A Qualitative Study of Past Student-Participants' Perceptions of College Mentoring Relationships: A Case Within a Hospitality College

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PAST STUDENT-PARTICIPANTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE WITHIN A HOSPITALITY COLLEGE

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Study of Past Student-Participants’ Perceptions of College Mentoring Relationships: A Case Within a Hospitality College

by

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The hospitality industry, encompassing both tourism and leisure segments, has become the world’s largest employer. As such, there is a workforce need to develop leadership bench strength through degree programming at the university level. Preparing future leaders for careers in the hospitality industry as part of university curriculum is particularly challenging as operational practices, leadership competencies, and interpersonal skills are often not instructed in the classroom environment, yet are a critical element of supervisory performance. Workforce development perspectives suggest that mentoring is a development tool to narrow programming gaps in university curriculum.

The study explores past student-participants’ relationship experiences in a formal hospitality college mentor program and their perceptions of how the mentoring relationship prepared them for hospitality employment at a supervisory level post-graduation. Under examination are the relationships formed through participation in a formal mentoring program within the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The study’s primary representation was drawn from past student-participants of the mentoring program who currently hold supervisory positions within the hospitality industry. The data collected through qualitative methodology including
interviews, focus groups, and document review was analyzed using the content analysis method incorporating open, axial, and selective coding. In the analysis of the primary study representation, past student-participants, a domain analysis was also completed for each research question. The conceptual models of Kram’s career-related and psychosocial mentoring functions and Bandura’s self-efficacy construct assisted in understanding the complexities of college mentoring relationships and its contribution to developing students for supervisory employment within the hospitality industry post-graduation.

Findings illustrated the activity themes of a structured relationship, exposure to opportunities, completion of work assignments, participation in learning discussions, and school assistance intertwined with the mentor behaviors of time and accessibility, coaching, care for the student, serving as a role model, and employment sponsorship to form a meaningful experience for the past student-participant. The perceived development aspect of the relationship focused on gaining an insider’s perspective and was characterized as a real-world experience, realistic job preview, and increased confidence through a broad based understanding of how work is accomplished in the hospitality environment and awareness of the expectations of managers in reaching organizational goals. The perceived long-term impact was described as personal and professional development through acquiring different management perspectives, influencing employment and career path, and a continuing relationship.
DEDICATION

Everything I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.

- Abraham Lincoln

For the luckiest of children, parents are their first mentors. I don’t know how I was such a lucky girl. I was blessed to have a Mom that was my biggest fan and supported both my dreams and me unconditionally. My life’s goal is to be the person my Mom believed me to be.

Mom, this one is for you. I know you are looking down from Heaven and smiling.

If flowers grow in Heaven, Lord, then pick a bunch for me.

Then place them in my Mother’s arms and tell her they’re from me.

Tell her that I love and miss her and when she turns to smile,

Place a kiss upon her cheek and hold her for a while.

- Unknown
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

_Monica_ saved my life, period. When I started the mentoring program, little did I know what a huge affect on my life she would have. Life had me feeling depressed, unappreciated, and trapped. Along came _Monica_ and my life has been on an upswing ever since. I have learned things about the hotel industry that I wouldn't have without her encouragement. _Monica_ is nurturing my career path and I know I will be successful in my endeavors because of her. If ever I need or want anything _Monica_ is there. This year went by too fast, but I know I have a mentor for life. _Monica_ has gone above and beyond just being my mentor. She is also my friend. [Student-Participant, Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

The powerful words from a student-participant of a collegiate hospitality mentoring program depicting a mentoring relationship that had a professional and personal impact. The topic of mentoring relationships has been explored in academic journals and non-academic publications including extensive studies in the general business environment (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2002) and academics (Asbee & Woodall, 2000; Cross, 1998; Goodland, 1998; Hughes & Fahy, 2009). However, no studies have provided in-depth analysis of formal college mentoring relationships within hospitality institutions and its perceived impact on long-term career development. Students pursuing careers in hospitality management require knowledge and skills in operations, leadership, and interpersonal relations often not learned in the classroom environment (Kay & Russette, 2000; Raybould & Wilkin, 2005). Although not previously researched in hospitality institutions, mentoring relationships have been shown to fill professional development gaps in college and university curriculum (Friedman et al., 2004; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Jowett & Stead, 1994).

The lack of hospitality-specific research provided an opportunity to examine mentoring relationships through a lens that takes into account the interpersonal,
leadership, and operational complexities of hospitality management. The current study contributes to the knowledge of formal mentoring programs and its impact on hospitality workforce readiness resulting in a broader dialogue about the mentoring relationship and how student-participants’ perceptions can shape the direction of future programming.

This dissertation study sought to understand (a) experiences of past student-participants of a formal hospitality college mentor program and (b) their perceptions of how the relationship prepared them for hospitality employment at a supervisory capacity post-graduation. Through the use of case study approach, the researcher identified aspects of the mentoring relationships that held meaning for the participants, which enhanced understanding of relationship qualities that cultivated hospitality workforce competencies and prepared students for supervisory positions in hospitality post-graduation.

**Study Overview and Context**

Mentoring relationships date back to ancient Greece with roots in Homer’s epic novel, *The Odyssey* (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip (2008) noted, “Throughout history, experienced people have taken an active interest in supporting the careers of their juniors” (p. 17). Since the early 1980s, mentoring has been institutionalized in educational and business environments (Johnson, Geroy, & Griego, 1999). The term “mentoring” has been used to describe a variety of development activities ranging from formal programming (Roberts, 2000) to informal assistance (Murray, 1991) and from intellectual development to career support (Blackwell, 1989). For the purpose of this study, mentoring is defined using two perspectives: (1) workforce perspective as a relationship between a junior colleague and a senior colleague that
contributes to career development (Kram, 1985) and (2) academic perspective as a relationship between older and younger students or a match between adult volunteers and students (Johnson et al., 1999).

The majority of mentoring literature is quantitative and focused on programming aspects (Hansford et al., 2002). Research studies have examined corporations that utilize mentoring as a means to promote employees’ individual growth and effectiveness (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2005; Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005; Hansford et al., 2002; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000), colleges that use mentoring programs to increase program retention and graduation rates (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008), and overall mentor program structure (Chao, 2009; D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006; Lyons & Oppler, 2004; McNamara & Rogers, 2000; Packard, 2003; Price, Graham, & Hobbs, 1997; Putsche, Storrs, Lewis, & Haylett, 2008). For example, Allen et al. (2006) used a 5-point scale to assess program effectiveness, mentor commitment, and program understanding and found that match input, receipt of training, and training quality all had a direct effect on the success of a mentoring program. Fagenson-Eland and Baugh (2001) utilized surveys and multivariate analysis of covariance to assess needs, self-esteem, and tension dissipation outcomes of mentoring relationships and concluded that personality characteristics are related to an individual assuming the mentee role. Lyons and Oppler (2004) examined structural attributes and demographic characteristics on mentee satisfaction using factor analysis of survey data and inferred that mentees were more satisfied with a mentoring program when they were paired with a mentor they had selected. Although quantitative data is useful to assess program aspects and outcomes,
the methodology is unable to address the complexities of mentorship, take into account the varied range of participant perceptions, or address situational aspects that may affect the mentoring relationship.

Researchers using qualitative approaches have provided in-depth insight into mentoring relationship components. For example, Fowler and O’Gorman (2005) found through in-depth analysis of interview data that personal and emotional guidance along with support, sponsorship, and advocacy were critical functions in a successful relationship. Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip (2008) analyzed personal reflections from participant journals finding that creation of emotional space to express concerns and needs, networking opportunities, establishing positive perceptions, and learning career balance methods were meaningful outcomes of the relationship. Storrs, Putsche, and Taylor (2008) described expectations versus realities through the use of metaphors. Their study discovered a gap between what participants expected in the experience and what was received. The gap focused on whether the mentor was able to address mentee needs and concerns. While previous qualitative research has added to the understanding of meaningful mentoring relationships, there is a lack of literature related specifically to hospitality mentoring relationships and its perceived impact on long-term career development. As hospitality institutions seek to qualify students for supervisory roles requiring operational, leadership, and interpersonal skills, there is a need to provide focused attention on this development function.

Statement of Problem

University administrators and faculty members believe their primary purpose is to educate and develop the mind to think critically, not to place students in jobs (Press &
Washburn, 2000). Although this viewpoint has merit, education without application means little in the world of business. Learning institutions have an ethical commitment to produce graduates who are employable in today’s workforce (Press & Washburn, 2000). As consumers question the high cost versus value of education, preparing students to meet workplace challenges and obtain gainful employment is a paramount concern (Wood, 2004). Additionally, as more employers become dissatisfied with college graduates, universities are experiencing pressure to connect curriculum with employer expectations (Jones, 2010). Increasingly, universities have a role in aligning learning to employer expectations and placing graduates in career-tracked employment, thus preparation for the workforce is a fair and legitimate goal.

The hospitality industry, encompassing both tourism and leisure segments, has become the world’s largest employer (Davidson, McPhail & Barry, 2011). Nearly 260 million jobs worldwide are directly or indirectly related to hospitality in sectors including accommodations, travel, food services, convention, recreation, and attractions (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011). As such, there is a workforce need to develop leadership bench strength through degree programming at the university level. Since 1922, hospitality management has been a viable major at the university level in the United States (Barrows, 1999). Hospitality education is defined as a “field of multidisciplinary study which brings the perspective of many disciplines, especially those found in the social sciences, to bear on particular areas of application and practice in the hospitality industry” (Riegel, 1995, p. 3). Hospitality education programs are intended to satisfy a need for future employees with specific industry skills, thus academics must meet industry expectations regarding workforce competencies (Raybould & Wilkins,
2005). Despite this need, Formica and McCleary (2000) found that employers in the hospitality industry expect higher levels of workplace skills than those recently encountered in hospitality management graduates. Raybould and Wilkin (2005) added that significant gaps exist between hospitality employers’ expectations and academics’ perceptions of the skills that graduates need. Hospitality students must balance operations and business acumen with strong interpersonal and leadership competencies (Bowen & Ford, 2004). Often, these skillsets are learned in practice versus the classroom environment (Alsop, 2002). Beyond hospitality work experience, Chi and Gursoy (2009) examined the academic factors important for career placement, and stressed that more than academic knowledge is needed to be successful in the search for post-graduation employment:

In today’s environment, achieving good academic performance is hardly enough to find a good job after graduation. In order to be competitive in the job market, hospitality students have to adopt aggressive approaches, such as building hospitality-related internship experiences, taking more course work, developing networking skills, and participating in extra-curricular activities like hospitality student clubs/societies, fund-raising initiatives, and community involvement. (p. 308)

Mentoring programs are designed to be a component of larger development programs at colleges and universities across the United States (Crisp & Cruz, 2009) and have been shown to fill socialization, professional development, and career programming gaps in college and university curriculum (Friedman et al., 2004; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Jowett & Stead, 1994). The coordination of a college mentoring program is an
administrative process that has been extensively researched (Allen et al., 2006; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999; D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007; Johnson & Ridley, 2004; Komosa-Hawkins, 2009; Smith, Howard, & Harrington, 2005; Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). However, fostering a meaningful relationship that narrows hospitality curriculum gaps and enhances a student’s workforce readiness requires a deeper analysis of the relationship aspects that are at the core of this development phenomenon.

**Purpose of Study**

In order for higher education administrators to prepare students for careers in hospitality management, an understanding of the importance of mentoring relationship aspects associated with workforce readiness and career success within the hospitality industry is needed. While the coordination and management of college mentoring programs have been researched in the general university environment, there is a gap in the literature within hospitality academia in regards to both the mentoring relationship itself and its impact on career development. Since the focus of college mentorship is on the student’s development, an understanding of mentoring relationship aspects begets an understanding of how the student-participant perceives the mentoring relationship. The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation.
Significance of Study

This study was conducted not only to understand student development through college mentoring relationships, but also to inform workforce development practice and research. Creswell (2007) wrote, “The strongest and most scholarly rationale for a study, I believe, comes from the scholarly literature: a need exists to add to or fill a gap in the literature or to provide a voice for individuals not heard in the literature” (p. 102). The study’s theoretical significance is threefold. First, a lack of published researched on college mentoring relationships in the hospitality environment exists. College students studying hospitality management provide a unique sample for mentor program analysis because bounded academic program relationships do not fall into the same bounded systems commonly experienced in business (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2005). Second, the average age of college students is between 18 and 24 years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012), which places the group into the Millennial generation, a group whose perceptions of mentoring have not been adequately researched. Finally, the study examined the mentoring process from a longer-term career perspective which has not been widely studied by examining past student-participants’ post-graduation perceptions of the relationships.

