Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Succession Planning: Strategies for Identifying and Developing Future Leaders

Mykhailo Zhylin[1,*], Svitlana Bondarevych[1], Liudmyla Kotliar[1], Olena Dikol-Kobrina[1] & Olha Dzhezhyk[2]

[1]Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine

[2]National University «Odesa Law Academy», Odesa, Ukraine

*Correspondence: Department of Practical Psychology, Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine. E-mail: zhylin.mykhailo@gmail.com. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2898-4403

Abstract

The aims of this study are to investigate the relationship of leadership identification and development with emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning and to outline the effective strategies for identification of potential leaders and leadership development. Methodology - To achieve the aim, we used the scheme of interactive co-production research where researchers create the scientific partnership with business professionals and they are responsible for generation of theoretical and practical knowledge. To process the data, we applied mixed methodology to improve the data assessment and contributed to objectivity and accuracy of the research. The survey involved five companies operating in the information technology, car repair enterprise, sewing business, and food and beverages producer in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine. The survey was conducted between March-September 2023. A sample included 24 business professionals and leadership in different roles, ages, gender, work experience, and education background. The selection of respondents was based on their involvement in leadership identification and development procedures in the organization and depended on their level of professional competency in the industry. The result show that leadership identification and development is implemented through certain strategies which include the use of feedback, culture of high engagement, performance assessment, leadership training programs, identification of skill gaps and future needs, and introduction of continuous learning culture in an organization. The use of these strategies should be implemented in the individual, group, and organizational levels. The study contributed to elaboration of the model of leadership identification and development in an organization.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, leadership, succession planning, leadership identification, leadership development

1. Introduction

Debates on the role and responsibilities of a leader have lasted a long time and the problem of effective leadership in an organization is still intriguing since no panacea for an ideal leader has been found (Balcerzyk, 2021). Today leadership is a multifaceted phenomenon with a number of definitions that demand more detailed examination. Leadership, from this perspective, is thus a complicated process when a person influences others to accomplish an objective efficiently and directs the organization in a rational and cohesive way (Hallo et al., 2020). Recent technological advancements and their transformative impacts on all the industries and education, changes in people's awareness, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors require leaders to possess a unique set of skills and characteristics to promote their professionalism, improve focus, build confidence, and develop resilience (Huda, 2023; Megheirkouni and Mejheirkouni, 2020). According to Iskakova et al. (2023), emerging technologies have a profound impact on the holistic development of future leaders through global connectivity, data-driven decision making, lifelong learning.

At the same time, the 21st century is being marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and creates unpredictable and rapidly changing professional environment (Suprunenko et al., 2024; Williams et al., 2022) that considerable influences leadership performance and goal achieving. In particular, we shall consider the use of tools associated with the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, social media, blockchain, sensor networks, and innovative imaging technologies (Tsekhmister et al., 2022; Yamin, 2019). The dynamics of new global economy and

current restructuring (Vlados, 2020), transformation of the work environment and operational procedures due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic (AlMazrouei, 2023; Linvill and Onosu, 2023), long-lasting economic and financial shock of war in Ukraine (Opatska et al., 2023) contribute to a leader's evolution and demand effective strategic planning, organizational recovery management, and value-based leadership.

A succession plan when thoughtfully designed, can ensure the continued success in an organization and bring sense of stability (Ritchie, 2020). Succession planning is a critical management imperative in a time of uncertainty since its performance and sustainability (Khugshal, 2020; Obianuju et al., 2021). It is worth mentioning that succession planning deals with a comprehensive and holistic approach to planning process that addresses leadership needs because it creates a clear agenda for achieve organizational goals and objectives (Farah et al., 2020), prioritizing specific strategic initiatives (López-Torres et al., 2023), and improvement of the effectiveness (Sherrer and Rezania, 2020).

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand people's feeling and reactions towards different situation and the readiness to apply these skills to make good decision and to avoid problems (Cavaness, 2020; Drigas, 2023). For decades, emotions were considered negative aspect in the professional environment. Expressing emotions by a leader was usually interpreted as a sign of confusion or inability to make rational decision. But recently the things have changed significantly, and the business sphere has started to recognize emotions as a valuable source of information that can produce amazing results in organizational management (Drigas, 2023).

Effective leadership, therefore, is closely connected with emotional intelligence because it can help leaders plan properly (Saha et al., 2023), build an effective team (Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez, 2023), solve difficult professional problems (Drigas, 2023), make accurate decisions (Alzoubi and Aziz, 2021), adapt their behavior model to the existing situation (Boyar et al., 2023), resolve crises quickly and effectively (Linvill and Onosu, 2023; Yuste, 2021), and implement innovations (Alzoubi and Aziz, 2021). Succession planning plays and important role in leadership development since it is oriented towards knowledge transfer (Arhama et al., 2021), training specific skills among future leaders (Jackson and Dunn-Jensen, 2021), building their professional capacity (Mehreen and Ali, 2022) and talent retention (Siambi, 2022).

Therefore, the research is aimed at the investigation of relationship of leadership identification and development with emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning and to outline the effective strategies for identification of potential leaders and leadership development to get an organization to thrive in the competitive and changing environment.

2. Literature Review

Leadership succession is an important and recurring process event in the life of organizations. According to Ritchie (2020), leadership succession planning is a course of relevant actions to cultivate future leaders within and outside of the organization. Other findings define leadership succession planning as the process of identifying and creating future leaders who will take the place of the previous employees when they depart the organization (Khugshal, 2020). Planned succession ensures smooth transition and has positive impact on post-succession performance whereas unplanned transition usually causes a huge shock in the organization (Farah et al., 2020).

