivity to using the assessment data, including for succession decisions, on the basis that the research participants essentially considered the

data to be rigorous, balanced and appropriate. Other practice deductions pointed to the relevance of other CSFs in relation to integration with HR talent management: the nature of the LSM process, the organisational culture, how potential is defined and identified and how development unfolds. These other CSFs determine the key content of the talent-management system.

The research findings are consistent with LSM best-practice recommendations that suggest that LSM practices need to be integrated with overall HR talent-management processes practices (Barnett & Davis 2008; Karaevli & Hall 2003). At the same time, it is somewhat surprising that the research participants generally expected assessment data to be used for decision-making rather than development. This is contrary to prior research suggesting that it can be problematic to use assessment data, including 360-degree feedback, to make appointment decisions (Bracken et al. 2016). Amongst other findings, the authors comment: “We firmly believe that there are many situations where 360° Feedback should not be used for decision making due to a lack of readiness, climate, or, frankly, lack of support” (p. 772). At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the Program was designed to create a strong sense of safety for participants by emphasising development and the confidentiality of discussions, limiting the distribution of reports, and sharing draft reports with participants for comment prior to finalising them. Notwithstanding these measures, given the centrality of leadership development as part of the overall LSM process, the integration of various practices, including reporting data, is clearly desirable. The research suggests that participants are generally likely to accept this. At the same time, given the inconsistency of the findings of established LSM research, this suggests a need for further clarification as part of any future research.

Large, flexible pool of potential successors: Practice deductions suggest that the research participants experienced being part of a talent pool as positive. In particular, they valued the group interactions that were part of the Sponsor Organisation’s development support, provided the participants felt safe. These responses highlight the perceived value of personal connection. Findings also demonstrate that the research participants perceived a large succession pool to represent a positive signal regarding the Sponsor Organisation’s commitment to developing high-potential leaders and, ultimately, achieving strategic performance. This also supports the concept of a strategic talent development pool rather than a succession pool, particularly as it offered the opportunity to link the LSM initiative to the strategy and shared purpose of the Sponsor Organisation; for example, by identifying an

understanding of the group identity and purpose as a critical leadership capability against which individuals were assessed.

Whereas the LSM literature points to the concept of large, flexible pools of potential successors (Barnett & Davis 2008; Conger & Fulmer 2003; Fink 2011; Karaevli & Hall 2003; Reid 2005; Watt & Busine 2005), it does not necessarily provide specific detail of the differences between different types of pools, and to what extent these are associated with LSM outcomes. As one exception, Lamoureux et al. (2009) point to “transparent talent mobility” as a higher form of LSM than “integrated succession management” (p. 139). Other contributions, however, make a distinction between potential successors for specific roles and the broader development focused on work or leadership hierarchy levels (e.g., Charan et al. 2011). In contrast, findings of the present research provide greater insight into why it may be advantageous for organisations to ensure that LSM objectives are met within broader talent pools. This is because it does not need to focus on specific positions whose availability is generally difficult to forecast. Instead, it can simultaneously focus on the delivery of strategic priorities and change initiatives and on the content and development activities associated with the different leadership levels. In further clarifying the CSF and to reflect the above findings, it is proposed to rename it “Large, flexible strategic talent pool of potential successors”.

6.3.4 Practice implications relevant at the interpersonal level

The following considers the CSFs “Quality of interpersonal interactions” and “Psychological safety and trust”. In contrast to the above CSFs, which have been identified from the review of the literature, the following also seeks to clarify the meaning of these CSFs as well as discussing how findings of the present research affect LSM theory and practice.

Quality of interpersonal interactions: The analysis of the case vignettes highlights the importance of the interactions between the research participants and the consultants who delivered the Program. Although this may be somewhat unique to the present research, the use of external consultants in relation to an LSM program is common (Larcker & Tayan 2016). It also applies to any individuals who are tasked with delivery of an LSM program, including those who are internal to the organisation. Further analysis of this CSF makes it apparent that it consists of elements captured in the other CSFs: effective communication, trust and psychological safety. Notwithstanding this, there are additional elements that pertain to the nature of the consultant relationship, including credibility and skill. An example of the credibility required includes the relevant knowledge and experience to enable the consultant to have an engaging and challenging conversation regarding the nature of the

business as well as the challenges of the individual's role and responsibilities. An example includes the ability to evaluate participants regarding their succession potential and development needs. The present research shows how important these elements are for the quality of interpersonal interactions within the context of LSM.

In terms of the LSM Taxonomy, the quality of interpersonal interactions contributes to the interpersonal aspects and, more specifically, captures the social-capital dimension. But rather than just existing between leader and follower, social capital is significant in describing the relationship between all individuals within the LSM program and process. Day et al. (2014, p. 65) describe “social mechanism” as “the creation of positive learning environments in which education about other groups occurs, innovation is supported, and cultural communication competence is encouraged, facilitates high quality relationships in diverse leader–member dyads”. As this applies to the objective of LSM, i.e. the development of leadership talent, it is proposed to adopt the term “effective social mechanism” as a distinct and established CSF that captures the quality of interpersonal interactions in a broader sense. Before discussing the findings in relation to effective social mechanism, it is necessary to discuss psychological safety and trust as the second relevant interpersonal CSF.

Psychological safety and trust: Sections 4.3 and 5.3.6.4 set out the CSF “Psychological safety and trust” as relevant LSM but also to how the research participants related differently to its aspects. Whereas most individuals did not seem to be concerned with the need to feel safe, for a small number it was a highly relevant aspect. These few were also focused on making a positive impression, particularly towards their direct line manager and the Sponsor Organisation's senior leadership. It is important to keep in mind that the Program communication emphasised confidentiality to promote conditions of psychological safety, and that this may have influenced all participants to feel safe. As stated in Section 4.3, prior research has demonstrated the importance of psychological safety and trust in relation to leadership development (Argyris 1991; Day 2000), and the responses analysed in Section 5.4.3 support its relevance within LSM. Therefore, focusing on the conditions that promote psychological safety and trust is clearly relevant to LSM outcomes, but this requires positioning with the proposed LSM Taxonomy.