The study also has practical significance. The researcher identified the aspects of the mentoring relationships that held meaning for the participants and led to an understanding of aspects that cultivated hospitality workforce competencies and prepared students for supervisory employment post-graduation.
Study Models

A large array of mentoring programs exist in corporate and educational settings, yet no unifying theoretical framework binds the critical components of the mentoring relationship (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Given that a single theory did not emerge as a basis of the study, concepts from two theories were used to organize the case study.

The first model is based on Kathy Kram’s (1985) career-related and psychosocial mentoring functions. This seminal mentoring model was developed through the analysis of informal mentoring relationships in the business context. Rather than aligning to a particular theoretical framework, researchers reference Kram’s model as a basis for evaluating relationships (Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005; Hansford et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2005). Career-related functions of Kram’s model focus on the advancement of the mentee in his or her chosen career path. The dimensions of career-related mentoring are directly related to the mentor’s status within the organization and include a range of behaviors and activities including exposure, sponsorship, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments (Kram, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring functions focus on enhancing the mentee’s sense of competence and identity. Components of psychosocial mentoring relate to the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and mentee and include the behaviors and activities of role modeling, counseling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship (Kram, 1985).

The second model is based on Albert Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy construct. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as a person’s judgment regarding his or her ability to perform a function or activity. Self-efficacy is a primary component of Bandura’s (1986) social learning theory, which contends that behavior is strongly stimulated by self-
influence. The self-efficacy construct has been utilized as a backdrop to observational learning, modeling, and mentoring (Gage & Berliner, 1998; Eggen & Kauchak, 1997; Sexton & Griffin, 1997) and found to have positive implications for training outcomes (Bhatti & Kaur, 2010; Zhao & Namasivayam, 2009), skill acquisition (Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Falvy, & James, 1994), and managerial performance (Woods, Bandura, & Bailey, 1990).

Self-efficacy is a component of professional development and hospitality workforce readiness (Brownell, 2009). Bandura (1995) concluded that an individual’s “level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively the case” (p. 2). Self-efficacy has been linked to a number of workforce readiness variables including job performance and job satisfaction (Karatepe & Khan, 2007). By exerting influence through mentorship in spheres over which individuals can command some control, mentees are better able to realize desired futures and to forestall undesired ones (Bandura, 1995). The self-efficacy construct is particularly critical in professional colleges, such as hospitality, in which students are actively constructing their career paths throughout their academic process (Brown & Lent, 2005).

**Research Questions and Design**

The overarching research question providing foundation for this study was: *How do past student-participants of a formal hospitality college mentoring program perceive their mentoring relationships?* The focus was on both the relationship and its impact on post-graduation employment. To this end, the following questions and sub questions were developed to guide the study:
(1) How do participants describe mentoring activities (specified pursuits promoting the development of the student) and mentor behaviors (observable personal attributes of the mentor) experienced as part of the mentoring relationship?
   a. Why were the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors considered meaningful?

(2) How do participants perceive their development through the mentoring relationship?

(3) How do formal college mentoring relationships affect workplace competencies and prepare participants for hospitality employment at the supervisory level post-graduation?
   a. How do participants view the relationship post-graduation?
   b. How do participants perceive the impact of the relationship on supervisory employment post-graduation?

The case study approach was used in the design, collection, and analysis of the study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Both Creswell (2007) and Merriam (1998) defined case study as in-depth analysis in a bounded system. Yin (2009) noted that case study is the most effective method for studying a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, particularly when understanding encompasses important contextual conditions. In support of the use of case study within the educational environment, Freebody (2003) stated, “Case studies focus on one particular instance of educational experience and attempt to gain theoretical and professional insights from a full documentation of that instance” (p. 81). The research goal is to expand theories through particular instances of practice, not enumerate frequencies (Yin, 2009).
Perceptions of past student-participants who were involved in a mentoring relationship formed as part of the formal college mentoring program within the College of Hotel Administration (Hotel College) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) were the focus of this case study. The UNLV Hotel College is ranked as one of the top five professional programs in the world for hospitality education and has an enrollment of approximately 3,200 students (Hotel College, 2012; Severt, Tesone, Bottorff, & Carpenter, 2009). The case is unique as there are few ranked hospitality programs that facilitate formal mentoring relationships through a college mentoring program.

The case study approach relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulated fashion (Yin, 2009). As such, three data sources were used and the data was analyzed using the content analysis method. The study’s primary representation was past student-participants of the Hotel College Mentor Program who currently hold supervisory positions within the hospitality industry. A second representation was mentor-participants (industry-professionals) for the program who received a Mentor of the Year nomination submitted by student-participants as part of the end-of-the-program awards ceremony suggesting that he or she demonstrated behaviors and facilitated activities perceived by the student-participant as meaningful. The third data source was a document review of Mentor of the Year nominations and program materials including promotional pieces, correspondence, training guides, and evaluation forms.

Assumptions

Several assumptions related to the study of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry are listed. First, students who participate in development
opportunities, such as mentoring relationships, are focused on obtaining practical experiences that will enhance their study of hospitality and are motivated to make career connections with hospitality industry professionals. Second, since 2008, the formal college mentoring program selected for the study has used empirically researched administration and implementation practices allowing for a focus on the relationship components of the mentoring. Third, mentoring relationships promote the advancement of skills, career awareness, and confidence in one’s decision-making. Finally, study data collection and analysis allowed for the accurate reflection of the perceptions of the participants.

**Limitations of Study**

The research study was based on past student-participants’ perceptions of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry and may not be generalizable to college programs outside of the hospitality environment. In addition, since the study was specific to college mentoring relationships, the findings may not be generalizable to mentoring programs to promote employee growth and development facilitated within hospitality organizations or other lines of business.

**Delimitations of Study**

The following delimitations were imposed in the design of the study parameters in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality environment and the relationship’s impact on hospitality workforce readiness.

(1) The study was bounded to relationships within a single program.

(2) Interview, focus group, and document review was limited to an examination of mentoring relationships between the years of 2008 and 2011. The time
parameter’s significance was two-fold. First, since 2008, the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program has implemented administration processes empirically shown to have a positive impact on mentoring relationships including structured pairings, training, and evaluation (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Eby & Allen, 2002; Eddy et al., 2005; Hegstad & Wentling, 2004; Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). Second, the mentor relationships analyzed had a minimum of 1.5 years separation from the formal college mentoring program, providing a long-term perspective on the impact of this relationship.

(3) Interview study participants were limited to past student-participants who (a) participated in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor as part of his or her undergraduate hospitality studies; (b) graduated with a degree from the UNLV College of Hotel Administration; and (c) currently employed in a supervisory capacity within the hospitality industry.

(4) Focus Group study participants were limited to mentor-participants who (a) participated in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program and (b) received a Mentor of the Year nomination.

**Epistemology**

Epistemology is a philosophical assumption that the relationship between the researcher and the study is interrelated; as such the process of qualitative research is largely inductive (Creswell, 2009). Since the researcher’s background and paradigms shape the interpretation, it was important to understand the epistemology influencing the study. The researcher’s epistemology reflected a social constructivism view (Creswell, 2009). In outlining this view, Creswell (2009) stated, “Social constructivists hold
assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (p. 8). In keeping with this view, there is a belief that social behavior is interpretive and meaningful (Ritzer, 2010). Individuals have the ability to think about a situation, act, and reflect on outcomes. Using the social constructivist view, it was anticipated that the past student-participants would be able to reflect on mentoring relationship aspects that were meaningful for the relationship and best prepared them for supervisory careers in the hospitality industry post-graduation.

The researcher’s epistemology was reflected in the study’s purpose, design, and analysis. There was the potential for researcher bias due to the researcher’s administrative status in the college mentoring program under examination as well as previous experiences as both a mentee and a mentor. Strategies that were used in the study to decrease researcher’s bias included: the incorporation of multiple sources of evidence (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) including interviews with past student-participants reflecting on the mentoring experience, focus groups and interviews with mentor-participants discussing relationship aspects, and document analysis of nominations and program materials; open-ended questions to allow participants to share their views (Crotty, 1998); member checks of interview transcripts to ensure accuracy of responses and increase validity (Merriam, 1998); bracketing to separate the researcher’s personal views from those of the study participants (Creswell, 2007); inclusion of highly descriptive data of participants (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) including quotes from interviews and Mentor of the Year nominations; and an audit trail detailing how categories were derived and decisions were made throughout the study (Creswell, 2007)
Definition of Terms

The concepts explored in this study were broad and have numerous interpretations. For the purpose of this study, the research terms are defined below to narrow the focus and reduce ambiguity.

Activities

Activities are specified pursuits completed to promote the development of a mentee (Cohen, 1995).

Behaviors

Behaviors are observable personal attributes of the mentor that facilitate the mentoring relationship (Cohen, 1995).

Hospitality

Hospitality includes any and all businesses and services whose primary objective is serving people outside the home including food, lodging, recreation, and travel-related services (Barrow, 1999).

Mentee

A mentee is the receiver of attention from a mentor (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001).

Mentor

A mentor is an experienced person who serves as a role model and provides support, direction, and feedback regarding career plans and interpersonal development (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001).
Mentor-Participant

Mentor-participant is an industry professional that participated in a college mentor program in a mentor capacity.

Mentoring Relationship

A study completed by Crisp and Cruz (2009) found over 50 definitions for the term mentoring. Despite numerous definitions, Jacobi (1991) found general consensus among researchers on five mentorship components: (a) relationship is focused on the growth and accomplishments of an individual and includes several forms of assistance; (b) experience may include broad forms of support including professional and career development, role modeling, and psychological support; (c) the relationship is personal and reciprocal; (d) the relationship is personal requiring direct interaction between the mentor and mentee; and (e) relative to the mentee, mentors show greater experience, influence, and achievement within a particular environment.

Millennial Generation


Professional Development

Professional development is a process that enables individuals to narrow the gap between the existing and expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can sustain future career growth (Covey & Colosimo, 2009).

Student

Student is a person who attends a four-year university program.
Student-Participant

Student-participant is a hospitality management student who participated in a college mentor program while attending school.

Supervisory

Supervisory is a staff member who directs the work of line-level employees or facilitates project work (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2005).

Workforce Readiness

Workforce readiness is described as competencies that new entrants need to be successful in the workplace (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006).

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an introduction to the concept of mentoring. The rationale for the dissertation study was based on both the lack of workforce preparedness in university curriculum and the need to understand meaningful mentoring relationship aspects that prepare students for careers in hospitality management. Additionally, the chapter outlined purpose, questions, methodology, significance, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, epistemology, and terms of the study.

The next chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the study of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry. Included in the literature review is research on mentoring, the Millennial generation, competencies important for career-tracked hospitality employment, and models of mentoring and social learning that inform this study. Chapter 3 consists of an overview of the case study methodology and research design. The study’s design, research questions, selection of the case and participants,
data collection, data analysis, design quality considerations, and ethical considerations are discussed. Chapter 4 addresses key findings. The final chapter provides a summary of findings, theoretical and practical implications, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation. The perspective for the literature selected for this study is that of a student involved in a one-on-one relationship with a hospitality professional as part of a college mentoring program.