The findings show that leadership succession planning is characterized by a number of benefits and contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of an organization (Egbuta, 2019; Jackson and Allen, 2022). Figure 1 presents the benefits of leadership succession planning. The include stability (Matagi, 2023), employee engagement (Mehreen and Ali, 2022), talent development (Siambi, 2022), knowledge transfer (Arhama et al., 2021), crisis management (Farah et al., 2020; Yuste, 2021), organizational performance (Khugshal, 2020; Obianuju et al., 2021; Sholesi et al., 2022).

Rakhimov and Mukhamediev (2022) research underscores the critical role of digital technologies in enhancing healthcare delivery, highlighting innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and telemedicine. These technologies not only revolutionize patient care but also necessitate a corresponding evolution in leadership within healthcare settings. Effective leadership in such an environment requires a high degree of emotional intelligence to navigate the complexities of implementing new technologies, managing change, and fostering a culture of innovation and empathy.

Moreover, the focus on the integration of scientific developments into marketing strategies—particularly those relating to big data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning—mirrors the advanced competencies future leaders must possess (Martynenko et al., 2023). Presently, leadership has become even more challenging due to the rapid

evolution and constant introduction of innovations which change business landscape significantly. This requires immediate attention to the problems of formation of new qualities among leaders that will help them set clear expectations, recognize the misunderstandings and problems in the team and also solve them quickly and effectively, and apply the certain strategies in accordance with the existing problems and opportunities (Karaszewski and Drewniak, 2021; Tagscherer and Carbon, 2023). And therefore, emotional intelligence has grown into a key element addressing the complexity of the challenges today's leadership face in the changing business environment (Cavaness, 2020; Drigas 2023; Saha et al., 2023).
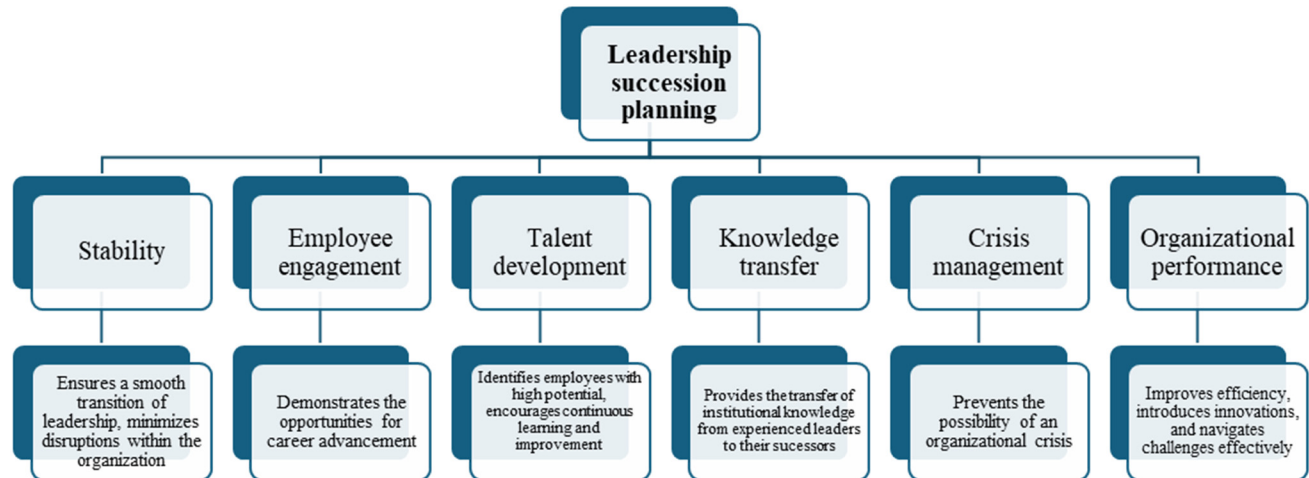

Figure 1. Benefits of Leadership Succession Planning

Source: Author's own development

Considering that leadership, and leadership succession in particular, can be affected by emotional intelligence, it is necessary to refer to its detailed explanation and description of its structure. Lee at al. (2022) state that emotional intelligence is associated with individual's abilities to identify, express, understand, and evaluate own emotions and emotions of others. Wen et al. (2019) described emotional intelligence as ability to monitor own and other's emotions, develop emotional cognition-based information, and use it to organize positive interpersonal relations.

Findings show that there are some approaches to emotional intelligence structure. Blasco-Belled et al. (2020) differentiate mood attention, emotional clarity and mood repair within emotional intelligence. At the same time, Cavaness 2020 and Dong et al. (2022) suggest that emotional intelligence in organizations contains personal and social domains. Personal domain includes self-awareness (emotional self-awareness) and self-management (adaptability, orientation towards achievements, emotional self-control). Social domain deals with social awareness (empathy, organizational awareness) and relationship management (teamwork, conflict management, mentorship, inspiration).

Incorporating emotional intelligence into leadership succession planning can have several benefits. Firstly, it makes communication effective during leadership transition (Farah et al., 2020). Secondly, emotional intelligence creates strong interpersonal relationship in an organization (Parker et al., 2021). Thirdly, leaders with emotional intelligence can navigate conflicts properly (Chen et al., 2019). Fourthly, emotional intelligence helps leadership understand the feelings of others and create supportive environment (Wen et al., 2019). Fifthly, emotional intelligence contributes to stress management in the team (Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Fteiha and Awwad, 2020) and building positive organizational culture (Neong et al., 2022). As such, the presence of emotional intelligence in leaders' targets regulation of emotions to be able to promote their emotional and intellectual growth.