Day (2000) distinguished between “trustworthiness” and “trust” as belonging to intrapersonal and interpersonal competency, respectively (p 584). Although trustworthiness and related intrapersonal aspects are relevant to an individual's ability to feel safe and trust others, psychological safety principally pertains to interpersonal aspects relevant to relationships and groups. Therefore, within the proposed LSM Taxonomy, psychological

safety is positioned as a CSF relevant to the interpersonal aspects of LSM. This also covers the concept of trust, which, notwithstanding Day's (2000) distinction, can be considered relevant at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, group or organisational level (Kramer & Tyler 1995; Ballinger, Schoorman & Lehman 2009).

Day et al. (2014) consider authentic leadership as a relevant interpersonal process that is predictive of more-effective development, because an authentic leader is perceived as trustworthy. This raises the question of whether authenticity may also represent a relevant CSF within the LSM Taxonomy. The authors refer to prior research by Avolio and Garner (2005) that suggests that the impact of authentic leadership includes "open, transparent, trusting and genuine relationships" that correspond to "enhanced engagement and workplace wellbeing, as well as more sustainable performance" of individuals (p. 322). On this basis, the interpersonal concept of authenticity is captured within trust and psychological safety, and consequently does not appear to be a distinct aspect of the LSM Taxonomy.

One final aspect of psychological safety concerns the overlap with the CSF "Quality of interpersonal interactions", now captured within the concept of "social mechanism" discussed above. Notwithstanding that psychological safety is a more specific aspect that Day et al. (2014) included as part not of social mechanism but of authentic leadership, it can be argued that "social mechanism" essentially captures psychological safety by virtue of defining "a positive learning environment". Therefore, it is proposed to include psychological safety within the concept of effective social mechanism as part of the proposed LSM Taxonomy.

Effective social mechanism: Practice deductions indicate that the research participants experienced the interactions that were part of LSM practice as safe and focused on their authentic needs and situation. This frequently involved dealing with challenging issues that they perceived to be valuable. It also extends to individuals engaging with the LSM process so that it would be more focused on their development within their current role rather than their preparation for a future role or more senior level. The extent to which the research participants were focused on safety varied significantly between individuals, with most being unconcerned about confidentiality and demonstrating trust because of the perceived quality of the process. Research findings support aspects of effective social mechanism, including effective communication, an ability to build rapport and instil trust, an ability to be supportive and challenging and the knowledge and experience to engage effectively at the senior executive and leadership level. These interpersonal skills are relevant beyond the interactions with succession talent, including for the 360-degree feedback interactions and interactions with various stakeholders involved in the LSM process.

LSM practice demands the relevant interpersonal skills that underpin effective social mechanisms. In the leadership context, Day (2000, p. 584) captured these as “social awareness” and “social skills”, with the former consisting of “empathy, service orientation and political awareness”, and the latter “building bonds, team orientation, change catalyst and conflict management”. Translating this to the LSM context, research findings suggest that some are more relevant than others; specifically, these include empathy, building a trusted bond and being an effective change catalyst. This is particularly relevant in situations that may be personally sensitive, such as receiving feedback, missing out on a particular role and group interactions. Underpinning these interpersonal aspects is the ability to communicate effectively as a part of an interaction that engages individuals and supports them with their requirements, but also derives the output necessary to achieve LSM outcomes. This output is critical because even though the engagement of succession talent is important, ultimately LSM practice needs to meet the needs of the organisation and the process in optimising succession outcomes.

6.3.5 Practice implications relevant at the intrapersonal level

Motivation and mindset: Motivation and mindset represent important intrapersonal factors that determine the ability of potential successors to engage in the LSM process and achieve the relevant development objectives that support their success in a new role. This represents the ultimate objective of LSM. Therefore, it is important to consider the factors that contribute to this outcome.

The initial discussion on motivation and mindset in Section 4.3 covered a number of elements and underlying constructs. In light of the analysis of the research participants’ responses and the constructs’ positioning within the LSM Taxonomy, this requires clarification. First, motivation and mindset are different constructs (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009). Whereas motivation, in the present context, refers to the enthusiasm of an individual to engage in the LSM process and follow up on development, mindset refers to their beliefs, attitudes and opinions that affect this process. Neither motivation nor mindset is itself predictive of the individual’s ability to successfully develop. The latter, however, has been captured within the constructs of developmental readiness (Hannah & Avolio 2010) and learning agility (Eichinger & Lombardo 2004; De Meuse, Dai & Hallenbeck 2010), and identified as a key factor in leader-development outcomes. Both of these competing constructs capture mindset and motivation as well as the skills involved in achieving development outcomes. They are also closely linked to leader potential, which, as discussed in Section 2.6.2.3, represents a critical aspect underlying LSM.

Day (2000) refers to “self-motivation” and “self-regulation” as key skills underlying intrapersonal competence and leader development (p. 584). More specifically, these include “commitment” and “adaptability”. In a later publication, Day and colleagues (2014) refer to “self-development” as the relevant “content issue” that captures “the personal characteristics of individuals to engage in leadership self-development activities” (p. 68). The authors refer to research by Boyce, Zaccaro and Wisecarver (2010) that considers the underlying “cognitive, dispositional and motivational precursors” that determine an ability to engage in such self-development (p. 159). They also refer to research by Reichard and Johnson (2011) that highlights the importance of the organisational environment in motivating individuals to engage in development as well as moderating such development outcomes.

Positioning motivation and mindset within the proposed LSM Taxonomy, the discussion above suggests the need for an appropriate term that captures an individual’s ability to engage in successful LSM-development outcomes. To avoid choosing between the competing and equivalent constructs of developmental readiness and learning agility, it is proposed to refer to “leader succession potential” as the combination of intrapersonal aspects that determine the motivation and ability to engage in successful LSM-development outcomes.

Leader succession potential: Practice deductions suggest a number of findings relevant to the research participants’ experience in relation to their succession potential. First, their motivation was affected by their personal career aspirations, rigorous and valuable assessment data, including context-rich 360-degree feedback, and an acceptable level of tension between addressing LSM-focused development and having adequate capacity to perform in their role. Second, the research participants needed to feel supported by the organisation in general, and their direct line manager in particular, and would consider pursuing their career objectives external to the organisation if the organisation could not provide the resources and opportunities to support them. And third, not all research participants necessarily understood the concept of potential and development, and development was frequently seen as conflicting with current role performance.

