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Developing a Managerial Competency Model with an Executive Succession Planning Program in State-Owned Banks (Case Study: Bank Sepah, Iran)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop and validate an integrated managerial competency model for senior executives of Iranian state-owned banks, with a specific focus on succession planning programs, using Bank Sepah as a case study. The research was applied in nature and employed a mixed-methods approach. In the qualitative phase, the key dimensions and components of the model were extracted through a meta-synthesis of 120 selected scholarly articles. In the quantitative phase, the proposed model was tested using a researcher-developed questionnaire distributed among 340 managers and branch directors of Bank Sepah in the northwestern region of Iran. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. The findings led to the identification and confirmation of a five-dimensional managerial competency model consisting of: talent assessment aligned with succession planning, interpersonal interactions, transformational leadership, strategic thinking, and knowledge-based organizational management. All model fit indices confirmed the adequacy of the model. Construct reliability and validity were also supported through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). By addressing an existing gap in the literature, this study presents an integrated and context-specific model that simultaneously incorporates managerial competencies and succession planning requirements. The application of a mixed methodological framework (meta-synthesis and structural modeling) further enhances the credibility and robustness of the findings. The proposed model can serve as a scientific framework for the design of managerial development programs and succession planning systems in Iranian state-owned banks.

Keywords: Managerial competencies, succession planning, structural equation modeling, meta-synthesis, Iranian state-owned banks, Bank Sepah

Introduction

In contemporary organizational environments characterized by accelerating technological change, intensifying competition, demographic transitions in the workforce, and increasing institutional complexity, the strategic importance of managerial competency and succession planning has become more salient than ever. Organizations

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across both public and private sectors face unprecedented challenges in sustaining leadership continuity, ensuring organizational resilience, and maintaining performance stability over time. The convergence of these challenges has elevated succession planning from a peripheral human resource function to a core strategic concern that directly influences organizational survival and long-term effectiveness (1-3). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that organizations with well-designed succession systems experience stronger leadership pipelines, improved governance quality, and enhanced organizational adaptability (4, 5).

At the heart of effective succession planning lies the construct of managerial competency. Competency models provide structured frameworks that define the knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and personal attributes required for effective managerial performance and leadership success. Such models serve as critical tools for talent identification, leadership development, performance evaluation, and strategic human resource planning (6-8). Without clearly articulated competency standards, succession planning efforts remain fragmented, subjective, and vulnerable to political bias, thereby undermining organizational stability and performance outcomes (9, 10).

The integration of competency modeling with succession planning has thus emerged as a central paradigm in modern organizational management. Contemporary research emphasizes that succession planning is not merely the replacement of individuals but the systematic development of future leaders whose competencies align with evolving organizational strategies and environmental demands (11-13). Competency-based succession systems allow organizations to forecast leadership needs, assess talent potential, design targeted development interventions, and ensure leadership continuity under conditions of uncertainty and change (14, 15).

In the context of global economic transformation, the growing influence of digitalization, Industry 4.0, and smart technologies has further complicated managerial roles and competency requirements. Modern managers must now integrate technological literacy, data-driven decision-making, adaptive leadership, and innovation management into their professional repertoire (16, 17). This dynamic environment necessitates the continuous reconfiguration of competency frameworks and succession mechanisms to ensure strategic alignment and organizational sustainability (18, 19).

Research in diverse organizational contexts confirms that the absence of formal succession planning mechanisms contributes to leadership vacuums, operational disruptions, diminished employee morale, and weakened institutional legitimacy (2, 3). Conversely, organizations that institutionalize competency-based succession systems achieve superior governance quality, improved risk management, and enhanced strategic coherence (5, 12). These findings underscore the strategic necessity of integrating competency modeling with succession planning in a systematic and evidence-based manner.

The Iranian organizational landscape, particularly within public and semi-public institutions, faces acute leadership continuity challenges driven by retirement waves, regulatory transformations, economic volatility, and institutional reforms. Despite these pressures, many Iranian organizations continue to rely on informal, experience-based, and politically influenced succession practices that lack scientific grounding and long-term strategic orientation (11, 20, 21). This gap between organizational needs and existing leadership development practices has intensified scholarly attention toward the development of localized, evidence-based competency and succession frameworks tailored to Iran's institutional realities (13, 22, 23).

