

Mastery of leadership competencies: leader led learning or mentorship?

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Disclosure

- **Author : Mrs S Peters (Supervisor: Professor MC Bezuidenhout)**
- **Information presented is an extract from my Masters dissertation : Mentorship in Health Services Leadership. The approach being presented today has not been published or presented at any other conference**
- **Employer : Gauteng Department of Health : Ann Latsky Nursing College (Located in the Gauteng Province : South Africa)**
- **Currently employed as a lecturer for undergraduate students**
- **The presenter has no conflict of interests**
- **Session Objectives :**
 - **Identify the role of leader led learning in development of leadership competencies**
 - **Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of mentorship in leadership development**

INTRODUCTION

- **This research was conducted in two provinces in South Africa, the objective of which was:**
 - **To identify leadership competencies required by health services leaders**
 - **Determine the role of mentorship in leadership development**
- **The target group : Health Services leaders from level 11 upwards (SA Public Services – Deputy Director and up)**
- **This presentation demonstrates the relationship of leadership development to experience or leader led learning and mentorship.**

Literature review

- **The concepts leadership, management, leadership development, mentorship and mentorship models were explored**
- **International and local studies, reinforced the significance of mentorship in the preparation of health care professionals for leadership positions.**
- **Models of Mentorship analysed demonstrated the following common threads:**
 - **Guidance of mentees**
 - **Demonstration of caring so that the mentee reached his/her full potential and utilise communication skills to optimise outputs.**
- **The focal points of these models were:**
 - **Learning through insight**
 - **Utilisation of relationships to bring about change**
 - **The significance of feedback from a mentor or colleague**

Methodology

- **A quantitative approach using an exploratory and descriptive design was used.**
- **A census survey was conducted to obtain the relevant data. Some researchers consider surveys to be shallow in that they do not add to the depth of scientific knowledge (Burns & Grove 2009:245). However, Polit and Beck (2006:241), rate surveys as highly flexible and applicable to many populations, and emphasise the fact that surveys can focus on a wide range of topics.**
- **A survey was selected in this study to reach a population that was widely distributed geographically.**

Methodology - continued

- **A questionnaire to assess leadership competencies was developed (based on the American College of Health Care Executives' questionnaire)**
- **Validity was confirmed through expert opinion**
- **A pre-test was conducted to validate reliability.**
 - **The outcome of statistical analysis using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .86 - .93 for the competencies assessed (0.7 confirms reliability)**
- **For the main study:**
 - **The questionnaire & information letter was dispatched to participants via e-mail**
 - **The participants were requested to conduct a self assessment of their leadership competencies on taking office and at the time of completing the questionnaire (requested to rate themselves as *novice/competent/expert*)**

Leadership competencies assessed

- **Communication and relationship management**
 - **Communication is an inherent competence in leadership.**
- **Leadership skills and behaviour**
 - **Goleman (1998:94) speaks to a leader needing strategic vision. Sinoris (2010:1) – “leadership is the single most important driver in overall organisational performance”**
- **Human Resources Planning**
 - **Leaders in health services are highly dependent on human resources to ensure optimal service delivery.**
- **Financial Planning**
 - **As much as the public sector institutions are non-profit driven, health services leaders are accountable for the finances allocated from government funding.**
- **Strategic Planning**
 - **This competence is key to efficient use of resources for improvement of outputs, both corporate & clinical**