Research findings suggest that LSM practice needs to support the relevant basic ingredients that determine leader-succession potential, principally motivation for further career progression and ability to acquire the competencies and capabilities required to succeed in new roles. As already discussed above, this is essentially captured by the constructs of learning agility (De Meuse 2017; Eichinger & Lombardo 2004), developmental readiness (Avolio & Hannah 2008) and leader potential (Silzer & Church 2009; Silzer et al. 2016). These

can be applied within the more specific objectives of LSM, principally to identify and develop suitable individuals in preparation to take on and succeed in a more advanced role. In practice, this requires applying these constructs to the unique aspects and circumstances of the role, work level and the organisation's strategic performance objectives. At a more granular level, LSM practice needs to be able to tap into motivation based on personally important, or intrinsic, factors (Deci 2002). It necessitates educating individuals about development, including the mindset and values that support learning and change (Dweck 2017; Heslin & Keating 2017). This also needs to extend to specific leadership competencies and capabilities that represent relevant development needs (Charan et al. 2011). At a broader level, organisations need to consider that LSM processes can crystallise considerations of succession talent regarding how individuals can best pursue their career objectives. This was recently highlighted by Groves (2018, p. 7) whose case study of a healthcare organisation includes "risk of loss" as a relevant LSM indicator. In addition to capturing this possibility, organisations also need to ensure that LSM processes are supported with the required resources, knowledge and commitment, including as part of line-management relationships.

6.4 Revising and extending the LSM-Framework

The above discussion of CSFs within the proposed LSM Taxonomy provides the basis for revising and extending the initial LSM Framework set out in Figure 2.1. This revised framework incorporates the major phase of the LSM process and highlights the distinction between intrapersonal, interpersonal and organisational-level aspects. It also reflects the criticality of context and the multidimensional role that effective communication represents. The above discussion of CSFs has resulted in a recommended revision to make them clearer and more meaningful in the context of LSM practice and theory (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: CSF heading changes to reflect research findings and practice implications

LSM Taxonomy categories and CSFs – original	LSM Taxonomy categories and CSFs – revised
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context</i>
Effective communication	Effective communication
Reflects organisational needs and culture	Supportive organisational learning culture
Link to organisational strategy	Translating organisational strategy into individually relevant leadership capabilities
	Identifying relevant level-based target capabilities
	Distinguishing between technical, management and leadership skills
High-quality assessment data	Multi-source, context-rich assessment data relevant to specific LSM development needs
Individualised development	Individualised development that involves work-based action learning and is aligned with performance expectations
<i>Process</i>	<i>Process</i>
Transparent, flexible and continuous process	Transparency regarding individual status and talent identification criteria
	Process flexibility reflecting individual needs and circumstances
	Process continuity focused strategic talent development
Regular review of progress and process	Regular review of individuals' development progress
	Regular review of process effectiveness
Consider internal and external talent	Consider the general availability of external talent to inform the relative importance of internal one
	Consider internal and riskier external talent to optimise the appointment decision
<i>Organisational</i>	<i>Organisational</i>
[Not captured]	Required organisational resources [Section 6.3.1]
Line-management ownership	Line-management ownership of successor development
Visible senior-leader support	Visible senior-leader support of LSM processes linked to strategy execution
Integration with HR talent management	Integration with HR talent management
Large, flexible pool of potential successors	Large, flexible strategic talent pool of potential successors
<i>Individual</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>
Quality of interpersonal interactions	Effective social mechanism
Psychological safety and trust	Effective social mechanism
<i>Individual</i>	<i>Intrapersonal</i>
Motivation and mindset	Leader succession potential

Source: Author

The LSM Taxonomy and revised CSFs provide a basis for also revising the LSM Framework set out in Section 2.7 (Figure 2.2).