Recent Iranian studies have made important contributions to competency modeling and succession management across various sectors. For instance, Ahmadzadeh and Mehdizadeh Ashtarfi proposed a comprehensive succession management model for the banking system, highlighting the central role of leadership competencies in

organizational sustainability (20). Similarly, Salimi Bazneshini and colleagues developed competency models for talent identification and succession management in the National Gas Company, emphasizing the importance of integrating technical, managerial, and behavioral competencies (14, 15). Shabani et al. validated a competency model for financial managers in the National Iranian Oil Company, demonstrating strong links between competency alignment and managerial effectiveness (22). Khayyati et al. extended this line of inquiry by designing a competency model for educational administrators, confirming the cross-sector relevance of competency-based leadership development (19).

Despite these advances, the literature reveals several unresolved challenges. First, many existing models remain sector-specific and fragmented, limiting their generalizability and integrative value (24, 25). Second, few studies explicitly integrate competency modeling with comprehensive succession planning architectures that account for organizational culture, governance mechanisms, and strategic alignment (26, 27). Third, limited attention has been paid to the systemic interactions between individual competencies, organizational processes, and institutional governance structures within succession systems (5, 28).

Theoretical developments further support the need for integrative competency–succession frameworks. Entrepreneurship theory highlights the role of leadership competencies in organizational renewal and generational continuity (4). Dynamic capability theory emphasizes the importance of adaptive managerial competencies in navigating turbulent environments and sustaining competitive advantage (8). Human capital theory underscores the strategic value of competency development as an investment in organizational performance and long-term growth (16, 29). These theoretical perspectives converge on the central proposition that sustainable organizational performance is contingent upon the systematic development and renewal of leadership competencies through structured succession mechanisms.

Moreover, methodological advances in competency research have strengthened the scientific rigor of model development. Meta-synthesis techniques enable the systematic integration of empirical evidence across studies (25, 30). Structural equation modeling provides powerful tools for validating complex competency–succession relationships and testing theoretical frameworks (31). The application of these advanced methodologies allows researchers to construct robust, empirically grounded models capable of informing both academic theory and managerial practice (18, 32).

Within this evolving scholarly context, the present study responds to a critical research gap by developing and validating an integrated competency model explicitly linked to succession planning. Building upon international and Iranian scholarship, this research incorporates insights from organizational behavior, human resource management, leadership studies, and governance theory to construct a comprehensive framework tailored to contemporary organizational challenges (13, 24, 33). The proposed model seeks to reconcile individual-level competencies with organizational-level processes and strategic governance considerations, thereby addressing the multi-layered complexity of succession systems (5, 27).

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the growing importance of emotional intelligence, creativity, innovation, and adaptive leadership in modern managerial roles. Mohamadi et al. demonstrated that creativity-driven competency development significantly enhances managerial effectiveness and organizational learning (28). Seyfollahi and Keshavarz highlighted the critical role of performance-oriented competency enhancement in cooperative organizations (33). These findings reinforce the necessity of incorporating soft competencies and dynamic capabilities into contemporary succession models.

In addition, this research aligns with global trends emphasizing governance quality, risk management, and leadership accountability. Bayi et al. introduced an innovative governance–risk framework underscoring the centrality of competent leadership in balancing organizational stability and strategic growth (5). Mohammadi and Roozbeh developed a structural interpretive model identifying key factors influencing succession management success in Iranian banks, further confirming the strategic importance of leadership competencies in financial institutions (12).

Collectively, the body of evidence suggests that organizations seeking sustainable success must move beyond ad hoc leadership replacement toward systematic, competency-based succession architectures. The integration of validated competency models with succession planning not only enhances leadership continuity but also strengthens organizational learning, governance quality, and long-term performance (1, 2, 4). However, despite this growing consensus, comprehensive integrative models grounded in both empirical evidence and contextual realities remain limited, particularly within emerging economies and public-sector institutions (13, 14, 20).

