Original Paper

Succession Planning Strategies for Nurses at The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas: A Case Study

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Abstract

Succession planning is crucial for developing nursing professionals who will eventually assume leadership responsibilities. In the past few years, a shortage of nurses worldwide has created challenges in health care and the implementation of strategies to address and manage these changes. The Bahamas Ministry of Health also faces this challenge. As a result, Healthcare organizations must develop nursing leadership to ensure long-term viability. Succession planning is crucial to overcoming these challenges. This exploratory single-case study examined nursing's perception of succession planning strategies, including competency models and myriad changes within The Bahamas's Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. This study was designed using qualitative methodology and a single case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select nurses from this population unit. As a result of the data analysis, the following eight themes emerged: 1) No formal succession planning; 2) Generational gap observance; 3) Continuous professional training and skills development; 4) Nursing educational development and managerial leadership; 5) Nursing personal best/care; 6) System changes and improvements to organizational processes; and 7) Clear, effective communications. Based on the observations and data analysis, relevant recommendations were made to address critical issues and improve outcomes, leading to positive changes.

Keywords: Succession planning, competency model, Nursing officers, succession planning strategies

1. Introduction

All organizations today are faced with constant change in their operations. According to Kyriakidou et al. (2021), several forces affect the environment of organizations, such as social, economic, and political influences. Considering these changes, leadership is no longer a constant requirement. Consequently, organizations and those within the healthcare industry must be able to handle these diverse changes. In addition, leadership positions must be able to meet stringent requirements concerning credibility and capability to deliver excellence and transformation in a time of uncertainty, volatility, ambiguity and complexity. According to Lartey (2020), 21st-century organizations must adapt to the constant technological advancements and globalization that affect their environment, and they must be capable of interpreting and exemplifying these changes. Throughout the world, health organizations face these challenges, including those in The Bahamas. The aging workforce and population, employee burnout, change management, and succession planning are notable examples (Haddad et al., 2022; Kuipers et al., 2014; Truxillo, Cadiz, & Hammer, 2015). According to Friday (2019), organizations must address various human resources issues related to leadership during this period of global change.

Succession planning remains vital for management leaders to implement business and human resource strategies while identifying current and future leadership needs. An important strategy to build a competitive advantage is succession planning, which ensures a consistent and uninterrupted supply of talent at the various levels of the organization. Additionally, Deshwal (2015) explained that modern

succession planning should not only focus on top-level managerial roles but also on preparing the right talent for all levels of management. Using succession planning, Desarno et al. (2021) suggested that organizations can identify which employees can step into leadership and senior management roles based on their current situation. Therefore, it is necessary to use a multidisciplinary approach to recruit, select, retain, and develop motivated employees for leadership roles.

An aging workforce will affect almost every organization; however, the healthcare sector will be mostly affected. The aging demographics growing in society present a challenge to organizations as well as government agencies around the world (Sousa-Ribeiro et al., 2021). In addition, Martin and O'shea (2021) found that 73% of the baby boomers will retire within three years and by 2020 there will be a great volume of vacancies in the Nursing profession. Therefore, due to these impending changes organizations need to educate and prepare for the future of nursing leaders and their adaptive leadership skills that will be required. It is essential for organizations that wish to continue operations for a long time to develop succession planning. Johnson, Pepper, Adkins, and Emejom (2018) contend that succession planning is critical for long-term success. In this study, the research focused on succession planning strategies at Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. A qualitative exploratory single-case study was used to explore the following question—based on existing knowledge—to answer the following question: "How do Nursing Officers perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, including the competency model, and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas?"

According to a literature review, succession planning research is lacking which needs to be addressed. A lack of succession planning was found within organizations, according to the following researchers, and more research is needed to explore succession planning strategies: Berns and Klarner (2017); Branden and Sharts-Hopko (2017); Darnell and Campbell (2015); Durst and Bruns (2016); Husain and Omer (2016); Magasi (2016); Odengo and Bett (2016); Pila, Schultz, and Dachapalli (2016); and Tabatabaee, Lakeh, and Tadi (2014). A systematic evaluation of business succession planning strategies, sound research methods, and empirical evidence in this area are lacking, as reported by Titzer, Shirey, and Hauck (2014). A study published by Durst and Bruns (2016) suggests that further research should explore succession planning strategies in different geographical locations and different types of public organizations. Research findings indicated a dearth of research in succession planning (Ip & Jacobs, 2006). Pila et al. (2016) proposed that further research should be conducted on the effects of workforce planning within public service organizations and other factors about succession planning within organizations.

The study not only responded to this call for additional research but was also the first of its kind to be completed on succession planning strategies in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas using a qualitative methodology. This was in response to a call for additional research. The overall objective of the study was to gain empirically valuable insights into perceptions of succession planning strategies and competency models to expand knowledge in these areas. In addition, this study addressed existing research gaps that various researchers have identified. The research paper follows the following format. In the first section, the research background is described, then by the research questions, the methodology, the findings, the results, the recommendations, and the conclusions.

2. Research Background

2.1 Healthcare Nursing challenges

The workplace environment is changing, especially as a result of COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic, Gaffney (2022) highlights a report by McKinsey and Company of Nurse Leaders that 22 percent of registered nurses and 20 percent of nurse leaders will leave their positions within a year. In addition, there is an aging workforce and an inevitable shortage of nurses. According to a 2020 National Nursing workforce survey, one-fifth of registered nurses will retire within five years, and the American Hospital Association projects a shortage of 500,000 registered nurses by 2026. Considering the alarming decline in nursing due to high turnover rates and an aging workforce, healthcare industries and health ministries need to address the urgent need to retain nurses.

Cooper (2022) has described how these nurses will bring an invaluable amount of nursing experience and knowledge they have acquired over their careers. The impact of COVID-19 on the healthcare system has further strained the system, and nurses have been able to stand up to the pressure during these critical times. There has been a decline in nursing employment levels of 3 percent between 2020 and 2021, which is significant compared to some 20 years ago.

Buchan (2006) explained that the nursing shortage is an economic issue that significantly impacts health care. Health care will not be maintained or improved if it is not addressed, whether regionally, nationally, or globally. Worldwide, nursing shortages are occurring. The World Health Organization (WHO) noted a 7.2 million healthcare workers shortage. A report published by the Third Global Forum on Human Resources for Health anticipates that the nursing shortage will reach 12.9 million by 2035 (WHO 2013, 2015). According to Haddad, Annamaraju, and Toney-Butler (2022), nurses play a critical role in the healthcare industry and are among the most significant members of the healthcare profession. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that between the years 2020 and 2030, 2750,000 nurses will be needed and that nursing populations will grow at a rate of 9 percent more significantly than other occupations (Haddad et al., 2022). Watson (2005) emphasized that it is unclear at which point the nursing shortage occurs, but there is a range across various countries. It was reported that the supply of nurses is failing to keep pace with the demand, particularly in regions such as North America, the Caribbean, and Central America. Similarly, The Bahamas' Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority are facing nurse shortages. Nurse shortages can further strain the healthcare system, contributing to longer patient wait times.

2.2 Lack of Succession Planning

As the background for this study, it is critical to note that there is still a lack of succession planning within the healthcare industry, and this makes these institutions more vulnerable to external threats. There is a need for more research on this topic. As a result of a lack of succession planning at management levels, Husain and Omer (2016) found that institutional memory and knowledge transfer were limited. Garman and Taylor (2004) noted a lack of succession planning within organizations, and some reports indicate that 6 to 70 percent of organizations lack succession planning processes. Furthermore, McDonagh argues et al. (2014) that the healthcare industry lacks succession planning, which will significantly disrupt organizations as they attempt to create and sustain remarkable changes. Approximately 70% of healthcare leaders report that succession planning is lacking. The lack of succession planning has contributed to a shortage of healthcare leaders, especially among nursing staff (Trepanier & Crenshaw, 2013). From their findings in the literature on succession planning in nursing, Manning et al. (2015) concluded that there is a concerning absence. According to several other researchers, there is a need for more research on succession planning. These include Berns and Klarner (2017); Branden and Sharts-Hopko (2017); Darnell and Campbell (2015); Durst and Bruns (2016); Magasi (2016); Manning et al. (2015); Odengo and Bett (2016); Pila et al. (2016); and Tabatabaee et al. (2014). In addition to the geographical locations already studied, further research is needed to explore succession planning strategies in areas other than those already reviewed by Durst and Bruns (2016) and Santora et al. (2015). In healthcare organizations, nursing leadership is vital to this industry; as such, the preparation of nursing in succession planning should be a concern within healthcare institutions. The healthcare organization must address the pressing matter of preparing nurses for succession planning (Nogueira et al., 2019). It was further argued by Nogueira et al. (2019) that health organizations should include in their overall strategic plans necessary training programs to ensure that nurses are prepared to fill vacancies and plan for future succession. Moreover, how nurses perceive succession planning at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas is not known. In the literature, these issues have not previously been addressed.

3. Problem Statement

Healthcare organizations face a significant problem with succession planning for healthcare leaders, particularly nurses (Titzer & Shirey, 2013). The lack of preparation of nurses for leadership succession is identified as a problem by nursing. The training of new nurses is essential for filling vacancies and for succession planning (Nogueira et al., 2019). In the rapidly evolving healthcare environment, healthcare organizations must capitalize on leadership development for long-term viability and success, including

nurses. However, turbulence or staffing problems can occur without proper planning, especially when a leadership team member retires or dies.

A fundamental problem identified by the researcher was a lack of understanding of nurses' perceptions of succession planning strategies within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. ALTamimi, Agarwal, and Hamner (2017) emphasized that there is no substantive research on succession planning in governmental organizations. Therefore, it is not known how nurses perceive strategies for the current succession planning process, including a competency model and the needed changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. As a result of an extensive literature review conducted by Ip & Jacobs (2006), it showed that there was a lack of research on succession planning. In addition, approximately 70% of healthcare industry leaders cited a lack of succession planning practices in their study by Trepanier and Crenshaw (2013). It has been noted by Tropman and Blackburn (2017) that most organizations lack succession planning, which also applies to many public-sector organizations, including Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas.