Research on the topic of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry is minimal. Despite the lack of research related to college mentoring in the hospitality industry, the literature on the broader concept of mentoring is expansive (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gentry, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Lather (1999) noted that the literature review is “not exhaustive; it is situated, partial, and perspectival” (p. 3). As such, business and academic mentoring, generational factors, and hospitality workforce competencies were synthesized for the literature review as these concepts have relevancy to college mentoring programs within the hospitality industry. The literature review is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of the concept of mentoring including history, definitions, program types, collegiate mentoring, mentoring development phases, and interpersonal attributes of people in effective mentoring relationships. The relevant literature selected for the first section derived from both business and academic arenas with emphasis on understanding conditions that create a positive foundation for mentor relationships, the implementation methods used to successfully create formal mentor relationships within business and academic settings,
and interpersonal dimensions frequently found in the mentor literature for effective relationships. To provide a demographic perspective, the second section renders a topical review of literature pertaining to Millennials, the generation currently benefitting from mentoring relationships in the collegiate setting. The relevant literature for the second section derived from business, academics, and social science perspectives with emphasis placed on generational factors of traditional college-aged students that impact learning and development. The third section addresses competencies empirically found to be important for career-tracked employment within the hospitality industry. The relevant literature for the third section derived from hospitality education research with emphasis on competencies necessary for supervisory roles in the hospitality industry. The final section provides information on mentoring and social learning models that inform this study. The literature for the final section derived from research in both business and social sciences with emphasis on the model of mentorship most commonly referenced in the business setting as well as understanding of how social learning theory, specifically self-efficacy expectations, impacts the transfer of knowledge and skills during the mentoring relationship.

**Concept of Mentoring**

The term “mentoring” originated from the Greek classic, *The Odyssey*, written in the 8th century BC by the poet, Homer (as cited in Bell, 1996). Odysseus, preparing to leave to fight the Trojan War, asks his trusted family friend Mentor to tutor his son. The term resurfaced in the late 1970s and has evolved into the business context in which a mentor is now defined as a teacher, guide, counselor, sponsor, or facilitator (Mentoring Overview, 2004).
A study completed by Crisp and Cruz (2009) discovered over 50 definitions for the term mentoring. Mullen (1998) described mentoring as a “one-to-one relationship between a more experienced member (mentor) and a less experienced member (protégé) of an organization or profession” (p. 319). Blackwell (1989) defined mentoring as “a process by which persons of a superior rank, special achievements, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés” (p. 9). Murray (1991) stated that mentoring was an informal process “whereby a more experienced person helps a less experienced person develop in some specified category” (p. 3) while Roberts (2000) defined the relationship as a formalized process “whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that persons’ career and personal development” (p. 162). Despite a myriad definitions, Jacobi (1991) found general consensus among researchers on five mentorship components: (a) relationship is focused on the growth and accomplishments of an individual and includes several forms of assistance; (b) experience may include broad forms of support including professional and career development, role modeling, and psychological support; (c) the relationship is personal and reciprocal; (d) the relationship is personal requiring direct interaction between the mentor and mentee; and (e) relative to the mentee, mentors show greater experience, influence, and achievement within a particular environment.

Due to its extended history and varied definitions, mentoring is often confused with other development functions, and most commonly confused with coaching (Gentry, 2009; Sparrow, 2005; Watt, 2004), executive development (Michelman, 2004), as well as
interchanged within the broader context of experiential learning (Hamovitch & Flanagan, 2009). Whereas the primary role of coaching is skills training, the focus of mentorship is the mentor’s shared experiences and wisdom enabling the mentee to develop competencies (Stone, 1999). Similar to coaching, executive development is focused on supporting the executive’s efforts in achieving both long and short-term organizational goals (Michelman, 2004), and not on the development relationship itself, which is the main focal point for mentoring (Chao, 2009). The umbrella term of experiential learning, described as any form of education such as internships, service learning, clinical experience, and field work that emphasizes experience versus learning from lectures, books, and other second-hand sources (Swan and Hansen, 1996), has relations to mentoring that help participants apply classroom concepts to real life situations (McHann & Frost, 2010). However, similar to coaching, experiential learning lacks the meaningful relationship component of mentoring. Unlike coaching, executive development, and areas of experiential learning, mentoring is a relationship with a predominant focus to assist in the development of another (Hecker, Mulhern, & Rubenstein, 2010).

**Mentoring Relationship Models**

A mentoring relationship is defined in general terms as a one-on-one association in which an individual with advanced experience and knowledge supports and facilitates the upward mobility of less experienced member (Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Caruso (1992) emphasized the connection aspect of mentoring, stating, “Mentoring is primarily a relationship not a process” (p. 1). At the core of this relationship is the ability to create in another person an insight that causes the individual to view the world in a different way (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999).
There are two primary mentoring relationship models, formal and informal (Stone, 1999). In general, mentoring connections are informally formed through natural chemistry and mutual interests or formally structured as part of a larger picture of learning and development (Stone, 1999).

According to Inzer and Crawford (2005), informal mentoring is defined as “the natural coming together of mentor and protégé. This is done in friendship through personal and professional respect and admiration from each to the other” (p. 33). In organizations that actively promote development and learning cultures, informal mentoring occurs amongst its members continually (Kram, 1985; O’Connor, Bronner, & Delaney, 2002). Relationships emerge from opportunities in which mentees and experienced leaders connect and find mutual interests and opportunities to gain personal growth and insight (Byham, Smith, & Paese, 2002).

According to Blake-Beard (2001), formal mentoring is a relationship that is “sanctioned by an organization” (p. 333). Ragins and Cotton (1999) added that this organizational assistance or intervention is usually in the form of formal matching of mentors and mentees. Formal mentoring selects and pairs novice employees or students with experienced professionals rather than assuming that such relationships will develop on their own (Chao, 2009; Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007; O’Connor et al., 2002). This allows a more equal opportunity for participation as well as structure for the relationship. Organizations have increasingly found benefits from establishing formal mentoring programs (Kamvounias et al., 2008) including improved performance, increased loyalty, and reduction of turnover in business (Caruso, 1992) and increased retention and student engagement in academics (Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008).
A primary distinction between formal and informal mentoring is in the formation component of the relationship (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Kram (1985) noted that informal relationships are often driven by development needs and mutual identification where a mentor chooses a mentee who has similar attributes and mentees select mentors who can serve as role models. In contrast, formal mentoring programs usually develop artificially through the assignment of participants (Lyons & Oppler, 2004). As the relationship progresses, there is increase variability between the models. Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007), in their critical analysis of seven previous studies from different researchers in a variety of settings, found that formal and informal mentoring differ on the four dimensions of intensity, visibility, focus, and duration. While informal mentoring intensity is greater and duration longer, formal mentoring is more visible and has prescribed goals for the mentee (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007).

Current research does not provide conclusive evidence as to whether informal mentoring is superior to formal mentoring (Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007; Werner & DeSimone, 2006), although some authorities contend that effective mentoring relationships cannot be engineered and must evolve through a natural and informal process (Rothwell & Kazanas, 2003a). Allen et al. (2006) in their study of 12 different mentoring programs found that designing elements that align with the interpersonal competencies associated with informal mentoring including similarity, identification, and comfort level may be a method to enhance formal program effectiveness.

Structured matches are one method for weaving informal components into a formal program (Friedman et al., 2004). Research by Putsche, Storrs, Lewis and Haylett (2008) of 23 undergraduate students focusing on academic, career, social, and emotional
support found that in a collegiate environment, matching pairs based on an assessment of a variety of criteria was important for meeting participant need. As part of a strategic process, mentors and mentees complete detailed profiles that provide information regarding interpersonal and leadership skills as well as career-related data. Each mentee selects a mentor based on interests and background (Friedman et al., 2004). The relationships are loosely supported through mentoring network opportunities where a mentee often fosters relationships with not only his or her mentee, but with other members of the program (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). The next subsection provides information on mentor programs derived from the formal mentoring model.

**Mentoring Programs**

A mentoring program is defined as a formation of a structured relationship that brings novice individuals together with more experienced advisors who offer guidance, support, and encouragement (Komosa-Hawkins, 2009). The majority of literature relates to businesses that utilize mentoring programs as a means to promote employees’ individual growth and effectiveness (Allen et al., 2006; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2005; Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005; Hansford et al., 2002; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000).

Mentoring programs have varied typologies including traditional, skill-based, self-mentoring, peer mentoring, and e-mentoring (Byham et al., 2002; Caruso, 1992; Johnson & Ridley, 2004; Kamvounias et al., 2008; Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006; Phillips-Jones, 1983; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2003a; Simmonds & Zammit Lupi, 2010). One problem presented in the literature is the lack of a comprehensive mentoring type (Jacobi, 1991). Aligning with this case study of college mentoring programs within the hospitality industry, the focus of the literature review is directed
towards the traditional mentorship typology which pairs a senior-level organizational member, referred to as a mentor with a mentee, a junior-level team member. The mentor is the more experienced individual who establishes a connection to a less experienced team member by clarifying the unstated norms, expectations, and culture of the environment. As part of the traditional mentoring process, a skilled mentor will help the mentee “roll” through a four stage learning process which includes discussing recent actions, reflecting on the positive and negative aspect of those actions, drawing conclusions regarding behaviors, and planning strategies for better behaviors in the future (Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the mentoring process depicting the stages of learning from planning strategies to conclusions resulting from actions and behaviors.

Mentoring programs in the collegiate environment include program typologies such as co-mentoring, composite, functional, and peer (Packard, 2003; Thorndyke, Gusic, & Milner, 2008; Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). Mentoring in the academic setting is most often utilized as a pedagogical enhancement to expand the educational experience of students (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008). In addition to the role of mentoring as a central component of professional development, the impact of this type of experiential learning on educational outcomes such as retention and graduation rates have been widely studied with overall positive results (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Thorndyke et al., 2008).

Formal mentoring programs are popular offerings in college settings; as such there is an abundance of data on mentoring programs in the higher education environment (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). The majority of literature relates to use of programs
Figure 1. Visual representation of the mentoring process. Adapted from The Mentoring Manual by M. Whittaker and A. Cartwright. Copyright 2000 by Gower Publishing Limited.
to increase retention and graduation rates (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008) and discussion of overall program structure (Chao, 2009; D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Karcher et al., 2006; Lyons & Oppler, 2004; McNamara & Rogers, 2000; Packard, 2003; Price, Graham, & Hobbs, 1997; Putsche et al., 2008). Programs developed for the college environment have three primary purposes: development of career competencies, acclimation of students to new surrounding, and increased collegiate confidence and skills (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Feldman, 2005; Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008; Kamvounias et al., 2008; Price et al., 1997; Schlee, 2000; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001).

The first purpose of mentoring in the college environment is similar to mentoring in the business context; it has as its goal to develop skills needed for career growth within a student’s chosen field (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Kamvounias et al., 2008; Price et al., 1997). These relationships are primarily coordinated through student services personnel and pair experienced mentors with students who are interested in a career path similar to the mentor or who are looking for general career guidance. The focus in the academic setting appears to shift from the business perspective of grooming a person for a particular position to developing future leaders for varied career paths (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008). Researchers have found that academic mentoring relationships offer a view of life in the business setting (Schlee, 2000) and increase career satisfaction (Tenenbaum et al., 2001). Research by D’Abate and Eddy (2008) of a mentor program with industry executives and undergraduate students from a New York business college found that mentoring, particularly a program with strong matching and preparation infrastructure, “can extend and enhance the educational experience by providing connections to the
practical world of business” (p. 363). The researchers concluded that mentoring not only offered students a glimpse of life in a business setting, but also reduced stress and enhanced career satisfaction.

The second purpose for mentoring programs within the university environment has more of a peer focus and is used to acclimate students to new programs and surroundings (Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008). Research by Feldman (2005) of students participating in a psychology undergraduate program revealed that students who feel a strong connection to their program are more likely to do well in coursework, seek assistance from faculty, participate in activities, and engage in research projects. Results from a study by Jaswal and Jaswal (2008) of new students in a community college setting found that the connections and assistance provided through a first-year student mentoring program assisted with program retention and student satisfaction. Studies by Asbee and Woodall (2000), Cross (1998), and Goodland (1998) concurred and provided further evidence that peer mentoring is an effective tool for helping students transition to college.

The third purpose for collegiate mentoring has common elements to student acclimation, but is primarily focused on developing confidence and skills, particularly of women and minority groups, as they navigate through collegiate studies (Liang, Tracy, & Williams, 2002; McAllister, Harold, Ahmedani, & Cramer, 2009; McNamara & Rogers, 2000; Packard, 2003; Putsche et al., 2008). Among the key characteristics of positive campus life are role models, a caring and supportive environment, and opportunities for leadership and self-learning (Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Mentoring programs encourage
active participation by students to seek role models that in turn can provide insight to effectively address academic and psychosocial needs (Putsche et al., 2008).