Results

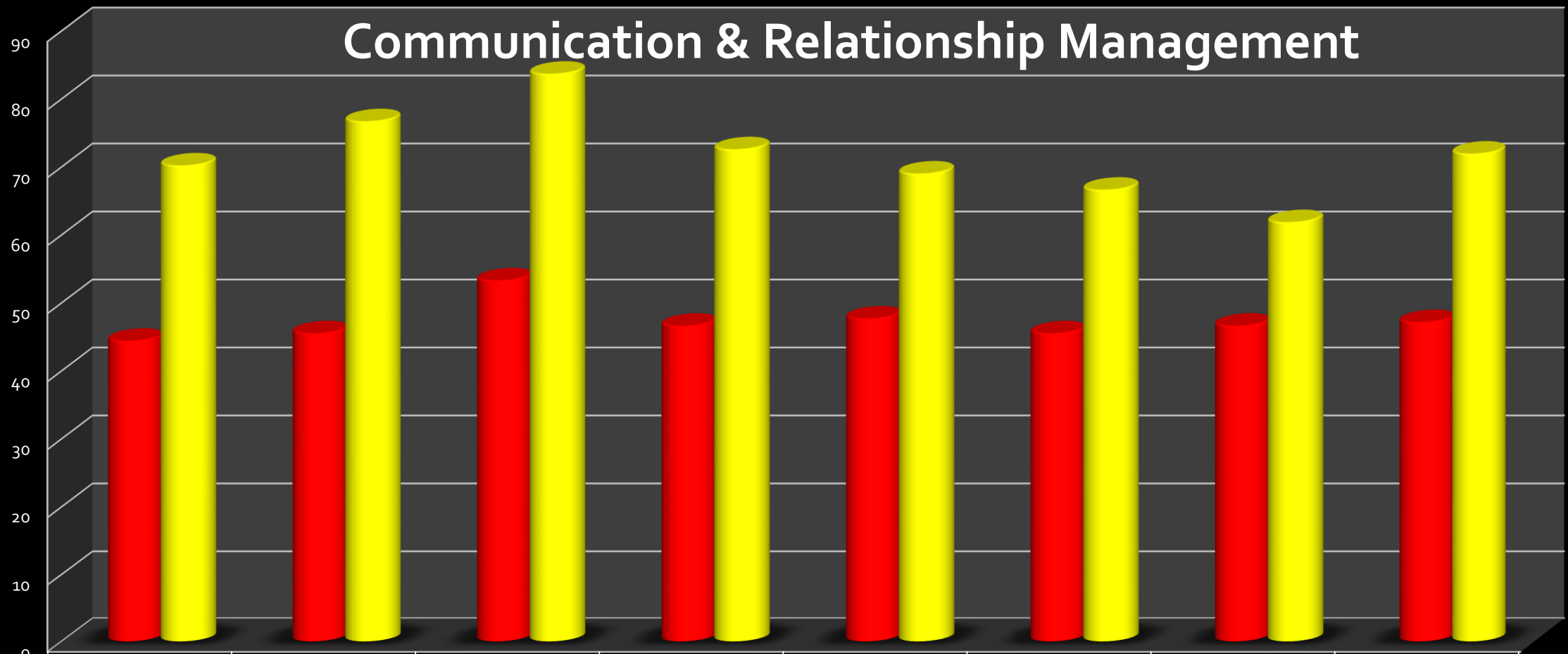
- **Data, collected via e-mail (30% response rate: 46 out of 153) was submitted to a statistician for analysis**
- **Each competence comprised a range of skills**
- **The average for each skill over the two periods was calculated (*novice, competent & expert converted to 0%, 50% & 100% respectively*) &**
- **Subsequently the average of the competence**
- **Comparisons were made for the two periods and the significance of the differences was determined (initially an Analysis of Variance was conducted and this was further subjected to Two Sample T- Testing to determine the significance of the differences)**
- **As an illustration one competence including the skills and the results obtained will be presented**
- **Thereafter a comparison of the competence from the self assessments will be discussed**

Results: Communication & Relationship Management (N=45)

- Of the 45 respondents 20 and 22.44 percent of the respondents considered themselves as novices in six of the listed skills in the first year of assumption of the position.
- *Shared decision-making* was the only skill in which respondents considered themselves to be *competent* (32; 71.11%) or *expert* (8; 17.78%), at the time of taking office as a manager.
- The average for each of the skills under *communication and relationship management* was calculated and the results demonstrated a general improvement of 25% in the skills over a period of time demonstrating a shift from *novice* to *expert* level.