Zacher, Kooij, and Beier (2018) emphasize the importance of succession planning within government organization/agencies in light of a shrinking workforce. In addition, the healthcare industry should prepare for the upcoming challenge of replacing baby boomers who will leave the industry soon. A total of 1.6 million employees of the global government will soon retire, according to Green and Roberts (2012). Globally, this will leave governmental agencies in precarious positions. To fill this void, leaders must identify, mentor, and develop future leaders, particularly relevant to nurses at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas.

As with other healthcare ministries worldwide, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas faces a nurse shortage. A World Bank report cited by the former Prime Minister, Dr. Hubert Minnis, identified The Bahamas as one of the Caribbean countries that suffer from nursing shortages. This is likely to continue. Moreover, the former Prime Minister stated that this problem affects not only The Bahamas but also other countries worldwide. Consequently, this shortage will add to the stress experienced by Caribbean countries and other countries around the world. The problem became more evident during COVID-19 when Leandra Rolle published an article entitled "Nurses shortage adding to the crisis." In addition, Dr. Duane Sands, the former Minister of Health, reported that, in 2015, 308 nurses entered the health system, with an average of over 60 nurses per year. However, in 2018, the Ministry of Health reported a shortage of 528 nurses. Moreover, Morgan (2022) stated that the Bahamian government, including Dr. Michael Darville, the current Minister of Health and Wellness, traveled to Cuba to seek nursing assistance in light of the country's significant nursing shortage. After completing the vetting process for Cuban nurses, the government accepted 50 for employment. Furthermore, Marć et al. (2019) highlighted that the nursing profession is faced with unprecedented challenges due to global changes in demographics and an aging population. Globally, the number of people will increase from 901 million to approximately 1.4 billion by 2030. The Public Hospital Authority/Ministry of Health and Wellness should pay particular attention to this matter. In healthcare industries, ensuring the continuity of the workforce is crucial (Zacher et al., 2018). The lack of succession planning within healthcare organizations is noteworthy. As a matter of strategic planning, succession planning has received little attention in healthcare. As a result, it has been viewed as a non-critical part of the organization's agenda.

This study will fill an essential gap in knowledge about succession planning strategies in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas that has received little attention - as previous researchers observed (Darnell & Campbell, 2015; Odengo & Bett, 2016). Therefore, this study will address the problem. It is not known, however, how nurses perceive the strategies, including a competency model, for the current succession planning process and the necessary changes in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. This study's results may guide succession planning for nurses at the Ministry. In addition to providing insights into succession planning's influence on shaping future leaders, this research will examine how succession planning aligns with an organization's mission and vision. Nursing leaders are prepared through this foundation to shape the future of their organizations. As a result, this study will add to the existing body of research on this topic.

3.1 Literature Review

A review of the literature on succession planning involves identifying, training, and preparing individuals to assume vacant positions (Sverdlik, 2012). A lack of leadership development hinders healthcare succession planning. A lack of succession planning, and leadership development can adversely affect the organization's ability to retain and develop talent. The absence of succession planning can negatively impact patient care, as well as significantly increase hospital expenses. Titzer and Shirey (2013) emphasized that training for leadership roles could cost hospitals anywhere from $200,000 to $500,000 per year, making it crucial to implement robust succession strategies. Succession planning is a crucial strategy that requires early preparation for the next generation of leaders. Instead of grooming one person in each nursing department, it is essential to identify potential nursing leaders among several individuals across the departments (Al Hosis et al., 2012). This approach can help ensure effective leadership continuity and smooth responsibility transition.

Health care organizations that prioritize succession planning have a crucial advantage in ensuring business continuity during staff absences. In addition, they demonstrate their commitment to employee investment. In the nursing industry, succession planning and leadership development are especially essential for creating a pipeline of continuous leadership. This is done by promoting nursing satisfaction and fostering a healthy work environment that leads to enhanced patient outcomes. Experts such as Titzer, Shirey, and Hauck (2014) and Webb, Diamond-Wells, and Jeffs (2017) have emphasized the significance of clearly outlined succession planning and leadership development in the nursing field.

According to Sittler (2019), there is a significant lack of succession planning in the development of nursing leadership positions, which contributes to the problem of vacant leadership roles. The absence of succession planning negatively impacts leadership stability, service stability, job satisfaction, safe patient care, and clinical outcomes. Griffith (2012) reported a global nursing shortage and identified its impact on many countries, including The Bahamas. Sittler (2019) stated that succession planning in nursing is lacking in the development of nursing roles and adds to vacant leadership roles. Filling in the roles of nursing is critical due to succession planning. These nursing roles are vital in hospital and continuity of care for patients.

Health care organizations can use succession planning to ensure consistent and continuous leadership (Tabatabaee et al., 2014). Furthermore, succession planning can be used to estimate the number of nurses required to cover illness, promotions, retirements, and death. These organizations can meet emerging and changing internal needs through effective succession planning (Charbonneau & Freeman, 2016). In the past, previous leaders have stressed succession planning as an important aspect of leadership (Seniwoliba, 2015).

Insufficient preparation for nursing leadership succession is a significant problem (Nogueira et al., 2019). An extensive review of literature found that there is still a lack of succession planning within the healthcare industry, which makes these institutions more vulnerable to external threats. There is limited literature on nursing succession planning despite the urgent need and anticipated impending retirements of nursing academic leaders (Sessler Braden & Sharts-Hopko, 2017; Tucker, 2020).

Organizations attempt to create and sustain remarkable changes. McDonagh et al. (2014) argue that the healthcare industry lacks succession planning. Health care leaders report a lack of succession planning in their organizations by approximately 70%. In addition to the shortage of healthcare leaders, there is also a shortage of nursing staff (Trepanier & Crenshaw, 2013). Based on a literature review, Manning et al. (2015) concluded there is an absence of succession planning in nursing. Several other researchers, including Berns and Klarner (2017), Branden and Sharts-Hopko (2017), Darnell and Campbell (2015), Durst and Bruns (2016), Magasi (2016), Manning et al. (2015), Odengo and Bett (2016), Pila et al. (2016), and Tabatabaee et al. (2014), emphasize the need for more research into succession planning. In addition to the locations already studied, further research is needed to explore succession planning strategies in areas not previously reviewed. Moreover, how nurses perceive succession planning within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas is unknown. Therefore, there is a need for more research on this topic**.**

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory single-case study was to investigate how nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, which include a competency model, and the needed changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The use of case studies as a design allows them to be viewed as a means of understanding complex social phenomena (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, Yin (2014) found that case studies were ideal for investigating organizational processes. The qualitative single-case study method was considered the most effective method for researching this domain (Brinkmann, 2014). According to Alpi and Evans (2019), case studies are useful for explaining, describing, and exploring phenomena. The rigor of a case study depends on various factors such as research design, components, research questions, unit of analysis, linking of data, and interpretation of findings (Yin, 2014). Case studies are research designs that are adaptable to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. Researchers support these methods and can help test the relationships between theory and phenomena. A case study design also allows for the involvement of stakeholders in the development, implementation, synthesis, and analysis of research findings. It is essential to conduct case studies with ethical considerations in mind and to ensure the validity and quality of the data collected. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize ethical behavior and practices when conducting case studies.

In this case, the phenomenon to be studied revolved around a central question: "How do Nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, which include a competency model, and the needed changes within the Ministry of Health and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas." The Bahamas' governmental system is composed of around 14 public sectors. This study focuses on nurses in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas. The study's target population was 233 nurses currently employed in these sectors. The researcher used a final sample of 207 nurses for the questionnaire and identified 10 nurses for semi-structured interviews, with a final sample of five nurses. The researcher also chose one focus group consisting of three nurses. The study was conducted in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, which is an independent nation that gained independence from the United Kingdom on July 10, 1973. The Bahamas comprises 700 islands and over 2,400 cays located in the western Atlantic Ocean. The country has a population of 324,597, and the Prime Minister is the official head of the government. Government elections are held every five years.

3.3 Research Questions

This qualitative exploratory single-case study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ Overall: How do Nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, which include a competency model, and the needed changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas?

RQ1: How do nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas?

RQ2: How do nurses perceive the competency model for the current succession planning process within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas?

RQ3: What are the nurses recommended changes to the strategies and the competency model?

4. Methodology, Design, Population and Sample

4.1 Methodology

This study used a qualitative single-case study. The qualitative case study methodology is considered one of the most practical methods for conducting research (Brinkmann, 2014). A discovery-oriented approach can be helpful when conducting qualitative research, especially when there is a need to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study. A qualitative approach allows for thoroughly exploring a phenomenon of interest without the limitations of quantitative measurements (Merriam, 2009). According to Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015), a qualitative study helps to develop concepts,

understanding, insights, and patterns from the collected data, enabling researchers to evaluate preconceived models.

Qualitative research provides valuable insight into people's experiences; an accepted universal definition of this methodology still needs to be discovered (Khuzaiyah et al., 2023). Fieldwork is an essential component of qualitative research as it allows for collecting related data in a natural setting, resulting in robust data. The qualitative data quality depends on the building of trust between the researcher and the participants, shaping the quality of data collection (Subedi, 2024). A response to the questions presented enables participants to express themselves (Johnson, 2015). Qualitative methodologies aim to understand people's experiences and perspectives in the real world (Jun & Bridges, 2016). According to Choy (2014), qualitative research methodologies allow researchers to examine the perspectives of homogenous and diverse groups of people within a community to shed light on different perspectives. As Patton (2002) noted, qualitative research methods include analyzing people, interactions, circumstances, and beliefs. In their review of qualitative studies, Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2015) concluded that the data collected facilitates the development of conceptual frameworks, understandings, insights, and patterns for assessing preconceived models. In this qualitative research, the experiences of nurses at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas were collected through various sources to gain insight into the study's central questions, leading to a focus on succession planning strategies.