**Program Implementation**

The following subsection underscores the implementation process commonly associated with formal mentorship within the business and academic settings. Facilitation of an effective mentor and mentee relationship as part of a formal program requires an implementation process (Allen et al., 2006; Komosa-Hawkins, 2009). Allen et al. (2006) in their study of mentoring program implementation found that administration processes such as participant input on matches, receipt of training, and training quality all had direct effects on commitment and program understanding. This, in turn, had direct effects on perceived program effectiveness. Komosa-Hawkins (2009) further emphasized the importance of planning to overall relationship success, “systematic and thoughtful planning leads to heightened intervention fidelity, such that the intervention is implemented consistently and as intended, which yields better outcomes” (p. 124).

A formal mentorship program requires an implementation process normally initiated, developed, and evaluated by a program coordinator. Whittaker and Cartwright (2000) emphasized the significance of the following components in an effective implementation process: (a) setting objectives, (b) planning launch, (c) identifying key roles, (d) influencing strategy, (e) aligning with culture, (f) matching, (g) training, (h) administration, (i) setting up support networks, (j) monitoring and evaluation, and (k) anticipating mistakes and difficulties. Table 1 provides key points of each component and illustrates the high degree of planning and development involved with the process.
Table 1

*Components of Effective Mentoring Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Objectives</td>
<td>• Communicate clearly&lt;br&gt;• Review objectives periodically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Launch</td>
<td>• Start small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Key Roles</td>
<td>• Clearly communicate expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing Strategy</td>
<td>• Tailor influencing strategy to target audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning with Culture</td>
<td>• Mentoring objectives should fit organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>• Good matches do not necessarily come from similar personalities&lt;br&gt;• Look for common interests/goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>• Set training objectives and measure the success of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>• Continually monitor relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Up Support Networks</td>
<td>• Provide a network of learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>• Monitor individual progress against objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating Mistakes and Difficulties</td>
<td>• Learn from mistakes and difficulties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kram (1986) provided a basic four-step model for the implementation of an organizational mentoring program that aligns with the typical college mentoring program administration process. The four steps included (1) determine the population that will be considered for the mentee and the mentor role, (2) obtain data on potential participants for matching purposes, (3) assign mentors and mentees or establish a voluntary selection process, and (4) set up evaluation procedures and measurement tools (p. 186). In addition, research by Allen et al. (2006), Jaswal and Jaswal (2008), Packard (2003), and Price et al. (1997) included training as another dimension essential in the implementation process. Each step of Kram’s model as well as the added training dimension is discussed in the following subsections.

**Determine the Population.** Many organizations simply implement mentoring programs by selecting a target population that is easy to access and monitor. A more effective strategy is to determine the target population based on a wider analysis of how a mentoring program will complement business or academic strategies. Successful mentoring initiatives require executive sponsorship and support (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). Developing a mentoring program that aligns with the company’s business strategy or an institution’s learning goals aids in obtaining program support from both constituents and senior leadership (Eddy, Tannenbaum, Lorenzet, & Smith-Jentsch, 2005). Examples of mentoring outcomes that align with business strategies include increased productivity, higher quality, lower turnover, reduced training time, improved customer service, and faster transaction times (Hansford et al., 2002). Academic outcomes include higher retention rates, improved career placement percentages, and increased student satisfaction levels (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).
Once the business case has been established, the next step is to align the mentoring program with established organizational education programs, rather than implement a program independent from other development efforts (Eddy et al., 2005). This practice may also aid in the selection of the target population. A recommended strategy is to add a mentoring component to an established development program (Hegstad & Wentling, 2004). For example, mentoring can be included as part of a management training program for recent college graduates as a means to reduce onboarding stress and increase individual effectiveness.

**Obtain Data on Potential Participants.** Obtaining data on potential participants should be completed as a larger marketing and communication campaign (Phillip-Jones, 1983). Effective relationships require time and commitment. Often attempts at implementing a mentorship program fail because participants do not realize the time, effort, and resources required (Eby & Allen, 2002; Phillip-Jones, 1983). Chao (2009) found that dissatisfaction could be tied to a mentor’s or mentee’s motivation to build and maintain a relationship. Her research concluded that individuals who are pressured to volunteer for a mentoring relationship are likely to drop off regardless of match. It is recommended that both mentors and mentees attend an informational meeting in order to be fully aware of benefits and participation requirements prior to enrolling (Phillip-Jones, 1983).

**Assignment of Mentoring Relationships.** Once individuals have made an informed decision to participate, data should be collected to assist with mentorship assignments (Phillip-Jones, 1983). Chao (2009) emphasized the importance of the pairing process. In her research of career psychologists, Chao found that the matching
process in a formal mentoring program was critical and concluded that “if partners do not perceive a match, there is no mentoring” (p. 318). D’Abate and Eddy (2008) discovered during their research of 47 mentors participating in an undergraduate business college mentor program that developing criteria for matches including compatibility, demographic similarity, personality, alignment of interests and values, and assessment of needs was critically important for relationship satisfaction.

Researchers have concluded that mentoring relationships work best when mentors and mentees are able to select each other versus being pre-assigned in pairings (Allen et al., 2006; Chao, 2009; Johnson & Ridley, 2004). Pairing receptions, get-togethers, and team-focused training sessions are a means for accomplishing this goal. If natural pairing is not realistic, it is recommended that pre-selection be completed by careful analysis of a number of criteria to include common interests, development needs, and career goals (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008; Hegstad & Wentling, 2004). During the matching stage, it is critical for the program administrator to allow the mentors and mentees an opportunity to get to know each other and self-select as much as possible. Researchers have found that mismatched personalities that are often caused by forced pairings are a primary cause of relationship failure (Eby & Allen, 2002; Hansford et al., 2002; Johnson & Ridley, 2004). Research completed by Lyons and Oppler (2004) supported the need for selection involvement. The researchers studied structural and demographic attributes of a mentor program at a federal agency and found that mentees who received a mentor that they requested were significantly more satisfied than mentees who did not.

**Training.** The training of both mentors and mentees is a critical component of an effective mentoring program (Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008; Packard, 2003; Price et al., 1997).
A critical review of mentoring literature by Hansford et al. (2002) confirmed the importance of training, citing its lack as a factor contributing to reported negative relationships. A by-product of an effective relationship is the opportunity for both mentor and mentee to facilitate insight and growth. Adult learning is self-directed, and requires each learner to be responsible for his or her development. To that end, an effective mentoring program must also include relationship-building opportunities for participants to learn from multiple mentors (Hegstad & Wentling, 2004; Packard, 2003). The more a mentee interacts with his or her mentor, the more he or she has the opportunity to utilize all the benefits associated with a mentoring program (Lyons & Oppler, 2004). Training workshops, case studies, learning exchanges, networking opportunities, and study circles provide means for encouraging self-directed learning. In addition, some mentoring programs encourage mentees to complete a personal development plan that can be used throughout the mentoring relationship to ensure personal goals are being met (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). Completion of personal development plans partially places the responsibility of learning on the mentee (Eddy et al., 2005). The mentoring then becomes one of the many avenues for self-directed learning.

**Measurement and Evaluation.** Measurement and evaluation processes provide meaningful data to assess learning and enhance program elements (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Megginson and Clutterbuck (2005) provided criteria to measure both the mentoring relationship as well as the program process. Table 2 provides a list of the recommended evaluation criteria including administrative, development, and organizational measures.
Table 2

*Evaluating the Effects of Mentoring*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the mentor and mentee established clear rapport?</td>
<td>Relationship Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the mentor/mentee relationship have clear objectives?</td>
<td>Relationship Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are meetings sufficiently frequent?</td>
<td>Relationship Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are meetings valued by mentor and mentee?</td>
<td>Relationship Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are both mentor and mentee learning?</td>
<td>Relationship Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many learning milestones were reached?</td>
<td>Relationship Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the mentee improved key scores on his/her performance appraisal?</td>
<td>Relationship Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the mentee feel more confident in his/her abilities?</td>
<td>Relationship Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were selection criteria adequate?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What proportion of relationships succeeded and failed?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do mentors feel they had sufficient training?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What skill deficiencies do mentees perceive in their mentors?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program support sufficient?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a decrease in turnover?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an increase in mentees suitable for promotion?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do mentors/mentees believe they have achieved significant progress?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do mentor’s direct reports see improvement in dealings with them?</td>
<td>Program Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective mentoring programs require both formal and informal means of evaluation. Informal evaluation provides information regarding the development and overall success of the relationship (Kram, 1986). Informal evaluations include brief “check-in” discussions with the mentor and mentee throughout the program cycle (Kram, 1986). Formal evaluations provide measurable evidence of a successful mentorship program. The purpose of informal and formal evaluation processes is to collect data that will evaluate whether the mentoring program made a positive difference in the lives of the participants as well as the organization (Phillip-Jones, 1983). Demonstrating each program year has merit and worth is critical to the longevity of a formal mentoring process (Komosa-Hawkins, 2009).

**Development Phases**

Once a mentoring program has been successfully implemented, the focus turns to the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Mentorships are developmental relationships focused on the transition of the mentee from novice to leader (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). As part of this transition, the relationship progresses through different development stages. Models developed by Kram (1986) and Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) are most commonly used to describe phases of long-term (one to three years) and short-term (three to six months) program relationships, respectively. Table 3 provides a synopsis of both models.

In a comparative analysis of functions of mentoring, Ragins et al. (2000) found close similarities in the phases of both long-term and short-term relationships, but concluded that short-term programs are at a disadvantage as there is a reduce opportunity for the mentor to influence the mentee’s career and work attitudes. Critical to both long
Table 3

*Mentoring Relationship Models*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kram’s long-term relationship model</th>
<th>Megginson and Clutterbuck short-term relationship model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiation</strong></td>
<td>Establishing rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period is characterized by excitement and feelings of anxiousness on the part of the mentee. During this stage, it is important for mentors to establish rapport and instill confidence.</td>
<td>Purpose is for the pairing to identify with one another and feel a sense of compatibility. This phase also provides the opportunity to clarify expectations, agree on program structure, and set-up details for future meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultivation</strong></td>
<td>Direction setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically begins after several months and is often the most productive phase of the mentorship. During this period, which often lasts one to two years, mentees demonstrate increasing competence and confidence.</td>
<td>Provides the opportunity for the mentee to discuss concerns and issues while the mentor provides feedback and sets development objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separation</strong></td>
<td>Personal and professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked by longer periods between interactions. This can be an emotional time as the relationship becomes less central in the lives of both the mentor and mentee.</td>
<td>Considered the period where progress is made in the development of the mentee. At this point in the relationship, achievement and goal attainment is recognized. At the same time, the relationship is reviewed and possibly changed based on the development outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redefinition</strong></td>
<td>Finalizing and maintenance of the relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This final phase of the relationship is characterized by the development of a peer friendship in which contact is less frequent and informal.</td>
<td>This final phase is characterized by a reflection of the learning experience by both parties as well as a discussion of possible next steps for the relationship. The goal of this stage is complete any unfinished projects or discussions and end the relationship on a positive note.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and short-term programs are the beginning stages of the relationship. A critical literature review by Hansford et al. (2002) discovered that initial incompatibility and mismatched expectations were impediments to the overall success of program relationships. Chao (2009) in a study of a mentoring program for novice psychologists found that lack of connection was one of primary reasons relationships failed after initial contact. The next subsection discusses the interpersonal dimensions of effective mentoring programs.

**Interpersonal Dimensions of Effective Mentoring Programs**

Mentorships are first and foremost, human relationships (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). McNamara and Rogers (2000) described the mentoring relationship as “a form of human bonding which appears to sit comfortably/uncomfortably at the confluence of privilege/burden, art/angst, science/art, security/vulnerability and alliance/friendship” (p. 86). Those who obtain the most benefit from the mentoring experience invariably spend time considering what they want to achieve from the relationship (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). Liang et al. (2002) in a study on mentoring college-age women found that specific relational qualities related to human dimensions including engagement, authenticity, and empowerment were critical in promoting positive outcomes. The following subsections provide information on the primary elements of a successful mentorship program – the mentor and mentee (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999).

**Mentor.** A mentor is defined as an experienced person who serves as a role model and provides support, direction, and feedback regarding career plans and interpersonal development (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001). He or she is an influential person who looks out for his or her charge and gives advice. The mentor has the critical role of guiding the mentee through the development process. Levinson et al. (1978)
further stated that the most important role of a mentor was “to support and facilitate the realization of a (mentee’s) dream” (p. 98).

