

The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme: Perceptions of the Mentees.

Megan Langford

**A thesis submitted to the Auckland University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Health Science (MHSc)**

2025

School of Clinical Sciences

Abstract

Background

Evidence suggests that a global nursing and midwifery shortage exists, and academic faculty are not immune to its effects. There are persistent recruitment and retention challenges paired with an ageing academic workforce. It is a concern that many faculty leaders are approaching retirement age with a profound lack of individuals prepared to step into these roles. The nursing and midwifery profession relies on competent, resilient leaders to drive transformational education and ensure excellent education for future practitioners. There is an urgent need for succession planning within the nursing and midwifery faculty to ensure capable individuals are prepared to take up leadership roles and propel nursing and midwifery education forward.

The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme was specially designed to support aspiring deans across Australia and New Zealand. The programme's purpose is to mentor academic nurses and midwives aspiring to be the next generation of academic leaders. Within the programme, the mentees had the opportunity to gain insights from a senior mentor and coaching from an executive coach. Mentorship provided relational, experience-based guidance, whereas executive coaching offered structured, skills-focused leadership development.

Aim and Objectives

This study aimed to identify the perceptions of mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme within nursing and midwifery faculties in Australia and New Zealand. The primary objective was to provide evidence to the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand) on how the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme could be strengthened in the future.

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive methodology was used in this study. First, a literature review was conducted to examine the evidence regarding mentorship in academia, specifically relating to aspiring leaders within nursing and midwifery faculty. Second, online, individual semi-structured interviews with nine mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme were conducted to gain mentee perspectives. The individual interviews took place via Microsoft Teams, with participants being in various locations across Australia and New Zealand. The interviews were audio-recorded and then analysed using a general inductive approach.

Findings

Two main categories were identified during data analysis, each with subcategories. The first main category was 'Strategic Leadership Development' and had three subcategories 'Programme Design',

‘Access to Influential Networks and Opportunities’ and ‘Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives’.
The second main category was ‘Career Transformation’, which had two subcategories ‘Mentorship, Leadership Identity and Capability’ and ‘Development of Academic Career and Goal Realignment’.

Conclusions

The findings from this study identified that, participating in a mentor leadership programme designed specifically for aspiring nursing and midwifery leaders made a significant impact on an individual’s leadership development, networking opportunities and career advancement. The minor challenges identified informed recommendations to strengthen the programme.

Table of contents

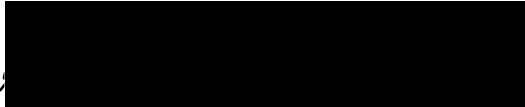
Attestation of Authorship	7
Acknowledgements	8
1. Chapter One: Introduction	
1.1. Introduction	9
1.2. The Study Context	11
1.3. Positionality of the Researcher	11
1.4. Background	12
1.4.1. The Nursing and Midwifery Academic Staffing Shortage	12
1.5. Problem Statement	13
1.6. Research Objective and Aims	13
1.7. Overview of the Thesis Chapters	13
1.8. Chapter Summary	14
2. Chapter Two: Literature Review	15
2.1. Introduction	15
2.2. Search Strategy	15
2.3. Search Outcome	16
2.4. Leadership Programmes in the General Academic Setting	16
2.4.1. Defining Mentorship	17
2.4.2. Faculty Career Trajectory	18
2.4.3. The Role of Succession Planning, Career Development and Mentorship in Developing Future Academic Leaders	20
2.4.4. The Impact of Mentorship: The Benefits and Job Satisfaction	21
2.5. Mentorship in Nursing and Midwifery Academic Faculty	22
2.5.1. The Academic Landscape	22
2.5.2. Aligning Succession Planning, Feedback and Career Planning	23
2.5.3. The Impact of Mentorship on Career Advancement and Leadership Development in Nursing and Midwifery Academia	24
2.5.4. Succession Planning in Nursing and Midwifery Faculty: The Critical Role of Mentorship	25
2.5.5. Challenges of Mentorship within Academia	25
2.5.6. Leadership, Succession Planning, and the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme	26
2.6. Gaps in the literature	27
2.7. Chapter Summary	27
3. Chapter Three: Research Design	29

3.1. Introduction	29
3.2. The Research Aim	29
3.3. Research Methodology	29
3.4. Sampling	30
3.5. The Recruitment Process	30
3.6. Data Collection	31
3.7. Transcription	32
3.8. Data Analysis	32
3.9. Research Rigour	34
3.10 Ethical Considerations	37
3.10.1 Voluntary Informed Consent	37
3.10.2. Respect for Rights, Privacy and Confidentiality	38
3.10.3. Minimisation of Harm	38
3.10.4. The Treaty of Waitangi Obligations	39
3.10.5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	39
3.11. Chapter Summary	39
4. Chapter Four: Findings	41
4.1. Introduction	41
4.2. Strategic Leadership Development	41
4.2.1 Programme Design	42
4.2.2. Access to Influential Networks and Opportunity	43
4.2.3. Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives	45
4.3. Career Transformation	47
4.3.1. Leadership Identity and Capability	47
4.3.2. Development of Academic Career and Goal Realignment	49
4.4. Chapter Summary	50
5.0. Chapter Five: Discussion	51
5.1. Introduction	51
5.2. Summary of Findings	51
5.3. Benefits Perceived by the Mentees within the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme	53
5.3.1. Mentorship and Leadership Progression	53
5.3.2. Networking and Collaboration	54
5.3.3. Executive Coaching and Access to Senior Leaders	55
5.4.4. Career Planning and Reflection	55
5.4. Challenges Faced by the Mentees in Aspiring Deans	

Leadership Development Programme	55
5.5. Success Factors of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme	56
5.6. Recommendations for Improvements for the Aspiring Deans' Leadership Development Programme	58
5.7. Strengths of the study	58
5.8. Future Research	59
5.9. Limitations of the study	59
5.10. Concluding Statement	60
References	61
Appendix A – AUTECH Approval Letter	76
Appendix B – Nursing Praxis Article	77
Appendix C – Letter to the Manager	89
Appendix D – Interview Questions	90
Appendix E – Invitation to Participate	91
Appendix F – Information Sheet	93
Appendix G – Consent Form	97
List of Tables	
Table 1: The Five Phases of General Inductive Analysis	32
Table 2: Summary of the Categories Developed During Data Analysis	34
Table 3. Perceptions of the Mentees within the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme	41
Table 4. Summary of Success Factors of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme	57

Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed: 

Date: 18.11.2025

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks a personal milestone that would not have been possible without the support of many.

To the participants in this study, thank you for generously sharing your time, experiences and insights. Your voices have shaped this work, and your knowledge has inspired me along the way.

To my supervisors, Dr Sara Napier and Professor Stephen Neville, thank you for your guidance, encouragement, and belief in me. Sara, your clarity, patience, and ability to keep me focused were invaluable. Stephen, your mentorship and reminders that there's room for everyone, even the small fish, have stayed with me.

To my colleagues in the Nursing and Social Science Faculty, thank you for your support, humour, and encouragement through the highs and lows. You all continue to inspire me.

To my friends near and far, thank you for your interest in this study, your patience, and love. A special thanks to my dear friend, Dr Ange. Your unwavering support, wisdom, and kindness have lit the way.

To my mum and Ray, thank you for your love and help with our children. Thanks, Mum, you always said I could do it.

Finally, to my husband Jack, thank you for keeping me grounded, believing in me, and bringing chocolate at the right times. To our boys, Liam and Jude, thank you for sharing your mum with this project. I hope you always believe there's a seat for you at any table.

Ethics approval to undertake this study was provided by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on the 19th of December 2025, Ethics Application Number 23/339 (Appendix A).

1. Chapter One: Introduction.

1.1. Introduction

The nursing and midwifery academic faculty are facing critical shortages. Factors influencing the shortage include an ageing faculty, a lack of succession planning, and a decreasing number of professionals willing or prepared to enter academia (Boamah et al., 2021; Darbyshire et al., 2020; Ephraim, 2021). Effective leadership is essential to provide supportive academic environments to enable the mentoring of aspiring leaders and build faculty expertise. This allows well-prepared educators to develop competent graduates who will serve as the next generation of nurses and midwives (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Morrison-Beedy et al., 2018).

Effective mentorship and career planning are essential for the sustainability of the nursing and midwifery profession. The global gap between the supply and demand of nurses and midwives has a profound impact not only on healthcare outcomes but on global economic growth (Sharplin et al., 2025). Although workforce shortages date back to World War II, they have escalated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, declining student enrolments, and an ageing workforce, collectively amplifying the demand exceeding supply (Farber et al., 2020).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared 2020 ‘the year of the nurse and midwife’, yet warned that shortages within the professions will persist for decades without substantial increases in production, employment, and retention (Adhikari & Smith, 2023; Richards & Kieffer, 2023; Stilwell & Newman, 2022). In New Zealand, a 2023 report from Te Whatu Ora acknowledged the deficit within the nursing and midwifery profession as the largest relative deficit of all workforces. It is also predicted that the shortage across Australia and New Zealand will result in the nation’s health demands not being met by 2030 (Drennan & Ross, 2019; Kurtzman et al., 2022; Mannix, 2021.).

There are not enough new graduates entering the profession. Australia and New Zealand rely more heavily on internationally qualified nurses (IQNs) than other developed countries to manage the insufficient staffing numbers (Chalmers, 2020; Drennan & Ross, 2019; Goodare, 2017). This reliance is unethical, especially as IQNs come from countries facing their own critical shortages, further exacerbating global health disparities (Stokes & Iskander, 2021). While individuals have the right to migrate, long-term solutions need to focus on building local capacity, particularly by addressing the underrepresentation of Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the professions (Chalmers, 2020).

The population in Australia and New Zealand is ageing, which will prove challenging, with the number of people aged over 65 predicted to double. The ageing population coincides with multi-morbidities and chronic health conditions, intensifying the demand for specialised nursing care (Parr-

Brownlie et al., 2020). The supply of nursing graduates will be insufficient to meet population demands unless strategies to address one of the underlying causes, the nursing and midwifery faculty shortage, are actioned (Bakewell-Sachs et al., 2022).

The global nursing and midwifery shortage has directly impacted the pipeline of academic faculty. A warning from the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) (Australia & New Zealand) stated that the academic workforce shortage was imminent (Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery [CDNM], 2008). Despite this warning being over a decade old, chronic faculty shortages continue to affect the profession. These shortages impede the capacity to educate the future nursing workforce, reduce research potential, and deplete the pool of leaders to advance the profession (Nowell, 2017). The power to revolutionise health education lies in the hands of academic leaders; such leaders can implement positive change to advance nursing and midwifery education (Jackson et al., 2015; Tucker, 2020). Global shortages within nursing faculty are a key concern, and while these shortages are less visible, they require the same attention as clinical shortages (Nowell, 2017).

Succession planning is essential for retaining and developing nursing and midwifery faculty. It involves mentorship, career planning/development, and increasing leadership preparedness, which may prevent future faculty staffing crises. By implementing succession planning, the development capacity of academic leaders increases (Morrison-Beedy et al., 2018; Simonson et al., 2023). The continuous decline of academic faculty numbers and unfilled vacant positions heightens the risk of positions being filled with poorly prepared educators (Bottino, 2022). In 2025, internationally, one-third of nursing faculty will retire, many from leadership roles, further exacerbating existing challenges in retention and the need for effective succession planning (Bouws et al., 2020; Richards & Kieffer, 2023).

Mentorship is key to professional growth, enabling knowledge transfer to potential leaders. A common trajectory for academic leaders begins as faculty and progresses into leadership roles such as dean/head of school; however, naivety assumes that becoming a leader in nursing and midwifery education is an extension of previous faculty positions. Mentorship is a structured process that addresses leadership within academia and is attributed to building faculty expertise and institutional capacity (Beasley & Ard, 2021; Morrison-Beedy et al., 2018; Nowell, 2017).

Chapter one presents a review of factors which underscore the nursing and midwifery academic shortages, the study context and the researcher's positionality. This study aims to present perceptions of mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme. Understanding their perceptions is vital in determining how such a programme can be strengthened for strategic workforce development and succession planning.

1.2. The Study Context.

In 2020, the year of the nurse and midwife, the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) (Australia & New Zealand) launched the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP) as part of their strategic plan. The programme aims to develop individuals aspiring to become deans or heads of schools within nursing and midwifery faculty. By supporting aspiring leaders in navigating the higher education and healthcare landscape, their leadership skills are strengthened, positively impacting their current and future roles. The initial programme commenced in 2023, and over 12 months, the mentees (candidates) were supported through mentoring, career planning, feedback/reflection, and professional development activities. The CDNM requested an evaluation of the current ADLDP to gain perceptions and success factors to influence the future success of the programme for nursing and midwifery faculty. This study draws on data from the larger evaluation study conducted across nine universities in Australia and New Zealand (see Appendix B). The findings presented in this thesis specifically focus on the mentees who participated in the project. Two universities in New Zealand were included, and seven in Australia.

1.3. Positionality of the researcher.

I have always had an interest in both the clinical and teaching aspects of the nursing profession. With a decade of experience within critical care, I have engaged in education by mentoring nursing students, new graduates, and new staff in the clinical area. I have reflected on the excellent mentorship I have received and provided throughout my clinical career. As I progressed into senior nursing roles, mentoring was instrumental in developing my professional growth and taught me to lead and educate. The impact of mentorship has positively contributed to my professional success.

Recently, I decided to transition into academia. Bachelor of Nursing programmes recruit clinical experts; however, I was a novice educator outside of the clinical setting. Transitioning into an academic role was humbling and presented a steep learning curve. During this time, there were no structured mentorship or orientation programs to become acquainted with systems, assessments, teaching preparation, and teaching pedagogies. Consequently, this resulted in major socialisation and professional challenges. I have continued to witness faculty having a similar experience, which has negatively impacted faculty retention. My personal experience and observing the experiences of other academics transitioning into academia have stimulated my interest in this research topic.

I was offered an opportunity to join an expert research team and contribute to a larger study evaluating the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme. This aligned with my research interests and aspirations for academic progression. As a novice researcher, I am interested in the perceptions of mentees who have participated in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme. I believe their perceptions will add valuable evidence to support the development of strategies to implement mentorship programmes within higher education. Nursing and midwifery education is delivered from Institutes of Technology

and Polytechnics (ITPs) and universities in New Zealand. I am specifically interested how the findings from this study can be transferable to this wider nursing education context.

In undertaking a Master of Health Science qualification, I have explored the experiences of mentees participating in the ADLDP. This has allowed me to gain insights into mentorship, coaching, professional trajectories, and career outcomes. I hope the findings from this research will be valuable not only to enhance faculty retention and career trajectories within nursing academia but also for other faculty and organisations.

1.4. Background

This section provides the main context for undertaking this study. Mentorship and leadership programmes are well understood within the clinical context; however, less so within nursing and midwifery academia. The following discussion will focus on the nursing and midwifery faculty shortage.

1.4.1. The Nursing and Midwifery Academic Staffing Shortage.

One of the factors impacting the current shortages within nursing and midwifery faculty is the ageing workforce. Faculty are typically employed late in their career, given the clinical skillset and education requirements, further adding to the ageing workforce and short tenure (Boamah et al., 2021). In Australia, 40% of faculty are over fifty, and in New Zealand, only 6% are aged under 40 (Bexley et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2022). The looming retirement of many faculty is intensified by the unpreparedness and unwillingness of individuals to assume leadership roles, further making sustainable succession planning a necessity (Darbyshire et al., 2020; Ephraim, 2021).

A further set of challenges includes expected post-graduate education and career ambiguity. Academic faculty are required to have a master's degree progressing to a doctoral qualification. There is a depleting number of doctoral graduates in Australia and New Zealand, a further challenge to the recruitment process (Nowell et al., 2017b). Stress, time and the financial burden of additional education, and an unclear career trajectory contribute to nurses' and midwives' reluctance to embark on an academic career (Albarran & Rosser, 2014; Fang & Kesten, 2017; Lee et al., 2017).

The faculty shortage will continue if occupational stress, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and succession planning are not addressed. Addressing and rectifying the faculty shortage is essential to ensure graduates are prepared to meet the future population health needs (Boamah, 2022). Leadership programmes, including career planning and mentorship of future leaders, should be a priority for all academic institutions to ensure the next generation of leaders is well-placed to thrive in their roles (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Boamah, 2022; Boamah et al., 2021; Bouws et al., 2020).

1.5. Problem Statement

The persistent critical shortages of practising nurses and midwives impact the pipeline of academic faculty within the higher education sector. There are minimal strategies in place to address and replace the current shortage of academic faculty and faculty leaders in the profession. The complexities of the academic role result in ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining adequately educated academic faculty. Nurse faculty pipeline programmes in the USA and Canada include mentor-guided teaching with leadership development to ensure academic staff are prepared to deliver health education. Mentorship is proven to support the transition from academic faculty into leadership positions; however, such programmes remain scarce within Australia and New Zealand. Resilient and transformational academic leaders are required to propel nursing and midwifery education forward and to educate future graduates of the profession. Retaining nursing and midwifery faculty is essential to continue to support enough graduates in the profession to meet the global demand. This leads to the research question this study addressed: What are the perceptions of mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme?

1.6. Research Aim and Objective

The Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) sought an evaluation study of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP), which was specially designed to support aspiring deans within Australian and New Zealand universities. The objective of the larger evaluation was to assess the quality, impact and key success factors of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme from the perspective of the mentees, mentors, deans, heads of school and the executive. This qualitative descriptive study explores the perceptions of mentees who participated in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP), addressing the research question: What are the perceptions of mentees participating in the ADLDP?

The overarching objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the benefits and challenges faced by the mentees within the ADLDP.
- Identify the mentee's professional and leadership career advancement resulting from the ADLDP.
- Identify success factors for mentees and improvements that could be made to the ADLDP to ensure it meets the needs of mentees

1.7. Overview of the Thesis Chapters

This thesis is presented in five chapters:

- Chapter one introduces the research topic and presents the background and context of the study. Firstly, the nursing and midwifery academic shortages are presented. The research

setting and my research interest are discussed. Finally, the research question and objectives are stated. Chapter two provides a review of relevant recent literature, with the findings organised into categories including mentorship and leadership programmes in the broader academic environment, and the nursing and midwifery faculty.

- Chapter three presents the research design and methods. The qualitative descriptive methodology used is explained. Ethical considerations associated with this study are also presented. This is followed by a comprehensive review of the research methods utilised. Lastly, how rigour was achieved in the study is presented.
- Chapter four presents the findings in which two main categories were identified, each with subcategories. The first main category was ‘Strategic Leadership Development’ and had three subcategories ‘Programme Design’, ‘Access to Influential Networks and Opportunities’ and ‘Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives’. The second main category was ‘Career Transformation’, which had two subcategories ‘Mentorship, Leadership Identity and Capability’ and ‘Development of Academic Career and Goal Realignment’.
- Chapter five provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings in the context of existing literature. This chapter examines mentees’ perceptions of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP), identifying key benefits and challenges of the programme. The chapter also discusses the strengths and limitations of the study and outlines future implications for enhancing the ADLDP to better support aspiring academic leaders.

1.8. Chapter Summary.

This chapter has presented the background central to the study topic, with a focus on the urgent need to prepare the future pipeline of academics to take up leadership roles. Worldwide, nursing and midwifery staffing shortages are at a crisis level. However, despite this growing challenge, there is a lack of formal leadership mentoring programmes in place aiming to ready the next generation of academic leaders. The next chapter provides a critical literature review on leadership and mentorship programmes, career planning, executive coaching and succession planning, all factors which will safeguard the profession.

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review.

2.1. Introduction.

The purpose of undertaking a literature review is to combine and synthesise findings from empirical literature and provide a rigorous discussion supported by reliable evidence. This involves critically discussing relevant theories and empirical publications to explore the background of the research topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A literature review is necessary to lay the foundation for the research study that follows. In most research, a literature review allows researchers to determine whether there are gaps in the literature (Polit & Beck, 2025). The current literature review included qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research. This literature review synthesises existing research on leadership or mentorship programmes, from general academic settings and nursing and midwifery faculty settings.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from a review of current literature on the topic. The chapter begins by presenting the search strategy and outcomes from the search process. Then the findings from the review are presented under two main categories: Leadership programmes in the general academic setting and Mentorship in Nursing and Midwifery Academic Faculty. It is critical to develop nurse and midwifery leaders, and the implementation of sustainable succession planning, including mentorship, ensures a smooth transition in the development of the next generation of academic leaders (Bognar et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2020).

2.2. Search strategy

A well-defined literature search strategy is vital for enhancing the rigour of a review (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). A preliminary search using multiple relevant databases was completed to gauge the extent to which this topic had previously been studied. The search strategy was then refined to narrow the search focus. The initial search was performed in March 2024 and repeated to refine the final search strategy in September 2024. The initial searches highlighted the importance of mentorship and leadership programmes within faculty to ensure adequate succession planning. It was clear evidence of formal mentorship and leadership programmes, and the perspectives of those participating were scarce. The inclusion parameters for the literature search are outlined below:

- Qualitative, mixed-methods and quantitative studies which focused on mentorship/leadership programmes for academic faculty in general and/or specifically nursing and/or midwifery faculty.
- Peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Articles published in the English language.
- Articles published within ten years (from 2014).

After seeking guidance from a research librarian and the researcher's supervisors, a search strategy was created. Electronic databases were searched, including, CINAHL, OVID, Scopus, ProQuest, ERIC, Science Direct and PubMed. Keywords and Boolean operators (OR, AND, NOT) were used in different combinations to ensure all relevant literature was identified. Truncation and wildcard symbols were applied to ensure comprehensive coverage within the search process to ensure all possible word endings were captured. Key words included in the search were: *nurse, midwife, faculty, academic, academia, mentorship, mentorship programme, leadership, career, planning, development, dean, professional development, succession planning, aspiring, future leader, evaluation, and university*. Following this search, additional terms were included to ascertain any insights from mentees or mentors participating in mentorship programmes. These included key terms such as *mentee, mentor* nurs* midwif* and program* and perspective or views or perceptions or attitudes or opinions*. Search terms were applied to the abstract field to limit the return of unrelated literature. To restrict the return of irrelevant articles and enhance the search process, the following words were omitted: *clinical, clinic, student, graduate, patient, undergraduate, baccalaureate, military and Covid*.