Importantly, leadership succession planning through emotional intelligence is a spread area of research globally, with various studies highlighting its impact and specifications. But the theoretical analysis revealed some key aspects from the research conducted in different countries recently. For example, Asian and European authors studying the role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership succession planning found its positive impact on team performance (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Kiishi, 2024). Some Chinese works are devoted to the problem of relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence as key traits of organizational

knowledge management (Zhang et al., 2023). They emphasize the continuous and interacting roles of emotional intelligence in knowledge management processes and leadership succession planning resulted in achievement of better performances in the organization. Similarly, culture influence project management and introduces adaptive leadership styles (Sayed, 2023). In the USA, some scholars explore gender differences in emotional intelligence and its implications for leadership succession planning. In this context, the findings of Cundiff (2022) suggest that women tend to score higher on certain emotional intelligence competencies, such as empathy, which may influence leadership styles and effectiveness. Besides, according to some scholars, emotional intelligence helps to enhance autonomous learning (Rajib & Jahan, 2024), culture of continuous learning (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023), and increased engagement of leadership (Kour & Ansari, 2024).

Table 1. Strategies for Leadership Identification and Development

1. *Strategy*	2. Explanation	3. Authors
4. Identification of skill gaps and future needs	5. Assessment of the current skills within an organization and understanding the skills required for future success	6. Kjellström et al. (2020)
7. Performance assessment	8. Evaluation of employees' performance to identify their leadership qualities	9. Hidiroglu (2021); Miloradova (2023)
10. Mentorship	11. Guiding and advocating of future leaders by experienced executives	12. Ayoobzadeh and Boies (2020)
13. Cross-functional experience	14. Providing the opportunities for employees to gain experience in different functions to extend their competencies	15. Ton et al. (2022)
16. Talent reviews	17. Conducting regular talent reviews to assess employees' skills and potentials	18. Rožman et al. (2023)
19. Leadership training programs	20. Implementation of targeted leadership training programs to enhance essential skills (communication, decision-making, critical thinking, etc.)	21. Lamm et al. (2021)
22. Feedback	23. Providing regular feedback to create individualized development plans	24. Crans et al. (2022)
25. Action learning projects	26. Engagement of future leaders in action learning projects so that they can cultivate leadership skills in real-world scenarios	27. Tsoli (2023)
28. Peer learning	29. Sharing knowledge, experiences, and insights to enhance leadership skills among future leaders	30. Pham (2022); Willocks (2023)
31. Continuous learning culture	32. Organization of environment where learning is an ongoing and integral part of the leadership development	33. Mariono and Sabar (2023)
34. Responsible leadership discourse	35. Encouragement of future leaders to follow the ethical principles, prioritize corporate responsibility, and contribute to positive communication within the professional environment	36. Bhinder (2022)
37. Culture of high engagement	38. Organization of professional environment where future leaders are actively involved	39. Bui and Le (2023)

Source: Author's own development

Leaders who apply emotional intelligence can build excellent management in an organization. They are responsible for influencing others and facilitation of teamwork. The interaction between a leader and employees is usually dynamic, supportive and empathetic (Yuste, 2021). We found that effective succession planning demands the application of strong leadership strategies throughout an organization oriented to identify and develop future leaders (Matagi, 2023). Table 1 describes the strategies for leadership identification and development that can be used in the context of succession planning.

The recent scientific literature presents some cases of leadership development through emotional intelligence in different spheres and industries. Firstly, it is important to mention healthcare leadership and emotional intelligence development among healthcare leaders. The researches of Cavaness et al. (2020) as well as Almadani and Alamri (2024) examined how emotional intelligence training improved leadership effectiveness, patient outcomes, and organizational performance in hospitals. Emotional intelligence development plays an important role among academic leaders in higher education institutions. According to Asmamaw and Semela (2023), and Wambi et al. (2024), academic leaders with higher emotional intelligence scores exhibited transformational leadership behaviors, effective conflict resolution skills, and stronger relationships with faculty and students. Besides, emotional intelligence training contributed to a more supportive academic environment and enhanced institutional reputation. Other studies demonstrated the positive effect of emotional intelligence among technology sector (Ertiö et al., 2024; van Dun & Kumar, 2023) and non-profit sector leaders (Herland, 2022).

We are confident that emotionally intelligent leader is characterized by the ability to recognize, understand, and manage own emotions and employee's emotions. And emotional intelligence, being an important leadership quality, positively affects organizational performance. Therefore, emotional intelligence enhances leadership succession planning and is usually associated with leadership identification and development since it determines a future leader's effectiveness, draws his/her interpersonal skills, and ability to navigate organizational dynamics. This suggests that the article addresses the following research questions:

What is the effect of emotional intelligence upon identification and development of future leaders?

How leadership succession planning contributes to identification and development of future leaders?

What are the effective strategies for leadership identification and development?

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

The research was aimed to investigate the relationship of leadership identification and development with emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning and to outline the effective strategies for identification of potential leaders and leadership development. The survey involved five companies operating in the information technology (2), car repair enterprise (1), sewing business (1), and food and beverages producer (1) in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine. The survey was conducted between March-September 2023. Unfortunately, during this period Ukrainians face a long war against Russia and this fact means that the general environment influences business activities significantly and causes uncertainty (Opatska et al.2023). But at the same time, when leaders encounter a number of challenges, their efforts were directed to improve organizational performance and demonstrate their strengths (Batryn 2023).