A study by Allen et al. (2006) examined 12 different mentoring programs and revealed that a mentor’s interpersonal skills and commitment had a direct impact on perceived program effectiveness. The researchers found that mentor commitment was essential given that meeting program goals hinged on the mentor’s actions to help mentee’s development. Johnson and Ridley (2004) determined that the interpersonal skills of the mentor are also important. Their research discovered that if given a choice, the majority of mentees would prefer a mentor who has interpersonal competence over one who has a powerful intellect (Johnson & Ridley, 2004).

Research by Cherniss (2007) and Lee and Johnston (2001) both found that it is an emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) that enables an effective mentor relationship interaction. Goleman (1998) used the phrase “emotional intelligence” to convey the importance of relating competently to others. His five components to emotional intelligence included: (1) self-awareness - knowing weaknesses and are not afraid to talk about them, (2) self-regulation - controlling impulses, (3) motivation - passion for achievement for its own sake, (4) empathy - taking into account the feelings of others when making decisions, and (5) social skill - ability to build rapport with others (Goleman, 1998). Bell (1996) found that the qualities associated with a high level of emotional intelligence including trust, balance, abundance, passion, and courage have a positive impact on a mentoring relationship. Johnson and Ridley (2004) stressed the importance of a mentor’s emotional intelligence:
EQ may be one of the most underrated and unexplored characteristics of great mentors. To prove the point, observe traffic flow patterns of mentoring in any organization. Typically, you will see protégés flocking to prospective mentors with proven interpersonal skills. Experience shows and research supports the principle that protégés are drawn to emotionally skilled mentors. (p. 56)

Research by Holt and Jones (2005) indicated that the self-awareness quotient has particular importance in the guiding process noting, “Empathy and commitment start with self-awareness, and without empathy, influence is not possible” (p. 17). Crumpton (2011) contended that self-awareness provides for a balanced relationship, “Mentor and mentee must have a relationship that isn’t threatening or out-of-proportion. This is where mentors must have their egos in check through self-awareness and not be on a power trip or come across as trying to save the day” (p. 52).

**Mentee.** A mentee is the receiver of attention from a mentor and has the critical role of accepting the coaching, guidance, and feedback from his or her mentor (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001). Stone (1999) provided six mentee attributes: (1) track record of success, (2) demonstrated intelligence, (3) loyalty, (4) desire to achieve, (5) value feedback, (6) enjoy challenges, and (7) take responsibility. The mentor assesses these attributes and when apparent in the relationship it motivates the mentor to increase both the quality and duration of the mentoring relationship (Mullen, 1998; Stone, 1999).

Emotional intelligence is critical for the mentee as well as the mentor; and is an important aptitude to instill as part of a college development program (Holt & Jones, 2005). This competency increases the effectiveness of mentoring relationships while providing needed development to mentees in order to self-manage their careers after
college. During mentorship, a mentee is partially in observation mode. The behaviors of a mentor have a role modeling effect instilling in the mentee the importance of emotional intelligence in professional life. This behavior is rooted in social exchange theory (Ensher, Craig, & Murphy, 2001). The theory suggests that individual exchanges overtime produce norms that shape subsequent individual behavior (Blau, 1964). From the student learning perspective, it is critical that mentors demonstrate emotional intelligence as mentees often develop competencies needed for career advancement in part by observing and emulating their mentors (Cherniss, 2007; Goetz, Frenzel, Pekrun, & Hill, 2005).

Mentoring Literature Summary

The previous section provided a comprehensive review of mentoring in business and academic settings. In today’s competitive environment, organizational and personal success both largely depends on the contributions of its members. Mentoring programs can support a variety of industry goals including productivity, profitability, and employee development (Allen et al., 2006; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2005; Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005; Hansford et al., 2002; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000) as well as academic goals of retention, degree completion, and bridge to career-tracked employment (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jaswal & Jaswal, 2008). An effective program requires time, effort, and resources, as well as commitment from the participants, program administrators, management, and senior leadership. Key characteristics related to effective programs include an understanding of mentor relationship models, an attentive implementation process, and a focus on human dimensions of this development function (Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). Despite the work required to implement and foster a successful program, the
performance and growth benefits derived from this learning relationship, make mentoring a worthy development function within the collegiate environment (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008). The next section of the literature review discusses the generational issues related to mentoring within the college environment.

The Millennial Generation

Students are entering college in historically high numbers, but they are arriving to campus with low levels of general knowledge in which to build an educational foundation needed for career success (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010). The average age of individuals attending a four-year university program is between 18 to 24 years placing the majority of students participating in college mentoring relationships into the category of the Millennial Generation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This group is broadly defined by their intuitiveness to technology, need for recognition and structure, natural acceptance of diversity, and desire for both a successful and balanced life (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Research also suggests that both learning styles and expectations of Millennials vary from previous generations (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). In order to prepare students for workplace challenges, it is important to recognize college students’ generational factors that may influence professional development programming.

Overview of The Four Generations

An analysis of workforce development programming requires knowledge of the differences between the generations relative to organizational behavior (Po-Ju & Choi, 2008). In today’s society, there are five generations living side by side: Greatest Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z (Paton, 2013;
Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). The difference between the generations results in varied expectations and impacts reactions to situations, issues, and events.

Similar to diversity issues in regards to race, age, gender, and sexual orientation, generational markers bring different perspectives to personal and professional relationships (Zemke, 2001). The term “generation” refers to people born in the same general time span that share key historical or social life experiences (Smola & Sutton, 2002). A generation marker represents the sum total of experiences, ideas, and values shared by people (Zemke et al., 2000). Once there is an understanding of generational perceptions, it is easier to target development opportunities to bring out the strengths of the group and make the most of progress. Specific to workforce factors, the different generations have disparate professional development expectations. An example is the idea of job loyalty. While Baby Boomers place value on job security through company loyalty, Generation Xers are skeptical of corporations and look for career security by building a portfolio of transferable skills (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Another example is each generation’s perception of training. The Greatest Generation grouping, commonly referred to as Veterans, believes that people should learn the hard way as they did while Baby Boomers feel too much training is a demotivator (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Generation Xers see training as an opportunity for career security while Millennials feel that continuous learning is a way of life (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

**Millennial Generation**

Millennials represent individuals born between 1981 and 1995 and are the newest generation of working adults (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Paton, 2013). This group was raised during the most child-centric time in our history (Zemke, 2001). As such,
Millennials are characterized as being extremely sheltered, team-oriented, and heavily influenced by peers and family (Zemke, 2001). Table 4 provides a profile depicting core values, cultural attributes, heroes, events, and trends that is representative of the Millennial generation.

Millennials strive for a life that is successful, meaningful, and balanced. Although friends and family are priorities in the Millennials’ lives, research by Gursoy, Maier, and Chi (2008) at a North American brand hotel chain found that this generation also takes both job and professional development seriously. Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) research discovered similar findings concluding that Millennials seek rapid advancement while also desiring a satisfying life outside of work. A study by De Hauw and De Vos (2010) of 903 Millennials ascertained that even during times of economic downturn, expectations related to job content, career development, training, compensation, and job security were still high and affected by this generation’s need for success, recognition, and balance. The Millennials who have join the supervisory ranks of hospitality companies have been found to need challenging work, constant recognition, and structure and direction (Chen & Choi, 2008). Recent analysis of Millennials and workplace culture in the quick service restaurant environment concurred with the studies of Dehauw and Devos (2010) and Chen and Choi (2008) finding that perceived opportunities for development and promotion combined with flexible work schedules contributed to a higher level of engagement (McKechnie et al., 2010; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008).
### Table 4

**Profile of the Millennial Generation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile element</th>
<th>Terms to describe elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terms used to describe this generation</td>
<td>Generation Y</td>
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<td>Net Generation</td>
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<td>Generation Me</td>
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<td>Nexters</td>
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<td>Major events and trends</td>
<td>Internet</td>
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<td>School violence</td>
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<td>Reality TV shows</td>
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<td>September 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
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<td>Heroes</td>
<td>Michael Jordan</td>
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<td>Princess Diana</td>
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<td>Mother Teresa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tiger Woods</td>
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<td>Their parents</td>
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<td>Technology introduced or widely used</td>
<td>iPods</td>
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<td>Flash drives</td>
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<td>DVR/TiVO</td>
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<td>Cultural memorabilia</td>
<td>Barney</td>
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<td>Beanie Babies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The X Games</td>
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<td>Spice Girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core values</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
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<td>Sociability</td>
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<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>Pursuing own dreams</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Optimism</td>
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<td>Informality</td>
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*Note: Adapted from *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* by R. Zemke, C. Raines, C. and B. Filipczak. Copyright 2000 by AMACOM.*
In the classroom, Millennials are naturally collaborative. As such, they thrive in team environments where there is an opportunity for hands-on learning (Tucker, 2006). A study by Shaw and Fairhurst (2008) found that success factors in learning acquisition and retention included audio-visually rich content, collaborative approach, instant feedback, and real-world application.

Millennial Factors Relevant to College Mentoring Programs

The Millennial generation values mentorship because it allows for continuous development (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Gursoy et al. (2008) found that Millennials are in search of role models. They seek direction and look to mentors for assistance and guidance. Critical Millennial factors related to mentoring include this generation’s desire for opportunities that promote growth and development, a demand for immediacy and fast response to communication, preference of visual and kinesthetic learning over traditional textbook methods, and an interest in gaining awareness of different leadership styles (Zemke et al., 2000). The generation’s need for social interaction and mutual support align with a college mentoring experience. Effective mentoring for Millennials requires an ongoing support system and a structured environment. These generational factors have particular impact on the development aspects of mentoring. To uphold the expectations of Millennials requires a relationship that fosters a positive learning environment through meaningful development activities and caring mentoring behaviors. Millennials are predisposed to expect a mentor to deeply value both them and the relationship and to spend time cultivating both. Because a large percentage of current administrators and mentors are Baby Boomers and Generation Xers, a paradigm shift is often required to facilitate a meaningful program.
The newest generation will not be able to fill the void left by the retirement of Baby Boomers if they lack experience that builds expertise (Wagner, 2009). Although there are critics to the concept of broad differences based on generational factors (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008), it is important to examine learning and work performance preferences as it relates to development programming, such as mentorship. In any generation, younger adults seek out relationships that enable development. Feedback through mentorship aids in confidence and competence. When creating a meaningful mentoring experience, it is simply an effective practice to pre-assess and evaluate a program target audience to provide for the most positive outcome of a learning and development opportunity such as mentoring. The next section will discuss competencies found to be contributors to individual success within the hospitality industry.

**Hospitality Workforce Competencies**

Competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed to perform effectively in an organization (Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2003a). Rothwell and Kazanas (2003b) further stated that competencies are characteristics related to successful performance tied to an individual, not the work he or she performs. Within the hospitality industry, competencies are a mixture of tactical practices, operational knowledge, leadership savvy, and interpersonal skills (Chung, 2000; Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Formica & McCleary, 2000; Huang & Lin, 2011; Kay & Moncarz, 2004; Kay & Russette, 2000).

Kay and Russette’s study (2000) of hospitality competencies found four primary domain areas essential for hospitality managers: leadership, technical, interpersonal, and conceptual-creative. Under leadership, key areas included maintaining customer
satisfaction through managing customer problems and developing positive customer relations and role modeling defined as demonstrating professional appearance and poise as well as portraying diligence, initiative, and ethics. Technical skills had a single attribute attesting to the importance of having a working knowledge of products and services. Interpersonal skills included listening, face-to-face interactions, and the resolving of conflicts using a win-win approach while conceptual-creative was the competency of adapting creatively to change. A study by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) provided additional insight regarding individual self-management dimensions needed for management success in hospitality including ethics and integrity, time management, self-development, and flexibility and adaptability.

Despite the clarity of competency-needs within the hospitality industry, results from a study by Kay and Russette (2000), Raybould and Wilkins (2005), and Huang and Lin (2011) found that there are significant gaps between industry expectations and academic perceptions of the skills that are needed from graduates entering the industry. While hospitality industry leaders value operational and management traits including relationship development and self-management skills, academics place emphasis on hospitality concepts and theories. To supplement higher education curriculum and provide work readiness skills for hospitality students, research by Dopson and Tas (2004) indicated the need for a two-pronged education approach that addressed both operation and management skills. Although there is a lack of research on college mentoring relationships in the hospitality industry, mentoring has been demonstrated to extend, enhance, and connect classroom-learning experiences to the practical realm of business
The following section will discuss the models influencing the study of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry.