2.3. Search Outcome

The comprehensive search of various electronic databases using keywords and phrases in various combinations yielded a diverse array of empirical literature. Initial searches identified an abundance of opinion pieces and reviews on the importance of mentorship/leadership programmes within nursing and midwifery faculty, effective mentorship models and mentorship resulting in succession planning. Empirical evidence from current mentor and/or leadership programmes within the nursing and midwifery faculty was scarce, and even more so were mentee perspectives of such programmes. Most of the studies identified originated from the UK, the USA and Canada. There was one study from Australia which has been included.

The literature review is presented in two categories, the first being 'Leadership Programmes in the General Academic Setting'. This category is supported by the following sub-categories: defining mentorship, faculty career trajectory, the role of succession planning, career development and mentorship in developing future academic leaders and the impact of mentorship: the benefits and job satisfaction. The second category presented in this section is 'Mentorship in Nursing and Midwifery Academic Faculty'. This is supported by the following sub-categories: the impact of mentorship on career advancement and leadership development in nursing and midwifery academia, succession planning in nursing and midwifery faculty: the critical role of mentorship, the impact of mentorship in nursing and midwifery faculty and challenges of mentorship within academia.

2.4. Leadership Programmes in the General Academic Setting

The term general academic faculty refers to the collective departments within the university setting that are not part of specialised professional faculties such as Nursing and Midwifery. General

academic faculty typically focus on theoretical, research-based education in contrast to the practice-based, clinically orientated training provided in nursing and midwifery. Similarly to nursing and midwifery, it emerged that other academic facilities such as medicine, pharmacy and business also had leadership mentoring needs. These faculty were included in the general academic faculty setting discussion. The following section explores the definition of mentorship, faculty career trajectory, development of future academic leaders and positive impacts of mentorship in the general academic setting.

2.4.1. Defining Mentorship

Mentorship is considered an essential component of succession planning. The concept of mentorship, derived from Greek mythology, has evolved into a contemporary concept represented by a protégé, or mentee. It is defined as a professionally centred, context-dependent relationship intended to guide less experienced colleagues (Busby et al., 2022; Strawser et al., 2022). The act of mentoring is a social mechanism for encouraging growth and development and can be defined as an empowering, nurturing relationship over a period that is goal-centred, mutually beneficial, and focused on growth (Das, 2020; McBride et al., 2017; Nowell et al., 2017a). Formal mentorship is structured, supported by the organisation and involves the intentional pairing of the mentee-mentor relationship, unlike informal mentorship, which is more casual (Pololi & Knight, 2005). Mentorship is a fundamental component of career success and productivity many academic disciplines. For example, in academic medicine effective mentoring is linked to greater research outputs and enhanced job satisfaction (Welch et al., 2017).

Different mentorship models, including dyad, peer, group, and constellation models, have been described in the literature; however, their individual outcomes and success are not well-documented (Nowell et al., 2017a; Perumal & Singh, 2022). Peer mentorship consists of several faculty members of similar rank collaborating as equals to reach goals, group mentorship involves one mentor supporting a group of mentees, and lastly, constellation mentoring involves a mentee having more than one mentor to advance the mentee's career (Nowell et al., 2017a). The traditional dyad mentorship model consists of an expert in the area and a junior member of the organisation, and is the most frequently used (McRae & Zimmerman, 2019; Nowell et al., 2017a). The dyad method, implemented effectively, benefits both mentor and mentee and, over time, can contribute to the development of successful leaders (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Baskin et al., 2023; McBride et al., 2017b; Strawser et al., 2022).

While the traditional dyad method remains the most commonly used mentorship model in academic medicine, it is often time-limited and results-oriented (Welch et al., 2017). The post-COVID-19 academic landscape has changed how interactions occur both within and across institutions. The online culture has exacerbated geographic divides and has made it harder to support communities of

scholars (Barr et al., 2024). For example, some radiology and medical faculty implemented peer mentorship, where the mentee engages with faculty across institutions at similar career stages. This approach enables a prolonged, comfortable relationship of gaining knowledge and exchanging ideas (Bredella, et al., 2019; Welch et al., 2017). Furthermore, psychology faculty have turned to group mentoring as an effective way to increase support and connection (Barr et al., 2024). Group mentorship has several benefits, including expanding networking, increasing collaboration, enhancing academic activity, and skill development. It also allows the mentee to connect to multiple mentors with varying expertise and avoids overburdening one mentor (Barr et al., 2024; Pololi et al., 2015; Welch et al., 2017). Both pharmacy and medicine literature support this use of a constellation-type mentorship method in which mentees are connected to a network of mentors both internally and externally to their institution. This model enables the mentee to benefit from a range of perspectives (McRae & Zimmerman, 2019). This further emphasises that one mentor cannot do it all (Bredella et al., 2019; Welch et al., 2017).

Mentorship, regardless of method, focuses on growth and development and is more than teaching or counselling (Efstathiou et al., 2018). It differs from supervision, coaching, and role modelling. Supervision is focused on professional development and coaching which facilitates learner development through practice strategies to meet a defined goal, whereas role modelling displays examples of positive practice which can be mirrored (Das, 2020; Efstathiou et al., 2018; Henry-Noel et al., 2019). The mentorship process is reciprocal, collaborative and has shared accountability for the success of the relationship (Perumal & Singh, 2022). While mentorship is recognised as an essential factor in retaining employees across businesses, schools and health industries (dentistry, pharmacy, medicine and radiology); it is a relatively new phenomenon in nursing and midwifery tertiary education (Ambler et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017b; Perumal & Singh, 2022).

2.4.2. Faculty Career Trajectory

An enhanced faculty career trajectory is not solely dependent on mentorship. Executive coaching and mentorship can be used in combination to promote individual leadership skills. While mentorship offers relational, experience-based support for career and personal growth, executive coaching delivers structured, goal-driven leadership development facilitated by a trained coach. Leadership programmes that do not incorporate either are likely to produce ineffective results (Eisner, 2014; Horvath et al., 2024; Mbokota & Reid, 2022). According to McRae and Zimmerman (2019), an unstructured programme has a direct negative impact on mentee career success. Investing in executive coaching is a sustainable approach to developing leadership capacity; it also has the potential to positively impact career trajectories (Cheesebrough et al., 2020). Being coached by an executive aligns with vertical leadership by empowering professional development. It is a model based on partnership and is often a catalyst for change beyond the acquisition of new knowledge. The idea is

that an executive coach will lead the individual to challenge current perspectives and engage with other points of view (Horvath et al., 2024).

Mentorship has a significant positive impact on the mentee and their academic career trajectory. It is proven that mentee grant applications are more often successful, resulting in more publications, thus career progression in medicine and business faculty (Eisner, 2014; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Zehra et al., 2023). Similarly, Henry-Noel et al. (2019) state that mentorship is associated with productivity and aligns with greater chances of success and opportunities for promotion. This emulates findings from academic medicine, for example a qualitative study found that 98% of participants found a lack of mentorship inhibited their career progression and promotion (McRae & Zimmerman, 2019). Within a health sciences faculty, the majority of participants strongly agreed that their leadership accomplishments, increased confidence and interpersonal connections were attributed to their mentorship programme (McRae & Zimmerman, 2019; Smith et al., 2022; Wurmser & Kowalski, 2020). Mentees also found the mentor's advice on conferences to attend and opportunities for research outputs valuable to enhance productivity and the likelihood of promotion. These findings suggest mentorship promotes academic productivity, career progression and leadership skills, all contributing to long-term success in many academic settings (Sarabipour et al., 2023).

Feedback and self-reflection shape an individual's leadership effectiveness and career trajectory. Employee appraisals are often hierarchical and have adverse effects on employees (Uraon & Kumarasamy, 2024). In contrast, a 360-degree feedback review offers a pragmatic, fair and efficient approach to assess leadership performance, beneficial for professional growth (Karkoulian et al., 2016; Rafiq et al., 2023). The 360-degree review is a questionnaire where perceptions are collected about an individual and their competencies within their workplace and the results indicate individuals' current performance and highlight areas for development. As Ellison et al. (2022) highlight, creating opportunities for professional dialogue is essential, with the 360-degree feedback emerging as an increasingly popular method for facilitating this (Rafiq et al., 2023). The juxtaposition of how one perceives oneself compared to others' perceptions within leadership can lead to personal growth and transformation (Markham et al., 2015).

When paired with personal accountability, such feedback can reinforce strengths and weaknesses. This is supported by Zacher et al. (2019), noting that this method evaluates perceptions of mid-level leaders' behaviours or competency within the workplace from peers and managers; this combined accountability serves as strong evidence to make changes. It is argued that the 360-degree feedback key components consist of the individual's 'big picture' vision, understanding of business, confidence, strategic vision and leadership impact (Mbokota & Reid, 2022). The correlation between the 360-degree review implementation, employee contentment and engagement has been shown to support goal attainment, expand self-awareness, improve employee satisfaction and enhance leadership

capabilities. Therefore, the 360-degree review is a meaningful addition to leadership programmes (Rafiq et al., 2023).

However, the lack of a psychological process following the 360-review feedback and insufficient explanation of the outcomes for the workforce showed a gap for further research. With that said, future studies should prioritise a longitudinal design to track changes in experience and behaviour over time to establish stronger evidence in career development interventions.

2.4.3. The Role of Succession Planning, Career Development and Mentorship in Developing Future Academic Leaders

Succession planning, including mentorship and career development, can be powerful tools for developing future academic leaders. This is a proactive, intentional process that involves leadership exposure and increased responsibility (Beasley & Ard, 2021; Mains & MacLean, 2017). Nurturing the mentee is crucial through the succession planning process to retain new leaders within academic settings, especially for women and minorities (Akanegbu & Iheduru-Anderson, 2022; Beasley & Ard, 2021; Bryant et al., 2015; Farkas et al., 2019).

One approach to succession planning is through structured leadership programmes that include career development and executive coaching. Career development is a concept focusing on contextual factors that influence individual careers over time, such as reaching personal goals and promotion (Zacher et al., 2019). Individualised career planning, a form of professional development, is a powerful tool for goal setting to identify potential, strategic growth opportunities (Bleich et al., 2019). Career planning can also highlight areas of weakness that need to be addressed (Robboy & McLendon, 2017). Additionally, the executive coaching method aligns with vertical leadership, developing soft skills by providing transformational learning, which impacts professional maturity, behaviours and emotional intelligence. This leads to new ways of thinking, resulting in personal and professional growth (Horvath et al., 2024). However, despite its benefits, the challenge of finding time to engage in such professional development remains a barrier (Ellison et al., 2020). It is suggested that career development should complement the mentoring process of individuals to ensure their advancement within the organisation and prepare them for bigger picture concepts within their field (Zacher et al., 2019).

Effective career development within academia is often supported by strong mentorship connections. Mentorship involves a long-term commitment, yet research has shown that short-term mentorship also increases mentees' confidence while consolidating skills (Cummins et al., 2017; Welch et al., 2017). Some medical and radiology faculty facilitate mentorship by providing a mentor, while others allow the mentees to pick someone they feel is best suited. Opinions on the effectiveness of these approaches are mixed, but the benefits of the consistency of mentorship were equal (Cummins et al., 2017; Douglas et al., 2016). Cummings et al. (2017) observed that having a mentor significantly

helped build confidence and skills. Notably, in their study, most mentors were self-chosen by the mentee, enabling the individual to pick someone whom they trusted and who they felt they could build a one-on-one relationship, resulting in ongoing mentoring. This is supported by Sarabipour et al. (2023) and Burgess et al. (2018), who found that those assigned a mentor reported less satisfaction with the partnership and participated in less constructive meetings compared with those who self-allocated their partnership. In the radiology faculty, having the right chemistry between mentor and mentee was seen as vital; it was identified that mentees are more likely to be engaged if their personalities are aligned (Bredella, 2019). Both Douglas et al. (2016) and Cummings et al. (2017) agree that the most important factor was that the mentee had someone experienced to turn to during their mentorship programme. These findings suggest that allowing mentees to select mentors based on mutual fit may contribute to more productive and satisfying partnerships, further emphasising the need for mentorship programmes that are both flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals.

2.4.4. The Impact of Mentorship: The Benefits and Job Satisfaction

The traditional dyad method is an impactful way to develop junior colleagues and is potentially one of the most meaningful tasks a senior academic can undertake (Etzkorn & Braddock, 2020; Mains & MacLean, 2017). Structured mentorship programmes have demonstrated significant improvements in faculty job satisfaction in academic medicine, radiology and pharmacy (Barr et al., 2024; Bredella et al., 2019). Bonilha et al. (2019) found that well-supported medical faculty had an increased satisfaction with career development and promotion criteria, rising from 75% to 84.7%. Several similar studies found that satisfaction was enhanced by structured mentorship programmes supporting career planning, confidence and clear scholarly direction (Ambler et al., 2016; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Rubbi Nunan et al., 2023).

The mentor-mentee relationship is vital to the success of both parties. One key aspect is the implementation of soft supports, such as socioemotional, personal and interpersonal forms of support; these are important factors within a successful mentorship relationship. Research from a school of public affairs emphasises that this approach significantly contributes to the quality of mentoring relationships (Fountain and Newcomer, 2016). Soft support is invaluable in that it extends the focus beyond academic achievements to include guidance in maintaining work-life balance and provides a safe space for reflection. For example, enriched work-life balance was identified within medical faculty who receive this type of support (Barr et al., 2024; McRae & Zimmerman, 2019). This support empowers individuals and increases overall satisfaction and collaboration (Ambler et al., 2016; Bryant et al., 2015; Etzkorn & Braddock, 2020). Soft support is necessary, especially in the context of multi-generational workforces. This individualised support for learning can help people cope with change (Mains & MacLean, 2017). An observational study found that mentors who were able to respond to their mentees' emotional needs, encourage, provide guidance, and provide feedback

were essential in the mentee's development (Zehra et al., 2023). Themes identified consistently throughout recent literature align with these beneficial findings and expand further, noting mutual trust and reciprocal learning impact job satisfaction (Ambler et al., 2016; Eby & Robertson, 2020; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Harvey et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction impacts individual performance, faculty engagement and organisational success. In academic medicine, numerous studies suggest that effective mentorship and leadership development programmes can improve faculty job satisfaction and retention (Barr et al., 2024; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Welch et al., 2017). Conversely, the lack of mentorship has been directly linked to intent to remain in academic roles, hindering career progression and institutional success (Sarabipour et al., 2023; Sheridan et al., 2015). Despite this narrative, Bonilha et al. (2019) reported no significant link between job satisfaction and faculty retention within their medical faculty. These findings suggest that while mentorship plays an important role, it is not the sole factor influencing satisfaction and retention. A broader approach that includes workload and career development may be more effective.

2.5. Mentorship in Nursing and Midwifery Academic Faculty

This section presents the literature on leadership and mentorship programmes in the specialised professional faculties of Nursing and Midwifery. These faculty provide clinically orientated training and practice-based research. The literature is critically examined under five categories: the academic landscape; aligning succession planning, feedback and career planning; the impact of mentorship on career advancement and leadership development in nursing and midwifery academia; the impact of mentorship in nursing and midwifery faculty; challenges of mentorship within nursing and midwifery academia; and leadership, succession planning, and the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme. .

2.5.1. The Academic Landscape

Intellectually stimulating work and research opportunities often motivate nurses and midwives to assume an academic role. However, the academic role is more diverse than health institutions and academics previously recognised (Bexley et al., 2013). Considerable challenges have been identified with balancing teaching workloads and research demands that can merge into personal lives, creating work-life balance conflict and burnout (Ambler et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017). More recently, overlapping concerns such as attrition, bullying, disempowerment, and mentoring inadequacies are responsible for burnout (Singh et al., 2020). Furthermore, the pressures of trying to navigate the politics from multiple stakeholders have stripped the joy of leading (Bleich et al., 2019). A low level of job satisfaction exists within university faculty, yet associate professors and professors report higher satisfaction with their work environment than their senior lecturer colleagues (Kidman & Chu, 2015). Faculty tensions increase for those lower in the academic hierarchy, influenced by the competition for roles, funding, and an unclear career trajectory (Ambler et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2020). A systematic response is required to alter current structures within the academic

profession to manage expanding expectations and provide clear pathways to promotion (Bexley et al., 2013).

2.5.2. Aligning Succession Planning, Feedback and Career Planning

Nursing and midwifery leadership programmes, such as the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP), aim to prepare aspiring leaders to fill vacant nursing and midwifery positions. While succession planning is a deliberate strategic approach to ensure leadership continuity (Clement et al., 2024; Bouttelet Munari et al., 2019), its effectiveness is under-researched. The competitive hierarchical nature of academic careers may cause difficulties in limiting collaborative leadership, potentially limiting the inclusiveness of succession planning initiatives. Despite this competitiveness, some academic institutions have implemented career development programmes; however, Zacher et al. (2019) note the absence of mentorship within these initiatives. Given the well-documented link between mentoring and career progression, this gap may represent a missed opportunity for aspiring leaders. The combination of succession planning, career development activities, leadership development, and mentorship may be key to preparing for the smooth transition of aspiring leaders into leadership roles (Phillips, 2019; Whitney-Dumais & Hyrkäs, 2019).

Career development is often driven by exchanging constructive feedback, an essential component of every leadership programme. Globally, tools such as the formal 360-degree review, as mentioned earlier, have become a popular way for organisations to quantify talent and drive change in employee behaviours (Church et al., 2019). When the 360 degree review process is completed correctly, there is an increased likelihood of enhancing career development, developing strategic vision thus creating change within organisations (Zenger & Folkman, 2020). However, there is space within the nursing and midwifery academic context for issues of power and feedback bias to exist, which may compromise the reliability of the feedback process.

Implementing career planning into leadership programmes is crucial in preparing aspiring leaders in nursing and midwifery. This allows individuals to identify possibilities for future career aspirations. It also enables the evaluation of readiness, strengths and areas that require further development (Chapman & Bartlett, 2024). Career planning allows for outlining individual short and long-term goals that align with career aspirations (Bouttelet Munari et al., 2019). It is argued that this process should happen early in an academic career to maximise the chances of success (Zacher et al., 2019). Evidence suggested that by identifying clear plans early, the individual is motivated to achieve these goals, increasing their likelihood of personal and organisational success. This enhances the talent bank, reducing the future successor gap (Whitney-Dumais & Hyrkäs, 2019).

2.5.3. The Impact of Mentorship on Career Advancement and Leadership Development in Nursing and Midwifery Academia

Formal mentorship within nursing is not new. Introduced by Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, mentorship is a socialising mechanism and the backbone for successful career development and growth (McBride et al., 2017b; Olaolorunpo, 2019). The WHO stated mentorship is a potential way to address the global shortages of nursing and midwifery faculty, and if implemented, could successfully stabilise the post-pandemic time for the health workforce (Baskin et al., 2023). Mentorship provides structured guidance and support for faculty to support, develop and prevent the premature departure of potential future nursing leaders (Ambler et al., 2016; Ephraim, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017b). While building leadership skills and career advancement for the mentee are key benefits of mentorship, outcomes at an organisational level, including faculty retention, and contributions to the nursing programme and governing organisation, are invaluable (Ard & Beasley, 2022; McRae & Zimmerman, 2019).

Mentorship programmes have been shown to positively influence career progression, while the absence of such hinders key advancements, such as gaining tenure and promotion (Johns & McNamara, 2014; McBride et al., 2017b; Nowell et al., 2017b). For example, nurses and midwives in a structured leadership programme reported significant career advancements, such as expanding their networks at a regional and national level. This broader network contributed to their increased leadership influence within their institution (McBride et al., 2017b). These findings highlight the critical role of mentorship and leadership development in supporting personal and institutional academic career success.

Leadership mentoring has been shown to result in greater research outputs and productivity for nursing and midwifery academics. A mixed methods review examining evidence for mentorship within nursing academia that included 34 studies from Canada (n=4), the USA (n=28) and Australia (n=2) uncovered three key themes relating to mentoring: behaviour, career and attitudinal outcomes. Within these, notable findings indicated an increase in scholarly productivity, such as successful scholarships, tenure and promotions (Nowell et al., 2017b). Jackevicius et al. (2014) found increased self-confidence and publication outputs, while Talbert et al. (2021) found a reduction in anxiety and an increase in participant empowerment. Alternatively, several authors noted the creation of authentic connection and knowledge sharing to be important factors within the mentoring relationship (Eller et al., 2014; Jeffers & Mariani, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017b). Furthermore, the deans' consensus at the conclusion of a three-year scholars' programme was that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Nurses Programme had accelerated the scholars' leadership development. McBride et al. (2017b) argue that although during this process the scholar's achievements were individual, the attitudes of junior nursing and midwifery faculty behaviours and attitudes were lifted positively, impacting the team as a whole. Collectively, these findings highlight that leadership mentoring is a key driver of enhanced academic productivity in nursing and midwifery.

2.5.4. Succession Planning in Nursing and Midwifery Faculty: The Critical Role of Mentorship

As the faculty workforce ages, mentorship is a priority to prepare the next generation of nursing and midwifery leaders (Akanegbu & Iheduru-Anderson, 2022). In agreement, Beasley and Ard (2021) see succession planning as a tool that should include discussion of career plans, goal setting and leadership training through mentorship. Globally, there is substantial evidence to suggest that mentorship is a valuable tool that could positively impact the nursing and midwifery faculty environment (Akanegbu & Iheduru-Anderson, 2022; Bonilha et al., 2019; Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017b). The implementation of mentorship provides an environment of social support, enables a strong research culture, improves career satisfaction and intent to stay within academic roles (Bryant et al., 2015; Jeffers & Mariani, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). These factors often coincide with reduced feelings of isolation and enhanced collegiality (Jeffers & Mariani, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). However, despite the generally positive findings, there is a lack of consensus in the literature regarding the direct value of mentoring on staff retention and satisfaction. McBride et al. (2017) reported a clear link between faculty retention and career satisfaction exists; in contrast, Richards and Kieffer (2023) found a weak association between formal mentoring and satisfaction in their cross-sectional quantitative study. This difference could relate to the research approach used. Qualitative studies are best suited to capturing the personal, emotional and social experiences of mentees, while quantitative studies struggle to measure these with precision.