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to develop and validate an integrated managerial competency model explicitly aligned with succession planning requirements in contemporary organizations.

Methods and Materials

This study is applied in terms of purpose and adopts a mixed-methods approach in terms of research design. The philosophical foundation of the study is grounded in pragmatism, which emphasizes the selection of diverse methods and instruments to effectively address the research problem. The reasoning approach of the study is inductive–deductive, and its overall strategy consists of meta-synthesis in the qualitative phase and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in the quantitative phase.

To identify the dimensions and components of managerial competency based on succession planning, the meta-synthesis method was employed. This method enables the integration of prior research findings and the extraction of a comprehensive conceptual model from existing evidence.

The meta-synthesis process was conducted in the following seven stages:

1. Formulation of Research Questions:

The primary questions focused on identifying the dimensions of managerial competency and clarifying how these dimensions are linked to succession planning programs.

2. Systematic Literature Review:

A systematic search was conducted in national and international databases (SID, MagIran, Emerald, ScienceDirect, Springer, SAGE, Taylor & Francis) using relevant Persian and English keywords.

3. Study Selection:

Inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed scholarly articles published between 2015 and 2024 for English publications and between 2016 and 2024 for Persian publications. Exclusion criteria included non-scientific or irrelevant studies and articles lacking sufficient methodological quality.

4. Data Extraction:

Key information from each article, including objectives, methodology, findings, and identified competency components, was systematically extracted.

5. Quality Appraisal:

The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) tool was used to assess the methodological quality of the studies. Articles scoring below 30 were excluded from the analysis.

6. Coding and Thematic Analysis:

The extracted data were analyzed using open and axial coding procedures. To ensure analytical rigor, two independent coders conducted the coding process, achieving an inter-coder agreement coefficient of 82%.

7. Development of the Initial Framework:

The resulting components were organized into five principal dimensions: succession-based talent assessment, interpersonal interactions, transformational leadership, strategic thinking, and knowledge-based organizational management.

4.2. Quantitative Phase: Structural Equation Modeling

To test the framework derived from the qualitative phase, the quantitative phase of the study was conducted using a descriptive–survey design. The statistical population comprised senior managers, departmental supervisors, and branch managers of Bank Sepah in the northwestern region of Iran. Using multistage cluster sampling followed by simple random sampling, a total of 340 participants were selected. This sample size satisfied the requirements of Structural Equation Modeling, namely a minimum of 5 to 10 observations per estimated parameter.

The primary data collection instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire based on the qualitative findings, consisting of 28 items representing the five main competency dimensions. Content validity was confirmed through expert review by specialists in management and banking. Construct validity was examined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients.

Descriptive analyses were conducted using SPSS software. Model fit was evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling in AMOS. Model adequacy was assessed using fit indices including χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, GFI, and RMSEA. Convergent and discriminant validity were evaluated based on the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Finally, all participants took part in the study voluntarily with informed consent, and confidentiality of their responses was strictly ensured.

Findings and Results

The meta-synthesis in this study was implemented to identify the core dimensions of managerial competency grounded in succession planning. In accordance with the methodological procedures, a systematic search was conducted across the specified databases. After the initial retrieval and screening process, a total of 1,087 articles were identified. Based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and the quality assessment process, irrelevant studies and those lacking scientific rigor were eliminated. Ultimately, 120 articles were retained for final analysis, of which 55% employed qualitative methods and 45% utilized mixed-methods designs.