**Relevant Models for Mentoring**

A large array of mentoring programs in corporate and educational settings exist, yet no unifying theoretical framework binds the critical components of the mentoring relationship (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Rather than aligning to a particular theoretical framework, researchers reference Kram’s seminal model of career and psychosocial functions as a basis for evaluating successful relationships (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2005; Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005; Hansford et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2005).

In a discussion of her research, Kram (1985) inferred connections to social learning theory, specifically Bandura’s self-efficacy construct (1977). Kram emphasized development through mentor relationship observations, actions, and feedback. She also stressed efficacy concerns of the mentee:

Young adults who are launching new careers are concerned about competence and whether they will succeed in establishing viable and successful careers. Not only do they question their skills and abilities, but they search for occupational identities and a sense of who they can become in a new role and work context. (1985, p. 13)

This dissertation examined past student-participants’ perceptions of mentoring relationships; therefore, to understand the complexities of the mentoring relationship, it was important to explore social learning, specifically self-efficacy. Social learning
theory is an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation and emotion (Maddux, 1995). As part of broader workplace learning research, Bandura’s social learning theory has been associated with mentoring relationship factors (Gopee, 2011). Bandura (1969) emphasized observing and modeling in the learning process. Both behaviors have demonstrated importance in developing career competencies through mentorship (Cherniss, 2007; Goetz et al., 2005). Self-efficacy is a construct within Bandura’s social leaning model (Bandura, 1977) and is defined as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Bandura’s research findings (1982, 1986, 1989, & 1993) suggested that efficacy beliefs not only exerted influence on future success, but also significantly affected individual development.

The models of Kram (1985) and Bandura (1977) assisted in understanding the complexities of college mentoring relationships and its contribution to developing students for supervisory employment within the hospitality industry post-graduation. The following subsections provide information on both models.

**Kram’s Conceptual Model**

Kram’s model of career-related and psychosocial functions has generated the most commonly cited and validated classification of mentoring functions (Smith et al., 2005). According to Noe (1988), Kram provided a systematic model for mentoring within the business environment. Kram was the first to formally explore mentoring (Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005). In 1980, Kram interviewed employees from the same organization about relationships that were currently affecting their development (Kram, 1985). The study results suggested that relationships vary in the ways they support
individual development, thus it is a worthwhile task to assess which career-related and psychosocial functions are evident in the mentorship process (Kram, 1985). Kram’s research (1986) focused on examining the link between functions and phases of mentorship. She concluded that career-related functions emerged first and psychosocial functions emerged in later phases (Kram, 1986). Through her seminal research, Kram (1985) found that mentoring relationships enable an individual to overcome the challenges encountered while navigating adulthood and an organizational career. Every individual brings a unique set of needs and concerns to relationships. When relationships address these needs and concerns, they are valued (Kram, 1985).

Support for the conceptual model of career and psychosocial constructs is evident in the research. Noe (1988) examined 139 educators as part of a study of development programs utilizing factor analysis to confirm the existence of these two mentoring functions. Green and Bauer (1995) also found theoretical validity of the model in the academic setting with their study of doctoral students perceptions of mentoring by their faculty advisors. A research study by Allen et al. (2006) of 12 different mentoring programs identified a range of mentoring functions and roles that can be placed in Kram’s conceptual model of career-related and psychosocial functions. Finally, Kram’s theories were predominantly featured in a critical review of 151 mentoring articles where half of the articles cited psychosocial and career-related functions as a significant component of their studies (Hansford et al., 2002).

Both career-related and psychosocial functions have development components. Career-related functions are those aspects of the relationship that prepare individuals for advancement (Kram, 1985). Hansford et al. (2002) found that career-related
benefits for mentees were career satisfaction, motivation, advice, promotion, coaching feedback, and strategies. Included within the career sphere are sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. Psychosocial functions are those aspects that enhance the mentee’s sense of self in a professional role (Kram, 1985). These functions include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Table 5 provides a synopsis of the model’s functions.

Research examining formal mentoring programs generally found that mentors provide more psychosocial support than career-related support (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). Psychosocial function affects the mentee “on a more personal level than career functions; their benefits extend beyond organizational advancement and generally carry over to other spheres of life” (Kram, 1985, p. 32).

**Bandura’s Conceptual Model**

Formal education should focus on equipping students with intellectual tools, self-beliefs, and self-regulatory capabilities (Bandura, 1993). In understanding the social world, researchers must focus their attention on understanding the behavior of individuals in social situations with an interest in understanding factors that shape and direct the actions (Baron & Byrne, 1984).

Social learning theory is an approach to understanding human action, motivation, and emotion (Maddux, 1995). The theory is categorized in the interpretive sociological paradigm in which humans derive meaning through understanding behavior (Ritzer, 2010). Bandura’s social learning theory emphasized that individuals learn through observation and modeling. Bandura (1969) stated, “Complex repertoires of behavior displayed by members of society are to a large extent acquired with little or no direct
Table 5

*Kram's Mentoring Career-Related and Psychosocial Functions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career-related functions</th>
<th>Psychosocial functions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>Role modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the most frequently observed career functions is sponsorship. This support can range from formal recommendations to more indirect functions of association.</td>
<td>The function of role modeling involves the mentor setting an example and the mentee identifying with it, thus providing a model of behavior to emulate. Interactions surrounding organizational tasks create the setting for the role modeling process. Through observation, the mentee learns behaviors, approaches, and values held by his or her mentor.</td>
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**Exposure and visibility**

The exposure and visibility function involves assigning responsibilities that allow the mentee to develop relationships with other key figures within the industry or organization. This not only makes an individual visible to others who may influence his career path, but also exposes the mentee to future opportunities.

**Coaching**

Much like a coach in the sporting arena, the coaching function involves the mentor suggesting specific strategies for accomplishing objectives. This function includes feedback on behaviors and critical events and enhances the mentee’s understanding of how to navigate the world of work effectively.

**Protection**

The protection function shields the mentee from “untimely or potentially damaging contact with other senior officials” (p. 29). This function involves the mentor taking blame in negative situations, as well as intervening when the mentee is not prepared to achieve an effective outcome.

**Challenging assignments**

This behavior is most often observed in mentor relationships between a supervisor and subordinate. The assignment of challenging work enables the “junior manager” to develop skills and to experience a sense of accomplishment in a professional role. The function assists in the development of essential technical, supervisory, and leadership skills through work that encourages learning.”

**Note:** Adapted from *Mentoring at Work: Development Relationships in Organization Life* by K. Kram. Copyright 1985 by Scott, Foresman and Company
tuition through observation of response patterns exemplified by various social agents” (p. 213).

In Bandura’s theory of social learning (1969), he delineated self-efficacy as a cognitive structure created by cumulative learning experiences. Since Bandura published his first article on self-efficacy in 1977, the term has become widespread in psychology, sociology, and other related fields (Maddux, 1995). Self-efficacy has documented links to effective mentoring relationship. The construct has been connected to motivation and performance (Pittenger & Heimann, 2000) and previously utilized as a backdrop to observational learning, modeling, and mentoring (Gage & Berliner, 1998; Eggen & Kauchak, 1997; Sexton & Griffin, 1997). Rhodes (2008) in a study to determine whether or not mentoring improved undergraduate student performance and increased graduation rates, found that mentoring not only enhanced academic performance, but also enhanced students’ self-esteem and self-efficacy. Komosa-Hawkins (2009) confirmed findings and determined that mentoring programs increase self-esteem, social competence, and academic competence.

Self-efficacy exerts its influence through cognitive, motivational, and affective selection processes (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1993) concluded, “The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves, and the firmer their commitment to them” (p. 318). The crux of the theory lies in initiation and persistence of source behaviors that increase the likelihood of being able to successfully navigate environmental demands and challenges (Maddux, 1995). Figure 2 provides a graphic description of Bandura’s model.
Figure 2. Graphic description of Bandura’s Model of Self-Efficacy Expectations, from “Self-Efficacy Theory to Career Counseling: A Personal Perspective” by N. Betz, 2004, *The Career Development Quarterly*. 
Bandura (1977) concluded that self-efficacy is based on four source behaviors: performance accomplishments (working successfully through a task), vicarious experience (learning experiences through observing and modeling behavior), social persuasion (encouragement from others), and emotional arousal (increased anxiety level that motivates individuals to perform successfully). These source behavior increase perceived self-efficacy, which influences individuals to approach tasks versus avoid, perform at a higher level, and increase persistence towards a goal. Critical self-efficacy sources related to mentoring are performance experiences and vicarious experiences (Hackett & Betz, 1995). Performance experiences are especially influential because self-efficacy is most commonly derived from practical contact (Lance, Jones, & Stevens, 2002). Performance experiences combined with verbal persuasion are particularly impactful. Kram (1985) noted:

Young adults seek out relationships that enable them to work on these development concerns. Feedback on performance is needed to build a sense of competence and confidence, a relationship with a more experienced colleague can satisfy concerns about confidence and identity. (p. 14)

Once established, enhanced self-efficacy through performance accomplishments tends to generalize to other situations and as a result improvements in overall behavioral functioning occurs (Bandura, 1969). Behaviors are also derived from vicarious experiences. Bandura (1986) explained:

People do not rely on enactive experience as the sole source of information about their capabilities. Self-efficacy appraisals are partly influenced by vicarious experiences. Seeing or visualizing other similar people perform successfully can
raise self-percepts of efficacy in observers that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities. Perceived self-efficacy can be readily changed by relevant modeling influences when people have had little prior experience on which to base evaluations of their personal competence. (p. 399)

Self-efficacy has been linked to a number of workforce readiness variables including job satisfaction and job performance (Karatepe et al., 2007). Zhao and Namasivayam’s (2009) research specific to hospitality workforce development found that self-efficacy performs two functions. The first function allowed individuals to reflect on learning outcomes and conclude they were able to perform. The second is that the knowledge had motivational properties and increased an individual’s willingness to perform. Most courses of action are initially shaped in thoughts. Individuals who have a high sense of self-efficacy are able to visualize success providing for an increased level of performance (Bandura, 1993).

Social learning theory, particularly Bandura’s self-efficacy model (1969), complements Kram’s functions model. Kram’s career-related and psychosocial functions, particularly coaching, acceptance and confirmation, challenging assignments and role modeling mentoring functions mirror the source behaviors of performance accomplishment, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional arousal increasing levels of perceived self-efficacy. Bandura’s research findings (1969, 1977; 1982, 1986, 1989, & 1993) suggested that efficacy beliefs not only exert influence on future success, but also significantly affected individual development. Kram’s (1985) research findings concluded that career-related and psychosocial functions enhance participants’ sense of
self and prepare individuals for advancement. Both influence the development of individual competencies that may result in increased workforce readiness.

**Conceptual Model for Mentoring Study**

Figure 3 illustrates a lens developed by the researcher for this study. Drawing from the literature on business and academic mentoring as well as research on the Millennial generation and hospitality workforce competencies, this study employed a model encompassing mentor factors and self-efficacy expectations. Based on research on the Millennial generational cohort, the researcher’s lens suggests that there are two Mentoring relationship constructs, activities and behaviors. Activities facilitated as part of the mentoring relationship are defined as specified pursuits completed to promote the development of a mentee (Cohen, 1995). Behaviors are defined as personal attributes of the mentor that facilitate the mentoring relationship (Cohen, 1995). Kram’ mentoring model provided a framework in which to categorize the relationship activities and mentor behaviors. Bandura’s self-efficacy expectations model conceptualized the impact of the relationship on the past student-participant’s perception of self. Both models aided in the analysis of students’ perceptions of mentoring relationship factors and its perceived impact on workforce readiness within the hospitality industry.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented literature within business and academic settings relevant to the study of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality industry. The first section provided an overview of mentoring including its definitions, historical construct, relationship models, program types, development phases, and human dimensions. The
Figure 3. Researcher’s lens of the mentoring study model.
literature imparted that mentoring is a complex development activity with a long history, and broad definition pool. Also reflected was key program success attributes, including an understanding of mentor relationship models, an attentive implementation process, and a focus on human dimensions of this development function. The second section provided information on Millennials, the generation currently benefitting from college mentor relationships. The literature provided a mixed portrayal revealing that this generation is incredibly bright, but has entitlement issues and workforce skills deficits. Also reflected was the need for meaningful development activities, hands-on application, and continual feedback. The third section focused on competencies important for career-tracked employment within the hospitality industry. The literature resonated that operational, interpersonal, leadership, and conceptual creative skills were needed in hospitality career-tracked employment. Also revealed was that these required competencies were not commonly associated with hospitality curriculum in the university setting. The final section provided information on conceptual models that inform mentoring relationships. A two-component model encompassing both mentoring functions and self-efficacy constructs was used to effectively understand the college mentoring relationship within the hospitality environment.