This study was conducted using the scheme of interactive co-production research where researchers create the scientific partnership with business professionals, and they are responsible for generation of theoretical and practical knowledge (Müller et al.2023). To make the research accurate and objective, the research team included six experts, three of which were the instructors of institutions of higher educational establishment where future leaders are trained, one expert represented the human resource department who is involved in leadership development and two experts belonged to business professionals and perform the functions of identification and development of future leaders in the work environment. The experts contributed to the design of model of leadership identification and development in the context of succession planning and improvement of emotional intelligence. Also, they contributed to the elaboration of recommendations for leadership to identify and develop future leaders in individual, team, and organizational levels.

We applied mixed methodology because the data required in this research was expresses in qualitative and quantitative forms. This approach improved the data assessment and contributed to objectivity and accuracy of the research.

3.2 Participants

A sample included 24 business professionals and leadership in different roles, ages, gender, work experience, and education background. The selection of respondents was based on their involvement in leadership identification and development procedures in the organization and depended on their level of professional competency in the industry. This means that we engaged individuals who had significant gains in training of future leaders and possessed in-depth knowledge about the organization they worked.

The respondents were aged between 27-58 years. 15 participants were males, and 9 – females. Their work experience varied from 3 to 18 years. 17 respondents graduated from university and obtained the degree of master or specialist. 7 participants graduated from university or college and had bachelor's degree. All the respondents were working in different managerial roles. Table 2 shows the roles of survey participants and their work experience in the organizations.

Table 2. The Roles of Survey Participants and Their Work Experience in the Organizations

No	Role	Work experience
1	Chief operating officer	15 years
2	Human resources manager	18 years
3	Chief financial officer	9 years
4	Controller	7 years
5	Marketing officer	12 years
6	Technology officer	10 years
7	Executive assistant	5 years
8	Executive assistant	3 years
9	Product manager	7 years
10	Product manager	4 years
11	Project manager	5 years
12	Project manager	6 years
13	Project manager	8 years
14	Project manager	11 years
15	Project manager	9 years
16	Risk manager	8 years
17	IT director	10 years
18	Director of computing services	9 years
19	General manager	11 years
20	Advertising manager	4 years
21	Sales manager	3 years
22	Sales manager	5 years
23	Education and development manager	12 years
24	Human resources director	17 years

Source: Author's own development

3.3 Data Collection

Before the questionnaire all the participants were explained the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence and its connection with succession leadership planning based on the findings of literature review. Besides, the participants were provided with the hand-outs on the effective strategies for identification of potential leaders and leadership development in the organization. The surveyors were satisfied that all the individuals are aware of the research problem and are knowledgeable about the emotional intelligence discourse and its terminology.

The questionnaire included open-ended and close-ended questioned and focused on three basic questions: Why is emotional intelligence is important? What is the effect of succession planning upon leadership identification and

development? What are the most effective strategies of identification and development of future leaders and what are their characteristics? Participants were asked were interviewed by e-mail or phone. The interviews lasted 30-40 minutes. They were audio recorded compulsorily and then transcribed verbatim. All the participants were informed about the survey objectives and procedures.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to the principles of descriptive analysis in management (Pozzebon and de Souza Bido 2019) in four stages (Figure 2). The data analysis enabled to calculate the basic statistical measures and identify standard deviations typical for the research.
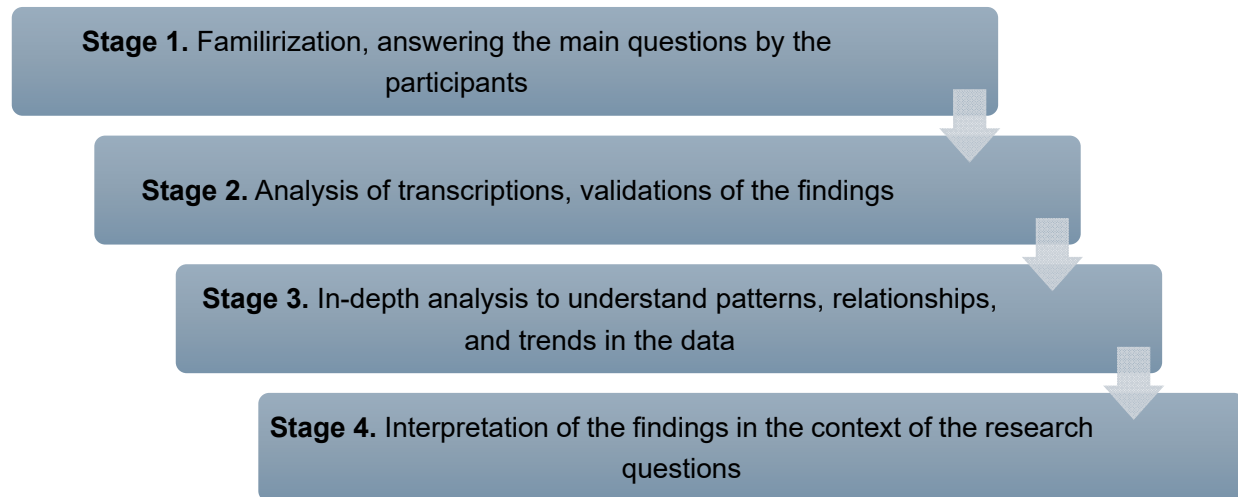
Stage 1. Familirization, answering the main questions by the participants

Stage 2. Analysis of transcriptions, validations of the findings

Stage 3. In-depth analysis to understand patterns, relationships, and trends in the data