It is well established that retention and job satisfaction are strongly associated with the long-term sustainability of the academic workforce (Beasley & Ard, 2021; Morrison-Beedy et al., 2018). Preparing current faculty for leadership roles and supporting career advancement contribute to this long-term commitment. However, more evidence is required to understand the effectiveness of mentorship programmes in the development of future nurse leaders. Longitudinal, mixed-method or evaluative research could be beneficial to address gaps in the current literature around perspectives of those within such programmes and their outcomes.

2.5.5. Challenges of Mentorship within Nursing and Midwifery Academia

The main challenges to implementing mentorship programmes in nursing and midwifery academia have been identified as time constraints and establishing effective mentor-mentee relationships. Despite their documented potential, it has been proven that time pressures can impact mentee success. For example, a study including 51 mentor-mentee dyads found no improvements in the number of successful research grants obtained, faculty retention rates or promotion outcomes (Jackevicius et al.,

2014). In addition, Hulton et al. (2016) found that mentors expressed frustration without adequate consideration for their time they took to act as a mentor. These findings suggest that without proper time, structure and support, mentorship initiatives may fail to reach their intended goals and their impact on nursing and midwifery faculty may be limited. For succession planning to be effective, it must address both barriers and programme design to support faculty growth and leadership readiness.

Establishing effective mentor-mentee relationships can be challenging due to difficulties setting boundaries and natural personal connections. It is reported that many dyads struggled with relationship boundaries and expectations of the relationship (Rubbi Nunan et al., 2023). In contrast, Hu et al. (2016) found that perceived boundary overlap was often interpreted positively, as a sign of the mentor's caring nature and investment. However, Hicket et al. (2014) found that, like medicine and radiology dyads, mentees had difficulty connecting with their mentor. Hu et al. (2016) noted that an individual's emotional state can negatively influence interactions, impacting the mentoring dynamic, potentially resulting in dysfunction and poorer outcomes. These findings suggest that mentoring effectiveness is influenced by both interpersonal dynamics and emotional readiness, indicating that one mentor may not meet all the needs of the mentee. As a result, mentees should be given the resources to build supportive networking links with multiple people during their programme using a constellation approach (Montgomery et al., 2022). Further research is required to identify which mentorship approach has the best outcomes for academic faculty and leadership success.

2.5.6. Leadership, Succession Planning, and the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme

Our understanding of 'leaders' has evolved. Traditionally, it was believed that an individual was born a leader and that leadership qualities are innate, not learned (Reyes et al, 2019). Contrary to this longstanding belief, Middleton et al. (2023) argue that leadership cannot be assumed and is a skill learned intentionally. Despite this knowledge, there is a lack of understanding of the effectiveness of such leadership development programmes (Reyes et al., 2019). It is known that the leadership of the dean improves the quality of university activity (Anthony & Antony, 2017). Traditionally, leadership has a 'top-down' approach by a single individual however, the unique university environment means a distributed form of leadership is required using a collaborative approach (Anthony & Antony, 2017).

Academic leadership is described as the building of a community of scholars through empowerment, while simultaneously improving the quality of university activity (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Wilkes et al., 2015). Deans/Head of school need to be agile thinkers, yet often advance to the role without adequate support and are expected to manage unrelenting challenges without a sound network of collaborators or a foundation to build upon (Phillips et al., 2018). For those willing to advance into the role, evidence suggested the top is lonelier than ever (McClintock, 2020.) Given the strategic and challenging nature of this role, there is a need for purposeful, targeted succession planning, including recognising talented faculty as potential leaders early in their career.

The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP) that formed the focus of this study was delivered over a 12-month period from February 2023 to January 2024. The programme was designed by the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) to support academic nurses and midwives aspiring to take on future leadership roles such as Head of School or Dean. The structure of the ADLDP comprised a combination of individual mentoring, executive coaching, structured leadership activities, professional development tasks, and group engagements delivered through both online and face-to-face modalities.

The programme commenced with an online group introduction session attended by mentees, mentors, and programme coordinators. This session provided an overview of the programme, expectations, and initial opportunities for relationship-building. This was followed by a group session with the executive coach, during which participants completed the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to support early self-awareness and leadership profiling.

Each mentee then engaged in a series of individual monthly mentoring sessions, beginning with the development of a learning contract with their allocated mentor. Mentoring meetings were conducted online or, when feasible, face-to-face, and focused on leadership development, reflection, and career planning. Across the programme, mentees worked with their mentor to develop 1, 3, and 5 year career plans, identify professional development needs, and reflect on progress toward leadership aspirations.

A formal component of the programme included completion of the Leadership Climate Indicator (LCI360), a multisource feedback tool. Participants then met individually with the executive coach to interpret their LCI360 results and integrate the feedback into their leadership development plan. Additional executive-coaching sessions were held throughout the year, providing participants with multiple touchpoints for personalised guidance, reflective practice, and strategic thinking support. Midway through the programme, some mentees travelled to attend a face-to-face CDNMM meeting, where they observed national-level discussions and engaged directly with current Deans and Heads of School.

The latter part of the programme involved structured reflection activities, during which mentees met with their mentors to discuss leadership insights, progress, challenges, and new opportunities arising from both the mentoring and coaching components. Two online group sessions, led by the executive coach, focused on self-awareness, leadership identity, and applied leadership practice within the higher-education context.

In the final months, mentees developed a formal leadership reflection, synthesising their experiences, goals, and developmental outcomes. These reflections were presented in an online group presentation to the executive coach and mentors, allowing participants to articulate their learning and receive feedback. The programme concluded in January 2024 with a final online group reflection session,

bringing together mentees, mentors, the executive coach, and programme coordinators to consolidate learning and discuss future leadership pathways.

The value and success factors of these tools are unknown; hence, the CDNM requested an evaluation to strengthen the future of the programme. To gain insight into how these developmental opportunities impact participants, the current study used a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the perceptions of the mentees in the programme.

2.6. Gaps in the literature

There is extensive literature on the impacts of mentorship on academic success, research productivity and retention in Canada, Europe, the UK and the USA. However, literature linked to mentorship supporting individuals aspiring to lead within nursing and midwifery is scarce. This highlights the need for a rigorous evaluation of mentorship programmes to support aspiring nursing and midwifery academic leaders. Literature evaluating nursing and midwifery mentees and mentors' perceptions of leadership programmes within the faculty in Australian and New Zealand Universities is non-existent. This is problematic, especially given the evidence indicating an ageing workforce set to retire, taking a wealth of knowledge and skills with them. Succession planning, including mentoring aspiring leaders, benefits the mentees, mentors and the organisation/institution. Therefore, implementing and evaluating mentorship programmes to develop academic leaders within universities is important. Without a robust investigation, institutions may face challenges in understanding their value, impact, and associated faculty advancement. This study aims to address this gap by gaining the perceptions of the mentees who participated in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme.

2.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed both international and national literature related to mentorship and leadership programmes in general academic settings and for academic nurses and midwives. The evidence presented highlights the effectiveness of these programmes, especially in improving outcomes such as greater job satisfaction, retention, research productivity and career advancement. Despite these proven benefits, these programmes are infrequently implemented. Notably, the absence of a trans-Tasman study to evaluate or investigate mentorship and leadership programmes in nursing and midwifery academic faculty was clear. This gap in the literature suggested that there is a need for further investigation as to how mentorship and leadership programmes can be implemented in Australia and New Zealand, and how best future nursing and midwifery leaders can be supported. Furthermore, consideration of the experiences of mentees within leadership programmes should be explored to inform future mentorship programmes.

Chapter 3. Research Design.

3.1. Introduction.

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this study. A qualitative descriptive approach was implemented to capture a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the topic. This chapter begins with an overview of the research question and an exploration of the philosophical assumptions of the paradigm supporting this descriptive design. Additionally, ethical considerations and the processes used are outlined. Finally, the methods used for collecting and analysing the data, including measures taken to ensure rigour and trustworthiness applied within this study, are addressed.

3.2. The research Aim.

In chapter two, the literature review established that minimal literature regarding the implementation of formal mentorship programmes in nursing and midwifery academia exists. Specifically, there was limited evidence from the perspectives of mentees participating in mentorship programmes aimed at developing nursing and midwifery academic leaders. This, paired with the lack of literature specifically on nursing and midwifery mentorship in Australia and New Zealand, highlighted a knowledge gap. This study addresses this gap by exploring the perspectives of mentees who participated in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP). Guided by the research question, what are the perceptions of mentees participating in the ADLDP? A qualitative descriptive methodology was employed to capture the mentees' perspectives in depth. The overarching aim of the study was to gain the mentees' perceptions of the ADLDP. The research objectives were:

- Identify the benefits and challenges faced by the mentees within the ADLDP.
- Identify mentees' professional and leadership career advancement resulting from the ADLDP.
- Identify success factors for mentees and improvements that could be made to the ADLDP to ensure it meets the needs of mentees.

3.3. Research Methodology.

This study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism is a paradigm that assumes individuals construct meaning from their own experiences (Nickerson, 2024). The interpretivist paradigm emphasises the understanding of human experience, making it well-suited as a foundation for qualitative descriptive research, which seeks to gain straightforward but comprehensive insights into the experiences of those closest to the research topic (Sandelowski, 2000). While this approach

avoids deep theoretical interpretations, it still demands clarity and coherence in how participant meanings are conveyed, ensuring that findings are credible and grounded in real experience (Sandelowski, 2000). This methodological choice supports the study's aim by enabling the collection and presentation of authentic participant perceptions.

A qualitative descriptive methodology was chosen for this study as it is useful in the investigation of topics that allow for the exploration of intricate and unique details of human experiences and behaviours (Ahmed, 2024; Campbell, 2020). This method of enquiry develops rich descriptions, making sense of human behaviour in the context of the participants' social environments (Whitehead et al., 2018).

In this study, the researcher is a partial insider, with some familiarity with the academic environment and the roles being studied. This positionality offers benefits and challenges. However, although contextual insight enhances critical reflection, a researcher's knowledge remains partial, influenced by their positionality and the way they view the world (Mullings, 1999). Being an insider fosters mutual understanding of the social and cultural context, which builds trust, subsequently resulting in richer descriptive data from those most knowledgeable (Karagiozis, 2018; Liu & Burnett, 2022). Regardless, qualitative research assumes that the researcher plays a central role in discovering new knowledge yet acknowledges that complete objectivity is not intended.

3.4. Sampling.

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants for this research study. This method allows individuals to be 'handpicked' and results in a narrow participant group who have the required knowledge and can provide rich data to answer the research question (Doyle et al., 2020). Purposive sampling was considered the most appropriate method to recruit the mentees who participated within the ADLDP as gaining the perspectives, insights and experiences of the mentees was the aim of this study.

The sample size was a maximum of nine if all ADLDP candidates consented (eight were female and one male).

The inclusion criteria were:

- Participating as a mentee on the ADLDP
- Able to participate in the online 40–60-minute interview

3.5. The Recruitment Process.

The initial stage of the recruitment phase included the ADLDP secretariat sending the study invitation, information and consent forms to the ADLDP candidates via email. Participants were given the opportunity to ask the research team any questions about the study and could provide written or verbal consent before the interview commenced. Once informed consent was gained, the secretariat sent a list of names and contact details to the research team. A letter seeking approval was then emailed to the individual participants' deans/heads of school to ask for permission to interview their employee as part of this study (Appendix C). Once approved, the candidates were contacted by the researcher to arrange a time that suited them for their online TEAMS interview. Leading up to and immediately before their interview, candidates had the opportunity to have questions answered and to give verbal informed consent for the audio recording. All nine ADLDP candidates participated in this study. This included nine mentees from nine different universities, seven across Australia and two in New Zealand, eight of the participants identified as female and one as male.

3.6. Data Collection.

Open-ended semi-structured interviews were undertaken via Microsoft TEAMS. Semi-structured interviews feature predefined questions that address the research question and aims, while allowing flexibility and leeway for the researcher and participant to explore tangential information on the topic (Whitehead et al., 2020). This method also allows the researcher to probe further areas of the participants' experiences, adding to the richness of the data (Campbell, 2020).

The interview questions (Appendix D) were designed around the ADLDP's programme structure, leadership development opportunity, benefits, challenges and highlights. Open ended questions such as "how has the programme impacted on your development as a leader" and "what aspects of the programme were most beneficial to your development as a leader" were designed to encourage participants to provide their insights and experience on how the programme enhanced their leadership skills and potential. All nine participants were interviewed alone despite the opportunity to bring a support person. The length of the interviews ranged from 20-60 minutes. The semi-structured method allowed for conversation to flow, this allowed for rapport and trust to be built while being able to probe for deeper insights and meanings (Whitehead et al., 2020). This method also offers an opportunity for the researcher to be flexible and ask further questions based on a participant's response, which is highly beneficial for contexts not well understood (McKim, 2024).

The interview process occurred over a six-week period due to scheduling and time zone differences. This gave the researcher time to reflect on interviewing skills, review previous data collected and refine the interview process. This helped guide future interviews and increased overall confidence in

the researcher. Thesis supervision meetings were scheduled fortnightly and were instrumental in discussing the data collection process and progress. Data collection continued until all nine participants had been interviewed.

3.7. Transcription

The transcription function on TEAMS was utilised; however, each interview was listened to by the researcher on multiple occasions to double-check the audio against the transcriptions for clarity. These were corrected, ensuring the transcripts were verbatim. Transcripts provide a rich, deep and revealing understanding of the participants' experiences (Liu, 2016).

3.8. Data Analysis

To strengthen the rigour of this research, the data analysis method is aligned with the qualitative descriptive methodological approach. A general inductive analytic strategy is an appropriate method for this descriptive design, as it allows categories to be identified directly from the raw data. This allows for the capture of participants' subjective experiences without imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks (Liu, 2016; Sandelowski, 2000). The goal of general inductive analysis is to provide an actual understanding of social reality from those closest to the phenomena without restraint (Liu, 2016; Whitehead et al., 2020; Thomas, 2006). Implementing a general inductive approach allows for methodological flexibility (Doyle et al., 2020; Liu, 2016). This enables significant findings to be identified from extensive raw data and then be condensed into categories and sub-categories. Links are established between the research aims and the study findings by identifying patterns in participants' perceptions, which are then grouped into categories and sub-categories derived directly from the data (Thomas, 2006). Implementing a general inductive analysis in this study allowed for the identification of the most relevant and meaningful categories and sub-categories. During the data analysis process, these categories were developed and continuously refined and compared across transcripts, evolving further as the analytic process progressed. This approach aims to describe the most important patterns and categories (Liu, 2016), and is easy to follow as a novice researcher. The five phases of general inductive analysis were key to developing categories into a framework. (Table 1).

Table 1
The Five Phases of General Inductive Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Close reading of text	Read in detail until the researcher was familiar with the content and gained understanding of the categories identified in the text
2. Creation of categories	The identification of categories started generally and was guided by the research questions and objectives. Several preliminary categories were identified.
3. The coding process	Identification of specific text segments related to study aim. The categories were developed from the coding process. Segments were labelled to create 30-40 categories. Overlap was reduced to 15-20. A model was created incorporating the most important categories 3-10
4. Overlapping coded and uncoded text	One segment of text may be coded into more than one category, and a considerable amount of text may not be relevant to any of the study objectives, so goes uncoded.
5. Refining	Continued to revise and refine category system. Searched for sub-categories including contradictory points of view. Searched for new points of view. Appropriate quotations were selected to convey the essence of the category selected. Categories were combined when the meanings were similar(Liu, 2016; Thomas, 2006).

The five steps in the general inductive analysis process were used in this study; they were followed for the nine interview transcripts collected. The first phase involved reading and re-reading the transcripts multiple times, line by line, allowing the researcher to identify specific segments related to the research questions and objective. The researcher completed the interviews for all nine mentees; because of this, the researcher had a thorough understanding of the content. However, by re-reading and re-checking the transcriptions, new insights came to light. The transcribing was time-consuming but allowed the researcher to be fully immersed in the data and develop further categories. During the reading process, text segments were highlighted, colour-coded, and notes were kept in the margins related to the study's objectives. These colour-coded text segments drew attention to the initial categories seen in Table 2. Data segments related to each category were entered into a spreadsheet and assigned a category label during step three. Initially, eight main categories were developed, which

were reduced to five after removing overlap, making the least important categories redundant with the most important categories the focal point. Subsequently, following guidance and peer debriefing with the researcher's supervisors, overlap was reviewed and refined further. The general inductive process was followed, repeated and resulted in two main categories with sub-categories (Table 2).

Table 2*Summary of the Categories Developed During Data Analysis*

Initial categories	First revised core categories	Second revised categories (overlap removed)	Sub- categories
Programme structure and impact	Programme structure	Programme Outcomes	Programme design Capability Leadership identity Mentorship
Leadership & professional development	Leadership development	Leadership development	Career Development Goal realignment Mentorship
Mentorship	Benefits and Challenges		
Networking and collaboration	Networking and collaboration		
Strategic thinking	Leadership development		
Career development	Career planning process		
Reflection	Career planning and development		
Challenges & benefits			

3.9. Research Rigour

The rigour of a study refers to the degree of confidence in the data and methods used to ensure the quality of a research study (Connelly, 2016). Rigour or trustworthiness are priorities in qualitative

research and are vital in establishing credibility and reliability of the findings (Ahmed, 2024; Ayton, 2023). Qualitative descriptive research can face criticism when there is a lack of transparency throughout the research process (Doyle et al., 2020). This study employed the four ‘gold standard’ steps for qualitative research developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to ensure methodological rigour. These criteria align with the interpretivist paradigm underpinning this research, providing a robust framework for evaluating the authenticity, credibility and reliability of the findings.

Credibility refers to the truthfulness of the data and its interpretation (Cope, 2014). In qualitative research, researchers must strive to establish confidence in the truth of their findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2025). Qualitative studies are considered credible and believable if they clearly describe and justify the steps in the research process (Polit & Beck, 2014). The believability of the study can be enhanced when participants share descriptions of their experience with those who share a similar environment or contexts (Cope, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2025). This study gave participants the opportunity to engage in discussion about their experiences within the ADLDP which contributed to a rich understanding of the context. Additionally, throughout the analysis process, similar categories and subcategories were developed from their data, with minimal outlying data further supporting the credibility of the researcher’s findings.

Factors that enhance credibility include building rapport with participants, validity checking, analyst triangulation, reflexivity, peer debriefing and, member checking (Ahmed, 2024; Doyle et al., 2020). Building rapport with participants allows for the collection of nuanced insights into their experiences and beliefs, enabling rich data that may not have been captured otherwise (Ahmed, 2024). Although limited time was spent with each participant, my ‘unknown’ status may have allowed participants to share honest perspectives rather than feeling scrutinised. Validity checks to determine accuracy are essential to strengthen rigour (Rose & Johnson, 2020). One way to establish interpretative validity is by using verbatim quotations from participants to provide depth to findings (McKim, 2024). This study uses direct quotes to capture nuances of participant experiences and insights, explore complexities and provide rich descriptions conveying personal meaning. Significant time was dedicated to following Thomas’s general indicative framework. This enabled the researcher to be immersed in the data, allowing thorough reading, re-reading, interpreting and analysis of the subjective experiences and insights identified in the findings. External interpretive validity, also known as peer debriefing, minimises the risk of misinterpretation and enables validity to be achieved (Connelly, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rose & Johnson, 2020). Having both experienced supervisors review all transcripts ensured the researchers' interpretations aligned with participant experience. This collaborative process addresses potential errors in interpretation, reflexivity and bias (Polit & Beck, 2025). Analyst triangulation during data analysis gains a deeper understanding and

minimises bias or blind spots (Lincoln & Guba 1985). As above, transcripts and the formation of categories were reviewed extensively. This was critical as it meant reviewed findings from multiple viewpoints did not alter the meaning of the findings.

Credibility relies on reflexivity and the ability for the researcher to be aware of their own bias during data collection, analysis and interpretation. This awareness minimises potential to distort findings (Ahmed, 2024). Being aware of preconceived ideas and biases, keeping an open mind and practising self-reflection were essential throughout this study. By utilising peer-debriefing at supervision meetings provided the researcher with external perspectives on the findings. These robust discussions enabled the researcher to confront any preconceived ideas and empowered the researcher to consider alternative perspectives. Lincoln and Guber (1985) suggest member checking can sometimes be an important method to demonstrate credibility in qualitative research (Thomas, 2017). During this process participants are presented with the identified categories, and their feedback is sought. This enables the researcher to gauge if the findings are representative of actual reality (Polit & Beck, 2025). However, there are pitfalls to member checking. A consequence of member-checking is a narrowing or sanitising of the variety of human experience (Thomas, 2006). Literature inadequately addresses the member checking process and provides little guidance on managing participant disagreement (Thomas, 2017). Often, little information is gained from member checking due to low response rates (McKim, 2024). Although member checking was considered in this study it was not implemented due to the nature of the participants' working environment. The time required to review transcripts was evaluated and deemed likely unfeasible for those involved in the study.

Dependability is the second criterion of the Lincoln and Guba (1985) framework and refers to the reliability of and stability of research findings over time (Connelly, 2016). To ensure this reliability the researcher must meticulously document their data collection and analysis throughout the research process. This thorough documentation allows other researchers to replicate the study, therefore reinforcing the dependability of the results (Ahmed, 2024). To further enhance dependability, the researcher kept researcher notes, logs and engaged in peer-debriefing with colleagues and supervisors throughout the research process. Regular supervision meetings were recorded, minutes kept, and notes taken. These additional research notes became an integral part of the research process. Credibility cannot be attained without dependability (Polit & Beck, 2025).

Transferability pertains to the degree to which the research findings can be applied within alternative contexts (Ahmed, 2024), this is determined by the reader and not the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2025). This requires the reader to determine how applicable the findings are to their context or situation (Ahmed, 2024). A guide containing the semi-structured questions addressed to the participants is attached (Appendix D). This study also provides detailed descriptive data from participants' verbatim. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researchers are responsible for providing sufficient

descriptive data in their findings, enabling the readers to assess the applicability of the results to other contexts.