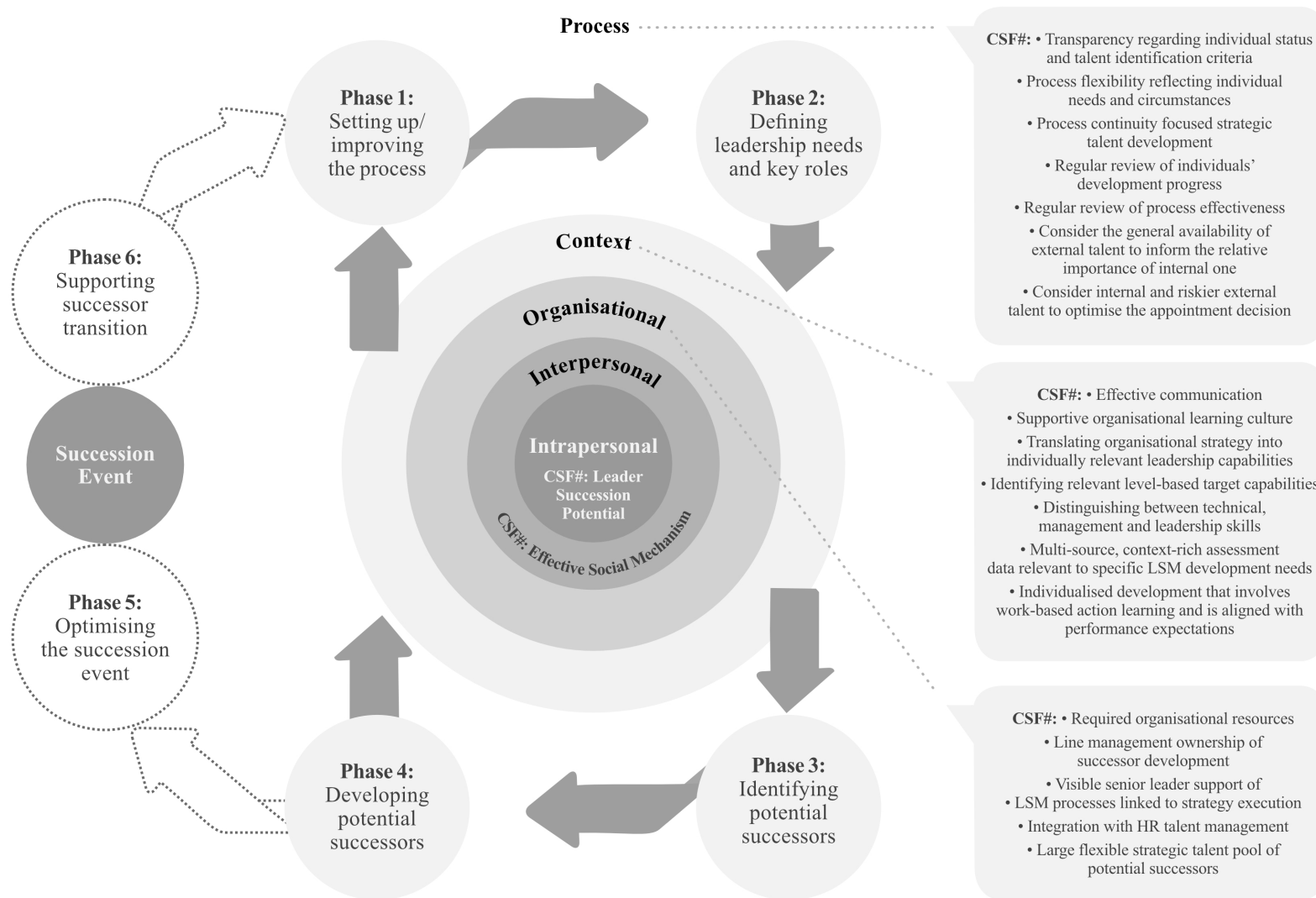


Figure 6.2: Revised LSM-Framework (Source: Author)

6.5 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a discussion of the CSFs within the context of a proposed LSM Taxonomy. This taxonomy has been derived from established leadership-theory research. It provides the basis for a more comprehensive model of LSM, the LSM Framework, with clearer and more distinct CSFs. This includes extending previous models identified in the LSM literature to also cover aspects that are relevant to those individuals who are senior executives and potential successors. This chapter also provides a range of practice implications relevant to each CSF derived from the practice deductions in Chapter 5. These implications, as well as the other findings of the research, are subject to limitations, which are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

7.1 Chapter overview

This chapter summarises the conclusions that directly address the research problem, objectives and questions set out in sections 1.6 and 1.7. It further provides a summary of the limitations of the research as well as suggestions for future research.

7.2 Research conclusions

The present research addresses the obvious and important need for a better understanding of the nature of LSM, which has been affected by a disconnect between recognising its importance but generally not implementing the systems, processes and practices that achieve optimal LSM outcomes. In doing so, this research achieves a number of important objectives (see Section 1.6.) including providing better theory (by defining a LSM Taxonomy), better knowledge (by identifying practice recommendations), better process (by revising and extending the LSM-Framework) and better outcomes for LSM (by incorporating the perspective of the individual including key intra- and interpersonal CSFs). In essence, the research identifies key elements relevant to the person who is a participant and therefore central part of the LSM process, including the intrapersonal aspects that are relevant to the individual's potential, and the interpersonal social mechanisms that are relevant to the interactions underlying the LSM process. The following summarises how the present research addressed the research questions set out in Section 1.7:

1. *What is the evidence in support of LSM practices in large organisations?* In addressing research question one, a review of the scholarly literature identified evidence in support of LSM and its associated practices (Section 2.4). Even though there is a lack of definite findings establishing a causal relationship between LSM and better organisational performance, evidence in support of LSM consists of research that establishes a range of benefits from LSM (Table 2.2). Research also indicates that internal candidates are associated with lower failure rates and do not incur the significant hiring costs of external candidates (Section 2.4.2). Other relevant outcome research establishes a link between more-sophisticated HR practices, including LSM, and economic profits (Friedman 1986; Huselid 1995), and highlights the perceived importance of LSM to organisational outcomes (Bernthal & Wellins 2006b; Lamoureux et al. 2009; Reid 2005). The literature also demonstrates that leadership development is central to LSM outcomes. This includes a number of outcome studies

that link LSM with leadership development (Charan et al. 2011; Groves 2007; Kim 2003) as well as key studies that demonstrate the efficacy of leadership development (Avolio et al. 2009; Collins & Holton 2004; McAlearney 2008).

2. *What best-practice approaches to LSM have been identified in the scholarly literature?* Section 2.6 and Appendix 1 set out various best-practice approaches. These have a significant number of similarities and some differences. They are similar with respect to the key phases that are involved in implementing LSM activities and the CSFs that are relevant in determining LSM outcomes. Table 2.3 provides a summary overview of the LSM best-practice phases and CSFs according to their representative literature source.
3. *In examining the scholarly literature, what are relevant contingent success factors (CSFs) affecting LSM outcomes?* Section 2.6.2 sets out the various CSFs according to the key phases of LSM. They include 11 CSFs: (1) Reflects organisational needs and culture; (2) Transparent, flexible and continuous process; (3) Integration with HR talent management; (4) Line-management ownership; (5) Visible senior-leader support; (6) Regular review of progress and process; (7) Link to organisational strategy; (8) Large, flexible pool of potential successors; (9) High-quality assessment data; (10) Individualised development; and (11) Considering internal and external talent. The key phases and CSFs were combined to form a framework for practice, termed the LSM Framework. The literature shows that no other approaches have defined such a framework in such a comprehensive way.
4. *How do these CSFs relate to the experiences and attitudes of Participants?* To better understand how the various CSFs relate to senior executives, the research explored the LSM Framework in the context of the LSM program of a large organisation. It applied a valid and reliable qualitative case-study research methodology to generate responses from 13 Program participants through a semi-structured interview process that explored their attitudes and experiences with respect to the various CSFs that form part of the LSM Framework.
5. *How do the research participants' experiences and attitudes toward each CSF inform best practice?* The multiple coding of the interview responses and a review of Program materials and participant feedback and evaluation reports formed the basis for generating insights to inform LSM practice and theory. Specifically, the coding analysis produced additional CSFs that address individual and relationship aspects of LSM;

specifically, intrapersonal aspects that define an individual's leader-succession potential, including their motivation, attitude and ability to develop further to assume a more advanced position. It also identified the requirement to have an effective social mechanism in place to support the interpersonal aspects that drive the LSM process and outcomes. This includes the trust and psychological safety required for people to engage fully in the LSM process.

6. How do the research findings relate to supporting better LSM outcomes? The analysis of CSFs across the 13 research participants' responses produced a large number of practice deductions that illuminate LSM practice. These practice deductions were considered within the newly formed LSM Taxonomy that the present research derived from the CSFs. The discussion of CSFs within the LSM Taxonomy allowed for the specific practice deductions to inform more-general practice implications. It also provided the ability to be more specific regarding the CSFs identified from the LSM best-practice literature.