4.2 Design

A case study is qualitative research that helps explore complex issues. It involves collecting in-depth data about a particular individual, program, or event to understand a situation that needs to be better understood (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This study examines how nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, including a competency model and the required changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas. Case studies aim to understand participants' perceptions and interpretations, allowing them to express their views (Yin, 2014). Case studies are intensive, systematic investigations of a single individual, group, community, or other unit, examining various variables in depth. Single-case studies involve an in-depth examination of the evolution of a single event or situation over time (Yin, 2014). This case study will use comprehensive data collection procedures to ensure a high level of detail (Heale & Twycross, 2018). Case studies allow stakeholders to participate in developing, implementing, synthesizing, and analyzing research findings. Case studies emphasize the importance of ethical behavior and practices to ensure the validity and quality of data obtained when conducted with stakeholders in mind. Finally, case study research allows for extensive methods and can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of phenomena of interest (Thomas, 2015).

4.3 Population and Sample

In this qualitative case study, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority were the research setting in The Bahamas. Although these entities operate under separate reporting authorities, they serve the public health sector. A comprehensive study of The Bahamas, including family islands, was conducted by the researcher.

The study's target population consisted of 233 nurses employed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas, including Senior Nursing Officers, Nursing Officers I and II, Registered Nurses, and Train Clinical Nurses. The researcher used a final sample of 207 nurses for the questionnaire. Furthermore, the study identified ten potential nurses for semi-structured interviews, with a final sample of five nurses. Additionally, one focus group of three nurses was selected for the study. To participate in this study all nurses had to be employed full-time within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Table 1 lists the total number of nurses who participated in the study by data sources.

Table 1. Number of Participants with Related Data Sources

Data Sources	# of participants
Semi-structured interview	5
Questionnaire (online overall 233)	207
1 Focus Group	3

Before the study, written letters were compiled and submitted to various entities for approval and authorization. A formal application and a sample proposal were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and ethics committee for approval. The researcher had to complete both approvals and submit approval letters to conduct the study. The researcher had to make telephone calls and visit both sites, including a formal meeting with one of the agencies to obtain IRB approval for the research. Where applicable, follow-up calls were made to both entities regarding the study. The researcher obtained approval from the Academic Quality Review Board and Institutional Review Board before commencing this qualitative case study. One of the most crucial steps in preparation for this research was obtaining formal written approval from the Institutional Review Board and the ethics committee.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in qualitative research. It was chosen for its ability to identify and select information relevant to the research topic. This technique allows researchers to gather data that contributes to a better understanding of the project's theoretical framework. For example, researchers can choose participants who are proficient in or well-informed about a phenomenon of interest, possess specialized knowledge and experience, or are available and willing to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling identifies and selects information-rich cases to help qualitative researchers meet their research objectives (McNeeley et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). According to Patton (2015), the benefit of purposive sampling is that it allows researchers to select participants with extensive knowledge and expertise relevant to the research objectives of a specific study. To gain a subjective understanding of the phenomenon of interest, Jun and Bridges (2016) often use small, purposeful samples and carefully chosen case studies. In this study, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority nurses provided detailed information on strategic succession planning events within the organization. To achieve the research objectives, purposive sampling was utilized.

The size of a research sample plays an important role in study results. There is often a debate about the appropriate sample size for qualitative studies. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2012), qualitative studies tend to have smaller sample sizes than quantitative studies. This is because qualitative case studies emphasize an in-depth exploration and understanding of a particular phenomenon. By focusing on fewer participants, researchers can obtain more detailed data, facilitating a deeper analysis and interpretation of the findings. This information enhances the richness and depth of the analysis, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. To conduct a case study, Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) recommend a minimum of four interviews. In the present study, the researcher conducted six interviews, but the sixth interview was cut short due to the participant's having an emergency while at work. Therefore, that participant interview will not be included in the research, making the total number of interviews five.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The research study followed the regulations and policies of The Ministry of Health, the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas, the Ethics Committee board, and the Public Hospital Authority/UWI Research Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board. The participants' approval was obtained before the research commenced (Øye, Sørensen, & Glasdam, 2016). According to Neale (2013), maintaining high ethical standards while conducting research is crucial. This ensures that participants are protected from harm and respect is established between them and the researchers. Ethical standards also play a vital role in ensuring that research is conducted honestly and openly and that the results are accurately and fairly reported.

All the data related to this study will be saved on a personal, password-secured external hard drive and kept in a safe for one year. After a year, the researcher will delete all the information from the computer and disposed of any paper items associated with the study. Privacy and the safety of study participants are fundamental principles of research ethics. To maintain confidentiality and protect participants, it is customary to change their names before publication (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). This practice helps to ensure that participants' identities remain. Furthermore, changing the participants' names protects them from potential negative consequences from participating in the study. The researcher assigned each participant an alphanumeric code, from NURSP01 to NURSP09, to safeguard their identities.

5. Data Sources Instruments

For this qualitative single-case study, three data tools were used, namely semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. According to Yin (2014), using multiple data sources provides researchers with diverse viewpoints from participants. These attributes are beneficial to a qualitative case study that aims for flexibility, purposive sampling, transferability, responsiveness, transparency, and triangulation within its methodology (Cook, Kuper, Hatala, & Ginsburg, 2016). These qualities helped the researcher understand how nurses perceive strategies for the current succession planning process in The Bahamas, including the competency model and needed changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority.

Questionnaire. The researcher used a questionnaire as the first data source to study succession planning strategies. The questionnaire had a final sample of 207 participants and was adapted from previous studies by Rothwell (2016) and Fenner (2005). The researcher obtained approval to use the questionnaire with slight modifications. The questionnaire had three parts to examine succession planning strategies at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The questionnaire included sub-sections covering each participant's organizational career path, competency and succession planning models, training activities, and the reasons for succession planning. The participants were nurses who had to select their opinions and feelings on different issues from an agreement Likert-type scale using a five-point response option. Questionnaires that use the Likert scale allow for the quick gathering of information and provide reliable and valid interpretations of data (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). The Likert scale is a commonly used, simple, and universal way to collect data (O'Neill (2017)). Chyung, Roberts, Swanson, and Hankinson (2017) highlighted how the Likert scale wording has changed over time from "Approve" to "Agree." Therefore, the researcher adopted the revised five-point Likert scale wording: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

Semi-structured interviews. For the second data source, open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted with five nurses. The original count was six nurses; however, during the interview of the sixth participant, an emergency occurred, and that participant had to exit to address the emergency presented. According to Kitzinger (1995), semi-structured interviews help gather detailed information about participants' views and beliefs regarding the research topic. These interviews also offer an opportunity to explore participants' insider perspectives. As Hong (2023) outlined, semi-structured interviews enable researchers to interact with participants directly and further explore people with first-hand experience of events and/or situations. Semi-structured interviews feature a guide containing open-ended questions and study-specific topics (Arksey & Knight, 1999). This allows researchers to explore their research objectives and provides participants with the opportunity to express themselves candidly. The guide's flexibility enables further investigation of topics of interest, resulting in comprehensive data. Allowing for spontaneous and in-depth responses, an interview guide provides flexibility for additional questions for elaboration (Belina, 2023). A researcher can gain additional insight into the feelings, motivations, and opinions of participants by asking follow-up questions.

Interviews are a valuable means of exploring people's opinions and experiences in-depth. They are the most used tools in qualitative studies, alongside open-ended questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful as they allow participants to engage in dialogue and provide detailed responses. Unlike structured interviews, which involve asking the same set of questions to all participants, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to ask follow-up questions that clarify participant responses. In this study, the focus was on the experiences of five individuals who work at the Ministry of Health and

Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The questions centered on succession planning strategies, and each interview lasted approximately 45 to 50 minutes.

Focus Groups. Data was collected from a focus group as the third source. The researcher used a final sample of one focus group, consisting of three nurse participants. The purpose of focus groups is to facilitate discussion among small groups on a specific topic. Researchers can observe agreements and disagreements around perspectives that may not have been evident in individual interviews (De Wolf, 2016). Interview data has been enhanced and supported through focus groups. Using focus groups to collect qualitative data can also increase the likelihood of data saturation as they relate to each research question and may help identify prominent themes (Hewson, 2018). Rabiee (2004) describes a focus group as an in-depth group interview with participants who represent a sample of a particular population and feel comfortable discussing the topic with each other and with the interviewer. Krueger (1994) noted that rich data could be obtained from group participants willing to fully engage in the discussion and advocate for a homogeneous group based on the topic. In addition, participants should have some common characteristics, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The duration of the focus group was about an hour and fifteen minutes. Participants were encouraged to express their opinions freely.

6. Findings and results from study

The research questions for this study guided the investigation of how nurses perceive the strategies for the current succession planning process, which include a competency model, and the needed changes within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas. The results of the semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group helped develop a better understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher categorized the findings and conclusions based on research questions and themes for each question using a qualitative methodology to analyze the results and draw conclusions.

This research aimed to explore nurses' views on the strategies used in the current succession planning process, including a competency model and the necessary changes required by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a focus group. The researcher used levels of coding to organize the data, and the final level of coding was generated in Table 2. The findings helped to gain insights into the phenomena. The results and conclusions were categorized according to the research questions and themes under each research question. David McClelland's (1973) competency model and Maria Shirey's (2008) five-step succession planning model provided the theoretical framework for this study. An individual's level of competency can be defined as the skills and abilities necessary to meet their performance objectives. According to Chang and Xue (2020), competency should be the primary element in evaluating an employee's ability to perform at work. The competency and five-step succession planning models were used to understand how the nurses' planning strategies may benefit from succession planning strategies.