Communication & Relationship Management

Percentage

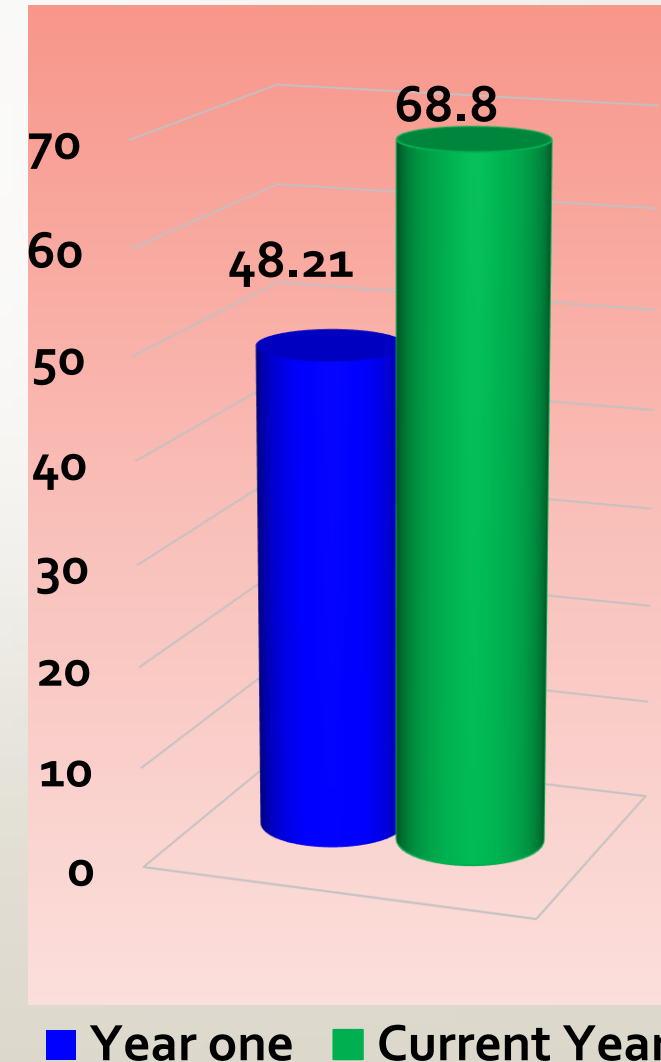


■ Year One	44.44	45.56	53.33	46.66	47.73	45.56	46.67	47.2
■ Current Year	70.24	76.74	83.73	72.62	69.05	66.67	61.9	71.98

LEADERSHIP

- **Nine listed leadership skills improved, indicating the positive influence of experience on the respondents' competence.**
- **Overall improvement of 20.9%**
- **The demand for optimal performance in health care services could be a motivating factor for this trend. Sinioris (2010:1) states that “leadership is the single most important driver of overall organisational performance”.**
- **The complex nature of health services demands effective leadership**
- **Resources to manage the changes are limited and these, among other factors, impacts on the success or failure of leaders in the health sector**