Overall, the present research provides a material contribution to practice and theory by positioning various LSM success factors within the first evidence-based LSM Taxonomy to create a comprehensive framework for practice and further theory-building and testing by deepening the understanding of its very nature.

7.3 Limitations of the present research

As with any research study, there are elements that limit the capacity of the project but also generate opportunities for future research. Some of the limitations of the current research have already been pointed out in Chapter 3 in relation to the research methodology and the decision to undertake an in-depth, qualitative study. For instance, it produces theoretically generalisable rather than statistical generalisable outcomes. This this was a critical choice to enable the collection of a different, and arguably, more meaningful type of data which enabled insights into the nature of LSM and the development of the LSM Taxonomy and LSM Framework. As such, it addressed the proposed overarching research question in a way that had not previously been achieved by academic research.

One limitation, from a qualitative study perspective was, however, that most of the research participants were hierarchically two or three levels below the Group CEO, with only one representing a direct report as a CEO of an Operating Company (Figure 4.2.). This may provide limited insight regarding individuals who are direct reports to a Group CEO, and

does not include the perspective of the Group CEO itself. Mitigating these limitations is the fact that the research participants worked in different entities and roles. The analysis of their responses set out in Chapter 5 demonstrates sufficient consistencies regarding some aspects, such as the importance of manager support, and significant variability across others, such as confidentiality. These similarities and differences inform best-practice approaches that have already been established, many of which have been examined in the peer-reviewed LSM literature. Furthermore, the objective of the research is not to validate CSFs but to better understand how they were applied in the practical context of the Sponsor Organisation.

As noted in section 4.2, there is a distinct gender imbalance given only one of the 13 research participants is female. Although this could be argued to be a limitation of the research, it is important to note that this imbalance is representative of the current state of senior leadership positions in Australia, and globally, even more so in the engineering and construction industries, e.g.(Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018). The gender mix mirrors that across the entire Program, where only 11 of 91 participants were female and as such is not considered to impact the validity of the research. Additionally, the research considers participants as individual case studies that inform LSM practice, further reaffirming its validity.

As mentioned in Section 3.2.6, the present research does not cover the entire life cycle of the LSM process. Although the Sponsor Organisation implemented some of the development-plan initiatives for the earlier cohort, participants in the present research essentially stopped before the development phase, Phase 4. This means that the research cannot consider the research participants' experience and attitudes as part of the actual development process or the actual succession event, including the decision-making process and the CSF of considering internal and external candidates. This limitation is partly mitigated by exploring the practices relating to these additional phases as part of the literature review in Chapter 2. It is further addressed by investigating the research participants' attitudes about leadership succession, the importance of following up through development, as well as their own potential.

Although these limitations are undoubtedly relevant, they need to be considered in the context of this research and the objectives it serves. Importantly, the present research does not intend to demonstrate the predictive ability of the LSM Framework and CSFs. The evidence for this has been derived from the review of the LSM literature, including outcome studies of LSM and leadership development. Instead, the present research aims to inform

some of the contextual factors that involve the potential successor. The value of this approach has recently been demonstrated by Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018) in the context of executive coaching. In their research, the authors investigated the contextual factors that are relevant to achieving executive-coaching outcomes. It is also important to remember that the additional CSFs, which provide guidance for individual-level aspects of LSM, refer to established theories and constructs that rely on the relevant outcomes-based research to provide the evidence for their causative relationship with LSM outcomes. Notwithstanding the above limitations, they should be addressed in future research.

7.4 Suggestions for future research

The present research contributes to a better understanding of the CSFs underlying LSM outcomes. Further research needs to comprehensively test each of these factors, ideally in accordance with established quantitative research methodologies to identify their significance in relation to LSM outcomes. Given the challenge of complexity that largely prevents measuring direct links between CSFs and LSM outcomes (Giambatista, Rowe & Riaz 2005), research should focus on the behaviours that underlie these outcomes. For example, research can investigate the degree to which development is standardised or individualised within different organisations, to test whether this results in greater or lesser developmental activity (such as regular review of progress or implementing development goals). This further research ultimately needs to lead to a comprehensive testing of the efficacy of the revised LSM Framework, or a version of it. Until this has been achieved, the existing evidence sufficiently supports that organisations that implement LSM best practice in accordance with the revised LSM Framework are likely to achieve better succession outcomes.

This research also suggests a number of additional opportunities for future research:

- a. Future research can investigate the additional CSFs in the context of LSM; specifically, the constituents of leader succession potential and the relevant social mechanisms. Whilst the concept of leadership potential in the context of LSM has been well recognised, so too have its challenges in reliably identifying and measuring this potential (Brant, Dooley & Iman 2008; Silzer & Church 2009; Silzer et al. 2016). The discussion in Section 6.2.2 provides a useful starting point and, importantly, positions leader succession potential as a central concept in a comprehensive practical and theoretical framework. Similarly, effective social mechanism represents a logical and necessary factor that is associated with LSM outcomes; however, no research has considered an evaluation between different

levels of social mechanism (for example, high-trust and low-trust relationship environments) and LSM outcomes. Such research will be valuable in better understanding the extent to which this CSF and its constituents matter to LSM outcomes.

- b. Further research has an opportunity to examine the CSF of Effective Communication to better understand how it is relevant to the different aspects of the LSM process. The criticality of communication has already been recognised in prior LSM research by Kasper (2008); however, as stated above, this research largely considered the perspective of the organisation, examining the importance of communication processes in relation to LSM and how to evaluate their effectiveness. Additional research needs to consider the importance of communication in relation to the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of the LSM Framework. The present research indicates some of these insights; however, these are limited because the research was not designed to specifically capture this aspect.
- c. Future research has an opportunity to more closely examine the attitudes and experiences of participants as part of phases 5 and 6 – the succession event and transition support, respectively – of the revised LSM Framework. Prior research has recognised the importance of transition support, also referred to as “onboarding” (Lamoureux, Campbell & Smith 2009; Byford, Watkins & Triantogiannis 2017), yet it is frequently identified as an aspect of LSM requiring future research (Berns & Klarner 2017; Schepker et al. 2017). Such future research is likely to identify a number of additional CSFs that are relevant to LSM outcomes because they improve the success rates and performance of successors.
- d. Future research can explore the differences between leadership, management and technical skills at different work levels and in relation to specific roles, as well as to the organisation more broadly. The approach of linking capabilities to different work levels was captured by Charan and colleagues (2011) in their leadership-pipeline approach. Although this is a useful starting basis, there is an opportunity to create a more comprehensive and integrated approach that connects the different aspects of the LSM Taxonomy and provides a more detailed understanding of how individuals can achieve successful transitions.