Stage 4. Interpretation of the findings in the context of the research questions

Figure 2. The Survey Stages According to the Principles of Descriptive Analysis in Management

Source: Pozzebon and de Souza Bido (2019)

4. Results

4.1 Effect of Emotional Intelligence upon Identification and Development of Future Leaders

The survey showed that emotional intelligence leads to improvements in an organization. Based on the respondents answers we found that positive effects mostly relate to strong interpersonal relationship (23 individuals), employees' emotional improvement (22 individuals), and establishment of effective communication within the professional environment (22 individuals). Also, emotional intelligence has significant improvements upon conflict resolution (19 individuals), stress management in the team (19 individuals), and building of positive organizational culture (19 individuals). In addition, the findings show that leadership emotional intelligence affects employees' intellectual growth positively. And this, in turn, can trigger development of employees' mental capacities or knowledge and encourage continuous learning. At the same time, respondents stated that in some cases leadership emotional intelligence causes leadership subjectivity (1 individual), nepotism or favoritism (3 individuals), failure to address performance problems (2 individuals), and inability to adapt to sudden changes (2 individuals). The survey proves that emotional intelligence is a critical quality of today's leadership and makes positive changes in the professional environment. This means it should be introduced while identifying and developing future leaders in an organization. Figure 3 shows effects of emotional intelligence upon identification and development of future leaders.
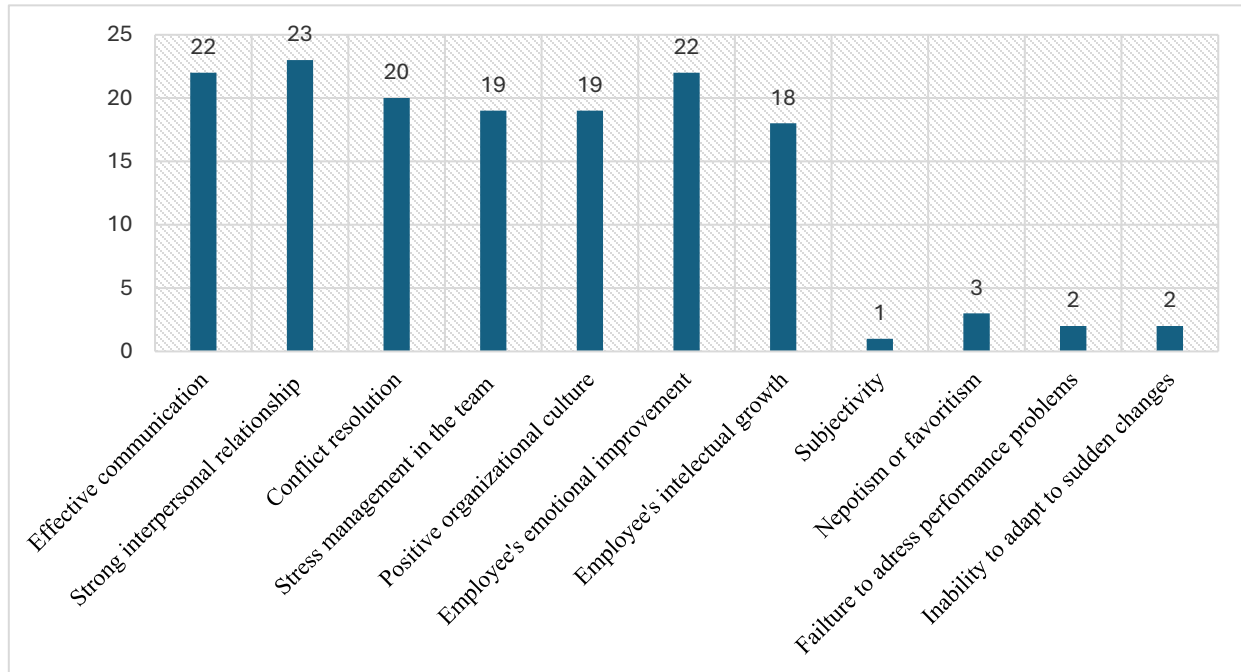
Figure 3. Effects of Emotional Intelligence upon Identification and Development of Future Leaders

Source: based on the survey results

4.2 Contribution of Leadership Succession Planning to Identification and Development of Future Leaders
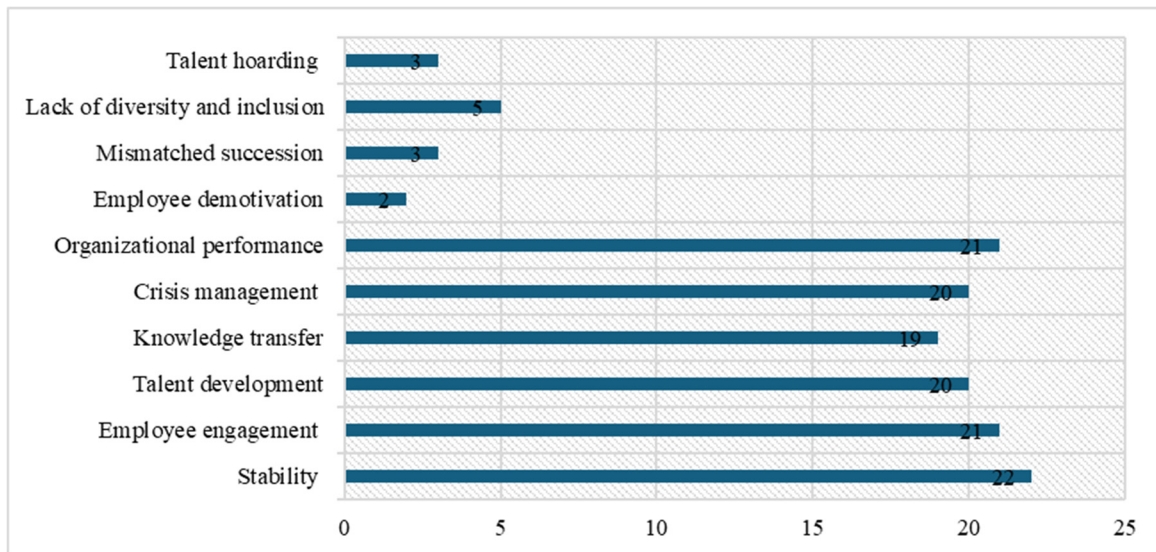