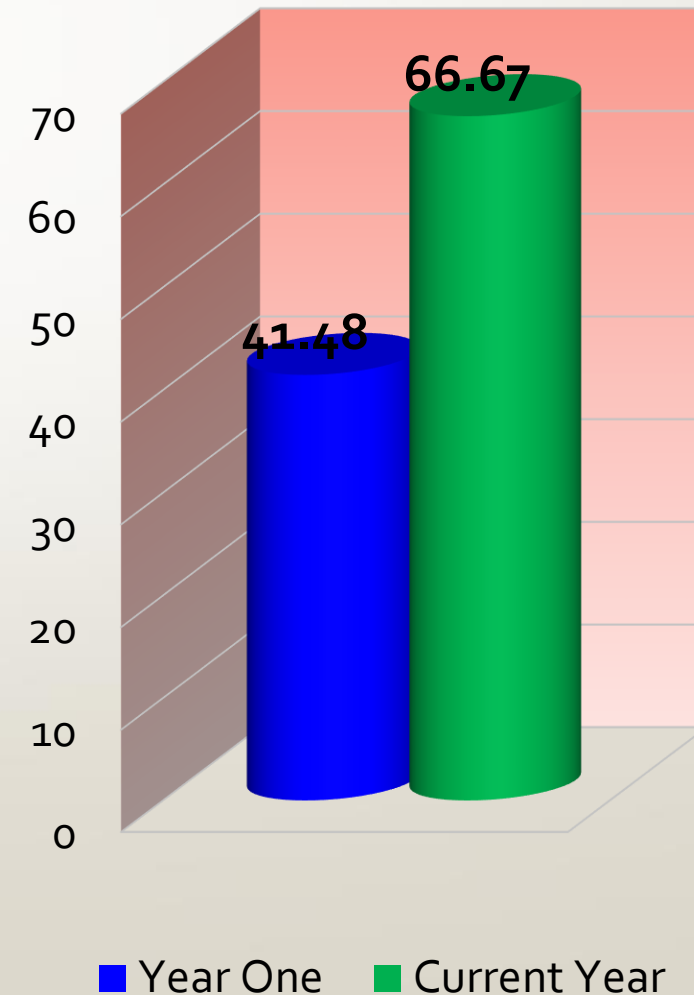
Self assessment of leadership



HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING

- **Between 24.44 and 28.89% of the respondents initially considered themselves as *novices* in three listed skills.**
- **However, the respondents' competency in the listed HR skills improved from that of novice to expert**
- **A **25%** general improvement was noted for this competence**
- **Health services leaders have many policy guidelines and legislation on which to base planning which demands engagement for success in compliance**
- **In the public health sector in South Africa each Provincial Department of Health has to plan and manage resources within a financial year cycle**

Self Assessment of HR Planning



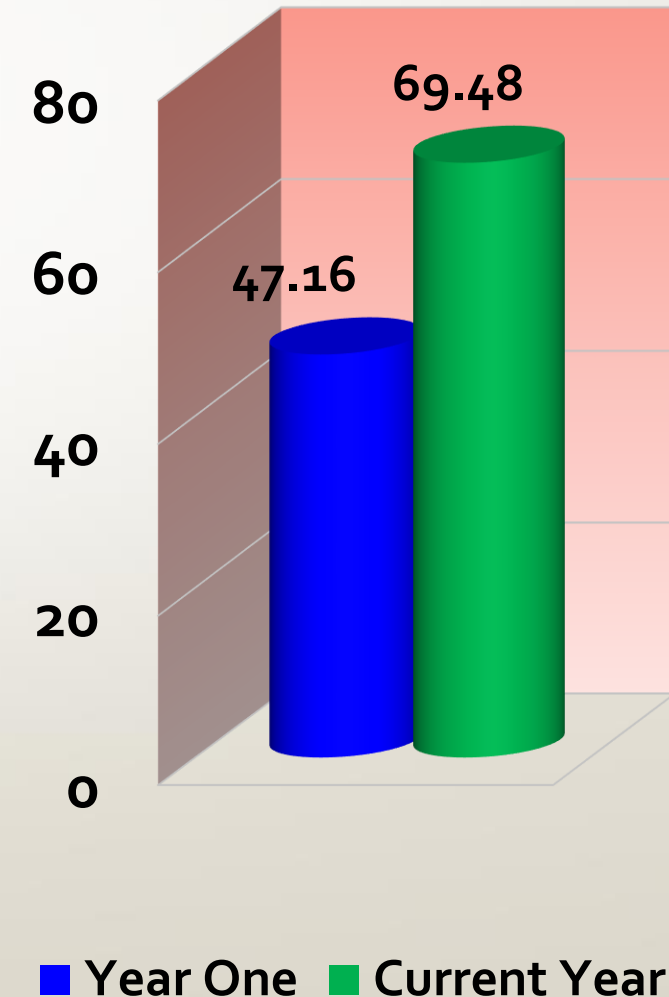
FINANCIAL PLANNING

- There was overall improvement in *financial planning* is **22.32%** which was quite a marked improvement.