- e. As indicated in Section 6.3.1, further research has an opportunity to use complexity science as part of the LSM Framework. Similar to Boyatzis's (2008) application of complexity concepts to leadership development, these can be applied to other phases of the LSM process. For example, Boyatzis's (2008, p. 299) concept of a "tipping point" associated with the nature of complex systems can be considered in relation to setting up the LSM process and whether a sufficient number of senior leaders provide visible support. Using a complex adaptive systems approach may also have implications for understanding the different phases of the LSM process, as these are arguably not linear and static, but rather emergent, interactive and dynamic, similar to other organisational processes (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey 2007). Ultimately, applying such a concept may also affect how leadership continuity is understood and approached through LSM practice, including the contemporary assumption that it is solely a hierarchical concept (Lichtenstein et al. 2006).
- f. Perhaps most importantly, there is an urgent need for research that reliably reports the status of the Knowing-Doing Gap of LSM, and its practices within organisations. The available data is indirect, obsolete and often conflicting (Section 2.5.). The challenge is to reliably capture the qualitative differences that distinguish between replacement planning, succession management and strategic talent management incorporating LSM. The present research provides an opportunity to use the revised LSM Framework to achieve greater definitional clarity and consistency in capturing relevant data. For example, organisations can report the extent to which they implement each of the LSM process phases. They can also report on the extent to which they consider incorporating the various CSFs; for example, the extent to which they consider the organisational culture to support development or whether senior leaders visibly support of LSM processes.

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Appendix 1: Summary overview of major best practice LSM models

Author(s)	Summary Description
Gordon and Rosen (1981)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-arrival: (a) successor characteristics; (b) prior experiences with succession events; (c) how the successor is chosen and appointed; (d) the mandate of the successor 2. Post-arrival: (a) the “mutual observation process”; (b) the successor’s actions and reactions; (c) the successor’s power and influence source
Conger and Fulmer (2003)	<p>Empirical study of succession management best practices within six leading organisations, including Sonoco, Eli Lilly, Bank of America and Dow Chemical, produced five key recommendations for best-practice succession management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on development 2. Identifying key positions 3. Creating a transparent process 4. Measuring progress 5. Retaining flexibility to enable changes in the approach. <p>Findings emphasise the criticality of development in combination with succession management and reports on succession planning metrics, e.g. internal hire rates, high potential attrition rates, number of “ready now” candidates for key roles, ratio of high potentials to “incumbents”</p>
Karaevli (2003)	<p>Suggested best-practice approaches include senior-executive involvement in the succession-planning process, tying leadership development to business strategy, a mix of formal and informal approaches, the use of data including 360-degree feedback and competency analyses, the use of group processes in identifying high-potential candidates, individualised development processes, and a focus on large pools rather than a few individuals.</p>
Garman and Glawe’s (2004)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process should be board-driven but responsibility should be shared with the CEO 2. Keep the process ongoing at all times 3. Communicate openly about the process 4. Identify a specific successor for the CEO role 5. Always have a potential successor identified 6. Communicate development needs 7. Create and implement clear development plans and succession timelines 8. Develop a clear exit strategy for the incumbent executive 9. Conduct post-succession assessment to identify potential problems early
SHRM Foundation (Day 2007)	<p>Succession Management Process at Dow Chemical Company</p> <p>Step 1: High-level review of the talent pipeline by the CEO and direct reports (yearly).</p> <p>Step 2: Review of each business function and strategic area focusing on what new capabilities will be needed to deliver this strategy and any new corporate-critical roles that will be needed.</p> <p>Step 3: Review of top 100 leaders using the “nine-Box” performance/potential grid.</p> <p>Step 4: Development and discussion of succession plans for high- and medium-risk corporate-critical roles that exist now and are anticipated in the future.</p> <p>Step 5: Developmental planning for this population</p>

Author(s)	Summary Description
Barnett and Davis (2008)	Suggest a five-step model designed to overcome key challenges to succession planning and provide a best-practice approach describing the major aspects of succession planning including process, talent identification and review, feedback and development and measurement
Sobol et al. (2007)	<p>Eight-phase chronological model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Business Case 2. Create Architecture 3. Design System 4. Plan Implementation 5. Analyse Bench Strength 6. Identify Successors 7. Develop, Acquire and Retain Talent 8. Measure and Learn
Berger and Berger (2010)	<p>Best-practice guidelines focus on the integration of succession planning to achieve alignment between individual career ambitions and the needs of the organisation to satisfy succession objectives. Key aspects include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine when succession planning and career planning are appropriate strategies; 2. Formulate policy, goals, roles and accountabilities; 3. Clarify present job duties and worker competencies; 4. Manage and measure performance; 5. Recruit and select talent to meet present/future needs; 6. Align future job duties and worker competencies with organisational strategy; 7. Assess individual potential for promotion; 8. Narrow developmental gaps through individual development plans and actions; 9. Retain talent and transfer knowledge; and 10. Evaluate results of the program compared to goals.
Rothwell (2010)	<p>Seven-Pointed Star Model for Systematic Succession Planning and Management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the Commitment 2. Assess Present Work/People Requirements 3. Appraise Individual Performance 4. Assess Future Work/People Requirements 5. Assess Future Individual Potential 6. Close to Developmental Gap 7. Evaluate the Succession Planning Program
Charan, Drotter and Noel (2011)	<p>Five-step process to support a leadership pipeline approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tailor the leadership pipeline model to fit your organisation's succession needs 2. Translate standards for performance and potential into your own language 3. Document and communicate these standards throughout the organisation 4. Evaluate succession candidates through a combined potential-performance matrix 5. Review the plans and progress of the entire pipeline frequently and seriously

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

(Version 1.1 – 29 May 2014)

TITLE: Succession Management and Leadership Development Case Study Research Project

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by researchers at the Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong and supported by <Sponsor Organisation>. The purpose of the research is to investigate how certain aspects of a succession-focused leadership development program are implemented in a large, complex organisation. <Sponsor Organisation> has agreed, in principle, to provide information about the <Sponsor Organisation> Leadership Development Program (“Program”) in support of this research. The research will be conducted by one of the senior consultants contracted by <Sponsor Organisation> to facilitate the Program.