Figure 4. Contribution of Leadership Succession Planning to Identification and Development of Future Leaders

Source: based on the survey results

The findings show different attitudes towards succession planning among managerial personnel. Stability (22 individuals), organizational performance (21 individuals), and employee engagement (21 individuals) had the most positive effects upon identification and development of future leaders according to respondents. Also, crisis management (20 individuals) and talent development (20 individuals) were regarded as positive effect of planned leadership succession. From respondents' experience, leadership succession planning can cause some negative effects

when it is implemented or managed properly. 5 people stated that poor leadership succession planning can bring lack of diversity and inclusion in an organization, and it can preserve the limited opportunities for underrepresented groups like internally displaced persons or people with limited abilities. Also, lack of diversity and inclusion can hinder organizational adaptability and retard innovation development. In some cases, succession planning can cause talent hoarding (3 individuals), mismatched succession (3 individuals), and employee demotivation (2 individuals). The respondents, who have in-depth knowledge in the industries and were involved in leadership identification and development procedures, state that efficient succession planning is an important strategic process and it can ensure a smooth transition of leadership and maintain organizational stability. Figure 4 shows contribution of leadership succession planning to identification and development of future leaders.

4.3 Strategies for Leadership Identification and Development

The results demonstrate managers apply different strategies for leadership identification and development, each of them has both positive and negative effects. Table 3 analyzes the strategies, their positive and negative effects and, therefore, contributes to the enhancement of identification and development of future leaders in an organization.

Table 3. Strategies for Leadership Identification and Development, Their Positive and Negative Effects

Strategy code	Strategy title	Positive effects	Negative effects
S1	Identification of skill gaps and future needs	Enhances talent management; Helps workforce planning in an organization; Helps understand what skills needed for future roles; Maintains competitiveness and adaptability of employees; Encourages formation of employees' readiness to sudden changes in the business environment; Helps integrate technologies in the workplace.	Demotivation of workforce; Prioritizes weaknesses over strengths; Focus on immediate skill gaps and neglects of long-term developmental goals.
S2	Performance assessment	Provides feedback on an individual's contributions to an organization; Identifies areas for improvement accurately; Help make decisions related to promotions or compensation; Implements performance standards; Enables employees to track their progress.	Can be subjective and leads to potential inaccuracies; focuses on meeting performance criteria but nor introduction of innovative solutions; Reduces autonomy.
S3	Mentorship	Contributes to employees' growth; Increases employees' skill development; Contributes to organizational success through positive partnership between experienced and less experienced individuals; Establishes mutual trust and respect in the team; Builds open communication.	Long-term mentorship is ineffective if both parties become too comfortable and stop challenging each other.
S4	Cross-functional experience	Helps involve individuals in different activities and projects; Contributes to teambuilding; Forms diverse skill development among employees; Enables employees to understand how different departments function.	Frequent rotation disrupts ongoing projects; Constant changes in leadership creates instability and uncertainty for team members.
S5	Talent reviews	Helps evaluate employees' skills, competencies, and potentials; identifies skill gaps; Forms employees; readiness for future roles; Ensures fair evaluation.	Is subjective; Creates a significant pressure on employees to perform well, leading to increased stress and anxiety.
S6	Leadership	Develops and enhances employees' professional skills;	Fails to adjust the training

	training programs	Preparing future leaders to respond to complex challenges; Inspires the team; Addresses to specific needs and challenges of an organization; Trains future leaders through simulations of real-life scenarios; Provides future leaders with practical experiences.	to the unique strengths and weaknesses of workforce; Does not often provide follow-up opportunities and continuous learning.
S7	Feedback	Provides information about employees' performance and behaviour; Allows leadership to make immediate adjustments and corrections; Offers suggestions for enhancement in an organization; Fosters positive mindset among employees; Allows employees to ask questions; Contributes to customization of learning programs.	Does not focus on development and growth opportunities; Can be unfair and unconstructive.
S8	Action learning projects	Enable employees to work on real-world problems; Organizes learning from the experience; Improves employees' problem-solving and collaboration skills; Develops critical thinks among employees; Contributes to continuous learning; Builds open communication in the team.	Needs integrating into a broader development plan; Is difficult to assess their value for employees.
S9	Peer learning	Provides the exchange of knowledge, skills, and experiences; Enhances professional development Creates collaborations among colleagues; Creates positive psychological atmosphere in the team; Makes learning an ongoing process; Establishes peer mentorship in an organization.	Does not provide accurate or comprehensive knowledge; May foster competition rather than collaboration.
S10	Continuous learning culture	Implements of commitment of learning; Recognizes the importance of enhancing practical skills; Addresses specific skills gaps; Provides knowledge-sharing among colleagues; Encourages employees' self-improvement.	Focus too much on individual development but not organizational goals or strategic priorities.
S11	Responsible leadership discourse	Engages employees in discussion; Builds open communication in the team; Fosters trust; Recognize the importance of diverse perspectives in an organization; Forms responsible leadership; Addresses potential human rights impacts of business activities	Requires risk management; Requires transparency.
S12	Culture of high engagement	Motivates employees; Involves employees in work; Increases productivity; Contributes to broader goals; Helps to communicate positively inside the team; Encourages employees' autonomy.	Leads to burnout and stress; Fosters competition among employees or departments resulted in strained relationships and reduced collaboration.