Table 2. Generated codes from research questions

Row Labels	Count of Codes
ATTITUDE CHANGES	7
CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS	14
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	5
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT	20
CULTURAL FACTORS	2
FAVORITISM	6
GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE	14
GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE	4
LACK OF TOOLS/RESOURCES	3
MENTORING AND COACHING NEED TO BE MORE EVIDENT/TRANSPARANT	1
MENTORING, ENCOURAGEMENT AND COACHING NEED TO BE MORE EVIDENT/TRANSPARENT	7
MENTORING, ENCOURAGEMENT AND COACHING NEED TO BE MORE EVIDENT/TRANSPARENT/	1
MORAL IMPROVEMENT	7
MORE NURSING STAFF RECOGNITION	4
NO FORMAL SUCCESSION PLANNING	40
NO SHADOWING FOR NURSES	2
NURSING EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	20
NURSING MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP	27
NURSING PERSONAL BEST/CARE	74
OTHER NURSING CONCERNS	56
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	38
SYSTEM -ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS & ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS	75
SYSTEM -ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS & ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS/OTHER NURSING CONCERNS	2
SYSTEM/ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS	10
Grand Total	439

6.1 Descriptive Findings

In this qualitative single-case study, the researcher collected data from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a focus group. According to Ibrahim and Rahman (2017), semi-structured interviews are useful in providing a deeper understanding of the context, as they are based on participants' responses. Additionally, Eckerdal and Hagström (2017) highlighted that qualitative questionnaires generate rich materials that can be utilized by researchers from different disciplines.

In research, triangulation involves combining data from multiple sources and collecting it using multiple methods. Research findings are more reliable and valid when this technique is used, according to Mhlongo and Harunavamwe (2017). Using triangulation, the researcher can reduce bias and verify the credibility of the data provided by the participants. According to Clark and Veale's (2018) research, the presentation of qualitative data involves studying participants' behavior, journals, interview transcripts, documents, and literature and applying thematic analysis with coding and sorting procedures. The data collected in this study were semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire (SurveyMonkey®), and a focus group. Five nurses participated in the semi-structured interviews, and three nurses participated in the focus group through Zoom. A professional transcription company, Trint.com, was hired to complete the transcription of all audio-recorded interviews to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness. The researcher purchased the software to ensure interview transcription accuracy. The software enabled the interview transcription by allowing the researcher to play and listen to the digital recording while following along with the produced transcript. One of Trint.com's software features allowed the researcher to regulate the digital recording. The researcher organized, prepared, and analyzed the collected data to answer the research questions. Before starting the analysis, the researcher reviewed the data multiple times. After that, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the collected data. Maguire and Delahunt's research in 2017 showed that thematic analysis observes themes or patterns within the data using a six-step data analysis process.

Participants – The study included semi-structured interviews with six participants, but only five were used due to one participant's early withdrawal caused by an unexpected work emergency. The researcher selected one focus group composed of three nurses. The questionnaire gathered 233 records; however, some results could not be used due to the incompletion of some questions being answered by participants. Table 3 shows the nurses' demographic information regarding each data source.

Table 3. Participants demographic information

Demographic Profile of Research Participant (Semi-Structured Interviews)

Profile	# of participants
Gender, n=5	
Male	1
Female	4
Age, n=5	
21-35	1
36-50	3
51-65	1
Job titles, n=5	
Registered Nurse (RN)	5

Demographic Profile of Research Participants (Focus group interviews)

Profile	# of participants
Gender, n=3	
Male	0
Female	3
Age, n=3	
21-35	3
Job titles, n=3	
Registered Nurse (RN)	3

Demographic Profile of Research Participants (Questionnaire online - 233 participants, but only the numbers below were captured, skipped questions were not used)

Profile	# of participants
Gender, n=207	
Male	10
Female	195
Prefer not to say	2
Age, n=206	
21 – 35	90
36 -50	66
51-65	50
Job titles, n=207	
Senior Nursing Officer	7
Nursing Officer 1	6

Nursing Officer 2	13
Registered Nurse	145
Trained Clinical Nurse	24
Other Nursing Position	12

Questionnaire demographics information. The final sample of nurses was 207 completed questionnaires for this study. From the data obtained 26 participants skipped this question. The 94.20% and 4.83% response rates were for females and males, respectively—195 females, ten males, and two who declined to answer (see Figure 1 for gender).
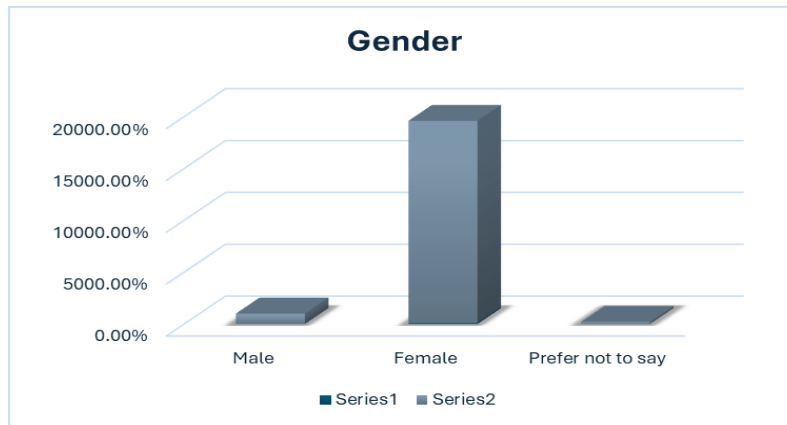

Figure 1. Gender

Age. All participants were asked their age, and they responded accordingly. The dominant age of the participants was 21–35, at 43.69%. However, the second highest in response to age was 32.04% between the ages of 36 and 50. The last group of participants is nearing the age of retirement. The third age category was 24.3% which was 51–65. Figure 2 depicts the age group from the questionnaire from survey monkey.
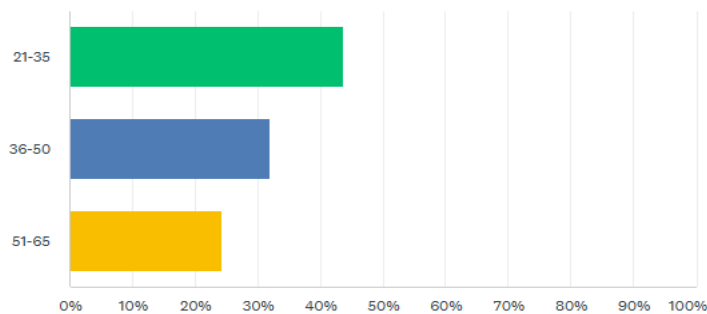

Figure 2. Age

Education background. The third question asked about nurse's educational background. Twenty-eight participants skipped this question. Participants with a bachelor's degree were the highest number which comprised of 55.61% which yielded 114. Participants with an Associate of arts degree was 18.05% was 37. The researcher also obtained data on other educational backgrounds (see Figure 3).
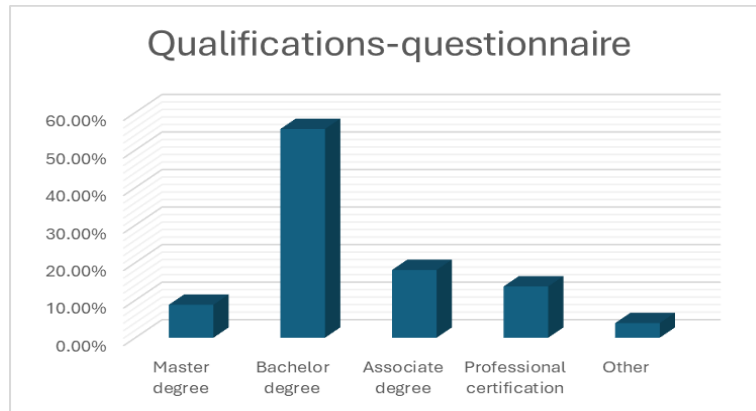
Figure 3. Qualifications

Island (Participants Residence). The third question was about nurses' residence during the time of this research. Twenty-six participants skipped this question. Figure 4 capture all island of which nurses currently reside which provided a full representative of nurses within the Bahamas. See residence island below.

Figure 4. Island (participants residence)

Years of employment at the Ministry of Health and Wellness Public Hospital Authority: The sixth question was about the nurse's employment of which they selected their choices. The choices for their selection were 5–10, 11–15, 16–20, and ≥ 21 years. Based on the participants' selections, many of participants have been employed for from 5 to 10 years. Figure 5 outlines each participant selection.
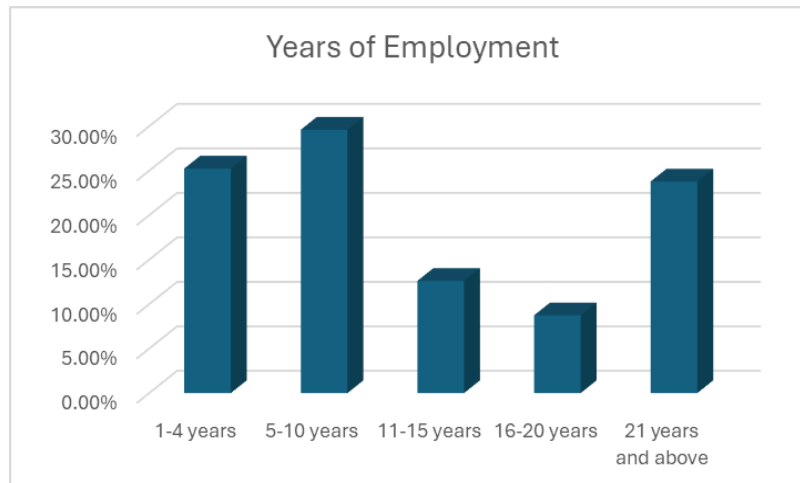

Figure 5. Years of employment

6.2 Research Question One

The overarching and first research question investigated was how nurses perceive the current succession planning process strategies, including a competency model, and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. After analyzing all three data sources, the researcher concluded that seven themes emerged. The findings support the three components of the competency model. Nurses identified knowledge, skills, and attitudes as being essential components.

The research further supported prior literature on the importance of including the competency model through no formal succession planning, generational gap observance, continuous professional training and skills development, systems-organizational process improvements, nursing personal best/care, nursing concerns and clear communication at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Two themes emerged based on the nurses' answers to semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups for question one. The data analysis revealed two themes that supported the research questions. These themes are:

1.   No formal succession planning (there is no succession planning, little to no succession planning, have not seen succession planning going on, no vision at this point for succession planning, not aware of succession planning).