Confirmability includes credibility, dependability and transferability. For confirmability to be achieved, the participants' voices must be reflected in the findings, and there must be an absence of biases and perspectives of the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2025). The researcher was openly reflexive and acknowledged their stance within the research. Being highly reflexive reduced preconceptions and the imposing the researchers' own views onto the study. Engaging in external validity and peer debriefing enabled the researcher to achieve the confirmability of their findings.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

The main purpose of ethical principles is to protect research participants. These principles are concerned with protecting moral values; respect for persons, autonomy, privacy and integrity while minimising harm, anxiety and discomfort (Barrow et al., 2024 ; Whitehead et al., 2020). Ethical approval was gained for the larger evaluation study, which included approval for the mentee interviews from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK). Likewise, AUTEK granted ethical approval to interview the participants in Australia as AUT is the awarding the qualification. The section that follows will discuss the ethical considerations that guided all decisions made during the study design and research process.

3.10.1 Voluntary Informed Consent

Gaining informed consent is the centrepiece of research ethics (Traianou & Hammersley, 2021). It is the process in which potential participants are provided adequate information related to the study. This informs potential recruits, in plain language, about the study's intent, purpose, demands, interventions, risks and benefits (Whitehead et al., 2020). Participants from the ADLP were aware of the opportunity to participate in this study prior to commencing the programme; however, the ethical process was followed, ensuring an absence of coercion. Coercion can include rewards or penalties for taking part in a study (Barrow et al., 2024). It was made clear that participating in the study will not influence participants professionally or alter their career trajectory in a negative or positive manner.

Potential participants received information from the ADLP secretariat when the ADLP had concluded. This included an invitation to participate in an interview (Appendix E), an information sheet (Appendix F) in plain language providing full disclosure of the study's aim, methods, and process, including risks and benefits, and the consent form (Appendix G). To ensure full disclosure, participants were informed that findings will be used for a master's thesis and will be included as

part of the larger Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery evaluation study. Participants had the opportunity to read the information, ask questions, and choose to participate.

Prior to the interview process commencing, each participant was reminded of the full disclosure process above. The opportunity to ask questions was given before continuing to be interviewed. Verbal consent in addition to signed consent forms, was obtained before the interview, and this was audio recorded. There was no incentive to participate in this study. Incentives remove self-determination, which must be respected throughout the research process (Barrow et al., 2024). Participants can only exercise autonomy in the absence of coercion or misinformation. Additionally, the process of gaining informed consent ensures transparency, enhances autonomy and protects the participants' welfare. This process promotes trust and integrity in research (National Ethics Advisory Committee, 2021).

3.10.2. Respect for rights, privacy, and confidentiality

The information sheet given to participants prior to the data collection process commencing clearly addressed the issues of confidentiality. The researcher digitally recorded each interview; this was explained in the consent process. The interviews were transcribed automatically using Microsoft Teams transcribe function; however, the researcher checked these thoroughly for accuracy. The recorded data were coded to anonymise participants' names and locations to protect their identity. Participant anonymity was protected by number-coding the saved recordings. Subsequently, participants were referred to by a participant number within the body of work. Access to the transcripts and identification codes was restricted to the researcher and thesis supervisors. The audio recordings and data transcripts were stored on the AUT secure OneDrive on a password-protected computer. Any transcripts that were printed were kept secure in a locked drawer in the researcher's office on campus at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). Consent forms were stored separately on the AUT OneDrive. A data management plan was submitted during the ethics process, and participants were informed of how their data would be handled, stored and destroyed as per AUT policy.

3.10.3. Minimisation of Harm

This study was anticipated to be low risk of causing harm. Notwithstanding, the nature of the questions had the potential to make participants feel uneasy or hesitant to be honest about negative experiences, perhaps fearing a potential impact on their professional relationships and career advancement. The researcher was sensitive to this and explained the process should a participant become upset. Participants were observed for any signs of uneasiness or distress. AUT counselling services free of charge were available if needed. All participants were given the opportunity to choose when and where their online (TEAMS) interview took place. Participants completed their

interview alone in their office or other private uninterrupted spaces. To mitigate any potential for identifiable information being disclosed, anonymity will be upheld beyond this study, particularly given the unique phenomenon of small-town New Zealand. While the population of Australian cities surpasses New Zealand, it is essential to uphold participant privacy and confidentiality due to the interconnectedness and size of the academic and research communities. Rigorous precautions were taken to reduce risk and ensure that information shared is not traceable to individuals or institutions. Participants were offered a support person throughout the process if required. In the case of indigenous Australians being involved in the evaluation, appropriate ethical review and cultural guidance were available.

3.10.4. The Treaty of Waitangi Obligations

Research goals, benefits, and risks were honest, fair, and transparent throughout. Ethical care and professionalism are essential. An AUTECH advisor to the school of nursing was consulted before submitting the ethics application to ensure protection, inclusivity and that the project adheres to New Zealand's ethical principles. Further consultation occurred with a published Hauora Māori researcher, senior nursing academic, nursing journal editorial board member and Pourangahau Māori. Consultation included robust discussion about the underrepresentation of Māori in the nursing profession, especially at an academic level. There were no participants in this research study who identified as being Māori. All participants were European; therefore, specific cultural or social support was not required.

3.10.5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Cultural awareness and competence is essential to foster a commitment to equity within the research process including indigenous communities (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). The researcher must acknowledge historical harm caused by research within the indigenous community and ensure that future research is well-informed, protective, causes no harm, and promotes positive outcomes (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018). Cultural and spiritual connections to the land, sovereignty, and self-determination were considered and respected throughout. There were no participants who identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander people. The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the Australian Evaluation Society's First Nations Cultural Safety Framework were not specifically required.

3.12. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the design and methods employed in this study. A qualitative descriptive design was used to translate rich descriptive data into everyday language, emphasising participant perceptions, experiences and insights. Nine participants were selected using purposive sampling, and

data were collected using individual, semi-structured interviews. A general inductive analytical approach following Thomas's approach was used. Ethical considerations and their application to this study were presented. Rigour was established following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework to ensure credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. The findings should contribute to empirical evidence for the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand), influencing the future development of programmes for nursing and midwifery leaders. The following chapter will present the findings from this study.

4. Chapter Four: Findings

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP). This chapter will report the findings from the data collected during the participant (mentee) interviews. Two main categories with associated sub-categories are presented. The first category is 'Strategic Leadership Development' and the second is 'Career Transformation'. These main categories are supported by sub-categories (Table 3). Data excerpts were used from participants to illustrate the connection to the categories and sub-categories throughout. Due to the small and highly specific nature of the study, as well as the close nature of the ADLDP and academic circles, the researcher chose not to provide detailed demographic information of the nine participants in order to protect their confidentiality.

Table 3

Perceptions of Mentees within the ADLDP

Category One	Category Two
Strategic Leadership Development	Career Transformation
Sub-categories	Sub-categories
Programme Design Access to Influential Networks and Opportunity Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives	Mentorship, Leadership Identity and Capability Development of Academic Career and Goal Realignment

4.2. Category One: Strategic Leadership Development

The ADLDP was a transformative experience for participants, facilitating significant professional growth and supporting enduring networks. Through strategic engagements and collaborative projects, the ADLDP empowered these aspiring leaders to expand their influence as they navigate their academic landscape. The first category, Strategic Leadership Development, captures the impact of the programme's design, which balances activities with the flexibility to address individual leadership aspirations. Mentees appreciated the opportunity to engage in high-level strategic thinking and career planning, describing these as pivotal in their leadership development. The following section presents

an analysis of the three sub-categories: 'Programme Design, 'Access to Influential Networks and Opportunity', and 'Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives'.

4.2.1. Sub-category One: Programme Design

Participants consistently expressed positive views about the programme, particularly praising its structure, and the opportunities it provided. The participants were generally satisfied with the programme design and the delivery of content. While most participants thought the programme was well-structured, balanced and had a good range of learning activities, one would have liked more emphasis on strategic thinking related to nursing and midwifery leadership: "There was sort of a little bit of a gap for me around strategic thinking and really being aware of the political, broader landscape for Australian nurses and midwives" (P3).

The participants' perceptions of the programme design suggest that flexibility is important to meet the different needs of the mentees. The programme's flexibility was seen as a strength by most. However, there was a notable call for more structured interaction and face-to-face engagement. This aligned with other mentees' views as "it would have been nice to have met earlier on to form relationships and feel more comfortable around people to have those more in-depth discussions at the beginning" (P7). This was further reiterated by participant four, stating "I think you do really get something else out of meeting face-to-face that you don't get elsewhere. I think people are less guarded, it is also a lot more personal". Regardless of meeting face-to-face, regular contact as a group was lacking:

"Having someone to facilitate regular hui, with the people on the programme would have been helpful... often all you need is an opportunity for other likeminded people who are experiencing the same things to get together, I think that was a missed opportunity." (P1)

While the programme's intent to support emerging leaders was generally viewed as positive, a few participants wanted greater clarity, structure and consistency in its implementation. A lack of clarity around written tasks and inconsistencies with meeting structures led to some participants feeling that parts of the programme lacked cohesion, "My preference is to do things with purpose... I don't like investing my time [with paperwork] and you get no feedback" (P1) and "There was a lack of clarity around what we have to submit in terms of written work" (P2). These statements reflect some frustration with the lack of guidance around expectations, particularly around the written requirements of the programme.

The majority of participants spoke positively about the programme experience, highlighting its uniqueness and impact. One participant shared, "I just thought this is such a brilliant opportunity, I'm never going to get another. It was great, absolutely fantastic" (P5). Another noted the programme's supportive aims, stating, "I think that the intention of the programme to mentor and support and bring people up is very positive, I think that's a great thing to do" (P1). These statements suggest that the

programme was well-received and also deeply appreciated for its purpose and the professional opportunities it provided.

The programme design included an opportunity to attend a Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) meeting. The meeting was talked about very favourably by all of the participants with the exposure to broader strategic thinking. Participants found this insightful and beneficial to view nursing and midwifery through a national lens rather than just thinking about personal development. This is reiterated by the following:

“Having the opportunity to sit in the room where that strategic thinking is happening is beneficial to see where you can go with your career... you get bogged down in the day-to-day academic life that you don't see or know this is where you could go...I got a lot out of that and was a highlight” (P9).

While the majority of participants valued the CDNM meeting, several advocated for the opportunity to attend more than one meeting, suggesting this could have enhanced the depth of engagement and practical outcomes of the programme. One participant noted, “We could have come to two meetings and had some structured activities for the participants... having structured time with your mentor where you worked on something specific” (P5). This was reiterated by another participant, “I enjoyed the CDNM meeting, it would have been useful to attend more than one... it would have been good to have more time with the other people in the programme” (P4). This reflects the broader desire among participants for sustained face-to-face engagement to strengthen connections. One participant reflected on the trans-Tasman nature of the programme:

“I hadn't realised there was somebody else from New Zealand on the programme until quite a long time...there is something a little bit uniquely different about NZ so I think I would have liked to have had that contact” (P4).

Together these perspectives highlight the importance of promoting early connections across geographical boundaries in the design of the programme, especially where cultural nuances may shape participant experiences.

4.2.2. Sub-category Two: Access to influential networks and opportunity

Throughout the ADLDP there were opportunities for participants to connect with senior nursing and midwifery academics and create opportunities for career advancement. Through strategic meetings and collaborative engagements, participants gained access to a community of accomplished professionals dedicated to supporting leadership and growth. For example:

“The programme was important just by feeling that this is a group of highly influential and very successful and clever people. That are opening the doors for other people and me... it felt like wow; they're really looking to create opportunities for others and supporting others not to just strive or aspire to but actually give wrap-around support to making it happen” (P8).

The importance of collaboration, professional collegiality and networking with other participants following the programme was noted by many participants. The programme facilitated meaningful connections, networking, promoted collegiality and resulted in lasting relationships. Participants found building a community among other participants was important in their growth as leaders and noted that the executive coach was instrumental in that. The programme contributed to the participants continuing to work together, insinuating that the programme was beneficial in creating long-term collegiality rather than disbanding once the programme had finished. This is illustrated by the comment by participant 6 “We are all in regular contact because post programme we were all involved in a project together, collaborating”. This is reiterated by participant 4, “the ongoing connection is really critical and it’s great that the opportunity has been given to us...that will be ongoing”. Many of the participants agree that this opportunity would not have happened if they had not been participants within the programme.

Having face-to-face contact was identified as a key factor in networking. Several participants suggested that the in-person meetings and CDNM meeting were a highlight, with participants stating, “I really enjoyed being in the room with all the deans but also meeting my peers and mentor face-to-face.” (P6). This is supported by fellow mentees who described the strong sense of collegiality, “One highlight was to meet all the aspiring deans and get to know people face-to-face, building relationships and hearing about other people’s journeys and aspirations.” (P8). It was highlighted how the programme enhanced the culture of mutual respect and collaboration among the senior leaders, “The collegiality... the deans’ interaction with each other was respectful... There was a deep respect for people’s different working relationships across the ditch...this is where we want the collegial culture to start from, the top.” (P5).

Many participants perceived the networking aspects of the programme critical to their leadership development. Beyond expanding professional contacts outside of their own universities, their interactions provided exposure to other leadership styles and how others across both countries cope with stress and challenging situations. Witnessing how others manage complex issues enabled participants to evaluate their own leadership approaches. The programme was perceived as an opportunity to grow the aspiring leaders’ networks across Australia and New Zealand with networking being highlighted as a key success factor of the programme by many:

Seeing how other people respond, how other people reflect on situations... challenging me in my way of thinking and doing things... that’s probably the biggest benefit of the networking... I now know some of the key players at other universities in New Zealand and Australia.” (P7)

Access to influential networks meant participants could also get 360-degree feedback. This gave the participants the chance to gain multi-source feedback from senior academics. This process was widely regarded as a valuable opportunity that provided honest feedback and facilitated increased self-

awareness and self-validation. It also allowed practical and potential leadership insights to be highlighted. For some, this opportunity was a chance to reassess their career aspirations:

“It was insightful in giving me a perspective of how others viewed me in terms of being a leader... It reassured me that I am a leader, and I am capable of taking senior leadership positions. But do I want to be a dean? I am not sure anymore”. (P3)

Participant 4 reflected on the opportunity, noting it had an unexpected impact:

“The 360-degree feedback was very valuable, more valuable than you think it will be. I felt very considered. It was really well done, and people were freely able to give very honest feedback, which was obviously mana enhancing”.

The emphasis on receiving honest, respectful feedback reflects a safe environment within the programme, an essential aspect for authentic leadership to develop. The majority of participants described the process as deeply reflective, empowering and beneficial but also challenging.

“I have to admit it was a bit painful. However, once I got over that I realised the feedback was valid and really useful to my development as a leader. Not all of it was entirely positive, but on the whole, it was good. It pinpointed areas of strengths but also areas to work on. The feedback was delivered in a way that didn't diminish me as a person, in fact the opposite”. (P1)

This reiterates that structured reflective feedback pinpoints areas of individual strength but also uncovers areas to improve, a vital role in leadership development. While many participants found this a valid and worthwhile opportunity, it was not seen as a positive experience by all. There was one concern about the potential harm caused by receiving such feedback and questioned whether this was the best way to get feedback on an individual's performance as a leader. However, overall, this opportunity within the programme appeared to reinforce the emphasis on reflective leadership and building on individuals' strengths to enhance leadership success.

4.2.3. Subcategory Three: Connection to Senior Leadership Perspectives

The executive coaching element of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP) had a significant and lasting impact on many participants professional development and self-awareness. Participant 1 highlighted how the coaching provided a reflective space outside of their institutional context, stating, “The programme just helped to kind of solidify... I have learned the benefit of having someone outside of the organisation to talk to, because that is helpful.” This showed the importance of external support which can enhance the ability to process and reflect.

Similarly, Participant 7 shared the value of the coaching experience: “It's really impacted my development... it helped me see things differently. I've continued with an executive coach at the recommendation from my mentor just to continue to develop and continue to work through my vision and goals.” Coaching beyond the programme showed that it was not only an immediate opportunity but one that is enduring, ensuring individuals invest in their leadership development for

the duration of their career. The programme, including the executive coaching and access to senior mentorship was deemed highly relevant:

“It is rare to have both an introspective focus... and the individual coaching, but also to be able to benchmark and have access to the thinking of an existing dean for quite a long period of time, that was really, relevant and probably the best component of it all to be honest.” (P8)

This highlights the critical role those senior individuals such as an executive coach and dean, can play in enhancing leadership development. The coaching process was not only informative but transformational for many. It allowed for deeper self-awareness, re-evaluation and enhanced strategic thinking, influence in supporting personal growth and leadership development. As participant 1 stated, “I was able to consider my five-year plan”, proving the connection to senior leadership enabled mentees to think about their future aspirations. Furthermore, the executive coaching facilitated a transformational yet supportive tool for strategic thinking and deep self-reflection. Participant 3’s reflection showed the nuanced impact of this relationship:

“[Time with the executive coach] was most beneficial... she listened, she understood, and she provided really sage guidance and advice, and she was non-judgemental. She seemed to have plenty of time to listen, she was excellent.” (P3)

This showed how the executive coach’s non-judgemental position created an environment conducive to open reflection and growth. The feeling of being listened to and understood appears to have been important within the programme. Additionally, the notion of protected time was seen as exceptional, participants were able to have rare time away from their day-to-day responsibilities to focus on the programme and engage in intentional career development with senior academics.

Working with senior leadership within the programme, enabled participants the opportunity to network with other aspiring deans and heads of schools, this was noted to be helpful and enable continued work on future projects to occur: “I think that’s probably the biggest gift to me has been people’s generosity in supporting feedback and ideas... right up to the director of the programme who was very good at giving feedback...” (P4).

A strong connection to senior leadership emerged as a key factor in participants’ leadership development, and several participants reflected on how interactions with senior leaders helped them overcome feelings of imposter syndrome and begin to see themselves as legitimate leaders. “This group of people made ambitions feel achievable, they’re supportive rather than competitive and I think that made the difference” (P8). As another participant shared, talking to a mentor and reviewing their experiences led them to dismiss initial doubts about themselves:

“There is a huge imposter that sits on your shoulder and talking to my mentor and looking at the information, I was like... I’m experienced, very knowledgeable, I absolutely deserve to be at this table... I think it’s very important as a new leader in this space that you don’t get overwhelmed by all the lads in their suits.” (P1)

Others emphasised the importance of networking, noting that the opportunity to connect with both current and aspiring leaders created an environment of shared learning and collaboration. This networking not only supported the development of future projects but also made leadership ambitions feel more attainable and less isolating, “I felt confident to ask for feedback on how I would present on some leadership dimensions, and she [mentor] was comfortable in providing that honest feedback, so I thought that was good” (P8).

Participants described a supportive, non-competitive culture, fostered in part by the accessibility and generosity of senior leaders who were willing to provide honest and constructive feedback. The networking “has absolutely contributed to me being more comfortable in my aspirations to take on senior roles” (P8). This feedback was consistently seen as valuable, with some describing it as one of the most significant gifts of the programme. Overall, engagement with senior leadership helped participants understand their own leadership styles, build confidence, and feel more comfortable aspiring to higher roles within academia.

4.3. Category Two: Career Transformation

Category two presents key findings illustrating how participation in the ADLDP influenced professional development of the participants. The two sub-categories that were identified are ‘Mentorship, Leadership Identity and Capability’ and ‘Development of Academic Career and Goal realignment’. These subcategories reflect the multifaceted impact of the ADLDP on the mentee’s growth as academic leaders.

4.3.1. Subcategory One: Mentorship, Leadership Identity and Capability

The opportunity of mentorship was seen as a strength within the programme and was highly praised by all of the participants. Mentorship was seen as a valuable developmental tool and a time where they could seek guidance on topics from another viewpoint. It was also used as a supportive relationship to provide an environment for reflection, learning and growth. The mentor’s availability was not time limited, it was flexible, according to participant 6 who stated that they “met regularly but I knew she was available for me... beyond those times.” (P6)

However, this was not the case for all, the logistics of meeting up regularly was difficult. This included challenges such as workload, scheduling and time zone differences. This is confirmed:

“My mentor’s time was quite challenging to fit in the schedule, and it took us a while to find a good rhythm. Sometimes there are things that we need to reflect on or do, I just didn’t feel like there was enough time for that because work, life is busy.” (p7)

While other participants had difficulty in scheduling time with their mentor, when they did connect, it was valuable.

“I had a mentor who I found it hard to engage with, to actually get time with... but when I did meet with her, it was really good. The things that she had to say, and I think the overall whole experience was beneficial in terms of the networking that you get to see what happens at that higher level...”. (P8)

Working alongside accomplished deans enhanced leadership identity and capability for the mentees, resulting in career advancement for many. Mentor meetings were designed to meet the mentees goals and aspirations.

“[my mentor] was always taking it back to me and what I was wanting to get out of the programme and trying to develop specific strategies.... working within what I was doing and where I wanted to be... how I was moving towards my development and how I saw myself situated as aspiring dean.” (P6)

Other participants expressed appreciation for the personal dimension of mentoring, particularly in relation to psychological and emotional support:

“Mentor chats help... finding the right person is really important. Just taking that time out probably gave me pause and space, a really safe space to talk to somebody about the challenges that I was having at the time...someone outside of my university that I could say Oh my god, what do I do, was beneficial.” (P1)

Mentorship promoted strong professional relationships that were appreciated, and it was suggested that emotional and practical advice was offered, and resilience was built. There was a common suggestion that mentorship should happen at all levels, and the ability to pass on skills learnt on the programme was an important sentiment uncovered. Participants who had regular and consistent meetings with their mentor formed long lasting relationships beyond the programme’s constraints, resulting in enhanced opportunity and networks.

The mentorship process supported mentees to strengthen their leadership identity and capacity, supporting and enabling the development of strategic thinking at a higher level. Many mentees stated the mentorship provided in the programme promoted reflection, clarified their leadership style and enhanced their confidence to think at a higher level. This was evident by participant 4 reflecting, “I think my confidence and my ability to be an academic leader, I am now realising that is my skill”. With help from mentors, mentees felt confident to think outside the box within academia given the new tools gained from participating in the programme “My mentor was very good at saying yeah, have a crack at it. What’s the worst that can happen?” (P5).