Source: Author's own development

Also, we assessed the strategies for leadership identification and development on the basis of four criteria: effective, moderately effective, low effectiveness, and ineffective. The findings show that respondents consider feedback (S7),

culture of high engagement (S12), and performance assessment (S2) effective strategies for leadership identification and development. Also, application of leadership training programs (S6), identification of skill gaps and future needs (S1), and continuous learning culture (S10) bring significant improvements in the process of leadership identification and development. At the same time, cross-functional experience (S4), peer learning (S9), and introduction for responsible leadership discourse (S11) are regarded as less effective strategies. 4 respondents stated that peer learning is ineffective strategy for leadership identification and development because of skills level disparities, lack of motivation, and insufficient readiness of employees to study from their colleagues. Table 4 shows the analysis of assessments of strategies for leadership identification and development.

Table 4. Assessment of Strategies for Leadership Identification and Development

Strategy code	Quantity of respondents			
	Effective	Moderately effective	Low effectiveness	Ineffective
S1	15	8	1	0
S2	19	5	0	0
S3	12	10	2	0
S4	8	10	4	2
S5	10	9	4	1
S6	18	4	2	0
S7	22	2	0	0
S8	11	12	1	0
S9	8	9	5	4
S10	14	8	1	1
S11	7	8	6	3
S12	20	3	1	0

Source: Author's own development.

Therefore, according to participants' experience leadership identification and development in an organization must include feedback, culture of high engagement, and performance assessment, leadership training programs, analysis of skill gaps and future needs, and continuous learning culture. Other strategies may bring to certain improvement if they are well planned and consider all the possible challenges.

5. Discussion

5.1 Overview

The section summarizes the role of leadership identification and development for organizational performance and proves positive effect of emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning. The research explains the most effective strategies for leadership identification and development in an organization considering the application of emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning.

Firstly, the findings show that emotional intelligence as a critical quality of today's leadership makes positive changes in the professional environment through building strong interpersonal relationship, employees' emotional improvement, establishment of effective communication, conflict resolution, stress management in the team, and organization of positive organizational culture.

Recently, emotional intelligence is paid attention of many researchers, and a number of works are devoted to its improvement. The findings allowed us to outline the recommendations on improvement of emotional intelligence among future leaders. We agree with Gilar-Corbi training et al. (2019) that emotional intelligence training has a moderate effect but its can be improved through supervision of the staff and fostering motivational professional environment; setting clear goals; providing competitive compensation; creating the opportunities for employees' professional development. According to Dong et al. (2022) emotional intelligence improved due open communication, mentorship, an improvement of self-effect mechanism among leadership. In addition, emotional intelligence is improved during the advanced training course or seminar which lectures and discussions on mental

health, peer sessions, check-in rounds, teamwork, and exercises aimed at emotional intelligence interventions.

Secondly, succession planning is a comprehensive and holistic approach to creation of clear agenda considering future changes in an organization. Ahmad et al. (2020) state that succession planning helps avoid organizational errors and puts the right people in the right positions at the right time. The survey results demonstrated that succession planning affects leadership identification and development since it enhances stability, organizational performance, employee engagement, crisis management, talent development. Improvement of leadership succession planning is associated with selection of a successor, identification of employees' high potentials, implementation of succession planning programs, involvement of top leaders in succession planning that encourages employees to take part in succession process (Ali and Mehreen, 2019). Other findings show that succession planning includes preparation of a potential candidate for further advancement, organization of leadership training, spread of higher-level responsibilities among employees and formation of their professional autonomy (Ahmad et al., 2020). According to Ritchie (2020), effective succession planning needs setting long-term strategic goals and announcement them to the employees. Thirdly, effective strategies for leadership identification and development are implemented through the model which considers succession planning and necessity of emotional intelligence improvement. The survey results and recent findings in the field of identification and development of future leaders contributed to the model design. Figure 5 shows the model for leadership identification and development which explains the introduction of the most effective strategies. The model is implemented in four stages: recruitment (attraction of talented individuals from both internal and external sources to ensure that they can step into critical roles when needed), training (providing learning and development opportunities to employees identified as potential successors for key leadership positions in an organization), performance (evaluation and assessment of employee's current job performance), and outcome (creation of a pool of qualified employees who can hold key leadership positions).
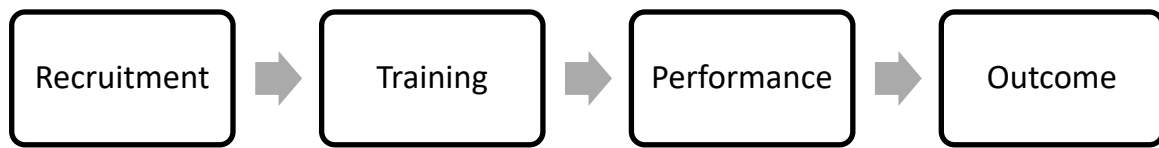

Figure 5. Model for Leadership Identification and Development

Source: based on the survey results

Leadership identification and development is implemented through certain strategies which include the use of feedback, culture of high engagement, performance assessment, leadership training programs, identification of skill gaps and future needs, and introduction of continuous learning culture in an organization.