2.   Generational gap observance (more recognition of younger nurses, different generation of nurses, totally different generation of nurses)

The researcher used alphanumeric codes, ranging from NURSP01 to NURSP09, to protect each participant's identity.

6.3 Theme one

No formal succession planning. The researcher generated theme one using all three data sources. Specifically, nurses were asked about the current succession planning strategies, including a competency model, and changes that were needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. In the study, participants noted that no formal succession

planning was evident within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas, or they were unaware of any. Table 4 provides the codes associated with this theme. Some participants may have needed a more complete understanding of the Ministry's current succession plan. Based on their responses and comprehension, they perceive a need for formal succession planning within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Notably the participants responded accordingly, for example **NURSP03** stated "Honestly, I don't feel like there's an actual outlined plan that they have in place in terms of succession planning" and **NURSP05** added "In terms of succession planning, I am going to say there is little to none." **NURSP06** added **"**Oh, I'm going to be very honest. The first time I even heard about succession planning was when I was approached about this study, so. I'm not even sure what is in place, to be very honest with you."

Table 4. Theme one code

Codes
you donot know if it exist sucession planning
what is the plan
there is no succession planning
there is no succession planning
suscession planning do not go as plan
Succession plannning is not known out there
succession planning over looked
Succession planning is not clear
succession planning donot know much about it
show
seems as if there is no strategy
organization stunted
not sure it exist
not seen much activtiy
not seem effective
not seeing the connection between succession planning
not known if you are following a model
not knowledgeable about it on succession planning
not heard of succession planning before this study
not effective succession planning
not aware of succession planning
not a good succession planning
no vision at this point for succession planning
no succession for younger nurses
no plan/its is not know
no alingment
need to see more succession planning
little to none succession planning
If there is stick to it
if succession planning is activated it will be more effective
if exist to certain people
I donot know if they have one in place
how they go about things

The nurses' responses will require a review and change within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority, with the inclusion of all its stakeholders, to include succession planning as part of its vital goal. This will ensure that qualified personnel are available when staff leave or retire. A pipeline of qualified nurses should also be created to replace the current staff when they move on to other positions. Moreover, succession planning will help maintain proper staffing at all times. Ip and Jacobs (2006) found that many organizations had inadequate succession planning. However, Redman (2006) suggested incorporating succession planning into an organization's strategic goals could provide several benefits. These include developing talent, retaining experienced employees, reducing external recruiting, and reducing errors in new staff learning curves. According to Estedadi and Hamidi (2015), succession planning involves identifying key positions within an organization and formulating organizational strategies and operational policies to maintain continuity in advanced practice roles. Loomes et al. (2019) further elaborated on succession planning benefits. They explained that

succession planning not only provides an access pipeline of talents but also helps leaders retain knowledge, preserve culture, and save costs on recruitment. Akinyele et al. (2015) emphasized that succession planning is vital to any organization's survival. Zafar and Akhtar (2020) added that succession planning leads to organizational growth by increasing the number of employed staff through hiring the right people and, more importantly, retaining productive staff for the desired organization. This theme further aligned with the selected theoretical model, the competency model, which includes succession planning strategies. Based on the three data sources of nurses' participants, succession planning strategies are a significant factor in the viability of continuous nursing care.

The responses to the questionnaire further verified the insight provided by participants in face-to-face interviews and a focus group. The feedback further reinforced the theme concerning the implementation of succession planning. It also reinforced the alignment processes for executing succession planning at The Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority. Question 26 revealed that 42% disagreed that their organization utilizes succession planning tools. Question 27 found that 42% agreed that their organization rarely uses succession planning to cope with early retirement and voluntary separation programs. Question 28 found that 40% disagreed that their organization utilizes succession planning to improve employees' ability to respond to changing workload demands. Question 29 found that 36% disagreed that their organization employs succession planning as a tool to overcome human capital shortfalls.

From the nurses' responses to the questionnaire, some concerns were noted regarding how nurses perceive the current succession planning process strategies, including a competency model, and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Specifically, nurses' responses to the questionnaire indicate a continued need for succession planning at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. Carpio-Vázquez and Lysenko (2017) noted that the competency model serves as a foundation for structuring succession plans by—allowing organizations to identify critical behaviors essential for success in key roles and strategic behaviors for future achievements. Susano et al. (2023) stated that the competency model provides a potential source for long-term value for an organization's competitive advantage in collaboration with HR professionals by closely engaging their managers, executives in the identification and resolving employee matters, perspective challenges about the organization and work. Furthermore, Lan and Hung (2018) highlighted research findings that establish leadership competency frameworks for public-sector organizations that benefit practitioners and researchers alike. Questions 26, 27, and 28 had higher percentages at 40% in which the participants responded in disagreement that succession planning is apparent at The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Figure 6 depicts a pie chart for question 26. Thus, creating succession planning is crucial for maintaining continuity, preserving institutional knowledge, and promoting a culture of growth and development within organizations.
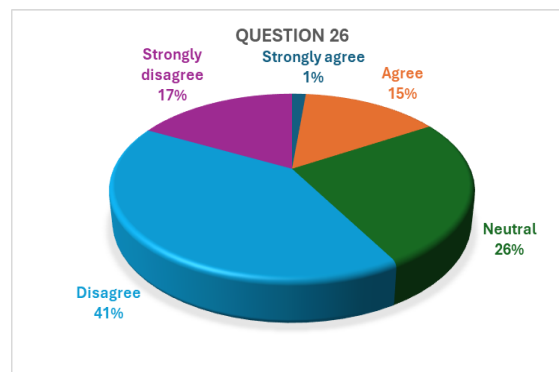

Figure 6. Questionnaire response to question 26

6.4 Theme Two

Generational gap observance. The researcher generated theme two with the data collected from all three data sources about generational gap observance regarding how nurses perceive the current succession planning process strategies, including a competency model, and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The participants' responses highlighted that there has been a generational change and a need to review and include this generation change within the Ministry is an important factor. Table 5 illustrates the codes used to generate this theme.

Table 5. Generational Gap

Codes	Segments/frequency occurences
younger nurses recognize more	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
totally different generation of nurses	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
stigma around older nurses	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
seniors still holding onto positions in nursing	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
seniors not teaching	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
seniors not sharing	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
replace next person instead of using generation	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
more consciouness of new generation of nurses	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
losing a lot of young people (nurses)	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
generation have change	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
different generation of nurses	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
different generation -gap	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
desire for young nurses have change	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
age trumps positions	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
seniority is a big thing	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
seniority is a big role	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
positoins filled by senority	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE
changes from back in the day to now	GENERATIONAL GAP OBSERVANCE

The generational gap observance was an area participants considered as essential in relating to the succession planning within the Ministry of Health and Public Hospital Authority. According to Muthui and Karimi (2023), organizations must consider generational differences in areas such as recruitment, retention, and management practices. By examining attitudes, values, and behaviors in the workplace through a generational lens, organizations can align employee behavior with organizational goals and outcomes. Keepnews et al. (2010) expressed that, at the organizational level, nursing leaders need to anticipate generational differences and provide a positive work environment for new nurses of all generations to demonstrate and develop their abilities. This environment can encourage staff nurses to understand and respect coworkers of all generational groups while not only focusing on areas of generational differences but on commitment to common goals. A supportive and collaborative environment is essential to delivering high-quality patient care. Perkins, Bamgbade, and Bourdeanu (2023) present a compelling argument, underscoring the unique perspective of new millennial nurses and their specific needs to remain in nursing. This distinct viewpoint, different from that of the older generation, poses both a challenge and an opportunity for nursing leadership. It is crucial to recognize and address these differences in work values and motivation, as doing so can significantly enhance job satisfaction and productivity among millennial nurses, fostering a more empathetic and supportive work environment. Moreover, the generation gap as outlined in this theme results from participants are areas in which the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority can use to determine how nurses perceive the current succession planning process strategies, including a competency model, and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas.

Unveiling the significance of understanding and nurturing the generational nursing environment in the workplace is essential. Fostering a generational nursing environment can lead to increased collaboration and knowledge sharing among nurses of different age groups. This can result in a more well-rounded and comprehensive approach to patient care, as each generation brings unique perspectives, experiences, and skills. Additionally, Hart (2006) stated that a multi-generational environment can help create a more inclusive and supportive workplace, improving job satisfaction and

morale among nurses. Furthermore, a multi-generational environment can help bridge the gap between younger and older nurses, creating a more cohesive and effective team. Nurses from different age groups can combine their expertise and skills, which can also benefit patients. Chung and Fitzsimons (2013) noted that generation gaps negatively impact nursing care. When older and younger nurses have animosity toward each other, it can lead to ineffective communication, teamwork, and knowledge sharing. This hinders the development of innovative approaches and obstructs the profession's evolution to meet patients' changing needs. As Stanley (2010) outlines, each generational group is different, bringing different views of authority and their own set of values and orientations into the world. This theme's participants identified generational gap observance as an area to support the results.