RESEARCHERS

Ingo Susing	Dr Anil Chandrakumara	Dr Gordon Spence
Doctoral Researcher	Supervisor	Co-Supervisor
Sydney Business School	Sydney Business School	Sydney Business School
	+61 2 4221 4034	+61 2 9266 1343

METHOD AND DEMANDS ON PARTICIPANTS

If you choose to be included, the study will involve a 90-minute interview which seeks to explore relevant contingent success factors to this process from the Program participant’s perspective. Sample questions include the following: (1) How transparent is the succession process of the organisation? (2) How helpful is the 360-degree feedback? (3) Are there clear key performance indicators, which relate to your development plan? In addition, de-identified information about yourself in relation to aspects of Program may be used to describe how various steps of the Program are applied in a real life setting. Possible information may include aspects of your broader career history and progression, your future ambitions, feedback rater data about your strengths and development needs, evaluation of key competencies and suggested development initiatives. Data will be captured through interview transcripts, reflection notes and any other material provided by <Sponsor Organisation> or yourself.

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS

Apart from being interviewed, there are no other requirements involved in the research. In relation to the activities involved, we can foresee no material risks for you, however some participants may find it uncomfortable or distressing to answer questions involving their development. To mitigate any potential risks and ensure the wellbeing of the research participant, the researcher will be vigilant in noticing any signs of distress and, if necessary, may suggest a referral to a health professional such as GP, psychologist or community service such as Lifeline. Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time and including any data that you have provided up to that point. Assuming you decide to participate, you will be asked to reconfirm your consent once you have received a copy of the interview transcript. Any decision not to participate or rescind your participation will be anonymous and not be known to <Sponsor Organisation>. Refusal to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with your employer, co-workers, the researcher or the Sydney Business School University of Wollongong involved in conducting the Program.

FUNDING AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

This study is conducted in relation to the <Sponsor Organisation> Leadership Development Program and supported by <Sponsor Organisation>. <Sponsor Organisation> will not be informed about whether, or not, you decide to participate, or have access to any of the data collected from you or other research participants. Findings from the study will be published in a doctoral thesis and possibly published in academic journals as well as presented at research conferences. Confidentiality is assured, and the organisation, you and co-workers will not be identified in any part of the research.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UoW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rs-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Appendix 3: Consent Form for Participation in Research

(Version 1.0 – 20 May 2014)

TITLE: Succession Management and Leadership Development Case Study Research Project

RESEARCHERS: Ingo Susing (Doctoral Researcher), Dr Anil Chandrakumara (Supervisor), Dr Gordon Spence (Co-Supervisor)

I have been given information about the above research project and discussed it with Ingo Susing in his dual role as a consultant working on the <Sponsor Organisation> Leadership Development Program (“Program”) and as a researcher who is conducting this research as part of a doctoral thesis supervised by Dr Anil Chandrakumara and Dr Gordon Spence in the Sydney Business School at the University of Wollongong.

I have had an opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the research and my participation. I understand that if I consent to participate, interview transcripts as well as de-identified information about myself in relation to aspects of the leadership development and succession management program will be used to describe how various steps of the Program are applied in a real life setting and what factors are relevant in contributing to its successful implementation. I will have an opportunity to re-consider my consent at any time until I receive a copy of the interview transcript at which point in time I will be asked to re-confirm my consent which is only valid if confirmed by me in writing.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will be kept anonymous from my employer and not affect my relationship with relationship with my employer, co-workers, the researcher or the Sydney Business School University of Wollongong involved in conducting the Program.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Ingo Susing, Dr Anil Chandrakumara (+61 2 4221 4034) and/or Dr Gordon Spence (+61 2 9266 1343). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to participate in the research. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used primarily for a doctoral thesis, and may also be used in summary form for journal publication or research conferences, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

.....

...../...../.....

Name (please print)

.....

Appendix 4: Interview Guide (incl. telephone/Skype script)

(Version 1.1 – 30 May 2014)

1. For telephone or Skype interviews, the following script will be used prior to commencing the interview:

[Researcher to introduce himself]: Hello, this is Ingo Susing calling in my capacity as doctoral research student at the University of Wollongong. Can I confirm that I am speaking with [Participant name]. [Researcher to await Participant response to confirm identity.]

I intend to audio record this interview and produce a transcript of our discussion for analysis audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis with all responses to be kept strictly confidential. Is this acceptable? [Await, participant response. If positive, researcher to continue.] I will now start the audio recording.

Thank you for making yourself available for this interview. Before we get into the actual interview questions I need to ask you a number of questions to ensure proper process is followed and the wellbeing of research participant's protected. Is that ok? [Await, participant response. If positive, researcher to continue.]

By returning the signed Participant Consent Form, did you have sufficient opportunity to consider the contents of the Participant Information Sheet and the contents of the Participant Consent Form? [Await, participant response. If positive, researcher to continue.]

As participation in the study is entirely voluntary there is no obligation for you to proceed with the interview. Are there any concerns that cause you to reconsider and decide not to proceed? This would be ok. [Await, participant response. If indicating willingness to proceed, researcher to continue.]

[If Skype is used.] Would you prefer to proceed with video and audio or audio only? [Await, participant response. If indicating audio only, researcher to switch off video.]

Thank you for your confirmation. I will now proceed with the interview. I am obligated to check in 5-minute intervals whether you are still willing to proceed. Is that

ok with you? [Await, participant response. If indicating willingness to proceed, researcher to continue with the interview.]

[Researcher to check in 5-minute intervals whether Participant is willing to continue.]

Once the interview is concluded, thank the Participant for their participation. Restate that all the data collected from the interview will remain strictly confidential and the findings from the research will be reported in a way that does not identify her/him.

2. For face-to-face interviews, the following script is proposed prior to commencing the interview:

Welcome participant to the interview and make them feel comfortable by offering them a drink.

Confirm for the participant that the interview will take approximately 90 minutes that will be audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis (with all responses to be kept strictly confidential). The interview will consist of multiple questions, which serve as a semi-structured discussion about the relevant topic.