Table 1. Search Keywords

Language	Keywords
English and Persian Equivalent	Succession Planning, Management Succession, Leadership Competence, Executive Competence, Managerial Competence

Table 2. Article Screening Process

Description	Number of Articles	Stage
Database search (national and international)	1,087	Identified records
Removal of 38 irrelevant articles	1,049	After title screening
Removal of 612 articles	437	After abstract screening
Removal of 228 articles lacking criteria	209	After methodological screening
55% qualitative, 45% mixed-methods	120	Final analyzed articles

Table 3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion Type	Criteria	Description
Inclusion	Scholarly research articles	Peer-reviewed and published in reputable journals
	Time frame 2015–2024 (English) and 2016–2024 (Persian)	Ensuring currency and relevance of data
	Topic relevance	Aligned with managerial competency or succession planning
	Full-text availability	Enables analytical data extraction
	Persian and English language	Primary search languages
Exclusion	General review or non-scientific articles	Lacking scientific methodology or empirical data
	Books, theses, informal reports	Sources not equivalent to peer-reviewed articles
	Duplicate publications	Preventing repetition bias
	Methodologically weak studies (score < 30)	Ensuring research quality

The information extracted from the selected articles was analyzed through open and axial coding procedures. At this stage, similar concepts were identified as initial categories and subsequently integrated into axial categories. To ensure analytical rigor, two independent coders conducted the data analysis, achieving an inter-coder agreement of 82%, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability of the findings. The coding process resulted in the identification of five main dimensions of managerial competencies associated with succession planning.

Table 4. Axial and Open Codes

Indicator (Meaning Unit)	Initial Codes	Categories
Innovation and problem solving; environmental awareness; perceptual capabilities; crisis management; strategic planning in succession planning; talent management strategy; decision-making skills	—	Talent management strategy
Organizational values; core values; value creation	Value-based	Leadership and human development competencies (transformational leadership)
Individual; ethical; personality-related capabilities	Individual	
General; managerial; social competencies	General competency	Knowledge-based organizational management
Economic; political; technological; professional competencies	Specialized competency	
Behavioral; communication	—	Interpersonal interactions
Identification of organizational needs; talent identification; competency development; continuous evaluation; succession	—	Talent assessment with succession planning

Table 5. Open and Axial Coding of Succession-Based Managerial Competencies

Open Codes (Indicators)	Axial Category	Main Dimension
Talent identification; continuous evaluation; design of development programs	Talent assessment	Succession-based talent assessment
Effective communication; ethical behavior; conflict management	Communication skills	Interpersonal interactions
Commitment to values; motivation building; human capital development	Transformational leadership	Transformational leadership
Innovation and problem solving; environmental analysis; crisis management	Perceptual capabilities	Strategic thinking
Rapid learning; use of technology; economic analysis	Knowledge skills	Knowledge-based organizational management

Based on these five dimensions, the initial conceptual model of succession-based managerial competencies was developed. This model indicates that individual competencies (such as ethics and communication skills), organizational competencies (such as knowledge management), and strategic competencies (such as strategic thinking and transformational leadership) must be addressed simultaneously within succession planning processes. These dimensions formed the preliminary conceptual framework of the study, which was subsequently tested in the quantitative phase using Structural Equation Modeling.