Likewise, the questionnaire results regarding the overarching question and RQ1 indicated a need to review the generational gap observance based on the responses. The results showed nurses perceived a need for generational gap observance to be included in the current succession planning process, which includes a competency model, and the needed changes within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. Regarding question 22, participants disagreed by 39% that The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority uses succession planning as a tool to increase job opportunities for its employees. In addition, question 34 revealed that 35% participants disagreed that the organization compares individual skills (attitudes, knowledge, attitude) to the required future positions. Figure 7 depicts the chart responses of participants' responses to the question. Fostering a work environment that values and respects generational differences can significantly enhance team performance, innovation, and overall job satisfaction. By acknowledging and embracing each generation's unique strengths and perspectives, staff nurses can work collaboratively to achieve shared goals, leading to improved outcomes and a more inclusive workplace culture.
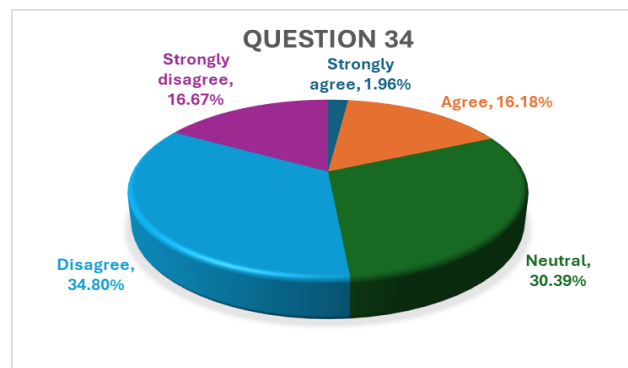

Figure 7. Question 34

6.5 Research Question two

The second research question of this study was: How do nurses perceive the competency model for the current succession planning process within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas? This question was essential to explore the strategies necessary for the current succession planning process at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospital Authority in The Bahamas. The nurses' responses from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a focus group revealed two themes. The themes are continuous professional training and skills development, nursing educational development, and managerial leadership. The two themes reveal nurses prioritize continuous professional training, skills development, and educational growth as critical elements of employee development.

6.6 Theme three

Continuous professional training and skills development: The researcher generated theme three with the data collected from all three data sources as it relates to the responses of participants regarding how nurses perceive the current succession planning process strategies, including a competency model,

and changes needed within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. These concepts further supported participants' views and responses on the importance of focusing on the individual employee and, more importantly, their skills development within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. This theme was formulated using the codes shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Theme three codes

Codes	Segments/frequency occurences
workshop training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
education going back to school	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
nursing education hours	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
post-graduate degree	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
take site courses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
training waiting to late	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
training useful assessment	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
training skills and fills gap	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
training offered for special courses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
training for nurses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
training courses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
strategies promoted thorugh course offerings	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
steps to do training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
specific training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
putting nurse start training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
PHA do more as it relates to training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
levels of change training starts	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
giving the opportunity to train	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
encourage training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
different training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
delayed promotion/pay for person who did the post-graduate	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
continuing nursing education activities	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
continuing eduation courses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
certain number of continuing education courses	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT
promote training	CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

The results highlighted the importance and need for more professional training and skills development within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. According to Karim, Choudhury, and Latif (2019), employees are essential assets to any organization. In order to achieve optimal performance, organizations require well-trained employees who are capable of executing their tasks with precision and efficiency. In this regard, continuous training and development programs are instrumental in enhancing the skills, knowledge, and abilities of employees. Organizations can ensure that their workforce is competitive and equipped to meet the industry's ever-evolving demands by providing ongoing training and development opportunities. Al-Omary et al. (2024) made it clear that continuing professional development (CPD) is an ongoing process. Rather than a one-time event, CDP is a continuous journey that healthcare professionals embark on to preserve and expand their knowledge, skills, and performance. This emphasis on the ongoing nature of CPD can instill a sense of the need for continuous learning and improvement in healthcare professionals. Jaradeh and Hamdeh (2010) indicated that continuous professional development is necessary for effective, safe, quality nursing care. It is a crucial factor in nursing retention and job satisfaction in the National Health Service.

According to Derakhshan and Zandi (2017), improving performance quality is essential for continued growth and productivity. To achieve this, organizational members must develop their skills to prepare for new responsibilities and challenges (Karim, Choudhury, & Latif, 2019). This development enhances their competencies, allowing them to achieve organizational goals and objectives. In relation to skills development, participant **NURSP08** stated, "in terms of development for the nurses, I feel like

they tried, but it's still lacking. You don't really get that training about little things, you know. For instance. If my needle stick prevention courses, etc. or stuff like that. I feel like they can implement more on a more consistent basis."

Based on the responses to the questionnaire, the insight provided during interviews and the support from a focus group session further reinforced the answers to the research question. Question 19 found that 34% disagree the organization has developed a training database that captures and tracks all skills, knowledge, attitudes, training, and development activities needed to support the organization's current and future business and succession needs. Question 29 found 37% agree their organization does not utilize succession planning as a tool to help develop employee career path programs, skills, knowledge, and attitudes. See Figure 8. The participants of this study recognize the importance of continuous professional training and skills development within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. Participants believe such training is essential for identifying the skills gaps of employees, empowering them to work more efficiently, and developing and improving their skills and training needs to enhance overall work productivity.
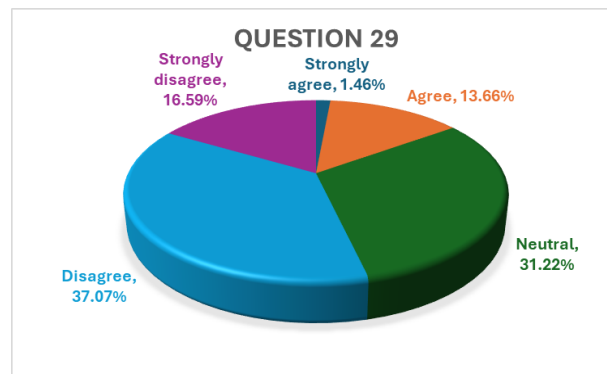

Figure 8. Question 29

After analyzing the data from all three sources, the researcher identified three themes that emerged. The findings not only validate the components of the competency model, but also underscore their practical significance. Nurses recognize the indispensability of knowledge, skills, and attitudes across all three components. This study further reinforces existing literature on the crucial role of continuous professional development and training. Importantly, nurses perceive the competency model as a key component in the current succession planning process within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas.

The findings for research question two align with previous studies/research. In their study, Subramaniam et al. (2016) argued that employees' skills and competencies should be developed through training and development. The competency model supports initiatives such as recruiting, performance management, career development, succession planning, and other human resource business processes (Francis, 2020). Building competencies is important to identify the skills and abilities required to achieve career goals. Therefore, creating a competency framework is essential for the success of both the employee and the system (Francis, 2020). Developing skills and training is a significant research issue, as it is seen as a strategic management tool to cope with the current business environment and achieve competitiveness (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). Hamid and Younus (2021) assert that communication skills are crucial for enhancing work performance. The competency model, skill development, and communication remain vital components of organizational growth strategies.

6.7 Theme Four

Nursing educational development and managerial leadership. This theme pertained to the nurses' educational development leadership preparation within The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The study participants noted that nursing educational

development and managerial leadership preparation are vital in securing leadership roles, especially when there is a vacancy. Additionally, they emphasized the need for nursing leaders to receive adequate training and support to ensure they are able to provide the highest quality of care. They argue that, without proper preparation and guidance, nurses cannot effectively transition into leadership roles. Participants shared the importance of focusing on nursing educational development and managerial leadership in this study. They believe that by strengthening their knowledge and skills through continuous learning, they can provide better nursing care and contribute to their profession's advancement.

The sources used for collecting the data were semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a focus group. The participants' responses outlined that nursing educational development and managerial leadership preparation are vital to the sustainability of continued leadership through succession planning strategies at The Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. This can be accomplished through leadership development, professional development, keeping abreast of nursing, and the medical profession that is constantly evolving and changing. The development of nursing education and managerial leadership is essential for organizational growth and employee development. When leaders communicate expectations clearly, provide the necessary support and resources, and cultivate a positive work environment, employees feel valued and motivated. This leads to higher job satisfaction and increased productivity.

Castle and Decker (2011) identified nursing managerial leadership as a key factor in improving care quality, while Germain and Cummings (2010) emphasized the critical role of nursing leadership in maintaining and enhancing staff performance. Nursing managerial leadership is also essential for creating a culture of safety and quality in the healthcare setting. Nursing leaders can foster collaboration and teamwork among healthcare professionals, improving patient outcomes. Leaders in nursing management's commitment and support are especially vital as they establish the significance of learning and development within an organization (Eraut, 2000).

Continuous nursing education and professional development are crucial to maintain a highly skilled and competent nursing workforce. These opportunities enhance knowledge and skills and improve patient outcomes and healthcare quality. It is pivotal for nursing educational development to align with current evidence-based practices, succession planning, and emerging healthcare trends. Participants shared their views on nursing educational development and managerial leadership as essential within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Participant **NURSP07** stated, "So when it comes to development, I don't think it's really good at that and then with organizational like I said that's there's always friction. Who's going to take the seat now that this person is leaving?" **NURSP06** shared, "so if a nurse says that their plan or their goal is to become a nurse, executive or nurse leader, then the organization should be starting that nurse or putting that nurse in positions where they start to, develop leadership skills. So, I can, I would, make an assumption that people who have identified that, what they want, if they want to be a nurse leader, that they would begin putting them in positions." **NURSP08** added, "so organizationally, I feel like that's an issue and in terms of development for the development for the nurses, I feel like they tried, but it's still lacking."

Leadership plays a crucial role in the development and advancement of the nursing profession. Effective nursing leadership is necessary to drive innovation, improve patient outcomes, and create a positive work environment for nurses. **NURSP01** shared**, "**You want to feel the leadership sees you, not that I am a number, but showing some concern. You want them to show you, come out and talk." **NURSP03** stated, "it speaks about leadership and again, are these people being trained in the leadership role to be effective?" **NURSP06** shared, "identify nurses who have the skills or the leadership qualities, I guess, and they sort of mentor those nurses and prepare them for those roles."

Responses from the questionnaires further endorsed the findings from the semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The responses further reinforced the relatedness of nursing educational development and managerial leadership within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Furthermore, the questionnaire's results regarding RQ2 indicated a need for nursing educational development and managerial leadership to go hand in hand, as effective leadership shapes the future of nursing education. By providing strategic direction, resources, and support, managerial

leaders can create an environment that fosters professional growth, enhances the quality of education, and ultimately prepares nurses to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the population.