Possible reasons :

- Financial planning is governed by a well defined regulatory framework
- Monitoring & evaluation is guided by a system of checklists and regular reports.
- Structured guidelines are in place as reference sources for health services managers in leadership positions
- Compliance to the regulatory framework is dependent on the manager being familiar with the contents

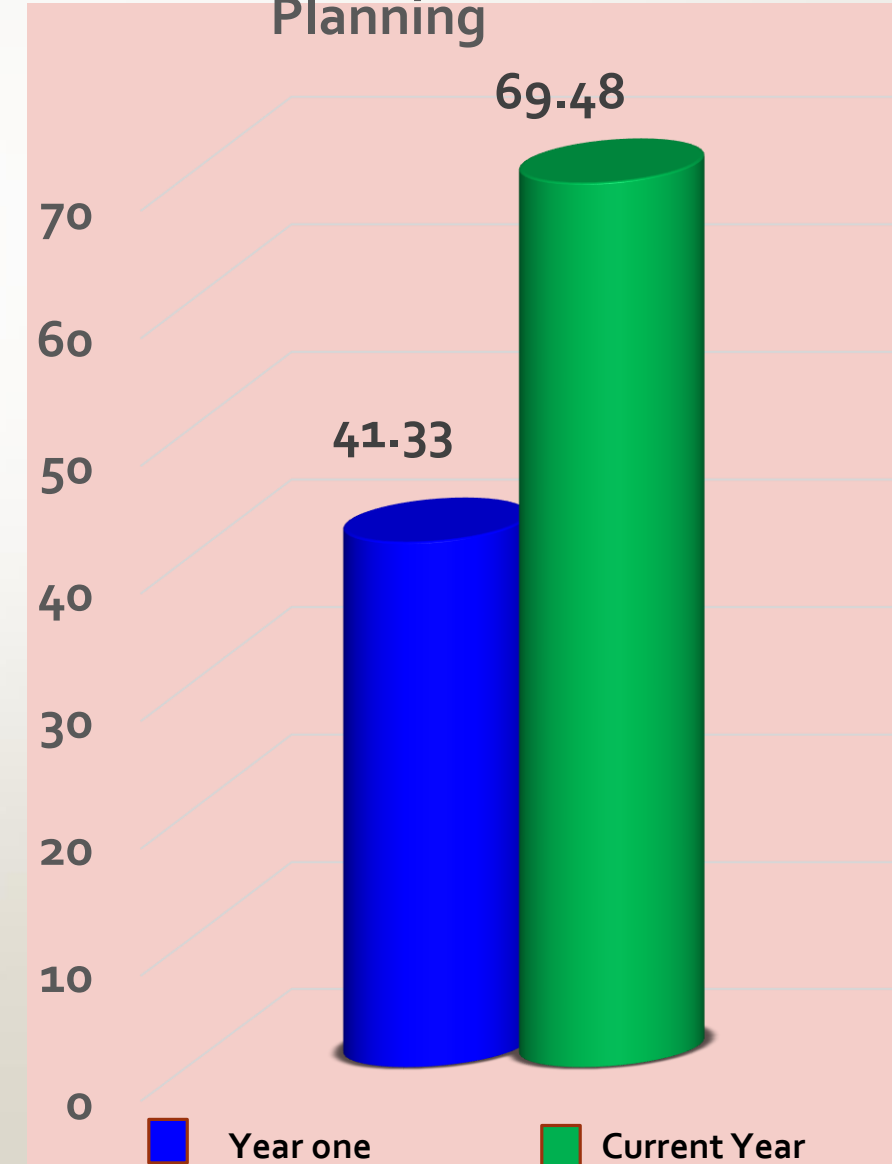
Self Assessment of Financial Planning



STRATEGIC PLANNING

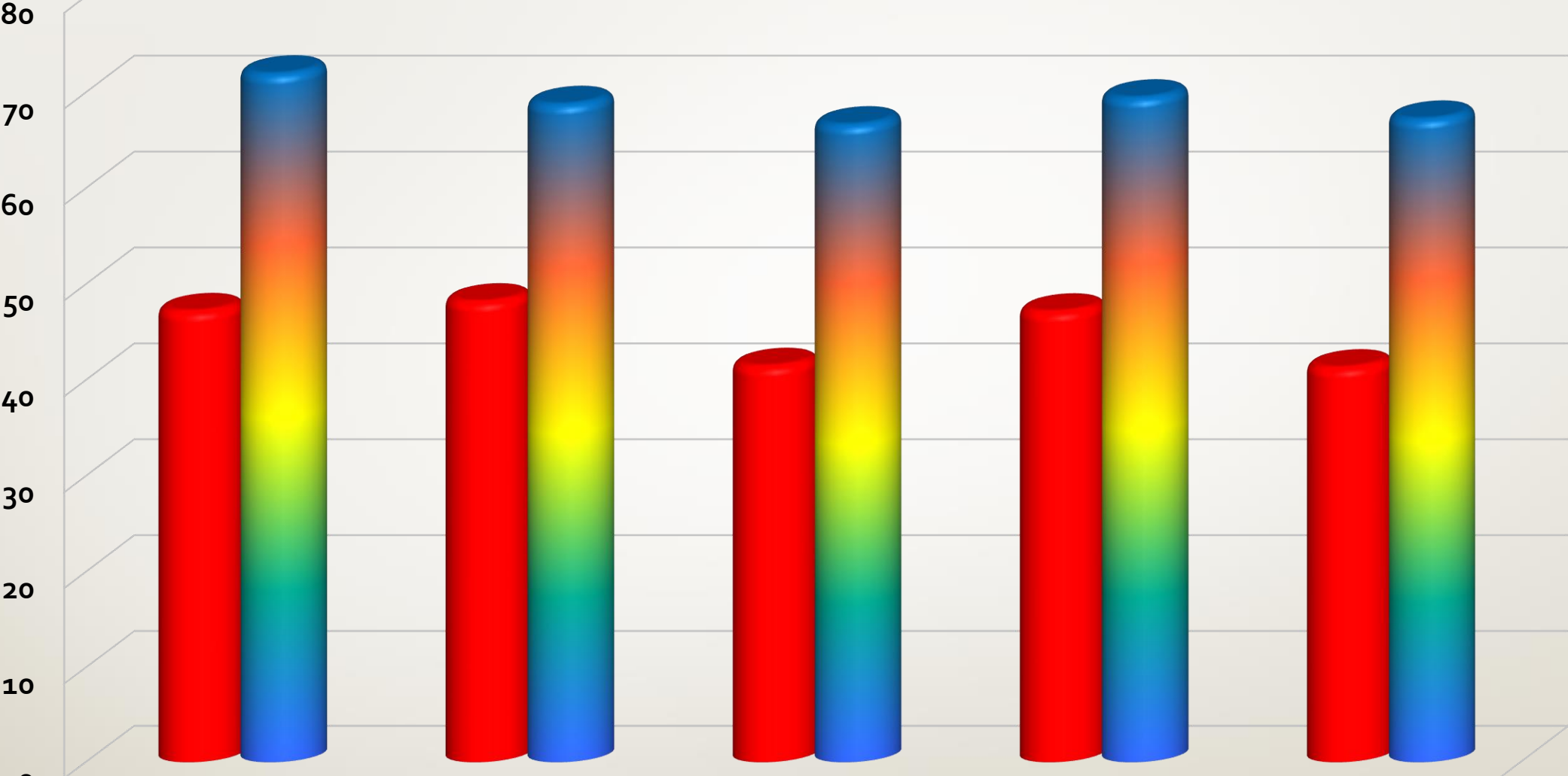
- There was an overall improvement of **26%**
 - Health services managers are compelled to have a strategic plan in place to motivate for optimal budgets.
 - Financial requests are linked to specific health outcomes and outputs that need to be achieved.
 - Thus managers are expected to provide evidence of achievements for the previous or current financial year in which the bid is being made.
 - This reinforces the link between *strategic planning* and financial management.
- According to Yoder-Wise (2011:311), the success of a strategic plan is developing a business plan which is integrated with a financial plan.