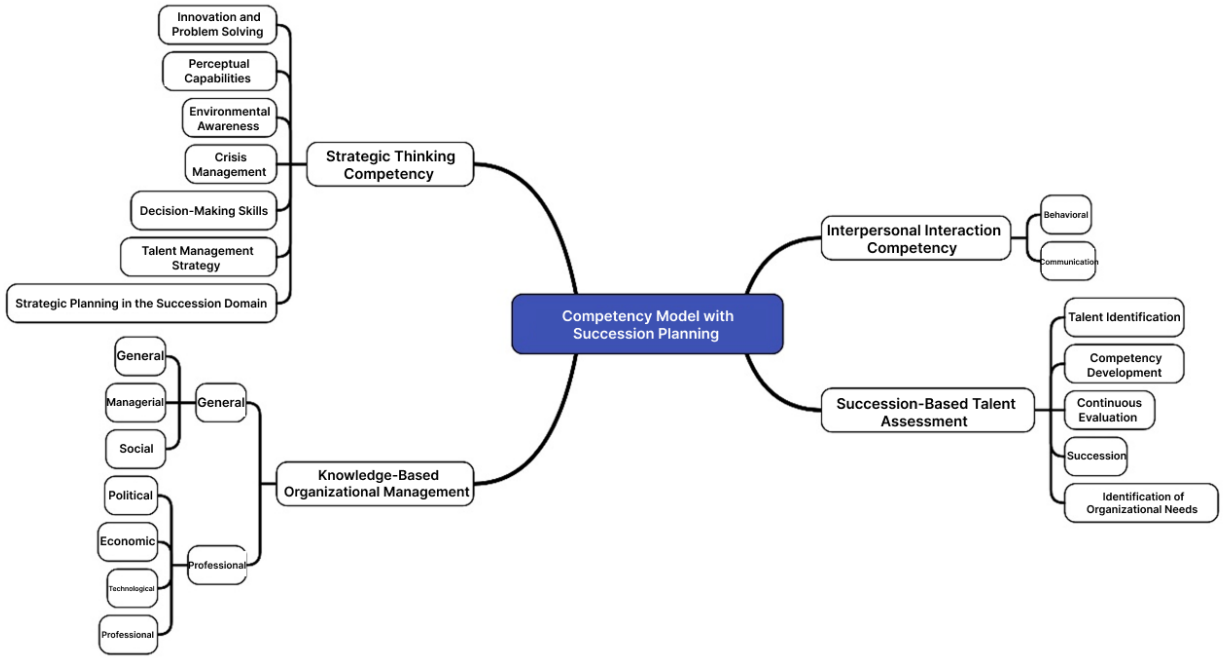

Figure 1. Final Model of Managerial Competencies with Succession Planning Program

To examine the goodness of fit of the model obtained from Structural Equation Modeling, AMOS software was used. The data were collected from 340 managers through cluster-random sampling, followed by stratified random sampling. To assess the adequacy of the sample size, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were employed, the results of which indicated satisfactory sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.825).

To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. According to the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988), composite reliability values should exceed 0.60, AVE should be greater than 0.50, and Cronbach's alpha should be above 0.70. As reported in Table 9, all obtained values fall within the acceptable range, indicating satisfactory reliability of the research constructs.

Table 6. Reliability and Validity Assessment of Managerial Competency Variables

Dimension	Component	Code	Standardized Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Succession-based talent assessment competency	—	TA1	0.75	0.81	0.81	0.52
		TA2	0.64			
		TA3	0.71			
		TA4	0.76			
Interpersonal interaction competency	—	II1	0.80	0.74	0.74	0.60
		II2	0.74			
Strategic thinking competency	—	ST1	0.77	0.85	0.87	0.54

		ST2	0.76			
		ST3	0.76			
		ST4	0.75			
		ST5	0.66			
		ST7	0.71			
Transformational leadership competency	Value-based	VC1	0.77	0.76	0.89	0.58
		VC2	0.81			
		VC3	0.73			
	Individual	IC1	0.70			
		IC2	0.75			
		IC3	0.83			
Knowledge-based organizational management competency	Specialized	S1	0.80	0.72	0.89	0.59
		S2	0.79			
		S3	0.77			
	General	G1	0.76			
		G2	0.75			
		G3	0.75			

To evaluate the validity of the research instrument, both content validity and construct validity (including convergent and discriminant validity) were examined. Content validity was confirmed through expert judgment regarding the adequacy of the measurement items. Convergent validity was supported by the statistical significance of factor loadings ($p < 0.01$) and indicator values exceeding 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Kline (2023). According to the first criterion, all correlation coefficients were below 0.85, which is within the acceptable range. Furthermore, as shown in Table 10, the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs, thereby confirming discriminant validity.

Table 7. Correlation Matrix and Square Roots of AVE

Construct	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Succession-based talent assessment (TA)	0.72				
(2) Interpersonal interaction competency (II)	0.15	0.77			
(3) Transformational leadership competency (T)	0.23	0.37	0.76		
(4) Strategic thinking competency (ST)	0.10	0.16	0.48	0.73	
(5) Knowledge-based organizational management competency (KM)	0.32	0.31	0.37	0.48	0.77

Managerial competencies with succession planning were measured using five distinct latent factors: succession-based talent assessment competency, interpersonal interaction competency, transformational leadership competency, strategic thinking competency, and knowledge-based organizational management competency. Each factor was measured using multiple observed items. In total, 28 items were used to measure the five latent factors. The succession-based talent assessment factor was measured using five items (TA1–TA5), interpersonal interaction with two items (II1 and II2), transformational leadership with seven items (VC1–VC3 and IC1–IC4), strategic thinking with seven items (ST1–ST7), and knowledge-based organizational management with seven items (S1–S4 and G1–G3).