For others, belief in their own capability to lead was built:

“I think it was a really good thing for my career... It was really helpful for me to develop the confidence and to reinforce some of the leadership skills that I didn’t think I had, but I do and bringing those to the forefront of my role and what I do.” (P3)

Participants described their mentorship experience as contributing to the development of practical leadership strategies and skills that helped them manage challenges, strengthen resilience and enabled them to think at a higher level. The programme supported participants to develop specific leadership

approaches relevant to their current roles. For example, participant 2 reflected on how mentorship enhanced their leadership capability:

“I think giving me strategies to deal with maybe some of the more challenging aspects...giving me some sort of right tools I suppose to use and thinking that I can use to actually rise above...thinking differently but at a leadership level”.

The mentorship aspect positively impacted leadership capacity by recalibrating mentees thinking and helping them gain more insight into their leadership, “It [ADLDP] validated some of the approaches that I take in my leadership, and it brought me to a place where I’m not the only person experiencing these things; you don’t feel so alone making these big decisions” (P1).

4.3.2. Subcategory Two: Development of Academic Career and Goal Realignment

Participants described how the programme influenced their career direction, aspirations and gave clarity on how to pursue new opportunities. Several of the mentees described the elements such as career planning, goal setting, and mentorship helped clarify their aspirations. For several participants, this resulted in outcomes such as job changes and promotions. Participant 3 reported, “I put my promotion in... for my professorship. I was informed that I was successful right at the end of the programme, so it feels like the programme helped me”. For others, the experience prompted a safe space for critical reflection on their professional goals and personal priorities, leading to a shift in what they thought was possible within their career. “This [ADLDP] made me sit back and think about what it is I really wanted and pushing the button” (P3). Participant five had a realisation:

“I decided by midyear I didn’t want to be a head of school because it’s more of a management role... it’s quite operational. My mentor was very good at encouraging me to look at other opportunities... and previously I would not have done that”.

The career planning component was seen as a critical design feature, a catalyst for tangible career advancement, this suggested that the structured reflection had a profound impact on their professional trajectory. Another participant shared how the career planning process encouraged them to re-evaluate their career aspirations:

“[the career planning process] was very relevant... it made me sit back and think about what it is I really wanted and pushing the button... like going for it and not just sitting about not taking advantage of opportunities” (P7).

Many participants described career planning as both timely and impactful in supporting their professional growth. These findings underscore the importance of integrating career planning into leadership development initiatives. For aspiring academic leaders, having dedicated time and structured support to reflect on career goals can be instrumental in building confidence, identifying opportunities, and taking proactive steps toward promotion or leadership roles.

A key element to the programme's success was its ability to support professional growth and encourage participants to step outside of their comfort zone. Participant 8 shared "Pushing your own boundaries for learning and development growth and reflection, the programme certainly, as any good programme does, forces that upon you... in a good way". Having senior leaders' insight into mentee goals was valuable as participant four stated "I think that's the biggest gift for me has been people's generosity in supporting feedback and ideas" (P4).

The ADLP broadened participants perspectives and highlighted other opportunities. Several individuals reported tangible career shifts because of their involvement in the programme. One participant stated:

"I've had a promotion and [am] exploring other opportunities to continue this pathway, so I think it's been really good" ... "I feel like it was a good outcome. I got a promotion; I got out what I put into it" (P7).

Findings from the 360-degree feedback review identified changes mentees could make in their leadership style within their current roles as participant 8 stated "I think becoming painfully aware of some of the areas for development is a good start... that certainly helped... I would say it [ADLDP] has made me a better leader".

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings from the participants interviews which revealed two main categories and associated sub-categories. Participants consistently described the ADLDP as a meaningful and impactful experience that contributed positively to their leadership development and career progression. Key elements of the programme, including its flexible nature, its emphasis on career planning, mentorship, and executive coaching with senior leadership were perceived as instrumental in enhancing the supportive environment. Participants expressed a desire for increased face-to-face engagement with mentors and other participants within the programme to further strengthen professional networks. These findings highlight the value of tailored, reflective leadership development initiatives in preparing the next generation of academic leaders. The following chapter will critically discuss the findings in relation to addressing the research aims and objectives.

Chapter Five: Discussion.

5.1. Introduction

This final chapter opens with a discussion of the findings in order to answer the research aim of identifying the perceptions of mentees on the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP). Using a qualitative descriptive methodology and general inductive analysis of nine semi-structured interviews, two main categories were identified: ‘strategic leadership development’ and ‘career transformation’. These findings are critically discussed in the context of current relevant literature, linking to the research questions and objectives of this study.

Research Question:

What are the perspectives of the mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme?

Research Objectives:

- Identify the benefits and challenges faced by the mentees within the ADLDP.
- Identify the mentee's professional and leadership career advancement resulting from the ADLDP.
- Identify success factors for mentees and improvements that could be made to the ADLDP to ensure it meets the needs of mentees

Additionally, implications for future research are highlighted, followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this study.

In discussing the findings and linking to the study objectives, it is noted that these categories intertwine across objectives. This means that many of the benefits experienced by participants are inextricably linked to the professional and leadership development they experienced. Similarly, the challenges reported by participants also impacted on their development. Thus, in discussing the findings, the professional and leadership development are embedded in each section.

5.2. Summary of findings

The first category, ‘Strategic Leadership Development’, identified that participating mentees valued the ADLDP, especially its design, relevance and structure. In addition to valuing the design of the programme, many participants spoke positively about its overall lasting impression, highlighting its uniqueness and significant impact. However, there was a request for more face-to-face opportunities.

The programme's design was highly reflexive and flexible; this was received well by many, as it allowed mentors to tailor their mentorship to give an opportunity to discuss individual career goals and aspirations. This personalised nature of the mentorship was appreciated and contributed to the lasting impression the programme had on the mentees. Despite the programme's flexible structure, some participants noted scheduling challenges and some requested further clarity, structure and consistency in the programme's implementation. Participants in New Zealand also emphasised the need for earlier cross-country interactions, highlighting how important inclusivity and engagement were.

Access to influential people and professional networks was identified as a significant benefit of the programme. The connection made with the executive coach and mentors was viewed as highly valuable and influential for their respective career development. Mentors primarily supported reflective career development, whereas the executive coach contributed structured leadership insight. These relationships facilitated the development of supportive relationships, resulting in strong professional bonds. Mentorship promoted strong professional relationships, which were appreciated. This was a time when emotional and practical advice was offered.

Overall, the programme was considered a beneficial and unique experience, with suggestions for improved structure and face-to-face engagement to further enhance its effectiveness. Nonetheless, participants highlighted the inclusion of career planning and executive coaching as important components of the programme, with many participants suggesting this process prompted reflection on current and future career goals, strategic thinking and leadership development. These processes helped mentees build momentum in their careers and led to concrete advancements such as promotions and new leadership opportunities.

The second category that developed was 'career transformation' and its sub-categories, mentorship, leadership identity and capability, and development of academic career and goal realignment. Most participants found the programme enhanced their confidence and presented professional opportunities that had not previously been considered. Mentorship built resilience for many of the participants and enhanced thinking at a higher level. Mentorship gave participants the opportunity to validate their approaches to leadership and made them feel less alone when making significant strategic decisions. Most participants stated that being part of the ADLDP influenced their career direction, aspirations and confidence to pursue different opportunities. For many participants, the programme provided a nurturing environment for critical reflection and promoted conversations that discussed other directions their career trajectory could take. Support and encouragement were offered to all participants to step outside of their comfort zone and apply for opportunities they may never have considered previously.

The above two categories identified challenges faced by the mentees yet captured professional and leadership development opportunities that may not have been possible without the programme. The findings have identified success factors and improvements that could be made to the ADLDP in the future to ensure the needs of the mentees are met and the mentorship experience is improved.

5.3. Benefits perceived by the Mentees within the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme

Benefits identified by participants that resulted from their involvement in the ADLDP centred around mentorship and leadership progression, networking and collaboration, executive coaching and access to senior leaders, and career planning and reflection. Each benefit is discussed in detail in the sections that follow, providing insight into how the programme supported participants leadership development.

5.3.1 Mentorship and Leadership Progression

The first category, 'strategic leadership development', encompasses the mentees' perceptions of one of the main benefits of the ADLDP. A critical insight that came through the data was that senior influential nursing and midwifery academics actively supported mentees by creating real opportunities for leadership development and helping the mentees to realise them. The findings of this study highlight significant benefits for the aspiring deans across Australia and New Zealand, including personal and professional growth.

A key finding across the dataset highlighted that the value of mentorship with influential people was beneficial. Mentees largely linked their mentorship experiences to their leadership development and enhanced career trajectories. The mentorship provided comprehensive support and often encouraged mentees to apply for career opportunities they had previously not considered. This resulted in all mentees changing career paths or gaining a promotion. This aligns with existing literature, which widely acknowledges the positive impact of mentorship on the mentee's academic career trajectories (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Smith et al., 2022; Wurmser & Kowalski, 2020). Numerous studies affirm that successful mentor relationships increase individual productivity, career success and progression (Ambler et al., 2016; Bredella et al., 2019; Efstathiou et al., 2018; Haas et al., 2023; Henry-Noel et al., 2019; Zehra et al., 2023).

Within the programme, mentor meetings were intentionally flexible ensuring individual goals and aspirations were supported. Several mentees noted their mentor refocused discussions on their own personal goals and discussed strategies on how to accomplish these. This approach reflects Sarabipour et al. (2023) findings, which emphasise the importance of experienced mentors in nurturing aspiring leaders. The mentees expressed appreciation for the psychological

support, including emotional support during their time with their mentors. Mentees stated this was the time when feedback was provided, and emotional guidance given. These factors are essential for long-term leaders. Literature agrees that mentorship which provides psychological guidance prevents the premature departure of aspiring leaders (Ambler et al., 2016; Cross et al., 2019; Ephraim, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017b; Strawser et al., 2022), crucial in maintaining the pipeline of academic leaders.

Findings from this study align with literature on the importance of psychological support in mentorship (Horvath et al. 2024; Zehra et al. 2023), and suggest that mentorship is not just beneficial, it is essential in shaping mentees and their leadership journeys. The structured components of the programme, in particular the executive coaching and career planning were repeatedly praised for their practical relevance and long-term impact. The career planning was seen as a space for reflection, supported strategic thinking and offered new insights into other professional opportunities. This aspect was seen as key in guiding mentees to set clear goals and pursue promotions or a change in career trajectory.

5.3.2 Networking and Collaboration

Participants reported that the ongoing connection with the other participants after completing the programme was beneficial, describing their ongoing connection and collaboration as something that would not have happened without the programme. This is consistent with research showing that successful mentoring results in collegiality within wider professional networks, contributing to increased publications and further opportunities for career progression (Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Nowell, 2017; Zehra et al., 2023). The mentees collaborated to complete a research project, agreeing that the ongoing connection was critical for their future development. This finding is further confirmed by Heffernan (2021), who stated that having access to a network of scholars has advantages for individual outputs but also increases publications for their institution. The ADLP appears to have facilitated the formation of valuable collaborative networks through its mentorship and mentee engagement design.

Face-to-face interaction was identified as a key element and highlight for the mentees. All mentees expressed enthusiasm about connecting in person with their peers, mentors and other Council of Deans members at the organised meeting. This encounter was significant as the mentees heard about others' professional journeys and saw the culture of collegial respect start at the top. The cross-university, trans-Tasman interactions proved beneficial. They provided exposure to a diverse range of leadership styles and strategies of how others manage challenging situations. This encouraged many of the mentees to reflect on their own leadership approaches and added to personal and professional growth. Such an experience could be aligned with the principles of the constellation mentorship approach, where many people mentor the

mentee along the way (Nowell et al., 2017a). This multifaceted approach enhances the depth of mentorship, fostering a more holistic leadership identity. This aligns with the literature, suggesting that building a community of scholars improves personal and institutional activity (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Henry-Noel et al., 2019; Sarabipour et al., 2023; Welch et al., 2017; Wilkes et al., 2015).

5.3.3 Executive Coaching and Access to Senior Leaders

In conjunction with mentorship, when mentees were asked about the highlights/benefits of the programme, executive coaching was identified as a core component, along with networking. The mentees were offered the opportunity of exposure to senior leaders across institutions as well as executive coaching. Although both were valued, they contributed differently: mentorship provided relational career support, whereas coaching strengthened leadership capability. This aligns with Mbokota and Reid's (2022) theory that leadership programmes that do not combine mentorship with executive coaching produce fewer positive results. Recent literature agrees, suggesting the learning process is more powerful when the two are integrated within a leadership programme (Horvath et al., 2024).

Mentees found the individual coaching, paired with the prolonged access to a dean, to be a significant highlight, emphasising the importance of external support in enhancing the leadership development process. This experience extends current literature, which focuses mostly on the traditional dyad model of mentorship, by demonstrating the added value of broader peer networks. There is minimal literature that agrees on which model of mentorship is most valuable when it comes to leadership development in nursing and midwifery academia (Nowell et al., 2017a; Perumal & Singh, 2022). However, authors agree that mentorship should be an empowering experience that focuses on the growth of the mentee (Das, 2020; McBride et al., 2017).

5.3.4 Career Planning and Reflection

Career planning was seen as beneficial, with several mentees highlighting how the structured goal setting and reflective processes encouraged them to think strategically about their future career aspirations. Having protected time with structured support to reflect was seen as an essential part of the leadership development process. The majority of the mentees indicated that career planning was a critical aspect in the design of the programme. This had a long-term positive impact on their career trajectories, including promotion, for example being promoted to full professor. This aligns with Cross et al. (2019), who suggest that strategically implementing career planning into leadership programmes provides development and promotion processes.

These findings build on previous literature that identified career planning was an essential component of succession planning to retain nursing and midwifery faculty. When faculty are retained, leadership development can occur, thus preventing future leadership shortages (Bouws et al., 2020; Morrison-Beedy et al., 2018; Richards & Kieffer, 2023; Scully, 2015).

5.4. Challenges faced by the mentees in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme

Despite the overwhelmingly positive perception of the ADLDP for the participants, challenges were noted related to logistics and the difficulties these presented; however, these were not significant to impact on participants' progression or enjoyment of the programme. Some mentees experienced structural challenges in securing time and connecting with mentors. In this study, scheduling was made more difficult due to the vast time zone differences across Australia and increasing mentor workloads. Once connected, their time together was described as valued. These findings align with current literature, which highlights mentor availability as a common barrier, often exacerbated by the mentors being overworked (Cross et al., 2019).

Despite scheduling challenges, most mentees met with their mentor regularly and had productive sessions. Some mentees did express that, occasionally, time was lacking to cover or reflect on issues they had wanted to discuss during their mentor sessions. This finding is consistent with Hulton et al. (2016), where mentees found the mentors' busy scheduling made it difficult to get the job done well which resulted in mentor and mentee frustration.

5.5. Success factors of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme

Mentees were overall satisfied with the mentorship programme. They acknowledged success factors similar to those found in previous studies on nursing faculty mentorship, including a focus on career development, improving professional networks, and developing a broader understanding of leadership roles (Ard & Beasley, 2022). Although several of the success factors discussed here have already been mentioned in the benefits, they are reiterated as important aspects of the overarching programme design.

The design of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP) was an important success factor. The programme was flexible, relevant and allowed for mentors to tailor their mentorship to meet mentee goals and aspirations. Mentees were satisfied with the mentorship they received, which aligns with literature, emphasising the importance of personalised mentoring in enhancing leadership development and career progression (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Sarabipour et al., 2023; McRae & Zimmerman, 2019). The findings also support the notion that a flexible programme design contributes to mentee satisfaction and long-term leadership capacity (Ambler et al., 2016; Henry-Noel et al., 2019).

The opportunity to have listen to the strategic thinking through the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) meeting was a key design feature that proved successful. The ability to have high-level discussions with peers at the meeting and having the executive coaching intertwined in the programme was a design feature that all participants said was valued. This is in line with literature suggesting that exposure to leadership environments and executive coaching enhances leadership capacity and career planning (Horvath et al., 2024; Mbokota & Reid, 2022; Cheesebrough et al., 2020).

The design of the programme allowed mentors the flexible opportunity to support their mentee goals, allowing mentees to develop goals and work towards their career aspirations. This supports literature suggesting the importance of personalised mentoring structures in enabling leadership development and career progression (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Sarabipour et al., 2023; McRae & Zimmerman, 2019). The flexible design contributes to mentee satisfaction and long-term leadership capacity (Ambler et al., 2016; Henry-Noel et al., 2019).

As mentioned as part of networking and collaboration, face-to-face meetings were identified as a key success factor in the ADLDP. Participants consistently reported that the in-person interactions enhanced their collegiality, trust, and created more authentic opportunities for strategic dialogue and networking. The literature agrees, stating face-to-face engagement enhances relationships, builds networks and contributes to leadership development by promoting shared learning (Ambler et al., 2016; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Henry-Noel et al., 2019; Sarabipour et al., 2023).

Executive coaching, as mentioned in 5.3.3, was consistently identified by mentees as one of the most impactful components of the programme. The executive coach offered non-judgemental advice helping the mentees clarify their career goals and identify ways to reach them. Literature suggests that executive coaching, when paired with mentorship, significantly enhances leadership capacity and career planning (Horvath et al., 2024; Mbokota & Reid, 2022; Cheesebrough et al., 2020). As with executive coaching, career planning was a key success factor in the design of the ADLDP. Many participants suggest it helped to clarify aspirations, enabled goal setting and led to tangible career outcomes such and promotions and professorships. Career planning is an essential component which should be implemented into leadership programmes to provide a clear path for development in academia, especially for women in academia (Bleich et al., 2019; Cross et al., 2019; Zacher et al., 2019). Table four summarises the key factors that contributed to the programme's effectiveness as perceived by the mentees.

Table 4*Summary of Success Factors of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme*

Success Factor	Description
Programme Design	Flexible in nature to allow for mentees and mentors to work flexibly to meet individual goals and career progression. Exposure to strategic thinking, access to influential networks, and executive coaching were all seen as positive design attributes.
Tailored Mentoring	Tailored mentoring enhanced mentees' confidence, leadership identity, and career advancement. Emotional and psychological support contributed to resilience and long-term leadership capacity.
Face-to-face interactions	The opportunity to attend the CDNMM meeting. Enhanced strong professional networks and collegiality. Face-to-face interactions were especially impactful, promoting mutual respect and ongoing collaboration among participants.
Executive Coaching	Paired with mentorship provided strategic thinking and introspective development. Exposure to senior leaders (e.g., deans) offered valuable insights into academic leadership roles.
Structured Career Planning	Helped mentees clarify aspirations, set goals, and pursue promotions or career changes. Reflective activities supported strategic thinking and long-term career development. Many participants were successful with promotion or gaining professorship.

5.6 Recommendations for improvements that could be made to ensure the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme meets the needs of future mentees

To enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of the programme, several key improvements are recommended. Firstly, the programme should be refined to provide clearer pathways into leadership roles, delivering timely and constructive feedback, and establishing more structured and intentional support mechanisms. Increasing opportunities for face-to-face engagement is also essential, as this helps strengthen professional networks and fosters a greater sense of community among participants. Additional funding is required to facilitate these in-person interactions and to actively support Indigenous engagement. To ensure equity, it is critical to capture Indigenous participants earlier in their careers and to investigate the barriers that may be preventing their involvement. This includes questioning whether the programme is culturally appropriate and, if not, making the necessary adjustments to ensure it is inclusive and supportive of all participants, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds. Final recommendations relate to structural elements, for example greater clarity around written tasks, consistent feedback processes, and prioritised time with mentors. This resonates with previous findings where mentees expressed frustration with the fluidness and wanted more structure (Hulton et al., 2016). It is agreed by many that a lack of structured engagement resulted in less satisfactory and less effective mentorship meetings (Burgess et al., 2018; Cross et al., 2019; Hulton et al., 2016).

5.7 Strengths of the Study

Leadership development is vital to the growth of nursing and midwifery in academia. Mentorship plays a key role in preparing future leaders, yet little is known about how mentees themselves experience such programmes. This study, conducted in Australia and New Zealand, explored mentees' perspectives within the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP). By identifying barriers and challenges to mentorship, the study aimed to inform improvements to the ADLDP. The findings should contribute to strengthening the pipeline of future academic leaders in nursing and midwifery. This research was undertaken in Australia and New Zealand and addressed the dearth of research focused specifically on mentees' perspectives while participating in a leadership programme. Participants who were involved directly in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme were interviewed; they are the closest to the experience, therefore could provide highly relevant perceptions. Barriers and challenges to mentorship within the Nursing and Midwifery faculty were identified. Findings from this study have the potential to strengthen the ADLDP to ensure its future success; therefore, continue the pipeline of academic leaders to propel nursing and midwifery forward.

5.8 Future Research

This research identified the perspectives of mentees participating in the 2024 Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme across Australia and New Zealand, offering insights unique to the nursing and midwifery academic faculty context. The findings highlight the importance of face-to-face engagement in strengthening professional networks and enhancing collegiality. Further research on which mentorship approach has the best outcomes for academic faculty and leadership success would be useful. Future research could also further explore the impact of in-person interactions on long-term leadership development and network sustainability within nursing and midwifery faculties. A longitudinal study that tracks the career trajectory of the ADLDP participants could identify longer-term impact; however, this is reliant on the continuation of the programme.

Additionally, there is a critical need to investigate how Māori and Indigenous nurses and midwives are supported in their academic leadership journeys. To promote equity for future aspiring leaders, it is essential to understand culturally appropriate and responsive mentorship models and to identify barriers to leadership progression for Māori and indigenous scholars. Co-designing a programme with Māori and Indigenous nurses and midwifery academics would ensure the programme is culturally aligned, which is essential in promoting equity.

5.9 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the perspectives of mentees participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme at a single point in time, therefore providing a snapshot rather than a

comprehensive view of leadership trajectories following the programme. Leadership progression data were not collected, which restricts the ability to assess the long-term impact of the programme.

Additionally, the programme came from a western position and world view. There was an absence of indigenous participants, meaning diverse cultural perspectives, specifically Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders, were not collected. Having these insights would have added further perspective. This gap highlights the need for further exploration into how indigenous academics engage with academic development and how the ADLDP can be more culturally aligned. Additionally, this was a 90-point thesis, which limited the size of the project and the amount of data that could be collected.

5.10 Concluding Statement

This study explored the perceptions of the mentees participating in the 2024 Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme (ADLDP) in Australia and New Zealand. The ADLP demonstrated a significant impact on the leadership development of nursing and midwifery academics across the Tasman. Central to this impact was the strategic succession planning, including mentorship, executive coaching, career planning, goal setting and peer networking, each contributing to mentees' enhanced confidence, professional development and career progression. Mentorship emerged as a pivotal component of the programme, with mentees consistently linking their increased confidence and leadership capability to their mentor meetings and support from the executive coach.