Through the completion of questionnaires, insight garnered during face-to-face interviews and a focus group was substantiated. Question 20 found that 29% disagree that the organization uses succession planning and competency model as a means of targeting necessary training, required skills and knowledge, career development, and education. Figure 9 reflects the results for this question. Question 33 found that 42% disagree there is no need for succession planning in my organizations because management always follow up on employee career development activities. Question 40 found 32% agree their organization does not use the five-step succession planning model (organizational and individual factors, development, execution, evaluation, and dissemination) as a key element when developing and implementing its strategic business plan. Therefore, this study's participants believed that nursing educational development and managerial leadership were significant components of advancing the nursing profession. They also suggested that these two focus areas should be a priority for nursing programs. Finally, they emphasized the importance of investing in the nursing workforce to ensure their profession's future.
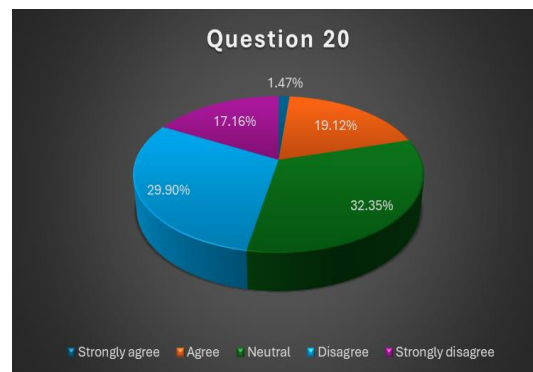

Figure 9. Questionnaire question 20

6.8 Theme five

Nursing personal best/care: The researcher generated theme four with the data collected from all three data sources on various nursing personal best/care used by participants within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. The theme of nursing personal best revealed participants' dedication and commitment to providing high-quality care to patients. It highlighted the various strategies and practices employed by nurses to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of their patients in the healthcare system. The researcher received an array of responses on nursing personal best/care outlined by the participants from semi-structured and a focus group interview.

As part of their discussion, participants shared their views on how nurses strive to do their best to ensure good care is provided to patients within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in the Bahamas. Participant **NURSP08** shared, **"**just do your best to try to get where you need to go." **NURSP03** stated, **"**keep up to date with whatever trends may be happening in the field." Participant **NURSP02** added, "I have learned that being competent in my profession, doing my job to the best of my ability, and working with an excellent spirit has caused me to excel." **NURSP05** highlighted, **"**trying to keep them elevated." Al-Omary et al. (2024) suggest that nurses develop personal and professional attributes that are essential to delivering safe and effective services. This ultimately helps in providing better care to the community. Davids (2006) emphasized that professional nurses need to continuously maintain and develop their knowledge and skills to provide competent and safe nursing care. Salder (2023) identified specific nursing qualities that healthcare organizations can use to recognize strong nursing candidates during the hiring process and to identify

potential future leaders. These qualities include caring and compassion, excellent communication skills, a willingness to learn and grow, strong critical thinking skills, integrity, leadership experience, and good time management skills. According to Cao et al. (2023), nursing professionalism is multidimensional and encompasses attributes such as knowledge, attitude, and behavior. Nurses always aim to provide excellent healthcare services in their respective fields. They are also dedicated to enhancing their skills and knowledge by continuing their education and keeping themselves updated with the latest advancements in healthcare. Nurses are dedicated to providing their patients with the best care possible. Staff development contributes to continuous improvement and growth for any organization and, more importantly, its continuity, as outlined by the data results collected from these participants. The participants outlined leading with a good attitude, remaining competent, putting your best foot forward, getting along and being able to deal with peers, and being the best, which support the results for this theme.

Responses from the questionnaires further endorsed the findings from the semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The responses further align how nurses strive to do their best to ensure good care is provided to patients within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. In addition, the questionnaire regarding RQ2 indicated that nurses' personal best needs to be further developed. As the nurses' personal best is achieved, it will be extended to every patient in their care, further supporting the development and implementation of succession planning strategies in their organization.

Regarding question 23, 36% of the participants believed that the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority does not use a merit system for promotions but instead relies on succession planning. In question 10, 30% of participants disagreed that managers and supervisors work with employees to enrich their current jobs. Question 16 found that 30% agree that their supervisors/managers refuse to help employees explore career goals other than promotions. Figure 10 illustrates participants' responses. Question 17 found that 39% disagreed that their supervisors know how to reward and keep top performers motivated even though promotions are not possible. Overall, this theme highlights the participants' view on the importance of considering nursing general concerns in succession planning strategies at the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority.
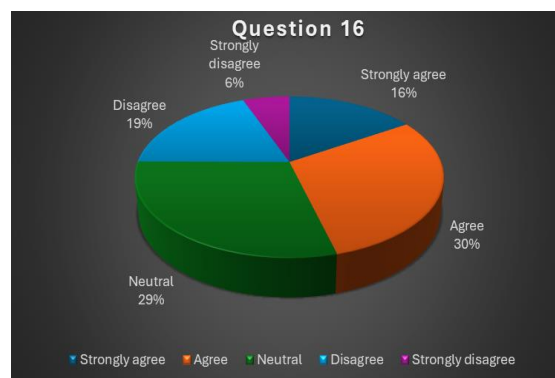

Figure 10. Question 10

Overall, this theme highlighted how participants perceived a need for the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority to focus more on how nurses strive to do their best to ensure good care is provided to patients. Kurtović et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of understanding nurses' perspectives on continuous professional development and personal best, as it directly affects the quality of care, nurse satisfaction, safety, and health costs. Al-Omary et al. (2024) pointed out that nurses in healthcare engage in activities aimed at expanding their knowledge, improving their performance, and developing their skills. They emphasized the need for more opportunities for nurses to grow and develop professionally. By providing more opportunities for professional growth, nurses

can expand their skills and knowledge, improving their ability to deliver quality care to patients. As a result, nurses' job satisfaction and motivation can increase, resulting in a more engaged and dedicated workforce within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Nurses can provide optimal care by giving their personal best. In addition to constantly updating their knowledge and skills, nurses should be able to adapt to new situations and create a positive work environment. Nurses should value collaboration and feedback and demonstrate strong leadership qualities. They must also keep themselves updated with the latest healthcare trends and technologies so that they can care for their patients safely and effectively.

6.9 Research Question three

The third research question of this study was: What are the nurse's recommended changes to the strategies and the competency model? This question was essential to explore the nurses' recommended strategies and competency model changes. The nurses' responses from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a focus group revealed two themes. These themes are system changes/ improvements to organizational processes, and clear, effective communications. An overview of these themes demonstrates organizations must utilize system changes and improvements to improve organizational processes and clear, effective communications. These themes further add to the organizational growth and continued survivability in a highly competitive environment. The following paragraphs will provide a brief description of these two themes.

6.10 Theme six

System changes and improvements to organizational processes: Organizational systems, processes, and improvements are pivotal in driving change and fostering development within any organization. The researcher generated theme seven with the data collected from all three data sources on various **s**ystem changes and improvements to organizational processes used by participants or used within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. The researcher received an array of responses on system changes and improvements to organizational process requirements at the Ministry from the data sources. These codes included promotion takes too long, regular reviews of mentoring and coaching, database creation of active nurses, get nurses involved, identification of critical position and future needs. It is essential to regularly review and update organizational systems, processes, and improvements to stay ahead. Participant **NURSP07** stated, "So, to be honest, I don't see promotion. I don't see it anywhere in my future and with that, if you work with the mindset for promotion in the job that we are, we would have left a long time ago. So, I don't work with the thought of I'm going to be promoted soon, even after nine years. That thought is far from my mind. I don't know. I don't even ponder it." Whereas participant **NURSP08** shared, **"**you don't really see promotion and stuff. Especially not near. You don't see that happening because a lot of the nursing officers etc. these are people who have been in the service up ten years. I feel like when is there going to your turn? So, I would say I would still try do whatever post grads you could do. In the meantime, just do your best. Do your best to try to get where you need to go." Participant **NURSP05** indicated, "if someone does not meet the criteria for promotion, don't promote them or they feel they need help, help them. And don't just let them keep going in the system and cause all the nurses who want to perform and give ministry some type of, help or help patients to be so bitter." **NURSP02** outlined, **"**I would like for them, to be honest, to do a database. Every nurse, or personnel they have in the system, especially nurses, because the nurses are the backbone of the whole system. They should put every nurse in the system their age when they start, so they'll know when they're about to finish, all of their qualifications and everything so they can pull it up and say, okay, this nurse is due to retire in 2025. We need to and if they have this database, they should be able to know how many nurses are RNS that are going to retire in 2025. They need a database about the nurses, so they'll know when they need to put on a course." **NURSP05** stated**. "**in terms of succession planning and for them beefing that up, if they do have it for me, I cannot see it. Identify their critical positions, assess for future needs and develop a talent pool. Make sure they're always training and developing their individuals. Mentoring and coaching is something that they need to take on regular reviews."

A competency model is a valuable tool that organizations can use to manage changes effectively (Mohd et al., 2020). The model helps evaluate proficiency, which is helpful for appraisal or succession planning (Mohd Ali et al., 2020). Competency models also allow executives to observe, analyze behaviors, and

discuss performance deficiencies, thus improving appraisal discussions (Shet et al., 2019). According to Bazneshini, Golafshani, Rahmanseresht, and Rabiei (2020), leadership requires specific critical competencies at every level, which help select and evaluate competent leaders. Competency models support organizational change by developing systematic strategies to support the organization. The participants mentioned that several changes are required to increase organizational growth in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. These include removing favoritism in assessments, addressing delayed promotions, expanding the range of postgraduate courses, providing compensation for nurses with a bachelor's degree, establishing new units or levels for nurse career progression, and preparing nursing retirement packages in advance.