It is critical to add to the understanding of mentorship by unpacking the ways in which the mentor relationship is personally experienced and constructed by students (Jacobi, 1991; Wallace, Abel, & Ropers-Huilman, 2000). The next chapter explains the methodology that was used to explore past student-participants’ experiences in a formal hospitality college mentor program and their perceptions of how the relationship prepared them for hospitality employment at a supervisory level post-graduation.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation. This chapter describes the qualitative research methodology for this study and includes: (a) rationale for methodology, (b) selection of the case, (c) selection of study participants, (d) research protocol, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) design quality considerations. Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the nine-step research process that guided the study.

The overarching research question providing foundation for this study was: How do past student-participants of a formal hospitality college mentoring program perceive their mentoring relationships? The focus was on both the relationship and its impact on post-graduation employment. To this end, the following questions and sub questions were developed to guide the study:

(1) How do participants describe mentoring activities (specified pursuits promoting the development of the student) and mentor behaviors (observable personal attributes of the mentor) experienced as part of the mentoring relationship?
   a. Why were the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors considered meaningful?

(2) How do participants perceive their development through the mentoring relationship?
Select Research Topic
1. Identified problem to investigate and gap in the literature
2. Literature review including study’s theoretical models
3. Determined research scope and limitations
4. Developed research questions

Methodology
1. Rationale for qualitative approach
2. Rationale for single case-study design

Selection of Case

Selection of Primary Research Participants
15 Past Student-Participants

Triangulation

Selection of Secondary Research Participants
14 Mentor-Participants

Document Review
63 Mentor of the Year nominations/materials

Research Protocol
1. Institutional Review Board approval
2. Selection and data collection protocol
3. Role of the researcher

Data Collection
1. Interviews
2. Focus groups
3. Document review

Content Analysis

Open Coding Analysis ➔ Axial Coding Analysis ➔ Selective Coding Analysis

Domain Analysis

Attribution
Inductive Process

Design Quality
Confirmability
Triangulation
External audit
Transferability
Detailed evidence
Descriptive data on study participants
Inclusion of all data content
Credibility
Member checking
Dependability
Code-checking

Reporting Results

Figure 4. Visual representation of nine-step research process.
(3) How do formal college mentoring relationships affect workplace competencies and prepare participants for hospitality employment at the supervisory level post-graduation?

a. How do participants view the relationship post-graduation?

b. How do participants perceive the impact of the relationship on supervisory employment post-graduation?

Rationale for Methodology

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation. Qualitative research is an effort to understand individual situations as part of specific contexts explored through the experiences of the participants (Merriam, 1998). Creswell (2007) emphasized, “The focus of all qualitative research needs to be on understanding the phenomenon being explored rather than solely on the reader, the researcher, or the participants being studied” (p. 3). The qualitative research method assumes that meaning is embedded in the participant’s experience (Merriam, 1998).

This case study explored the understandings, experiences, and perceptions of past student-participants and the meanings attached to the mentoring relationship. The case examined particular instances of mentoring relationship aspects that hold value in the minds of past student-participants. Yin (2009) explained, “In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary
phenomenon within a real-life context” (p. 2). Case study research is focused on the meaning people make of their lives in a specific context and how it may relate to the broader social world (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The method is used to enlighten those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear single set of outcomes (Yin, 2009). Dyson and Genishi (2005) noted, “The aim of such studies is not to establish relationships between variables (as in experimental studies), but rather, to see what some phenomenon means as it is socially enacted within a particular case” (p. 10).

This case study focused on students participating in a college-mentoring program from a single hospitality college versus a number of colleges. Yin (2009) noted rationales for selecting a single case study model versus a multiple case model; included was a rationale that the case is a bounded representation of a unique occurrence of the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). This case was unique as there are few ranked hospitality programs that facilitate formal mentoring relationships through a college mentoring program. In addition, the location of the college is in one of the world’s largest tourist destinations providing a diverse representation of mentoring experiences.

**Selection of the Case**

Perceptions of past student-participants who were involved in a mentoring relationship formed as part of the formal college mentoring program within the College of Hotel Administration (Hotel College) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) was the focus of this case study. The UNLV Hotel College is ranked number three in the world for hospitality education and has an enrollment of approximately 3,200 students (Hotel College, 2012; Severt et al., 2009). The college is located in one
of the top tourist destinations in the world with over 38 million visitors yearly (Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, 2012). With over 150,000 hotel rooms, 12 million square feet of convention space, and one of the largest food and beverage infrastructures in the world, Las Vegas is considered a living laboratory for Hotel College students (Hotel College, 2012; Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, 2012).

The Hotel College Mentor Program is an optional development opportunity offered to students within the college. As part of the program, junior and senior level students are paired for a seven-month period from October through April with a hospitality industry professional within the Las Vegas community. It is a structured pairing of a student with a mentor whose experience is aligned with the student’s professional career path. The amount of time and type of development activities are flexible and vary from one pairing to another. On average, 135 high level executives representing different market segments and positions of the Las Vegas hospitality industry serve as mentors in the program each year. Appendix A provides general program information.

The process of conducting a case study begins with the selection of what is to be studied. Merriam (2002) discussed, “The selection is done purposefully, not randomly; that is, a particular person, site, program, process, community, or other bounded system is selected because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher” (p. 179). The unit of analysis for the study was mentoring relationships within the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program. The relationships were bounded within the Hotel College Mentoring Program and within a specific time parameter.
between 2008 and 2011. The time parameter’s significance was two-fold. First, since 2008, the Hotel College Mentor Program has implemented administration processes empirically shown to have a positive impact on mentoring relationships including structured pairings, training, and evaluation (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Eby & Allen, 2002; Eddy et al., 2005; Hegstad & Wentling, 2004; Whittaker & Cartwright, 2000). Second, the mentor relationships analyzed have a minimum of 1.5 years separation from the formal college mentoring program, providing a long-term perspective on the impact of this relationship.

**Selection of Study Participants**

Purposeful sampling was utilized to select participants as part of the data collection in order to best inform the research problem under investigation (Creswell, 2007). This type of sampling builds on certain characteristics or criteria, which assists in collecting meaningful data (Mason, 2002).

The study’s focus was on perceptions of both the mentoring relationship and its impact on post-graduation employment. As such, it was important to select participants that could provide informed insight (Merriam, 1998). As such, the primary participants for the study were individuals who met the following three criteria: (1) participated in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program between the years of 2008 and 2011 as part of his or her undergraduate hospitality studies; (2) graduated with a degree from the UNLV College of Hotel Administration; and (3) currently employed in a supervisory capacity within the hospitality industry.

Secondary study participants were industry professionals who served as mentors between the years of 2008 and 2011 and received a Mentor of the Year nomination.
suggesting that he or she demonstrated behaviors and facilitated activities perceived as meaningful by the student-participant. Secondary study participants were included to increase the confirmability of the study through the use of triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By the utilization of two study participant sources, the researcher sought convergence and collaboration of information to better understand the mentoring relationship, which enhanced the quality of synthesis (Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Colllins, 2012).

Research by Weller and Romney (1988) found that in general 10 knowledgeable informants are needed to understand the contents of an action, concern, or function. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted the importance of sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached:

In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize the information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion. (p. 202)

Dobbert (1982) recommended a representation with reasonable variation in the phenomenon, setting, and people. Redundancy and data saturation was reached at a representation of 15 past student-participants and 14 mentor-participants with expertise in a variety of hospitality settings including convention, entertainment, finance, food and beverage, gaming, human resources, hotel, sales and marketing, and tourism.

**Research Protocol**

The study was submitted to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Office for the Protection of Research Subjects and approved on February 6, 2013. The primary ethical
consideration was the use of the program database. Thus, gaining authorization from the Dean of the College of Hotel Administration was obtained prior to seeking research approval. It is important to note that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) does not apply to the use of the program database, as the program records are not tied to the student’s university records (United States Department of Education, 2012).

Selection Procedures

A letter introducing the study, outlining its purpose and scope, and discussing requirements was sent via e-mail on February 16, 2013 to all past student-participants who participated in the program during these years: 2008 - 2009 (139 participants), 2009 - 2010 (137 participants), and 2010 - 2011 (132 participants). Out of the 408 e-mails sent to past student-participants, 31 were returned with undeliverable e-mail addresses. The researcher received 10 responses from past student-participants who expressed interest in participating, but did not meet all of the research requirements. A total of 17 past student-participants provided a positive response and met all of the participation requirements. Out of the 17 positive responses, 15 past student-participants reviewed and signed informed consent forms and were interviewed for the study.

A letter introducing the study, outlining its purpose and scope, and discussing requirements was sent via e-mail on February 17, 2013 to 54 mentor-participants. Out of the 54 e-mails sent, 17 were returned with undeliverable e-mail addresses. The researcher received 22 positive responses. Despite efforts to schedule multiple focus groups, many of the mentor-participants were unable to participate due to work and travel
schedules. The researcher was able to accommodate 14 mentor-participants through the offering of two focus group sessions and five one-on-one interviews.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Interviews and focus groups were conducted in-person and via phone using a conferencing system. Prior to the start of the interviews or focus groups, an overview of the study was provided to include a discussion of anonymity via the use of pseudonyms for the mentor, his or her mentee(s), and his or her organization. The study posed minimal risks to participants. The participants were asked to sign an Institutional Review Board approved consent form prior to the interview or focus group, acknowledging the risks and the researcher’s responsibility to protect their anonymity throughout the study.

The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcriber service. The transcribing service reviewed and signed the University’s Transcription Confidentiality Agreement. All data collected was stored on a flash drive and provided to the Principal Investigator for secured storage.

**Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the instrumentation is the researcher (Merriam, 1998). The data collection process is greatly influenced by the personal characteristics that the researcher brings to task (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The study design, collection, and analysis is closely related to the researcher’s background and preexisting views regarding mentoring. The researcher acknowledges participation in mentoring relationships as a mentee, mentor, and administrator. Through these experiences, the researcher has experienced or witnessed the development impact of positive mentoring relationships. The experiences affirm the researcher’s desire to study mentoring relationships as part of
an in-depth research process. The researcher’s background creates opportunities as well as barriers. Throughout the study’s process, the researcher used pre-existing knowledge and experience to enhance the level of analysis while bracketing to separate experiences from those of the participants.

**Data Collection**

Data collection consisted of interviews with past student-participants, focus groups and interviews with mentor-participants, and document review of Mentor of the Year nominations and program materials. Appendix B provides the case study protocol and structured interview protocols used for the interviews and focus groups.

**Past Student-participants**

The primary research representation – past student-participants, were asked to participate in an in-depth interview involving semi-structured, open-ended questions. Interviews are defined as “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (DeMarrais, 2004, p. 55). Merriam (1998) noted, “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (p. 88). The interviews ranged between 45 and 75 minutes.

The researcher used the semi-structured interview process by asking a combination of prepared open-ended and behavior-based questions. This process ensured that questions critical to the study were addressed while allowing participants to elaborate on responses to provide additional information that may be germane to the study (Patton, 1987). Results of the analysis will be described in the following chapter.
Mentor-participants

The secondary research representation – mentor-participants, were asked to participate in focus groups. A focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the subject matter (Krueger, 2009). Focus groups are often used to complement other qualitative collection means such as interviews, observations, and document review, providing opportunity for an exchange of information and the garnering of multiple perspectives (Khan, Anker, Patel, Hemlatha, & Ranjana, 1991). The researcher asked a combination of prepared open-ended and behavior-based questions. Two focus groups were planned and facilitated. Each focus group was 60 minutes in duration.

Due to scheduling conflicts, interviews were conducted for the secondary research representation – mentor-participants, who could not attend one of the scheduled focus group meetings. Interviews completed with mentor-participants ranged from 25 to 45 minutes. Analysis results will be described in the following chapter.