The use of these strategies should be implemented in the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Individual level. Succession planning is oriented towards preparing specific employees for key roles in an organization. It requires identification of high potential employees (Mehreen and Ali, 2022); assessment of employees' current skills and professional competencies (Kjellström et al., 2020); formation of leadership competencies (Jackson and Dunn-Jensen, 2021); creation of individual leadership development trajectory (Fuentes, 2020); mentorship (Ayoobzadeh and Boies, 2020); peer learning (Pham, 2022; Willocks, 2023).

Team level. Succession planning in the team level demands the development of a group of employees within a specific department to ensure continuity and readiness for future changes in an organization. Succession planning in the concerns identification of key roles in the team (Ahmad et al., 2020); assessing current team members (Hidiroglu, 2021; Rožman et al., 2023); formation of team leadership competencies (Rony et al., 2023); development of team succession plan (Al Suwaidi et al., 2020); collaboration and teamwork (Yuste, 2021); ensuring diversity and inclusion (Fernandez et al., 2022).

Organizational level. Succession planning in the organizational level involves a strategic approach to identifying, developing, and retaining talents in an organization. It requires assessing current workforce (Kjellström et al., 2020); creation of succession planning framework (Al Suwaidi et al., 2020); talent reviews (Rožman et al., 2023); mentorship (Ayoobzadeh and Boies, 2020); knowledge transfer (Arhama et al., 2021), introduction of continuous learning culture (Mariono and Sabar, 2023), and regular monitoring and evaluation (Hidiroglu, 2021).

It is worth mentioning that strategies for leadership identification and development should be implemented simultaneously at each level to enhance their efficiency.

5.2 Practical Implications of the Study

Research on leadership development and succession planning through emotional intelligence offers valuable practical implications for the organizations aiming to develop effective leadership flows and ensure long-term organizational success. The integration of emotional intelligence into leadership development programs enhances leaders' ability to cope with complex challenges within the professional activities. It is worth mentioning that focusing on formation of emotional intelligence qualities, particularly self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and relationship management, the organizations can foster a leadership culture that values as interpersonal effectiveness.

Obviously, this competence equips current leaders with the skills needed to inspire and motivate teams. Moreover, emotional intelligence also prepares emerging leaders to be involved in future leadership roles with confidence. Besides, succession planning strategies that prioritize emotional intelligence ensure continuity in leadership effectiveness and organizational success. The organizations can apply the findings to develop the targeted assessments and development initiatives to foster innovation, and maintain proactive approach to mitigate risks associated with leadership turnover. The research proves the importance of inclusion of emotional intelligence into the organizational culture to support sustainable leadership development and succession planning efforts. Cultivating a culture that values emotional intelligence encourages leaders at all levels to continuously enhance their professional skills and behaviors. When the positive environment where emotional intelligence is celebrated and practiced, is implemented in the organization, it will enhance employees' engagement, promote collaborative decision-making, and strengthen organizational resilience in the face of change.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

At the same time, the research concerns some limitations which address negative effect of application of emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning while identifying and developing future leaders. Understanding their negative effect will contribute to enhancement of the efficiency of the model of leadership identification and development in an organization. Based on the research findings, future research must consider the potential leadership attitudes towards the use of the strategies for identification and development of future leaders.

6. Final Considerations

The research was devoted to the investigation of relationship of leadership identification and development with emotional intelligence and leadership succession planning and outlining the effective strategies for identification of potential leaders and leadership development to get an organization to thrive in the competitive and changing environment. During the research we came to the following conclusions:

(1) Leadership succession is an important and recurring process event in the life of organizations since it is the process of identifying and creating future leaders who will take the place of the previous employees when they depart the organization. Planned succession ensures smooth transition and has positive impact on post-succession performance whereas unplanned transition usually causes a huge shock in the organization. They include stability, organizational performance, employee engagement, crisis management, and talent development.

(2) Emotional intelligence is associated with individual's abilities to identify, express, understand, and evaluate own emotions and emotions of others. Also, it is the ability to monitor own and other's emotions, develop emotional cognition-based information, and use it to organize positive interpersonal relations. Incorporating emotional intelligence into leadership succession planning can have several benefits. Based on the survey we found that positive effects mostly relate to strong interpersonal relationship, employees' emotional improvement, establishment of effective communication within the professional environment, conflict resolution, stress management in the team, and building of positive organizational culture.

(3) The results demonstrate managers apply different strategies for leadership identification and development. The most effective ones include feedback, culture of high engagement, and performance assessment, application of leadership training programs, identification of skill gaps and future needs, and continuous learning culture. At the same time, we found that cross-functional experience, peer learning, and introduction for responsible leadership discourse are regarded as less effective strategies.

(4) Effective strategies for leadership identification and development are implemented through the model which considers succession planning and necessity of emotional intelligence improvement. The survey results and recent

findings in the field of identification and development of future leaders contributed to the model design. The model is implemented in four stages: recruitment (attraction of talented individuals from both internal and external sources to ensure that they can step into critical roles when needed), training (providing learning and development opportunities to employees identified as potential successors for key leadership positions in an organization), performance (evaluation and assessment of employee's current job performance), and outcome (creation of a pool of qualified employees who can hold key leadership positions).

(5) Also, we concluded that the strategies for leadership identification and development should be implemented in the individual, group, and organizational levels.

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