Questionnaire responses validated the insight provided during face-to-face interviews and a focus group. Question 23 found 36% of participants disagree that their organization uses succession planning to ensure job promotions instead of using the merit promotion system. On the other hand, question 26 found that 42% disagree that their organization utilizes its succession plans as a tool to enhance employee morale. Question 28 found that 41% disagree that their organization utilizes succession planning as a tool to improve employees' ability to respond to changing workload demands. Figure 11 depicts the results.
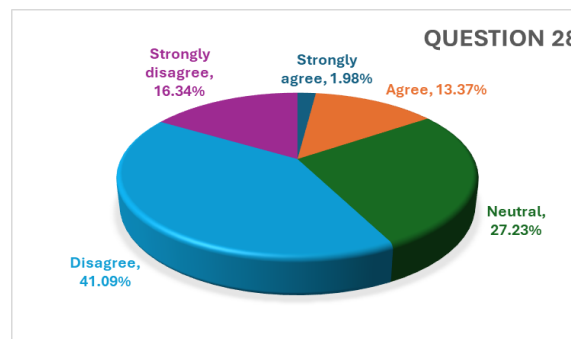

Figure 11. Question 28

In a study conducted by Khamisa et al. (2015), several variables were found associated with nursing general concerns and job satisfaction. Poor staff management, such as inadequate communication, lack of support, inconsistent scheduling, and resource inadequacy in the workplace, were some of the concerns expressed by the participants. Fretwell (2002) highlighted that staff management is important, as decisions made by managers can influence the working environment. In addition, Dye and Garman (2006) stipulated that poor staff management can also diminish staff morale, which can lead to depersonalization (burnout) and job dissatisfaction. This can have a negative impact on the organization's productivity and morale, as well as the overall job satisfaction of its employees. Additionally, poor staff management can lead to an increase in absenteeism and turnover.

The scarcity of essential resources, such as medication, treatment equipment, and examination facilities, significantly compromises the quality of patient care. This not only leads to a decrease in job satisfaction and morale among healthcare providers, but also a decline in the quality of care provided. Participant **NURSP01** highlighted, "but we're lacking a lot of stuff, a lot of equipment, a lot of supplies. We need supplies for our nurses. But yeah, we spend on a whole lot of money for decorations for Christmas. I personally think our priorities are in the wrong place." On the other hand, **NURSP05** shared, "sometimes especially being on the family island where we are short of resources."

Furthermore, inadequate resources exert a strain on already tight healthcare budgets, necessitating increased costs to cover the needed resources (Pillay, 2009). Based on the findings of the study conducted by Khamisa et al. (2015), stress related to staff issues has a direct and significant impact on burnout, job satisfaction, and nurses' general health. Another study was conducted by Tummers et al. (2001) identified insufficient resources, insufficient staff management, and security risks in the workplace, underlining the urgent need for intervention and support. Additionally, organizations should

review their staffing policies to ensure adequate staffing levels to ensure that their staff have the necessary resources to work comfortably and efficiently. Furthermore, a lack of resources leads to insecurity about obtaining and maintaining the resources required to meet job demands, causing stress that results in burnout. A lack of resources can also have a negative effect on the organization, leading to a decrease in morale and employee retention.

6.11 Theme seven

Clear effective communications: Effective communication in the workplace fosters understanding, collaboration, and trust among team members. It promotes clarity in tasks and expectations, reduces conflicts and misunderstandings, and enhances productivity and efficiency. As outlined by Hartung and Miller (2013), communication is crucial to maintaining a healthy work environment. The researcher generated theme six with the data collected from all three data sources on clear, effective communication used by participants or used within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Public Hospitals Authority. Nurses from both semi-structured interviews and the focus group responded to the importance of clear and effective communication within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority. Notably, the participants outlined some areas related to this theme, such as sharing information/communication, delayed communication, and keeping staff up to date on information. Table 7 illustrates the codes used to formulate this theme. Participant **NURSP03** stated, "they have occasional memos that you know about. Sometimes you will see a memo come, finally come out, and that memo was dated 1st December and you're just seeing that memo." **NURSP05** stipulated, "they need to learn how to communicate, how to be transparent and engage all nurses, not just senior nurses." On the other hand, participant **NURSP03** added, **"**some nursing officers, I have never got report back from their meeting to see what would happen, what they spoke about. But then you have some who would call a meeting within their clinic and say, okay, I just attended this meeting. This is what was discussed, XYZ."

Table 7. Theme seven code

Column1	Segments/frequency occurences
word of mouth of communication	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
sharing of information/communication stemming from a meeting	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
see where the nurses interest lie	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
revising information on nursing	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
Need to be heard and listen to	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
meetings information not readily shared with nursing staff	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
keep staff up to date	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
communication gap	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
decisions made in one day and they follow it	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
delayed communication-memos are late	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
get more involvement from the nurses	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
have that conversation	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
information slowly trickle down effect	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
information stops at management	CLEAR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is a crucial aspect that has far-reaching benefits for patients, nurses, and the healthcare system. However, it is a complex and multifaceted concept in nursing, which is influenced by various factors, such as emotions, appearance, personality, mood, and education level. Despite its complexity, effective communication is pivotal to the success of a nurse (Afriyie, 2020). Effective communication refers to mutual understanding and satisfaction between patients and nurses and has been linked to achieving patient concordance. Nursing practice and clinical reasoning are both shaped by effective communication.

The results of the questionnaire validated the insights gained during the face-to-face interviews and a focus group. Question 9 found that 25% of respondents disagreed with having written individual

development plans that support the organization's current and future business needs. Similarly, question 11 found that 29% of participants do not see the organization providing access to career assessment planning/tools materials for employees. Question 24 found that 39% of participants agreed that their organization does not use succession planning as a key element when developing and implementing its strategic business plan.

A clear and effective communication system is essential to ensuring alignment, enhancing collaboration, boosting productivity, decision-making, and achieving organizational goals. Udejinta (2017) asserted that communication is what every employee requires to carry out an assigned task. The flow of communication and information within organizations and the organization's environment could make or break the performance. Productivity will deteriorate if employee communication is ineffective or poorly attended by management. Neill (2018) advocated that effective communication entails management communicating effectively. Having effective communication improves practice, eliminates issues in an organization, and informs the employees about the organization. Genç (2017) highlighted that communication is a process that enables the materialization and achievement of related goals. Communication is vital to convince, motivate, inform, and provide mutual understanding. The study conducted by Radovic Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) found that effective communication is essential to an organization's progress and survival process. This theme has highlighted the necessity for clearer and more effective communication, system changes, and enhancements to organizational processes, which should be incorporated into the succession planning strategies of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas.

6.12 Recommendations and conclusion

Findings from this study indicate that nurses perceived succession planning strategies as an essential factor in the overall development of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority. In their recent study, Beasley and Ard (2021) highlighted the importance of succession planning in nursing programs as an effective way to ensure continuity. Succession planning involves strategically recruiting and developing emerging leaders to maintain a continuous pool of qualified and prepared program leaders who can assume the nurse administrator role. As a result, nurse administrator turnover rates can decrease. Enhancing new nurse administrators' preparation ultimately improves nursing programs. The study offered valuable insights into how participants perceive the current process of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas. Nursing leaders should integrate succession planning with the organization's overall strategic plan to improve their practices. This approach will help leaders create an effective succession plan that aligns with the organization's culture. Aligning the organization's succession plan with its culture is crucial to ensure that future leaders possess the necessary skills, values, and mindset to carry out its mission and vision. This approach fosters continuity and stability within the organization, as leaders in harmony with the culture are more likely to embrace and uphold its values. This results in a smoother transition of leadership and a more robust organizational identity.

A second recommendation for future practice is introducing a nursing database system. As a result, the organization will be able to identify the nursing skills of their workforce and each nurse's age and retirement age. This nursing database system will further allow the organization to know their employees' qualifications and skill sets in preparation for filling and preparing individuals for new or future positions. In a study conducted by Riley et al. (2007), a functional and sustainable tracking system in the healthcare workforce was created to provide current and accurate data for that country. This concept can also be adopted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority in The Bahamas to assist in making informed workforce policy decisions and, more importantly, accessing the human resources that will be required. According to Yucedag-Ozcan and Metcalfe (2018), a successful succession planning strategy can help identify and train candidates with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitude for leadership roles. Nurses can use this research to enhance their leadership abilities, ensure their continuous professional development, and improve their performance in the workplace.

A third recommendation to improve the nursing workforce is to implement a mentoring program that focuses on leadership development and encourages nurses who aspire to leadership roles within the

organization. This program should also include support and encouragement for all nurses in the organization. The third recommendation is to recognize and reward nurses for their dedicated work. This can be done by providing regular feedback, publicly acknowledging their achievements, offering opportunities for professional growth and development, and creating a positive and supportive work environment that values their contributions. Khojah and Asif (2020) stressed the importance of mentoring in developing professionals.

A fourth recommendation would be to review the current generational gap within the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Public Hospitals Authority Bahamas to gauge the concerns of this large staff group (millennials) within the organization. According to Sittler (2019), assessing millennials for available positions within an organization and implementing succession planning to encourage their interest in nursing leadership roles is crucial. Current leaders should promote the exchange of knowledge and work towards creating an environment that appeals to millennials in the nursing leadership field. The literature also suggests millennials seek supportive supervisors who endorse thoughtful succession planning and mentoring.

A fifth recommendation would be to review and make necessary amendments to the nurse promotion policy. This review is crucial to ensure the policy is just, inclusive, and aligned with the latest nursing practices. It can also address gaps or inconsistencies in the promotion process, providing equal opportunities for all nurses to advance their careers. Furthermore, nursing promotion seems overly long. Updating the policy ensures that nurses are appropriately recognized and rewarded for their contributions, promotes career advancement opportunities, and aligns with the evolving needs and expectations of both nurses and patients, and more importantly, the organization.

Succession planning is an effective strategy for ensuring continuity in nursing programs by recruiting and developing emerging leaders. It also prepares organizations for the future and helps employees feel valued and supported (Beasley & Ard, 2021). According to Ramseur et al. (2018), preparing future nursing leaders is essential due to the impending retirement of many current leaders. Succession planning helps organizations identify potential successors and develop them for future leadership roles. It allows organizations to anticipate and plan for staffing needs, ensuring long-term success. Overall, succession planning is a crucial element of any organization's strategy, ensuring its leaders' ongoing success and development.

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