The findings indicate that all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.50 except for items TA5, S4, ST6, and IC4. After removing these items, the model fit indices reached acceptable levels. Moreover, the correlations among the five factors were all below 0.85 (Figure 3), indicating construct independence, discriminant validity, and support for the unidimensionality assumption. It should be noted that all remaining items were retained based on

standardized factor loadings exceeding 0.50. According to Table 11, the model fit indices after modification demonstrate satisfactory model fit.

Table 8. Fit Indices of the Measurement Model for Managerial Competency with Succession Planning

Model	N	χ^2	df	p	GFI	AGFI	TLI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	χ^2/df
Initial model	340	417.93	336	0.001	0.92	0.90	0.97	0.88	0.97	0.02	1.24
Modified model	340	285.60	238	0.018	0.93	0.92	0.98	0.91	0.98	0.02	1.20

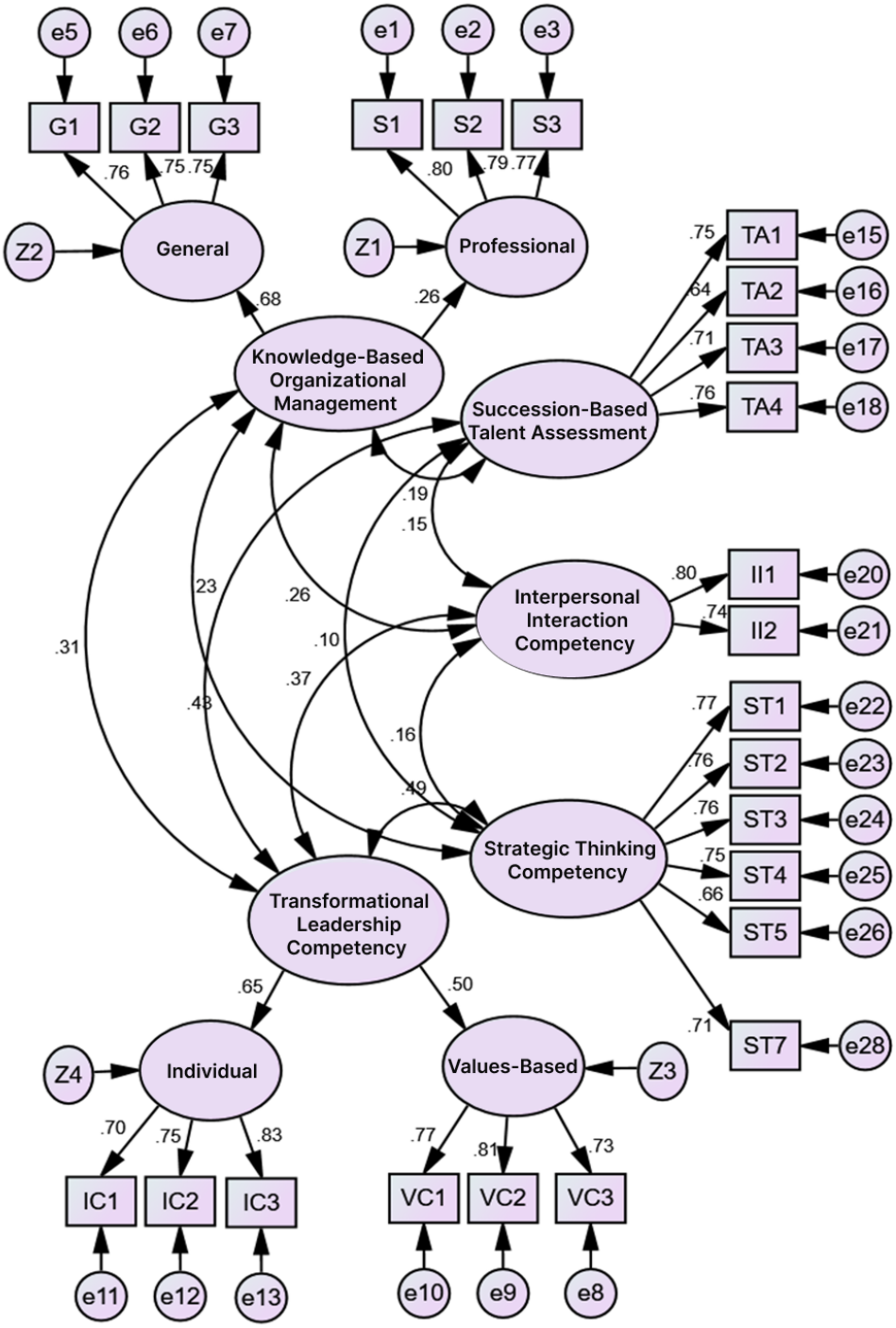

Figure 2. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Measurement Model for Managerial Competency with Succession Planning

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study sought to develop and validate an integrated managerial competency model aligned with succession planning requirements, and the empirical findings provide strong support for the conceptual framework proposed. The results of the structural equation modeling confirmed that the five core dimensions of managerial competency—succession-based talent assessment, interpersonal interactions, transformational leadership, strategic thinking, and knowledge-based organizational management—collectively form a coherent and statistically robust model of managerial effectiveness in succession planning contexts. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated excellent model adequacy, and the reliability and validity analyses demonstrated high internal consistency and construct integrity, confirming that the measurement model accurately captures the latent competency structure (31). These findings substantiate the argument that managerial competency is not a unidimensional construct but rather a multidimensional system of interrelated capacities that must be developed and assessed holistically to ensure leadership continuity and organizational sustainability.

One of the most salient findings of the study is the central role of succession-based talent assessment as a foundational dimension of the model. The strong factor loadings associated with talent identification, continuous evaluation, and development planning indicate that organizations achieve superior succession outcomes when leadership development is systematically embedded within ongoing talent management processes. This result is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the