Two themes identified following the individual interviews were 'strategic leadership development' and 'career transformation'. While the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme was seen as a positive experience with many gaining promotions or changing career direction, barriers and challenges were identified. These included logistical issues such as time zones and scheduling and the desire for more face-to-face engagement. Despite the challenges, the programme was overwhelmingly viewed as a beneficial and transformative experience. The findings from this study provide important insights for the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) and offer evidence to support the continued development and refinement of the programme. By addressing the identified challenges and building on the strengths of the programme, future iterations can further enhance leadership capacity, support succession planning and contribute to a sustainable nursing and midwifery faculty workforce.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a growing body of knowledge on academic leadership development and highlights the critical role of mentorship and structured support in preparing the next generation of nursing and midwifery leaders.

References.

- Adhikari, R., & Smith, P. (2023). Global nursing workforce challenges: Time for a paradigm shift. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 69, 103627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2023.103627>
- Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 2, 100051. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>
- Akanegbu, C. O., & Iheduru-Anderson, K. (2022). Formal Mentoring Program in Nursing Education: A Literature Review. *ABNFF Journal*, 1(1), 23–28.
- Albarran, J. W., & Rosser, E. A. (2014). The challenges facing midwifery educators in sustaining a future education workforce. *Midwifery*, 30(8), 949–955. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2013.07.016>
- Ambler, T., Harvey, M., & Cahir, J. (2016). University academics' experiences of learning through mentoring. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 43(5), 609–627. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-016-0214-7>
- Anthony, S. G., & Antony, J. (2017). Academic leadership – special or simple. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 66(5), 630–637. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-08-2016-0162>
- Ard, N., & Beasley, S. F. (2022). Mentoring: A key element in succession planning. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 17(2), 159–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2022.01.003>
- Ayton, D. (2023). *Chapter 26: Rigour*. https://oercollective.caul.edu.au/qualitative-research/chapter/_unknown_-26/
- Bakewell-Sachs, S., Trautman, D., & Rosseter, R. (2022). Addressing the nurse faculty shortage. *American Nurse*. <https://www.myamericannurse.com/addressing-the-nurse-faculty-shortage-2/>
- Barr, K. P., Deluca, K., Dicianno, B. E., Helkowski, W. M., & Liu, B. (2024). Group peer mentoring to improve faculty connections and enhance mentoring networks. *The Clinical Teacher*, 21(4), e13747. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tct.13747>
- Barrow, J. M., Brannan, G. D., & Khandhar, P. B. (2024). Research Ethics. In *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459281/>

- Baskin, R., Biazus-Dalcin, C., & Bartlett, R. (2023). The Time For Mentoring Is Now. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing & Mental Health Services*, 61(8), 3–4.
<https://doi.org/10.3928/02793695-20230705-01>
- Beasley, S. F., & Ard, N. (2021). The future of nursing: Succession planning. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 16(2), 105–109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2020.12.003>
- Bexley, E., Arkoudis, S., & James, R. (2013). The motivations, values and future plans of Australian academics. *Higher Education*, 65(3), 385–400. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9550-3>
- Bleich, M. R., Jones, -Schenk Jan, & Bleich, M. R. (2019). The Professional Development Educator and Leadership Succession Planning. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 50(3), 104–106. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20190218-03>
- Boamah, S. A. (2022). The impact of transformational leadership on nurse faculty satisfaction and burnout during the COVID -19 pandemic: A moderated mediated analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 78(9), 2815–2826. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15198>
- Boamah, S. A., Callen, M., & Cruz, E. (2021). Nursing faculty shortage in Canada: A scoping review of contributing factors. *Nursing Outlook*, 69(4), 574–588.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2021.01.018>
- Bognar, L., Bersick, E., Barrett-Fajardo, N., Ross, C., & Shaw, R. E. (2021). Training aspiring nurse leaders: A mixed-methods study of a leadership academy. *Nursing Management*, 52(8), 40–47. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NUMA.0000758688.41934.dc>
- Bonilha, H., Link to external site, this link will open in a new tab, Hyer, M., Krug, E., Mauldin, M., Edlund, B., Martin-Harris, B., Halushka, P., Link to external site, this link will open in a new tab, McGinty, J., Sullivan, J., Brady, K., Ranwala, D., Hermayer, K., Harvey, J., Paranal, R., Gough, J., Silvestri, G., & Chimowitz, M. (2019). An institution-wide faculty mentoring program at an academic health center with 6-year prospective outcome data. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 3(6), 308–315. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2019.412>
- Bottino, B. (2022). *To Build the Workforce, We Need More Nurse Educators*.
<https://www.nurse.com/blog/build-workforce-need-more-nurse-educators/>

- Bouttelet Munari, D., Gomes Nogueira, A. L., Teixeira Sousa, E., Miranda Ribeiro, L. C., & Sherman, R. (2019). Leadership succession: A necessary reflection for the future of nursing. *Revista Eletrônica de Enfermagem*, 21, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.5216/ree.v21.54787>
- Bouws, M., Madeira, A., & Streberger, A. (2020). Fulfillment in the role of academic nurse leader: A grounded theory study. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 36(6), 469–476. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2020.03.007>
- Bredella, M. A., Fessell, D., & Thrall, J. H. (2019). Mentorship in academic radiology: Why it matters. *Insights into Imaging*, 10(1), 107. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13244-019-0799-2>
- Bredella, M. A., Link to external site, this link will open in a new tab, Fessell, D., & Thrall, J. H. (2019). Mentorship in academic radiology: Why it matters. *Insights into Imaging*, 10(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13244-019-0799-2>
- Broome, M. E. (2013). Self-Reported Leadership Styles of Deans of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Nursing Programs in the United States. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 29(6), 323–329. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2013.09.001>
- Bryant, A. L., Aizer Brody, A., Perez, A., Shillam, C., Edelman, L. S., Bond, S. M., Foster, V., & Siegel, E. O. (2015). Development and Implementation of a Peer Mentoring Program for Early Career Gerontological Faculty. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 47(3), 258–266. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jnu.12135>
- Burgess, A., van Diggele, C., & Mellis, C. (2018). Mentorship in the health professions: A review. *The Clinical Teacher*, 15(3), 197–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tct.12756>
- Busby, K. R., Draucker, C. B., & Reising, D. L. (2022). Exploring mentoring and nurse faculty: An integrative review. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 38, 26–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2021.11.006>
- Campbell, A. J. (2020). Let the Data Speak: Using Rigour to Extract Vitality from Qualitative Data. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 18(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.34190/JBRM.18.1.001>
- Chalmers, L. (2020). Responding to the State of the World's Nursing 2020 report in Aotearoa New Zealand: Aligning the nursing workforce to universal health coverage and health equity.

- Nursing Praxis in Aotearoa New Zealand*, 36(2), 7–19.
<https://doi.org/10.36951/27034542.2020.007>
- Chapman, D. D., & Bartlett, M. E. (2024). *Faculty Development on a Shoestring: Programs to Support Higher Education Faculty Using Little or No Resources*. IAP.
- Cheesebrough, K. R., Bronzert, J., & Frazier-De La Torre, E. (2020). Leadership, academia, and the role of career coaching. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 10(4), 870–872.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaa057>
- Church, A. H., Bracken, D. W., Fleenor, J. W., & Rose, D. S. (2019). *Handbook of Strategic 360 Feedback*. Oxford University Press.
- Clement, S., Hein, L. C., Herbert, L., Taylor, J. G., Harding, K., Taylor, A., & Andrews, J. O. (2024). A Pilot Faculty Fellows Pipeline Program: Developing Nurse Educators in South Carolina. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 63(12), 813–817. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20240731-01>
- Cole, B., Zehler, A., & Arter, S. (2020). Role-Reversal Mentoring: Case Study of an Active Approach to Faculty Growth. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 59(11), 627–630.
<https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20201020-05>
- Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(6), 435–436.
- Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and Meanings: Credibility and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications
- Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(1), 89–91. <https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.89-91>
- Cross, M., Lee, S., Bridgman, H., Thapa, D. K., Cleary, M., & Kornhaber, R. (2019). Benefits, barriers and enablers of mentoring female health academics: An integrative review. *PLOS ONE*, 14(4), e0215319. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215319>
- Cummins, A. M., Denney-Wilson, E., & Homer, C. S. E. (2017). The mentoring experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models in Australia. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 24, 106–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2016.01.003>

- Darbyshire, P., Hungerford, C., Thompson, D. R., & Lauder, W. J. (2020). Nursing, leadership and academia: Passing the baton. *Nurse Education Today*, 89, 104400.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104400>
- Das, S. (2020). Faculty development/mentoring evolution of mentorship in academic medicine. *Journal of Investigative Medicine*, 68(3), 721. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jim-2020-001302>
- Douglas, V., Garrity, J., Shepherd, K., & Brown, L. (2016). Nurses' perceptions and experiences of mentoring: Valerie Douglas and colleagues present qualitative findings from a study of the support nurses need when they supervise and assess pre-registration students. *Nursing Management*, 23(1), 34–37. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nm.23.1.34.s29>
- Doyle, L., McCabe, C., Keogh, B., Brady, A., & McCann, M. (2020). An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *Journal of Research in Nursing: JRN*, 25(5), 443–455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987119880234>
- Drennan, V. M., & Ross, F. (2019). Global nurse shortages—The facts, the impact and action for change. *British Medical Bulletin*, 130(1), 25–37. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bmb/ldz014>
- Eby, L. T., & Robertson, M. M. (2020). The Psychology of Workplace Mentoring Relationships. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 7(1), 75–100. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-044924>
- Efstathiou, J. A., Drumm, M. R., Paly, J. P., Lawton, D. M., O'Neill, R. M., Niemierko, A., Leffert, L. R., Loeffler, J. S., & Shih, H. A. (2018). Long-term impact of a faculty mentoring program in academic medicine. *PLOS ONE*, 13(11), e0207634.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0207634>
- Eisner, S. (2014). Onboarding The Faculty: A Model For Win-Win Mentoring. *American Journal of Business Education (AJBE)*, 8(1), 7–22. <https://doi.org/10.19030/ajbe.v8i1.9013>
- Eller, L. S., Lev, E. L., & Feurer, A. (2014). Key components of an effective mentoring relationship: A qualitative study. *Nurse Education Today*, 34(5), 815–820.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.07.020>

- Ellison, L. J., Steelman, L. A., Young, S. F., & Riordan, B. G. (2022). Setting the stage: Feedback environment improves outcomes for a 360-degree-feedback leader-development program. *Consulting Psychology Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000236>
- Ephraim, N. (2021). Mentoring in nursing education: An essential element in the retention of new nurse faculty. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *37*(2), 306–319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2020.12.001>
- Etzkorn, K. B., & Braddock, A. (2020). Are you my mentor? A study of faculty mentoring relationships in US higher education and the implications for tenure. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, *9*(3), 221–237. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-08-2019-0083>
- Fang, D., & Kesten, K. (2017). Retirements and succession of nursing faculty in 2016–2025. *Nursing Outlook*, *65*(5), 633–642. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2017.03.003>
- Fang, D., & Mainous, R. (2019). Individual and institutional characteristics associated with short tenures of deanships in academic nursing. *Nursing Outlook*, *67*(5), 578–585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2019.03.002>
- Farber, Dr. J. E., Payton, Dr. C., & Dorney, Dr. P. (2020). Life balance and professional quality of life among baccalaureate nurse faculty. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *36*(6), 587–594. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2020.08.010>
- Farkas, A. H., Bonifacino, E., Turner, R., Tilstra, S. A., & Corbelli, J. A. (2019). Mentorship of Women in Academic Medicine: A Systematic Review. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, *34*(7), 1322–1329. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-019-04955-2>
- Fitzpatrick, E. F. M., Martiniuk, A. L. C., D'Antoine, H., Oscar, J., Carter, M., & Elliott, E. J. (2016). Seeking consent for research with indigenous communities: A systematic review. *BMC Medical Ethics*, *17*(1), 65. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-016-0139-8>
- Fountain, J., & Newcomer, K. E. (2016). Developing and Sustaining Effective Faculty Mentoring Programs. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *22*(4), 483–506.

- Ghosh, R. (2014). Antecedents of mentoring support: A meta-analysis of individual, relational, and structural or organizational factors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *84*(3), 367–384.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.02.009>
- Goodare, P. (2017). Literature review: Why do we continue to lose our nurses? *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *34*(4), 50–56.
- Haas, M., Triemstra, J., Tam, M., Neuendorf, K., Reckelhoff, K., Gottlieb-Smith, R., Pedigo, R., McTaggart, S., Vasquez, J., Hundert, E. M., Berkowitz, B., Humphrey, H. J., & Gruppen, L. D. (2023). A decade of faculty development for health professions educators: Lessons learned from the Macy Faculty Scholars Program. *BMC Medical Education*, *23*(1), 185.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-023-04155-x>
- Hafsteinsdóttir, T. B., van der Zwaag, A. M., & Schuurmans, M. J. (2017). Leadership mentoring in nursing research, career development and scholarly productivity: A systematic review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *75*, 21–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2017.07.004>
- Harvey, M., Ambler, T., & Cahir, J. (2017). Spectrum Approach to Mentoring: An evidence-based approach to mentoring for academics working in higher education. *Teacher Development*, *21*(1), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1210537>
- Heffernan, T. (2021). Academic networks and career trajectory: ‘There’s no career in academia without networks’. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *40*(5), 981–994. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1799948>
- Henry-Noel, N., Bishop, M., Gwede, C. K., Petkova, E., & Szumacher, E. (2019). Mentorship in Medicine and Other Health Professions. *Journal of Cancer Education*, *34*(4), 629–637.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13187-018-1360-6>
- Horvath, Z., Wilder, R. S., & Guthmiller, J. M. (2024). The power of coaching: Developing leaders and beyond. *Journal of Dental Education*, *88*(S1), 671–677.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jdd.13535>

- Hu, C., Gan, S., & Bauman, M. G. (2016). *Understanding attraction in formal mentoring relationships from an affect-centered perspective*. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 95, 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.09.011>
- Hulton, L. J., Sawin, E. M., Trimm, D., Graham, A., & Powell, N. (2016). An Evidence-based Nursing Faculty Mentoring Program. *International Journal of Nursing Education*, 8(1), 41. <https://doi.org/10.5958/0974-9357.2016.00008.8>
- Jackevicius, C. A., Le, J., Nazer, L., Hess, K., Wang, J., & Law, A. V. (2014). A Formal Mentorship Program for Faculty Development. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 78(5), 100. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe785100>
- Jackson, D., Peters, K., Andrew, S., Daly, J., Gray, J., & Halcomb, E. (2015). Walking alongside: A qualitative study of the experiences and perceptions of academic nurse mentors supporting early career nurse academics. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, 51(1), 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10376178.2015.1081256>
- Jaul, E., & Barron, J. (2017). Age-Related Diseases and Clinical and Public Health Implications for the 85 Years Old and Over Population. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2017.00335>
- Jeffers, S., & Mariani, B. (2017). The Effect of a Formal Mentoring Program on Career Satisfaction and Intent to Stay in the Faculty Role for Novice Nurse Faculty. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 38(1), 18–22. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NEP.000000000000104>
- Johns, R., & McNamara, J. (2014). Career development in higher education through group mentoring: A case study of desirable attributes and perceptions of a current programme. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 23(2), 79–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416214528883>
- Karagiozis, N. (2018). Complexities of the Researcher's Role. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 13(1), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-011X/CGP/v13i01/19-31>
- Karkoulian, S., Assaker, G., & Hallak, R. (2016). An empirical study of 360-degree feedback, organizational justice, and firm sustainability. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(5), 1862–1867. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.10.070>

- Kidman, J., & Chu, C. (2015). *MĀORI SCHOLARS AND THE UNIVERSITY*.
- Kurtzman, E. T., Ghazal, L. V., Girouard, S., Ma, C., Martin, B., McGee, B. T., Pogue, C. A., Riman, K. A., Root, M. C., Schlak, A. E., Smith, J. M., Stoldalorf, D. P., Townley, J. N., Turi, E., & Germack, H. (2022). Nursing Workforce Challenges in the Postpandemic World. *Journal of Nursing Regulation, 13*(2), 49–60. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2155-8256\(22\)00061-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2155-8256(22)00061-8)
- Lavoie-Tremblay, M., Maheu, C., Octeau, D., Primeau, G., & Lavigne, G. L. (2019). Evaluation of a mentorship program for new and more-experienced nursing faculty. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice, 9*(7), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v9n7p1>
- Lee, M., Coutts, R., Fielden, J., Hutchinson, M., Lakeman, R., Mathisen, B., Nasrawi, D., & Phillips, N. (2022). Occupational stress in University academics in Australia and New Zealand. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 44*(1), 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2021.1934246>
- Lee, P., Miller, M. T., Kippenbrock, T. A., Rosen, C., & Emory, J. (2017). College nursing faculty job satisfaction and retention: A national perspective. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 33*(4), 261–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2017.01.001>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. SAGE.
- Liu, L. (2016). Using Generic Inductive Approach in Qualitative Educational Research: A Case Study Analysis. *Journal of Education and Learning, 5*(2), 129. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v5n2p129>
- Liu, X., & Burnett, D. (2022). Insider-outsider: Methodological reflections on collaborative intercultural research. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 9*(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01336-9>
- Mains, I., & MacLean, S. (2017). Developing across boundaries – mentor and mentee perceptions and experiences of cross-organisational mentoring. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 49*(4), 189–198. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-02-2017-0008>
- Mannix, K. (2021.). *The future of Australia's nursing workforce: COVID-19 and burnout among nurses*.

- Markham, S. E., Markham, I. S., & Smith, J. W. (2015). At the crux of dyadic leadership: Self–other agreement of leaders and direct reports — Analyzing 360-degree feedback. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(6), 958–977. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.10.001>
- Mbokota, G., & Reid, A. (2022). The role of group coaching in developing leadership effectiveness in a business school leadership development programme. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 53(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v53i1.3105>
- McBride, A. B., Campbell, J., Woods, N. F., & Manson, S. M. (2017a). Building a mentoring network. *Nursing Outlook*, 65(3), 305–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2016.12.001>
- McBride, A. B., Campbell, J., Woods, N. F., & Manson, S. M. (2017b). Building a mentoring network. *Nursing Outlook*, 65(3), 305–314. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2016.12.001>
- McClintock, C. (2020). The two cultures of academic leadership. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*, 5(2), 112–115.
- McConnell, K. R. (n.d.). *Mentoring Future Education Leaders: Mentor Perceptions of an Educational Leadership Doctoral Mentoring Program*.
- McKim, C. (2023). Meaningful member-checking: A structured approach to member-checking. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 7(2), 41–52.
- McPake, B., & Mahal, A. (2017). Addressing the Needs of an Aging Population in the Health System: The Australian Case. *Health Systems & Reform*, 3(3), 236–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23288604.2017.1358796>
- McRae, M., & Zimmerman, K. M. (2019). Identifying Components of Success Within Health Sciences-Focused Mentoring Programs Through a Review of the Literature. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*.
- Mintz-Binder, R. D. (2013). From Frontline Nurse Managers to Academic Program Directors: Research, Strategies, and Commonalities: Frontline Managers. *Nursing Forum*, 48(2), 114–124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12016>
- Montgomery, B. L., Sancheznieto, F., & Dahlberg, M. L. (2022). *Academic Mentorship Needs*.
- Morrison-Beedy, D., Tzeng, H.-M., & Abriam-Yago, K. (2018). Building the pipeline of diverse nursing leaders: Reflections from the AACN Deans’ mentoring program. *Journal of*

- Professional Nursing*, 34(1), 9–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2017.07.003> Morris, M., Wood, F., & Dang, D. (2020).
- Development and evaluation of a nurse leadership succession planning strategy in an academic medical center. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 50(7–8), 378–384.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/NNA.0000000000000904>
- Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: Some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, 30(4), 337–350. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185\(99\)00025-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(99)00025-1)
- National Ethics Advisory Committee. (2021). 7. *Informed consent* | *National Ethics Advisory Committee*. <https://neac.health.govt.nz/national-ethical-standards/part-two/7-informed-consent>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2018). *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders*.
- Nowell, L. (2017). *Mentorship in Nursing Academia: A Mixed Methods Study*.
<https://doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/26882>
- Nowell, L., Norris, J. M., Mrklas, K., & White, D. E. (2017a). A literature review of mentorship programs in academic nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 33(5), 334–344.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2017.02.007>
- Nowell, L., Norris, J. M., Mrklas, K., & White, D. E. (2017b). Mixed methods systematic review exploring mentorship outcomes in nursing academia. *Journal of Advanced Nursing (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)*, 73(3), 527–544. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13152>
- Olaolorunpo, O. (2019). Mentoring in Nursing: A Concept Analysis. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 12(1), 142–148.
- Parr-Brownlie, L. C., Waters, D. L., Neville, S., Neha, T., & Muramatsu, N. (2020). Aging in New Zealand: Ka haere ki te ao pakeketanga. *The Gerontologist*, 60(5), 812.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa032>
- Perumal, R. V., & Singh, M. D. (2022). Mentorship in nursing in Canada – A scoping review. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 65, 103461. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2022.103461>

- Phillips, C., Bassell, K., Fillmore, L., & Stephenson, W. (2018). Transforming Leaders Into Stewards Of Teaching Excellence: Building And Sustaining An Academic Culture Through Leadership Immersion. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, *11*(1), 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v11i1.10104>
- Phillips, L. K. (2019). Succession Planning in Nursing Academia: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, *16*(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijnes-2019-0070>
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2025). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (13th ed.). Wolters Kluwer
- Pololi, L., & Knight, S. (2005). Mentoring Faculty in Academic Medicine. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, *20*(9), 866–870. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2005.05007.x>
- Rafiq, S., Kahdim, M., & Afzal, A. (2023). THE ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT OF 360-DEGREE LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL. *JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES DEVELOPMENT*, *2*(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.53664/JSSD/02-02-2023-06-189-203>
- Rehman, R., Khan, F., Kayani, N., & Ali, T. S. (2022). Reflection of mentors and mentees at initiation of Faculty Mentorship Program at Aga Khan University: A perspective. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, *38*(6), 1691–1695. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.38.6.5454>
- Richards, A. J., & Kieffer, J. (2023). Addressing the associate level nurse faculty shortage: Do job and mentoring satisfaction predict retention? *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, *18*(1), 219–224.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2022.09.007>
- Robboy, S. J., & McLendon, R. (2017). Structured Annual Faculty Review Program Accelerates Professional Development and Promotion: Long-Term Experience of the Duke University Medical Center’s Pathology Department. *Academic Pathology*, *4*, 2374289516689471.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2374289516689471>
- Rose, J., & Johnson, C. W. (2020). Contextualizing reliability and validity in qualitative research: Toward more rigorous and trustworthy qualitative social science in leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *51*(4), 432–451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2020.1722042>