Ask if the participant has any questions and if so, answer them until they are comfortable enough to begin the interview.

Tell the participant you will start the interview by announcing his/her name, check they are ready and then start the digital recorder.

Conduct the interview using the interview questions, as appropriate. Ensure active listening is used to help the participants feel at ease and comfortable to share their experience.

Check frequently, ideally in 5-minute intervals, once discussion topics are completed, to ensure that the Participant is willing to continue. Consider any signs of the individual showing signs of discomfort or distress and, if required, ask for permission to turn off the audio record and offer to stop the interview.

Once the interview is completed, turn off the audio recorder and thank the participant for the discussion.

Interview questions:

1. Focus on identifying future potential and development:
 - a. What did you hope to get out of the <Sponsor Organisation> Leadership Development Program prior to commencement?
 - b. To what extent did the Program inform your current role priorities?
 - c. To what extent did the Program provide clarity with respect to what you need to learn for continued career success?
 - d. How do you define leadership potential? How important is it to you that you live up to your potential?
2. The use of data including competency analyses and 360-degree feedback:
 - a. How relevant to you are the 'leadership capabilities' referred to in the Program? (May need to probe for clarity and relevance.)
 - b. To what extent was the 360-degree feedback helpful? (May need to refer to specific examples of the type of 360-feedback, which a participant has received.)
3. Measurement of key performance indicators, evaluation and follow up:
 - a. What are the KPIs (key performance indicators) relevant to your development plan?
 - b. Do you expect there be follow up? What will be the impact?
 - c. Do you expect to share your development plan with your manager? Are you likely to pursue a proactive discussion?
 - d. To what extent are you personally motivated to ensure there is adequate follow-up with respect to your development plan?
4. Integration with other HR systems and the wider management reporting:
 - a. How do you expect the information generated about you to be used by <Sponsor Organisation>?
 - b. Would it be appropriate to integrate the key development objectives in your development plan with your annual performance contract? What would be potential advantages or disadvantages of this?
5. Senior leadership support (including board involvement), responsibility and accountability for succession outcomes:
 - a. To what extent is it important for the Program and your participation to be visible to the senior leadership of <Sponsor Organisation>, including the board?
 - b. To what extent do you believe the Program to be visible to the senior leadership of <Sponsor Organisation>, including the board?
 - c. To what extent is there a level of ownership and accountability for the success of this Program? Where does this reside? (Probe for Board, CEO, senior team, HR, manager of program participant and program participant.)
6. Importance of communication and language:
 - a. How was the Program communicated to you?
 - b. Were there any aspects of the Program that were not clear?
 - c. To what extent would you consider the Program represented an approach that is consistent with the culture and language of <Sponsor Organisation>? Why?
7. Organisational culture that is supportive of learning and development:

- a. What keywords would you use to describe the culture of <Sponsor Organisation> with regard to overall leadership? (Probe learning, development, self-awareness, etc.)
 - b. How supportive would you consider the organisation is of ongoing learning and development of its senior leaders?
 - c. How does the organisation demonstrate this support? (Probe time off, less job responsibilities, resources etc.)
8. *Creating a large pool of potential succession candidates rather than focusing on few individuals:*
- a. What is the implication of you having been made aware that the Program represents a large initiative that spans the most senior leadership positions across the Group? Would it make a difference if the same exercise was conducted with you in isolation?
9. *An ongoing systems view, rather than event based process:*
- a. To what extent is the Program relevant to the future performance of <Sponsor Organisation>?
 - b. Should there be more or less of these initiatives? Why?
10. *Creating a transparent process of how succession is approached in the organisation:*
- a. How transparent is the senior leadership succession process of the organisation?
 - b. What is the impact of how succession is approached in the organisation on you as a senior leader of <Sponsor Organisation>? What are key concerns and important elements?
 - c. How transparent is the notion of “high-potential”? Have you been informed of your potential status formally or informally? If so, please describe the communication and process. (Probe whether people know who is high-potential even informally, who gets selected for programs, who has coaches etc.)
11. *Retaining flexibility regarding adjustment and changes in line with organisational requirements:*
- a. How have you found the Program to be flexible in understanding and addressing your individual needs?
 - b. What could the organisation do to ensure this feels tailored to you as an individual leader?

Appendix 5: Draft Email Inviting Potential Participants

(Version 1.1 – 29 May 2014)

Dear [Participant First Name],

Re. Proposed Research Study involving the <Sponsor Organisation> Group Senior Leadership Development Program

I refer to your participation in the <Sponsor Organisation> Senior Leadership Development Program (“Program”), which is now complete.

Following my engagement to facilitate the Program, I now have the opportunity to conduct doctoral research, which addresses a significant gap in the existing research into leadership development and succession management processes. The gap is the lack of in-depth, empirically rigorous descriptions of how such processes unfold in a large, complex organisation such as <Sponsor Organisation>.

In light of this need, you are invited to participate in this research. If you choose to participate which you need to advise me of directly (ingo.susing@gmail.com), a 90-minute interview (either in person, or alternatively via telephone or Skype depending on your availability) will be conducted by myself to better understand your experience of the Program. In addition to this, de-identified confidential information about yourself in relation to aspects of the Program will be used to describe how various steps of the Program were applied. Importantly, although the research is supported by <Sponsor Organisation> (as per attached letter), no individual at <Sponsor Organisation> will be informed of whether you decide to participate, nor receive any information other than that provided in the ordinary course of conducting the Program. Further detail is set out in the attached Participant Information Sheet and also a Consent Form, which you are asked to read carefully and, subject to your agreement, sign and provide to me prior to your interview, should you decide to participate.

I would like to stress that your involvement in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time, as well as withdraw any data that you have provided to that point. Refusal to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with <Sponsor Organisation> or the consultants involved in conducting the Program. There are no particular advantages or disadvantages by participating in the research compared to other senior leaders of <Sponsor Organisation> who are going through the Program. Once the interview is complete and a transcript available, you will be issued with a copy of the transcript and asked to re-confirm your participation by signing a second Participant Consent Form. Should you wish to withdraw your participation after initially accepting, I ask you to simply advise me of this by email.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions or comments you may have in relation to the above. Please do not hesitate to contact me on my mobile on +61 .

With best regards,

Ingo Susing

Doctoral Research Candidate, University of Wollongong