inseparability of competency management and succession planning in contemporary organizations (1, 2, 12). The results also align with the findings of Ahmadzadeh and Mehdizadeh Ashtarfi, who demonstrated that effective succession systems in banking institutions require structured competency-based talent pipelines rather than episodic replacement mechanisms (20). Similarly, the strong contribution of talent assessment observed in the present study echoes the conclusions of Salimi Bazneshini and colleagues, who identified competency-driven talent identification as the cornerstone of succession management in large-scale energy organizations (14, 15).

The dimension of interpersonal interactions emerged as another critical pillar of the competency model, underscoring the importance of communication skills, ethical behavior, and conflict management in leadership effectiveness. The statistical significance of this dimension reinforces the growing recognition that managerial success depends not only on technical proficiency but also on relational and emotional capabilities. This finding corroborates the conclusions of Porfaraj et al., who demonstrated that emotional intelligence and interpersonal competence substantially shape the outcomes of managerial performance and organizational change (25). Furthermore, Boney and Sarchahani reported that interpersonal competencies mediate the relationship between organizational culture and attitudes toward change, thereby enhancing the success of transformation initiatives (26). The present results extend this body of knowledge by positioning interpersonal interaction competency as a structural driver of succession effectiveness.

Transformational leadership constituted a third major dimension of the validated model, reflecting the decisive influence of values-based leadership, motivation building, and human capital development on organizational sustainability. The empirical strength of this dimension confirms that succession planning cannot be detached from leadership philosophy and value systems. Leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviors cultivate trust, commitment, and long-term engagement among organizational members, which in turn stabilizes succession processes and facilitates leadership transitions. This finding is strongly aligned with the research of Shabani et al.,

who found that transformational leadership competencies significantly predict managerial effectiveness in large public enterprises (22). Seyed Hosein et al. similarly observed that transformational leadership forms the core of managerial competency in academic institutions and plays a decisive role in leadership continuity (23). The present study confirms these conclusions within a broader, integrative succession framework.