- Rubbi Nunan, J. L., [Link to external site](#), this link will open in a new tab, Ebrahim, A. B., [Link to external site](#), this link will open in a new tab, Stander, M. W., & [Link to external site](#), this link will open in a new tab. (2023). Mentoring in the workplace: Exploring the experiences of mentor–mentee relations. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 49.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v49i0.2067>
- Salmond, S. W., & Echevarria, M. (2017). Healthcare Transformation and Changing Roles for Nursing. *Orthopaedic Nursing*, 36(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NOR.0000000000000308>
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing & Health*, 23(4), 334–340. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240X\(200008\)23:4<334::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-G](https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-240X(200008)23:4<334::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-G)
- Sarabipour, S., Niemi, N. M., Burgess, S. J., Smith, C. T., Bisson Filho, A. W., Ibrahim, A., & Clark, K. (2023). The faculty-to-faculty mentorship experience: A survey on challenges and recommendations for improvements. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 290(2013), 20230983. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2023.0983>
- Scully, N. J. (2015). Leadership in nursing: The importance of recognising inherent values and attributes to secure a positive future for the profession. *Collegian*, 22(4), 439–444.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2014.09.004>
- Sharplin, G., Adelson, P., Fish, J., Peters, M., Corsini, N., & Eckert, M. (2025). COVID-19 and workforce wellbeing: A survey of the Australian nursing, midwifery, and care worker workforce. *University of South Australia*
- Sheridan, L., Murdoch, N. H., & Harder, E. (2015). Assessing Mentoring Culture: Faculty and Staff Perceptions, Gaps, and Strengths. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 45(4), 423–439.
- Shollen, S. L., Bland, C. J., Center, B. A., Finstad, D. A., & Taylor, A. L. (2014). Relating Mentor Type and Mentoring Behaviors to Academic Medicine Faculty Satisfaction and Productivity at One Medical School: *Academic Medicine*, 89(9), 1267–1275.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000000381>

- Simonson, N., Brown, M., & Klingbeil, C. (2023). Academic nursing leadership: Lessons learned during a pandemic: A qualitative research study. *Nurse Education Today*, *120*, 105620. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105620>
- Singh, C., Cross, W., Munro, I., & Jackson, D. (2020). Occupational stress facing nurse academics—A mixed-methods systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *29*(5–6), 720–735. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15150>
- Singh, M. D., Pilkington, F. B., & Patrick, L. (2014). Empowerment and Mentoring in Nursing Academia. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, *11*(1), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijnes-2013-0070>
- Smith, K.-A., Morassaei, S., Ruco, A., Bola, R., Currie, K. L., Cooper, N., & Prospero, L. D. (2022). An evaluation of the impact for healthcare professionals after a leadership innovation fellowship program. *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences*, *53*(4), S137–S144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmir.2022.09.004>
- Stilwell, B., & Newman, C. (2022). Nurses Learning to be Powerful Leaders: What Will It Take? *Creative Nursing*, *28*(1), 23–28. <https://doi.org/10.1891/CN-2021-0062>
- Stokes, F., & Iskander, R. (2021). Human Rights and Bioethical Considerations of Global Nurse Migration. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, *18*(3), 429–439. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-021-10110-6>
- Strawser, M. G., Smith, S., & Rubenking, B. (2022). A Focus on Faculty: Mentorship, Organizational Identification, and Job Satisfaction. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, *36*(1), 38–47.
- Swanson, K. M., Larson, E. L., & Malone, B. (2017). Mentors' perspectives on supporting nurse faculty scholars. *Nursing Outlook*, *65*(3), 315–323. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2017.01.006>
- Talbert, P.Y., Perry, G., Ricks-Santi, L., Shaheen, M., Seto, M., Kumar, Deepak., Quarshie, A., Thakar., & Rubio, D.M. (2021). Challenges and Strategies of Successful Mentoring: The perspectives of LEADS Scholars and Mentors from Minority Serving Institutions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(11). <http://10.3390/ijerph18116155>

- Terry, S. W. (2014). A study of formal mentorship programs to explore experiences of nursing faculty and their retention in the nurse educator role [Ph.D., Capella University]. In *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*.
<http://www.proquest.com/docview/1608994626/abstract/31D29A7B0252425APQ/20>
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- Thomas, D. R. (2017). Feedback from research participants: Are member checks useful in qualitative research? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 14(1), 23–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2016.1219435>
- Traianou, A., & Hammersley, M. (2021). Is there a right not to be researched? Is there a right to do research? Some questions about informed consent and the principle of autonomy. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 24(4), 443–452.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1801276>
- Tucker, C. A. (2020). *Succession planning for academic nursing* | Elsevier Enhanced Reader.
<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S8755722320300284?token=56D16501F06F5124C0B7E3621D8812E4C3727257EE13495DBAE24299466B59797CB3FB46B0E3B17C0F0FA83FCD181980&originRegion=us-east-1&originCreation=20230507231548>
- Uraon, R. S., & Kumarasamy, R. (2024). The impact of justice perceptions of performance appraisal practices on job satisfaction and intention to stay: The mediating role of job engagement. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 46(2), 408–431. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-07-2022-0328>
- Welch, J., Sawtelle, S., Cheng, D., Perkins, T., Ownbey, M., MacNeill, E., Hockberger, R., & Rusyniak, D. (2017). Faculty Mentoring Practices in Academic Emergency Medicine. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 24(3), 362–370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acem.13136>
- Whitehead, D., Ferguson, C., Lo-Biondo-Wood, G., & Haber, J. (2020). *Nursing and Midwifery Research. Methods and appraisal for evidence-based practice*. (6th ed). Elsevier.
- Whitney-Dumais, T., & Hyrkäs, K. (2019). Missing pieces of the retention puzzle. *Nursing Management*, 50(5), 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NUMA.0000554340.32390.ec>

World Health Organization. (2021). *Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025*.

WHO Press

Wilkes, L., Cross, W., Jackson, D., & Daly, J. (2015). A repertoire of leadership attributes: An international study of deans of nursing. *Journal of Nursing Management*, *23*(3), 279–286.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12144>

Wurmser, T., & Kowalski, M. O. (2020). Perceptions of a statewide nurse mentorship programme: A qualitative study. *Journal of Nursing Management*, *28*(7), 1545–1552.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13104>

Zacher, H., Rudolph, C. W., Todorovic, T., & Ammann, D. (2019). Academic career development: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *110*, 357–373.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.08.006>

Zehra, T., Tariq, M., Rehman, R., & Zuberi, R. W. (2023). Basics of faculty-to-faculty mentoring: A process to identify support and challenges. *PLoS ONE*, *18*(6 June). Scopus.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0287127>

Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2020). *What Makes a 360-Degree Review Successful?*

<https://hbr.org/2020/12/what-makes-a-360-degree-review-successful>

Appendix A

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH) 19 December 2023

Sara Napier
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Sara

Re Ethics Application: **23/339 Developing Future Academic Leaders -The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, a Process Evaluation.**

Thank you for your responses to AUTECH's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 19 December 2026.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTECH.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTECH approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTECH prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTECH, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTECH grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Langfordmegan6@gmail.com

Appendix B.



Evaluation of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Program in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

Stephen Neville¹^a, Sara Napier², Megan Langford³, Leah East^{4,5,6}, Karen Strickland⁷, Jeffery Adams⁸

¹ Nursing, School of Health, University of the Sunshine Coast, ² School of Nursing, Auckland University of Technology, ³ Nursing, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, ⁴ School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Southern Queensland, ⁵ Centre for Health Research, University of Southern Queensland, ⁶ School of Health, University of New England, ⁷ School of Nursing and Midwifery, Edith Cowan University, ⁸ School of Health and Sport Science, Eastern Institute of Technology

Keywords: Nursing, Midwifery, Faculty, Leadership, Workforce, Succession planning <https://doi.org/10.36951/001c.142788>

Nursing Praxis in Aotearoa New Zealand

The global demand for registered nurses outstrips supply. The sustainability of the registered nurse workforce is exacerbated by a global shortage of suitably qualified faculty to educate the next generation of nurses and midwives. The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) (CDNM) provides leadership to academics who deliver higher education to nurses and midwives. To support succession planning, the CDNM launched the inaugural Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Program (ADLDP) in 2020. The purpose of the ADLDP was to provide mentorship to academic nurses and midwives aspiring to be the next generation of academic leaders. A pragmatic qualitative study was undertaken to assess the quality, impacts and key success factors and provide insights and empirical evidence to CDNM executive on how the ADLDP could be strengthened in the future. The findings indicate the ADLDP was effective in contributing to leadership development and career advancement. Programme activities increased leadership confidence. Networking between current leaders and aspiring nursing and midwifery leaders was a highlight. Challenges for both mentees and mentors included planning dedicated time for scheduled meetings. Recommendations to consider for strengthening future programmes were provided to the CDNM including more opportunities to meet face-to-face, build continuous improvement into the ADLDP and to explore how Indigenous nurses and midwives are supported in academia and leadership. The findings provide empirical evidence in the under-researched area of nursing leadership development and contributes to a global need for a resilient and sustainable academic workforce to support and educate future nursing and midwifery

graduates.

Te Reo Māori Translation

He Aromātai i te Kaupapa Whakawhanake i te Hunga e Whai nei kia Tū hei Kaihautū Mātauranga i Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

Ngā Ariā Matua

Kei runga kē noa atu te hiahia o te ao ki tēnei mea te tapuhi rēhita i te

maha o ngā tapuhi e puta ake ana. Nā te korenga o te kāhui kaiako whai tohu mātauranga tōtika hei ako i tērā whakatupuranga o ngā tapuhi, me ngā kaiwhakawhānau hou o muri ake, i raru ai te toitū o te ohu kaimahi tapuhi rēhita. Ka mahi nui te Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Ahitereiria & Aotearoa) (CDNM) ki te hora tikanga ārahi ki ngā kaiako e hora nei i te mātauranga tiketike ki ngā tapuhi me ngā kaiwhakawhānau. Hei tautoko i te whakakīnga whāwhārua, i whakarewaina e CDNM te Kaupapa Whakawhanake i te Hunga e Whai nei kia Tū hei Kaihautū Mātauranga (ADLDP) i te tau 2020. Ko te whāinga o te kaupapa he hora kaiakopono ki ngā tapuhi me ngā kaiwhakawhānau e anga nei kia eke hei kaihautū pūmātauranga i roto i te whakatupuranga hou. I whāia tētahi rangahau ine kounga ngāwari o ngā ritenga mahi hei aromatawai i te kounga, i ngā pānga me ngā pūtake o te whāinga hua, hei hora māramatanga, taunakitanga whai take hoki ki te kāhui whakahaere o CDNM mō te kaupapa, me pēhea hoki e whakapakaritia ai ā tōna wā. E waitohu ana ngā kitenga he whai take te kaupapa hei hora i te ārahitanga i ngā kaihautū me te ahunga whakamua o te ara mahi o te tangata. Nā ngā mahi o te kaupapa i piki ake ai te māia o ngā kaihautū. He mea ātaahua te whakawhanaunga i waenga i ngā kaihautū o nāianei me ngā kaihautū kaiwhakawhānau. Ko ētahi o ngā pīkauranga mō ngā ākongā me ngā kaiakopono ko te whakamahere wā motuhake tōtika mō ngā hui i āta whakaritea. Ko ētahi o ngā tūtohu mō te whakapakari i ngā hōtaka mō ngā wā e tū mai nei i horaina ki CDNM kia whānui kē atu ngā whāinga wā mō te tūtaki ā-kanohi, te hanga whakapikinga ake ki roto i te hōtaka, me te tūhura me pēhea e tautokona ai ngā tapuhi iwi taketake me ngā kaiwhakawhānau ki te ao mātauranga me ngā mahi hautū tikanga. Nā ngā kitenga nei ka horaina mai he taunakitanga mō tēnei āhuatanga kāore anō kia tino rangahaua, o te hautū tikanga, ka takohatia hoki he āwhina mō te hiahia o te ao whānui ki tētahi ahumahi mātanga rangahau pakari, toitū hoki hei tautoko, hei ako hoki i ngā pia tapuhi, pia whakawhānau hoki, mō ngā rā kei mua i te aroaro.

INTRODUCTION

The global registered nurse shortage is a significant sustainability issue for health care services. Complex political, economic and demographic forces are contributing to this shortage including the increasing complexity and demand for cost effective health care, the ageing population and an ageing workforce. While these factors have had an influence over several decades, the shortage was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Lee et al., 2024). The associated global shortage of appropriately qualified and skilled faculty to educate the next generation of nurses and midwives is a major threat to the sustainability of the registered nurse and midwifery workforce which is reliant on education provided in tertiary institutions (East et al., 2024; World Health Organization, 2021). The *Global strategic direction for nursing and midwifery 2021-2025* (World Health Organization, 2021) identifies the establishment of leadership development programmes and mentorship opportunities as a priority to develop and empower the next generation of nurses and midwives.

With the supply of academic nurse leaders declining, a significant factor in future proofing this workforce is securing a pipeline of appropriately qualified nurses to work in nursing education (Stockmann et al., 2024). A career pathway that enables nursing academics to move into leadership roles is important for succession planning. Effective mentorship programmes are a key factor in encouraging and supporting nursing academics in leadership progression (Nowell et al., 2017); yet formal mentorship in nursing academia has been slow to develop. Little is known about formal mentorship programmes for leadership development for nursing faculty in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) (CDNM) is a Trans-Tasman peak organisation established to represent the Deans and Heads of Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in universities that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in nursing and midwifery in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The CDNM provides leadership to academics who deliver higher education to nurses and midwives and fosters succession planning in the sector by supporting the development of aspiring academic leaders. In providing succession planning support, the CDNM launched the inaugural Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Program (ADLDP) in 2020 to coincide with the World Health Organization’s Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The purpose of the ADLDP was for members of the CDNM to provide mentorship to academic nurses and midwives aspiring to be the next generation of academic leaders.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASPIRING DEANS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The aims of the ADLDP were developed to promote academic nursing and midwifery leadership as a career and to develop the academic nursing and midwifery workforce. The inaugural 12-month ADLDP was run as a pilot project with 10 participants completing the ADLDP in February 2021. Informal evaluation of the pilot project identified several areas for improvement including regular online meetings to enable mentees to connect with each other, clearer objectives to guide participants through the programme and improved collaboration and networking opportunities incorporating at least one face-to-face meeting. These findings were incorporated into the planning of the 2023 cohort of the ADLDP.

A tailor-made 12-month ADLDP was developed and commenced in February 2023. Expressions of interest were sent out to the membership of CDNM for potential candidates to join the ADLDP in November 2022 via email. A total of 14 applicants submitted an expression of interest which included a current curriculum vitae. Ten applicants met the selection criteria and of those one withdrew, leaving nine available to commence the ADLDP. Those who were unsuccessful were notified and encouraged to apply the following year. Reasons precluding a place on the ADLDP included being too early in their academic careers and experience and qualifications not well aligned with the programme criteria. Participants were supported through monthly mentoring, leadership profiling and professional development activities including presentations, 360 degree appraisal and career planning (Table 1).

Table 1. Programme overview

	Activity	Foci	Date
1	Introduction Meet executive coach	Group meeting mentees, mentors and programme co-ordinators. Programme overview and building connections. Group meeting with the executive coach. Completion of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). ^a	February 2023
2	Learning contract Executive coach	Individual meeting with mentor and development of a learning contract. Individual MBTI feedback with executive coach.	March 2023

3	Career planning	Individual meeting with mentor and developing 1, 3 and 5-year career plan.	April 2023
4	Leadership Climate Indicator 360 Professional development planning	Complete LCI360. ^b Individual meeting with mentor and identify professional development needs to meet career goal.	May 2023
5	Meet with executive coach	Individual meeting with executive coach to discuss results from LCI360.	June 2023
6	CDNM meeting Reflection activity	Attendance at CDNM meeting. Individual meeting with mentor including reflection on findings from LCI360.	July 2023
7	Reflection activity	Individual meeting with mentor and reflection on the programme to date.	August 2023
8	Online group meeting	Online meeting with the executive coach – ‘knowing yourself’.	September 2023
9	Leadership reflection	Individual meeting with mentor. Develop leadership reflection based on identified career goals, professional development needs and experiences in the programme.	October 2023
10	Leadership reflection	Individual meeting with mentor. Develop leadership reflection based on identified career goals, professional development needs and experiences in the programme.	November 2023
11	Online group presentations	Present to executive coach and mentors leadership reflections.	December 2023
12	Final reflections	Online final reflections with mentors, mentees, executive coach and programme co-ordinators.	January 2024

^aMBTI is a personality assessment tool that categorises individuals into four pairs of opposing traits. It is widely used in personal and career development.

^bLCI360 provides a comprehensive feedback system that gathers information from a variety of stakeholders to evaluate a leader’s impact on the work environment.

METHODS

The current Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Program evaluation study

The current evaluation study was commissioned by the CDNM to inform on key success factors and recommendations to improve the programme. The aims of the evaluation were:

1. Assess the quality, impacts and key success factors of the ADLDP.
2. Provide insights and empirical evidence to CDNM executive on how the ADLDP could be strengthened in the future.

Evaluation research design

A pragmatic evaluation approach using qualitative methods was used to assess programme delivery

and out-comes from a range of perspectives (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). Following Davidson (2025), specific evaluation questions were developed to structure the evaluation based on Kirkpatrick's (1998) model for evaluating training programmes. A stakeholder group comprising CDNMs members was established to advise on all aspects of the research design and to confirm the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent is the design of the ADLDP relevant for meeting the needs of mentors, mentees and Deans/Heads of Schools?
2. What has been the impact of the programme on mentees and mentors and Deans/Heads of Schools?
3. What have been highlights and success factors of the programme?
4. What challenges were experienced during the programme?
5. What would improve the experience and outcomes?

Ethical approval for the evaluation was granted by Auckland University of Technology (AUTEC 23/339). The study

Table 2. Interview participants

To what extent is the design of the ADLDP

Role	Number
Mentees	9
Mentors	9
Deans/Heads of Department	2
Executive Coach	1
Total	21

relevant for meeting the needs of mentors, mentees and Deans/Heads of Schools?

Most participants agreed the topics in the ADLDP were appropriate. Although most were generally satisfied with the depth and breadth of the content, some mentees would have liked more emphasis on strategic thinking related to nursing and midwifery leadership:

There was sort of a little bit of a gap for me

commenced in February 2023 and was conducted over 15 months.

Data collection

Qualitative data were collected from multiple sources including mentees and mentors in the programme, the executive coach, and Deans/Heads of Schools. Participants were recruited from within the programme. All candidates were invited to participate in the evaluation. Before commencing data collection, permission was sought from Deans/Heads of School to contact potential participants working in their respective institutions. Once gained, an email containing the information sheet was sent by a CDNM administrator inviting potential participants to be interviewed for the evaluation. Interested parties contacted a member of the research team to organise a time and day for the interview. Verbal or written consent was gained prior to the interview. Individual online interviews using Microsoft Teams were used to collect data from ADLDP mentees, mentors, the executive coach of the programme and Deans/Heads of Schools.

Data analysis

A general inductive analysis of data was conducted. This was an appropriate method to establish clear links between the evaluation questions and data (Thomas, 2006). Transcripts were generated from the Microsoft Teams automatic transcription feature. The transcripts were checked and corrected where necessary to ensure accuracy and readability. The transcripts were read, discussed and analysed by all members of the evaluation team. As part of the analytic process the stakeholder group participated in a sense making workshop to support the development of key findings from the programme and to develop ideas and improvements for further implementation of the ADLDP. Common meanings from the data were coded and categorised and presented under each of the evaluation questions.

FINDINGS

A total of 21 people were interviewed (Table 2). Demographic data were not collected. Participants represented universities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Most mentors had a dual role as both mentor and Dean/Head of School. One mentee moved institution during the programme and there was a change in a Dean/Head of School in another institution. strategic thinking and really being aware of the political, broader landscape for Australian nurses and midwives. [Mentee 3]

Most participants thought there was a logical flow to the presentation and progression of topics. The programme's clear structure was useful to participants new to mentoring and guiding the mentorship process.

This is the first time I have been a mentor on this programme, so I was really conscious of wanting to do a really good job and make sure the mentee had the best experience possible. Overall, I followed the format provided and felt as though I didn't miss anything out. [Mentor 9]

While the ADLDP's structure was useful, some mentees and mentors took a more flexible approach based on the mentor's experience and the specific needs of the mentee as explained by one of the mentors:

Overall, the topics were relevant and the order the topics delivered were okay. However, I don't think we [mentor and mentee] necessarily followed them [topic areas] rigidly. We used the formal structure as more of a background guide. I have a lot of experience as a leadership mentor, so my

usual approach is very much about going in the direction that the mentee wants to go and what they need. [Mentor 3]

This flexible and organic approach provided a flexibility to match specific needs for mentees.

My mentor and I used the topics as a guide. We took an organic approach to the whole process and used most of the topic areas as a guide for what we wanted to focus on ... the programme did provide a degree of flexibility so that as a mentee, I was also able to determine and dictate what I wanted to get out of the programme and what would be most beneficial. [Mentee 2]

Most participants were satisfied with the mode of delivery with the mix of online and face-to-face meetings identified as convenient. Despite the benefits of online meetings, including the general acceptability of this mode of delivery, some perceived face-to-face meetings provided a more authentic environment to engage with others and build a trusted relationship.