Self Assessment: Strategic Planning



Comparison of leadership competencies over time

PERCENTAGES



■ First Year
■ Current Year

Communication

Leadership

HR

Financial planning

Strategic planning

TEST FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- **A paired t-test was conducted to establish the significance of the overall improvement in the rating**
- **The results of the t-test confirmed that improvement was significant in the five listed leadership competencies with the p-values being less than 5%.**

The effect of mentorship on leadership competencies

- Ten (21.74%) respondents participated in mentorship programmes.
- A two sample t-test was conducted to test which leadership competencies were lacking in managers not exposed to mentorship
- At a less than 5% level of significance, *leadership skills behaviour, human resources planning and communication and relationship management* were lacking in the first year in the group that was not exposed to mentorship
- At a $\leq 5\%$ level of significance, *leadership skills and behaviour and, communication and relationship management* were still lacking after two or more years in the post for these leaders

Discussion

- **This study reinforced the need for mentorship (limited to competencies & skills regarded as soft skills)**
- **Of the 5 competencies , two (leadership skills and communication and relationship management) were not significantly improved in leaders that did not undergo mentorship programmes**
 - **The specific skills of ‘ fostering trust’ encouraging commitment and promoting team work showed the lowest rate of improvement (12.53%, 16.01% and 17.63% respectively)**
- **This reinforced the need for mentorship for leaders**

Discussion - continued

- Evidence also demonstrated an improvement in three of the competencies assessed in both groups (*HR, Financial & Strategic Planning*)
- Suggests that leader led learning played a significant role in self development
- Orvis, KA and Ratwani, KL (2010:661) explored learner engagement – quote Knowles:1980 and Kraiger:2003 – activity that demands learner effort and engagement – promotes learning, retention & transfer of information
- Engagement in practice directs an individuals cognitive processes
- Progress evaluation and feedback makes a positive impact on progress toward own learning

Discussion – cont.

- **The participants in this research were either heads of smaller health institutions or heads of specific programmes**
- **Part of their role expectations was the presentation of progress reports on a quarterly basis as accountability for achievement of outcomes (linked to expenditure)**
- **This meant working with operational staff - reinforcing the principles of:**
 - **engagement in practice**
 - **The role of progress evaluation toward own learning**
- **The researcher's own observation of the presentation of regular monitoring and evaluation reports to stakeholders was that progressive positive feedback was given to leaders**
- **However, this observation will need to be further researched to confirm whether this can be generalised especially where there are no formal programmes for development in place**

Conclusion

- **Orvis, K and Ratwani, KL (2010:658) explored the pressures faced by organisations to move toward self-development to supplement formal leader development programmes.**
- **Leader – led development could be :**
 - **Voluntarily self initiated**
 - **Organisation driven**
- **However, the authors also quote McCauley (2001) – who speaks to leader development through job experiences**
- **There is adequate data on the quantity of leader development activities that leaders engage in**

However, the challenge for further research is confirming the effectiveness including cost effectiveness of self development activities