Strategic thinking also emerged as a powerful contributor to the competency–succession architecture. The results indicate that innovation, problem-solving, environmental analysis, and crisis management capabilities significantly enhance the effectiveness of succession planning systems. These findings support the argument advanced by Tang that strategic leadership competencies enable organizations to navigate environmental turbulence and sustain competitive advantage (18). Zacca and Dayan likewise demonstrated that strategic managerial competence directly influences enterprise performance through dynamic capability development (8). The present research extends this theoretical insight by empirically demonstrating that strategic thinking is not merely an operational asset but a structural necessity for succession system integrity.

The fifth dimension, knowledge-based organizational management, highlights the growing importance of learning agility, technological literacy, and economic analysis in modern leadership roles. The significant loadings associated with this construct reinforce the notion that contemporary managers must integrate knowledge management with decision-making and strategic governance. This finding is consistent with Abuaddous et al., who documented the positive impact of knowledge management practices on organizational performance (29). Lashgaripour et al. similarly emphasized that digital transformation in banking requires competency models that incorporate technological and knowledge-based capabilities (17). The present study demonstrates that such competencies are also essential for effective succession planning in complex organizational environments.

Beyond individual competency dimensions, the overall model reveals that the interaction among these five components produces a synergistic effect that strengthens organizational resilience and leadership continuity. This systemic perspective resonates with the governance and risk management model proposed by Bayi et al., which emphasized that leadership competence serves as a stabilizing mechanism linking governance quality, risk mitigation, and strategic performance (5). Furthermore, the integrated nature of the present model addresses the fragmentation observed in prior competency frameworks, many of which remained sector-specific and methodologically limited (24, 34). By contrast, the current study offers a comprehensive, empirically validated framework that captures the complexity of modern succession systems.

The methodological rigor of the study further strengthens the credibility of its findings. The use of meta-synthesis enabled the systematic integration of diverse scholarly perspectives, consistent with the methodological recommendations of Jafari et al. and Porfaraj et al. (25, 30). The application of structural equation modeling provided robust validation of the conceptual relationships and ensured measurement precision (31). This combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques enhances the explanatory power of the model and contributes to the advancement of competency and succession research.

Taken together, the results of this study reinforce the central thesis that sustainable organizational success depends on the strategic alignment of managerial competencies with succession planning architectures. The findings confirm that leadership continuity is not the product of isolated human resource interventions but rather the outcome of a complex system of competencies, values, strategic capacities, and knowledge structures. This conclusion is consistent with the work of Maleki, who emphasized the necessity of integrated succession models for professional service organizations (13), and with the cross-sector evidence presented by Okoro and Iheanachor,

who demonstrated the universal relevance of competency-based succession in traditional enterprises (10). The present research thus provides strong empirical justification for the institutionalization of competency-driven succession systems in contemporary organizations.

Despite the robust design and comprehensive analysis, this study is subject to several limitations. The research relied on self-reported data, which may introduce response bias and affect the objectivity of certain findings. The cross-sectional nature of the study restricts causal inference and limits the ability to examine long-term effects of competency development on succession outcomes. Additionally, the sample was drawn from a specific organizational context, which may constrain the generalizability of the results to other sectors or cultural environments.

Future studies should employ longitudinal research designs to examine how managerial competencies and succession systems evolve over time and influence organizational performance across different developmental stages. Comparative studies across industries and national contexts would further enhance the external validity of the model. Moreover, integrating qualitative case studies with quantitative modeling could provide deeper insights into the behavioral and cultural mechanisms underlying effective succession planning.

Organizations should institutionalize competency-based succession planning as a core strategic function rather than a periodic administrative activity. Investment in continuous leadership development programs, systematic talent assessment, and knowledge management infrastructures is essential. Managers and policymakers should also ensure that succession frameworks are aligned with organizational strategy, governance structures, and future environmental challenges to enhance leadership continuity and long-term organizational sustainability.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adheried in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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