I think you do really get something else out of meeting face-to-face that you don't get elsewhere. I think people are less guarded, it is also a lot more personal. For example, somebody who I thought initially to be a little

bit snooty online, when I met the person face-to-face, I realised that actually it was shyness. [Mentee 4]

What has been the impact of the ADLDP on mentees and mentors and Deans/Heads of Schools?

The ADLDP was considered essential for succession planning and preparing the next generation of nursing and midwifery leaders. The support and opportunities offered by the programme increased mentees confidence in their existing leadership roles and for some, their capability to take on higher-level leadership positions. For most mentees, participation in the programme had a positive impact on their leadership development. Receiving honest feedback from a range of colleagues through the 360-degree process was a key contributor to this growth. Mentors reported a sense of satisfaction from observing their mentees' increasing confidence over time. Further, the mentoring relationship provided broad insight into the leadership positions mentees aspired to:

This is a group of highly influential and very successful and clever people that are opening the doors for other people like me ... they're really looking to create opportunities for others and supporting others to not just strive or aspire to, but to actually give wrap around support ... I felt humbled by that and appreciated the opportunity to be part of the programme and develop myself as a future leader. [Mentee 9]

The executive coach for the ADLDP identified how the programme provided mentees with increased self-awareness and the ability to see the world in a broader sense.

The thing that I notice more than anything was their [mentees] increased awareness of self, who they are and how they operate. They were able by the end of the course to

understand that their personality traits influenced their work, how they interacted with others and how others interacted with them. I think they started to see the world broader than what they previously may have seen and were more open to ideas and suggestions. [Executive coach]

The mentorship role also heightened the mentors' awareness of their own leadership style and reinforced some of the core aspects and values of their current roles as Dean/Head of School that go beyond operational and day-to-day management. One mentor articulated how the mentorship role highlighted the complexities of nursing leadership roles in relation to teaching and research.

We did explore a lot of the different facets of the Dean/ Head of School role. I don't think people fully appreciate the multifaceted nature of the job and how you are constantly juggling ... the resourcing and support needed to deliver teaching to large numbers of students, while also providing enough research time for staff to be research active and supporting career advancement. [Mentor 1]

Mentees and mentors found career planning a key aspect of leadership development. As one of the mentors ex-

plained, mapping out a career pathway was an important component of the ADLDP.

I don't think nurse academics spend enough time thinking about their careers, it tends to be a serendipitous experience, based on what opportunities are available at the time ... but sitting down and actually planning your career is a really useful thing to do. [Mentor 8]

also areas to work on. The feedback was delivered in a way that didn't diminish me as a person, in fact the opposite. [Mentee 1]

A key aspect of the 360-degree process was the opportunity to have a follow up session with the executive coach to make sense of the feedback.

What have been highlights and success factors of the ADLDP?

A major benefit was dedicated time for mentees to step back and reflect on their roles and career aspirations. Mentees valued the mentee-mentor relationship and exposure to the expertise mentors offered.

To have access to the thinking of an existing Dean for quite a long period of time. That was really relevant and probably the best part of my whole experience. [Mentee 5]

A highlight of the ADLDP was attending the CDNMM meeting and the face-to-face networking opportunities with other Deans/Heads of Schools this provided for mentees. The informal gathering following the meeting provided extra opportunity to network with fellow aspiring leaders. This was particularly useful for career development.

I attended one of the Council of Dean's meetings, that was great because I got to meet other colleagues who normally I wouldn't have had an opportunity to meet and get to know. The social gathering after that meeting was a fantastic bonus because it was a relaxed way to have conversations with people who were like me wanting to develop their careers. [Mentee 8]

A strength of the ADLDP related to the support provided by the executive coach during the programme. The sessions with the executive coach inspired mentees to shift focus from the day-to-day teaching responsibilities to the broader aspects associated with leadership roles. This reflection was facilitated by the 360-degree feedback activity. While the experience of receiving feedback was sometimes uncomfortable, many highlighted the benefits of this activity.

I have to admit it was a bit painful. However, once I got over that I realised the feedback was valid and really useful to my development as a leader. Not all of it was entirely positive, but on the whole, it was good. It pinpointed areas of strengths but

What challenges were experienced during the ADLDP?

Challenges identified mainly related to organisational aspects of the ADLDP. A mutual challenge identified by mentees and mentors was the complexity involved in aligning schedules to fully engage in the mentoring programme.

The main challenge for me was probably the timing of our meetings. It wasn't so much of an issue for me, but it was for my mentor and that was something we struggled with ... it was quite challenging to get our schedules to align and find a good rhythm. My mentor was quite busy managing a large school, I understood that. There were times when I felt we needed more time to reflect on and discuss things that were important for my leadership development. I just didn't always think there was enough time. [Mentee 7]

Scheduling times for the mentoring sessions including consideration of different time zones required negotiation to secure appropriate times for sessions that suited both mentees and mentors. Balancing Dean/Head of School responsibilities with commitment to mentoring were common issues as described by one of the mentors.

It was being able to give the person the amount of time that they needed and the headspace. Because often I was running into a meeting with them on zoom, having run in from a meeting where we're talking finances, just being able to make that head shift and go, stop, I've just got to be in the moment, change my focus and be present. I did find this challenging. [Mentor 6]

At times, lapses in the communication strategy resulted in some mentees feeling disconnected from the ADLDP. Some mentors felt isolated in their mentoring role and would have welcomed communication with other mentors for support as well as guidance:

Being a mentor was quite a lonely experience. You want to do a good job and at times I wasn't sure I was doing the right thing ... I'm always open to trying new things. [Mentor 5]

What would improve the experience and outcomes?

Mentees suggested more emphasis on the key issues specifically impacting nursing and midwifery across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. A further suggestion was to incorporate more specialised leadership activities such as management of challenging situations often experienced by

Deans/Heads of School.

It would be good if the CDNLM could consider extending the programme to incorporate more specific leadership development activities. I'm thinking of things like how to have difficult conversations, conflict resolution and other specific stuff like strategic governance, as well as media and assertiveness training. These are all things I think leaders need. [Executive coach]

Similarly, mentors suggested specific content integral to leadership roles that could be added to future ADLDPs.

I'm thinking about university governance, finance ... those sorts of things. Also, things like developing strategic and business plans. So, I think that's something that we probably could develop. A standard programme with a number of webinars with guest speakers and activities to complement the mentoring and coaching that the programme already provides. [Mentor 2]

Most participants identified the limited number of Indigenous nurses and midwives interested in pursuing academic pathways as a key sustainability issue and reflected on the importance of being responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Māori nursing and midwifery academics to ensure their representation in academic leadership roles. For example, a more pro-active and focused approach to attracting Indigenous academics into nursing and midwifery leadership roles.

I think we need to join up with the organisations like CATSINaM [Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Nurses and Midwives] and Wharangi Ruamano [Māori nurses group] in New Zealand to really think through what a programme could look like. At this stage I don't know how it would look but it is an important discussion we need to have. [Mentor 2]

DISCUSSION

The current evaluation assessed the quality, impacts and key success factors of the ADLDP in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Mentoring among nursing academics is under-researched with few studies focused specifically on mentoring programmes for aspiring academic nurse leaders (Busby et al., 2022; Nowell et al., 2017). The current findings drew on experiences of mentorship across multiple academic settings. There was overall satisfaction with the mentorship programme from a range of perspectives. Mentees reported benefits similar to those found in previous studies on nursing faculty mentorship including a focus on career development, improving professional networks, and developing a broader understanding of leadership roles (Ard & Beasley, 2022). However, more emphasis on specialised leadership activities such as management of challenging situations and issues specifically related to the Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand context would be useful in future ADLDPs. The mentors welcomed the opportunity to share their expertise and knowledge in developing leadership skills with mentees. In addition to the

sense of satisfaction mentors experienced, they perceived mentoring to be crucial to succession planning. Despite challenges with scheduling, mentors and mentees were willing to dedicate time to the mentoring relationship. Commitment of time and enthusiasm are known to be essential factors in successful mentoring (Ard & Beasley, 2022).

Recommendations to the CDNLM to improve the ADLDP have included programme refinement to support transitioning into leadership roles, promote opportunities to meet as a group and strengthen networks, an exploration

of how Indigenous nurses and midwives are supported in academia and leadership and ensuring a continuous improvement process is integrated into the programme design.

Additionally, the ADLDP delivered these results with minimal level of financial investment. The CDNM should consider whether additional financial and other support is increased given the success of the ADLDP at the current level of funding for example, developing additional content, facilitating more face-to-face contact and supporting Indigenous engagement.

The evaluation the ADLDP was limited to the perspectives of those participating in the initiative at one point in time following the completion of the ADLDP. Leadership progression data were not collected. Longitudinal data would provide evidence of long-term success of the leadership programme and longer-term benefits to mentees from the mentorship programme. Lack of Indigenous participants mean diverse cultural perspectives on the ADLDP need further exploration. Despite these limitations the current findings provided rich qualitative evidence from a bespoke programme designed to develop the next generation of academic nurse and midwifery leaders.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated a leadership development programme undertaken in the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand academic faculty context. Recommendations were

provided to the CDNM (Australia and New Zealand) to strengthen the existing ADLDP. The findings provide empirical evidence in the under-researched area of nursing leadership development and contributes to a global need for a resilient and sustainable academic workforce to support and educate future nursing graduates.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to all participants who contributed to this re-search

Funding

CDNM funded the ADLDP. No funding was received for this evaluation.

Conflict of interest

None

Submitted: May 01, 2025 NZST. Accepted: July 28, 2025 NZST.

Published: August 28, 2025 NZST.



This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CCBY-4.0). View this license's legal deed at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> and legal code at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode> for more information.

References

- Ard, N., & Beasley, S. F. (2022). Mentoring: A key element in succession planning. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing, 17*(2), 159–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2022.01.003>
- Busby, R. K., Draucker, C. B., & Reisling, D. L. (2022). Exploring mentoring and nurse faculty: An integrative review. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 38*, 26–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2021.11.006>
- Davidson, E. J. (2025). *Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation*. Sage.
- East, L., Halcomb, E., Terry, D., Jackson, D., & Hutchinson, M. (2024). The Australian nursing and midwifery academic workforce: A cross-sectional study. *Nurse Education in Practice, 81*, Article 104156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2024.104156>
- Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1998). *Evaluating training programs: The four levels*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Lee, J. L., Logan, L., Pajarillo, E. J. Y., Kubanick, V. A. E., Brown, F., Kabigting, E.-N. R., Santee, R., Doria, J. B., Seibold-Simpson, S., & Bajwa, M. (2024). Addressing the shortage of academic nurse educators: Enlisting public and business sectors as advocates. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing, 29*(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol29No02Man02>
- Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2018). *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Nowell, L., Norris, J. M., Mrklas, K., & White, D. E. (2017). A literature review of mentorship programs in academic nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 33*(5), 334–344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2017.02.007>
- Stockmann, C., Ford, N., & Peterson, K. (2024). Nursing faculty well-being: A qualitative study. *International Journal for Human Caring, 28*(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.20467/IJHC-2022-0034>
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*, 237–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021-2025*. Author. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240033863>

Appendix C

To:

From: Members of the research team

Subject: Developing Future Leaders. The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, a Process Evaluation.

Kia ora, (enter manager name here) the research team and I are undertaking an evaluation project of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme for the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australian & New Zealand). This evaluation will involve an online interview with an employee within your organisation. These employees are mentees and mentors within the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme. Information collected will be confidential. This study gained ethics approval from the AUT Ethics Committee, approval number 23/339 and the appropriate consent process will occur prior to the interview process.

We seek your permission to interview employees who agree to participate in the study. Please contact Professor Stephen Neville if you have any questions or concerns.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ngā mihi nui

Megan Langford

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *19.12.23*, AUTECH
Reference number *23/339*.

Appendix D

Interview questions for the Mentees participating within the ADLP		
Key Evaluation questions	Criteria	Interview questions
Questions for mentees.		
To what extent is the design of the mentoring programme relevant for meeting the needs of mentors, mentees and Deans/Heads of Schools?	Content areas Flow of content Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How relevant were the topic areas to developing nursing and/or midwifery leadership? 2. What did you think about the presentation of the topics? - Were the topics presented logically? 3. How did the mix of face-to-face, online, individual, and group delivery modes meet your needs? 4. Was there anything that could have been done differently to meet your needs?
What has been the impact of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme on mentees and mentors and Deans/Heads of Schools?	Mentees: 1. leadership traits 2. Career planning 3. Professional development needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. In what ways did completing the program help you understand your leadership style? 6. How will you incorporate this into current and future roles? 7. How relevant was the career planning process to your development as a nursing/midwifery leader? Could you give me an example? 8. Could you elaborate on the specific ways in which your involvement in the developing professional development activities contributed to your career aspirations? 9. Overall, how has the programme impacted on your development as a leader? How/why? Can you give me an example?
What have been highlights and success factors of the programme?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. What aspects of the programme did you find most beneficial to your development as a leader? 11. Can you give me an example how this aspect developed your leadership attributes/skills? 12. What were the highlights of the programme for you? Why?
What challenges were experienced during the programme?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. What challenges/difficulties/issues did you experience participating in this programme? 14. Why did these challenges and/or difficulties arise?
What would improve the experience and outcomes?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. What would improve the experience and outcomes? 16. What could be done differently next time to improve the programme?
How is the program designed to incorporate the needs of Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. The programme did not have any participants who were indigenous, how could the ADLP be designed in the future to be relevant to indigenous peoples (Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders)?

Appendix E

Invitation to Participate

To:

From: Members of the research team

Subject: Developing Future Academic Leaders. The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, a Process Evaluation.

Hello, we are members of a research team undertaking an evaluation project of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme for the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand). The research team is led by Professor Stephen Neville, the principal investigator within this project. Professor Stephen Neville, Dr. Sara Napier, experience evaluation researchers, and Megan Langford (a student researcher) will collect the data for the evaluation. Megan Langford will collect the interview data from the mentees involved in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, this will then be used in a Master of Health Science thesis through Auckland University of Technology. Megan will be supervised by Dr Sara Napier (primary supervisor) and Professor Stephen Neville (external supervisor).

This research seeks to evaluate the quality and success of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development programme by individually interviewing mentors, mentees, Deans/Heads of Schools, the executive coach, and the CDNМ executive. Findings will inform the CDNМ of the quality, and relevance of the programme and how it can be improved to develop future leaders. The CDNМ provides leadership to academics in higher education, is at the forefront of innovation within nursing and midwifery education and is highly dedicated to developing and inspiring future leaders through supporting the delivery of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme.

A global nursing and midwifery shortage exists, and academic faculty are not immune to its effects. The Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) supports succession planning through the delivery of an Aspiring Dean's Leadership Programme (ADLP). Formal academic mentorship programmes are a rarity, but an important component of supporting nursing and midwifery workforce development. The findings will provide important insights to the CDNM (Australia & New Zealand) on how the programme may be strengthened to develop future leaders.

We seek volunteers who are employed within your academic institution and are involved in the ADLP in the role of mentor, mentee, Dean/Head of school, executive coach, and CDNM executive. A range of roles, backgrounds, and experiences are sought to add richness to the results.

We would like to interview participants individually via Microsoft Teams (online) which will last approximately 60 minutes. The interview will include open questions related to the participant's experience, roles, goals, professional growth, challenges, and suggestions for improvements in relation to the ADLP. All identifying information about each participant, including their place of employment, will remain confidential throughout the process and will not be published in the findings. The information shared will not be shared with any third party.

The project will be guided by an expert research team. Ethics will be gained from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

If you are interested in participating in this study or have further questions, please contact:

Professor Stephen Neville	Professor and Head of Domain Nursing. Te Pukenga. stephen.neville@tepukenga.ac.nz	021 995 689
Dr. Sara Napier	Senior Lecturer Auckland University of Technology sara.napier@aut.ac.nz	022 069 7937
Megan Langford	megan.langford@nmit.ac.nz	027 868 5309

Regards,

Megan Langford.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **19th December 2023**,
AUTEC Reference number **23/339**.

Appendix F

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

20th September 2023

Project Title

Developing Future Academic Leaders. The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, a Process Evaluation.

Hello, we are members of a research team undertaking an evaluation project of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme for the Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand). The research team is led by Professor Stephen Neville, the principal investigator within this project. Professor Stephen Neville and Dr Sara Napier, experienced evaluation researchers, and Megan Langford, a student researcher, will collect the interview data for the evaluation. Megan Langford will collect data from the mentees involved in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme; this will then be used in a Master of Health Science thesis through Auckland University of Technology. Megan will be supervised by Dr Sara Napier (primary supervisor) and Professor Stephen Neville (external supervisor). You are invited to participate in this evaluation research project. Your participation is voluntary. Thank you for taking time to consider this opportunity.

The information below is provided so that you can make an informed decision about being a participant in this study. Your participation is voluntary and will not advantage or disadvantage your employment.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study aims to identify the perceptions, and experiences of stakeholders participating in the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme, and what, if any, are the key factors contributing to its success. We would like to know your perceptions and experiences of the programme. The findings from the study will provide empirical evidence and insights to the Council of Deans (Australia and New Zealand) executives on how the program could be strengthened in the future. Findings from this research will be used for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

As a member of the Aspiring Deans Leadership Programme, whether as a mentor, mentee, Dean/Head of School, or executive, you will have been invited to participate in this study. Your participation in this research project is voluntary and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. If you are reading this information sheet you will have been contacted by the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme secretariat by email. You will have two weeks to consider your participation in the evaluation and confirm your participation

with the secretariat. The secretariat will send a follow-up email or call you after 2 weeks to remind you if you have not responded. If you agree to participate in an interview, you are invited to contact one of the researchers from the contact details at the bottom of this information sheet.

You can withdraw from the study without providing a reason. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, you are invited to contact one of the research team listed at the bottom of this information sheet either by email or phone call. You will have two weeks to consider your participation in the evaluation and confirm your participation with the secretariat. During this time, you are invited to ask the research team questions about the study. The secretariat will send a follow-up email or call you after 2 weeks to remind you if you have not responded. Your participation in this research is voluntary and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the research project at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the research project, you will be offered the choice of having any data collected from you in the interview removed or allowing it to be used. However, once the findings have been produced it will not be possible to remove data.

What will happen in this research?

If you choose to participate you will be involved in a one-on-one online interview using Microsoft Teams, which is expected to take one hour. This can be in a location that best suits you and can take place at a time negotiated by you the participant and the researcher. The interviews will be conversational in style and will be recorded for transcription purposes only. Your consent to participate will be gained by signing an electronic consent form sent to you by email prior to the interview. You will also receive an outline of the interview questions which you will be asked. You will only be asked questions pertaining to the objective of this study and the information you share will only be used for this research project. Your information will not be shared with any third party. Following the interview process, you will be offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the interview transcript via email to ensure your insights have been collected as you intended. You will have up to a week after you receive the transcript to inform if there are any changes or amendments. If we do not hear from you after one week, we will assume you do not require any changes.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The interview will involve discussion around your experiences during your time on the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme. While some questions may raise challenging or difficult experiences, you do not have to disclose information that is uncomfortable or that may cause personal distress. You may choose not to answer questions or discontinue the interview at any time. This will be your choice. It is not anticipated that there will be any risks involved in your participation in this research project. Your perspectives will be respected as your own opinions.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If feelings of discomfort or distress occur, you have the right to decline to answer any questions, and the interview can be paused or terminated without any negative consequences. Should discomforts or stress arise, you will be prompted to access the well-being services provided by your employer.

Alternatively, AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health can offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions

are only available for issues that have arisen directly because of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services in person or online, you will need to:

- Drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus or email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9292.
- Let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of the research and name and contact details as given in this information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

This research has the potential to benefit you by promoting self-reflection on your role and experience in the mentorship programmes. Considering the global shortage within the nursing and midwifery profession, this research has the potential to benefit nursing and midwifery academic organisations by enabling them to implement similar programmes. This research will also contribute to the expanding knowledge base concerning leadership and mentoring programmes in New Zealand. This research will also form part of a Master of Health Science thesis and qualification.

How will my privacy be protected?

Maintaining your confidentiality is of great importance to the research team. All information collected during the research project will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we will not use your name or place of employment. Instead, an anonymous identification code will be used. Access to information that links your personal details to the identification code will remain confidential to members of the research team members directly involved in collecting and analysing interview data, Professor Stephen Neville, Dr Sara Napier and Megan Langford. Given the limited size and nature of the cohort being interviewed for this evaluation, the research team acknowledges that in some cases limited confidentiality can be offered especially for those in executive roles. Notwithstanding, all endeavours will be made to limit disclosure of participants identity. Interview data will be kept securely online and separate from the consent forms so that information cannot be linked to specific individuals. Your contact details will be stored securely on AUT OneDrive on password protected computers to maintain your privacy and destroyed after six years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost to you is your time. We expect the interview will take up to 60 minutes at a time most convenient for you.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please consider this invitation for up to two weeks from receiving this information sheet. You will receive a follow-up email or phone call from the Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme secretariat if there has been no response within this timeframe. Please contact one of the research team listed below via email to discuss any questions you have before you agree to participate.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Once the study is complete, a written report will be available to all participants. If you would like to have a copy of this report, your details will be collected from the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Primary Investigator Professor Stephen Neville stephen.neville@tepukenka.ac.nz mob: 021 995 689.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Principal investigator, Professor Stephen Neville, stephen.neville@tepukenka.ac.nz Mob: 021 995 689

Students Supervisor, Dr Sara Napier, sara.napier@aut.ac.nz, mob: 022 069 7937

Student Megan Langford, Langfordmegan6@gmail.com mob: 027 868 5309

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *19th December 2023*,
AUTEK Reference number *23/339*.**

Appendix G

Consent Form

Project title: Developing Future Academic Leaders. The Aspiring Deans Leadership Development Programme, a Process Evaluation.

Principal Investigator: **Professor Stephen Neville**

Research Team: **Professor Stephen Neville, Dr. Sara Napier, Megan Langford**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that participating in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged.
- I understand that given the size and nature of the cohort being interviewed for this evaluation, the research team acknowledges that in some cases limited confidentiality may be offered especially for those in executive roles.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study, I will be offered the choice between removing any data that is identified as belonging to me or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research: Yes No
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please pick one): Yes No

Participant signature:

.....

Participant name:

.....

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19.12.23, AUTEK
Reference number 23/339.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.