Document Review

Document review is a “method for describing and interpreting the artifacts of a society or social group” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 177). A total of 63 Mentor of the Year nominations completed by participants at the time they were involved in the college mentoring relationship were included as part of the study’s data collection to provide additional perspective (Donaldson, 1988; Goldsmid, Gruber, & Wilson, 1977). In addition, program materials including promotional pieces, correspondence, training guides, and evaluation forms were used in the analysis and triangulation of data. Results of the analysis will be described in the following chapter.
Data Analysis

Case study research requires empirical thinking, along with presentation of collaborating information (Yin, 2009). Describing the case study analysis process, Dyson and Genishi (2005) wrote, “the slow piecwork of analysis is yielding an evidentiary quilt, a written case that folds into its fabric details of talk, text, and action” (p. 126). Content analysis was used to analyze data collected from participant interviews, focus groups, and document review. The content analysis method focuses on communication, specifically the frequency and variety of perceptions and insights (Merriam, 1998).

Using open, axial, and selective coding allowed for the construction of categories that gave meaning to the phenomenon of mentoring relationships (Merriam, 1998). The first data coding process, open coding, broke down and categorized data. The second process, axial coding, made connections among the categories created through open coding. Finally, the selective coding process integrated the data into a cohesive whole providing insight into the phenomenon under investigation. Appendix C provides a synopsis of the three-step coding process. This process was used for both the primary and secondary data collected.

The method of coding was adapted from Creswell (2007) and Merriam (1998) and assumed the following format: (1) organize data; (2) open code by reading through text, making notes, and forming initial codes; (3) axial code to interpret and draw meaning from single instances; (4) use selective coding to seek a collection of instances from the data; (5) identify quotes that pertain directly to the experience and place in a category; (6) cross-reference data using Excel database and Atlas.ti software to ensure data is not overlooked; (7) develop naturalistic generalizations that the audience can learn from the

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case; and (8) present an in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables, and figures. Table 6 illustrates a sample of the analysis. The following data analysis subsections provide information on each coding step.

**Open Coding**

Open coding is the process of reading and noting observations, comments, and information potentially germane to the study (Merriam, 2009). This process was completed in conjunction with the data collection. The researcher employed the use of line-by-line coding to segment data into categories of information (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process followed an inductive process (Merriam, 2009) resulting in an initial set of 109 codes representing categories, comments, viewpoints, and experiences replicated within the data. The initial codes were a combination of emergent terms the researcher created that best described the information and in-vivo terms extracted using exact words of the study representation (Creswell, 2005). Examples of emergent terms included *accessible, job shadowing, learning discussions, personal and professional development, real-world experience, role model, and student accountability*. In-vivo examples included *career swagger, fraternity elder relationship, hit-if off, realized my passion, person I continue to learn from, mentor for life, and found my calling*. Appendix C provides a list of all open codes.

**Axial Coding**

Axial coding is the process of grouping related codes and recurring patterns of data in the study (Merriam, 2009). The process followed an inductive process with the goal to construct categories that capture reoccurring patterns (Merriam, 2009). The following nine categories were constructed: *impact, mentor behaviors, relationship*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Category</th>
<th>Manifest</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>I played soccer in college, so I probably didn’t have as positive relationship—or the relationship I had with my coach was kind of a negative relationship in like—everyone’s always yelling. You’re always in trouble. When I saw Ms. Swan on the professional side, it’s like oh. They may be in trouble but she always went about it so professionally. There was never no yelling or any of that. I definitely bring that to the work place.</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means Mentor and Mentee Keep in Touch</td>
<td>My first mentee is still in town, so it's one of those things where she and I can get together and go out to lunch or go out to dinner or things along those lines in addition to emails and text messages and just kind of checking in with one another</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Behaviors</td>
<td>She was the one who was right next to me the whole time and encouraged me to do what I want to. I have always appreciated her concern about me and taking time of her busy schedule to come talk and discuss whatever I wanted speak with her about.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Activities/Attributes</td>
<td>I was a part of a one-week training program she put together specially catered for me! I walked around and learned from housekeeping, banquets, A/V, front desk services, bell desk services, and even my new favorite stewarding. She introduced me to meeting planners who I can now go to for help or advice.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Accountability</td>
<td>I'm gonna kinda reciprocate whatever they want to put into it. If it's important to them, then it's important to me. I'll spend my time with you that you want to spend with me, but I'm not gonna develop a whole program … for you if you're not wanting to participate.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Feeling Towards Relationship</td>
<td>I have built a rapport with Mr. Jones that will continue for years beyond the end of this program.</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Work Skill Deficits</td>
<td>The biggest challenges I have is they sometimes don’t understand hard work. They feel a little bit entitled.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Work Skills</td>
<td>You need to be somebody who’s organized, somebody who’s a planner, someone who is actually really good with people as well because I think it’s important that—dealing with a department of 65 team members</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Relationship</td>
<td>All in all, Ms. Brooklyn was more likely a best friend than a mentor.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
activities/attributes, student accountability, type of relationship, student feelings toward relationship, means mentor and mentee keep in touch, student work skills deficits, and supervisory work skills. Appendix C provides the breakdown of axial codes for each constructed category.

**Selective Coding**

Selective coding is the final step of coding information. It is the process of interrelating and refining the categories to describe the central phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007). At this stage of coding, the process moved from inductive to deductive. During the deductive process, the researcher was influenced by the literature review, conceptual framework, and list of research questions that organized the study resulting in an informed connection between the means in which the inquiry was conducted and the knowledge generated from it (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Appendix C provides the breakdown of codes per research question.

In the analysis of the primary study representation, the past student-participants, a domain analysis was also completed for each research question. Spradley (1980) defined domain analysis as a search for larger units of knowledge. Domains are created from concepts discovered in the analysis and referents found in the literature, research questions, and theoretical framework (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012; Spradley, 2012). The focus on domain for each research question allowed for the increased understanding of relationship experiences from the focal point of the study – the past student-participants (Spradley, 1980). An attribution domain was used to analyze the interview responses. The attribution domain is defined as, “X is an attribute of Y” (Spradley, 1980, p. 105). Utilization of an attribution domain aided in the exploration of past student-participants’
perceptions of their mentoring relationships by focusing on the characteristics of behaviors, activities, and its impacts on workforce readiness in the hospitality industry.

Design Quality Considerations

Effective research design assists in the compilation of information that addresses the initial research questions (Yin, 2009). Merriam (2009) insisted, “All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner” (p. 209). Creswell (2007) emphasized the concept of “methodological congruence” in which “the purposes, questions, and methods of research are all interconnected and interrelated so that the study appears as a cohesive whole rather than as fragmented, isolated parts” (p. 42). For this study, ensuring quality control was focused on triangulated data, documented rigor in the analysis of the study data, and inclusion of descriptive data to substantiate themes and demonstrate multiple perspectives.

Following standards of research is an important part of the qualitative researcher’s responsibilities. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in an interpretive approach utilized the following as standards for qualitative research: confirmability (degree of neutrality), credibility (confidence that there is truth in findings), transferability (ability to apply the data to another situation), and dependability (findings are consistent and could be repeated). The goal is study findings that are “sufficiently authentic, so that social policy or legislation could possibly be based on the information” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 54). The following subsections discuss the analysis elements that were implemented to ensure quality of research.
Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined confirmability as “the degree of neutrality, or the extent to which the findings of the study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest” (p. 299). To increase the level of confirmability, the study utilized triangulation. For this study, the process of triangulation incorporated multiple sources of evidence including interviews with past student-participants, focus group discussions and interviews with mentor-participants, and document review of Mentor of the Year nominations and other program materials including promotional pieces, training guides, correspondence, and evaluation forms. In addition, an audit trail was prepared detailing how categories were derived and decisions were made throughout the study. Lastly, a researcher independent of the project reviewed the research process. This independent researcher holds a Doctorate in Educational Psychology and currently instructs qualitative research methods at the graduate level.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that credibility is a confidence that there is truth in the findings. For qualitative researchers, this is a difficult process as “data does not speak for itself; there is always an interpreter, or a translator (Ratcliffe, 1983, p. 149). To increase the level of credibility, the researcher provided each of the study participants with his or her interview or focus group transcript and asked the participant to ensure that thoughts and opinions on the mentoring relationship were accurately conveyed. Participants were also encouraged to provide additional comments and feedback. Out of the 29 participants in the study representation, 22 participants (13 past student-
participants and 9 mentor-participants) confirmed via phone or e-mail that the transcript accurately reflected their thoughts and opinions of the mentoring relationships.

**Transferability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined transferability as demonstrating that the findings have applicability in other contexts. Within the domain of transferability, the burden shifts to the person seeking to make an application elsewhere to assess the value of the information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Strategies that were used in the study to increase transferability included descriptive data on the study representation, detailed evidence including quotes from interviews and award nominations, and an inclusion of all data content in the analysis process versus sampling to ensure maximum variation within the representation.

**Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined dependability as exhibiting that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. Miles and Huberman (1994) advised code checking as a means to reinforce reliability and dependability in research. Using this process, the researcher enlisted the assistance of the same individual who independently examined the study’s research process and results to perform a code-check of the analysis. The researcher randomly selected 10 pages of study data, which was code-checked separately by the researcher and independent reviewer. The results of the code check were compared. Agreement was at 93% exceeding the 90% range recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).
Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a description of the methodology and analysis for this study. Specifically, the chapter included: (a) rationale for methodology, (b) selection of the case, (c) selection of study participants, (d) research protocol, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) design quality considerations. Findings from the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation. This chapter presents (a) a description of the study participants, (b) a discussion of the overarching themes discovered through the data analysis, and (c) the findings for each research question.

Perceptions of past student-participants who were involved in a mentoring relationship formed as part of the formal college mentoring program within the College of Hotel Administration (Hotel College) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) was the focus of this case study. Three data sources - interviews, focus groups, and document review were utilized and analyzed using the content analysis method. The study’s primary representation was past student-participants of the Hotel College Mentor Program who currently hold supervisory positions within the hospitality industry. A secondary representation was mentor-participants for the program who received a Mentor of the Year nomination submitted by student-participants. A third data source was Mentor of the Year nominations and other program materials including promotional pieces, training guides, correspondence, and evaluation forms.

The findings presented in this chapter are based on data from 15 past student-participant interviews, 14 mentor-participant focus group sessions and interviews, 63 Mentor of the Year nominations, and other program materials. The data analysis yielded
109 open codes grouped into nine axial groupings and 12 domain groupings, and selectively coded to address each research question.

**Description of the Participants**

The 29 participants in this study represented various segments, levels, and expertise in the hospitality industry. Figure 5 provides demographics of the participants. Table 7 provides the participants’ pseudonyms and job titles.

The past student-participants (n=15) were primarily Caucasian (67%), included more males (53%) than females (47%), and a slight majority worked in Las Vegas, Nevada (53%) where the mentoring relationship occurred. The past student-participants, held supervisory positions in Finance, Front Desk, Table Games, Casino Marketing, Human Resources, Food and Beverage, Slots, Entertainment, Convention Services, and Housekeeping. The supervisory positions included administrator (33%), supervisor (7%), manager (53%), and director (7%). Supervisory duties of student-participants included supervision of up to 65 employees, management of guest service, complex reporting of property income, oversight of housekeeping, coordination of entertainment and convention bookings, facilitation of services for high-end casino players, and integration of gaming technology on the table games floor.

The mentor-participants (n=14) were primarily Caucasian (86%), included an equal distribution of males (50%) and females (50%), and all worked in Las Vegas, Nevada. The mentor-participants held positions including manager (21%), director (43%), and vice president (36%) representing Human Resources, Sales, Telecommunications, Catering, Organizational Behavior, Inventory Control, Pit Clerk Operations, Front Desk, Leisure Sales and Marketing, Convention Sales, and Finance.
Figure 5. Participant demographics.
Table 7

*Pseudonyms and Job Titles for Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Student-Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Hotel Assistant Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>Auditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>Hotel Assistant Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Housekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Marketing Integration Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Human Resources/Training Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond</td>
<td>Restaurant Managing Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>Front Desk Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimmy</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Assistant Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hal</td>
<td>Slot Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>Casino Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danika</td>
<td>Hotel Evaluation Manager</td>
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<td>Drake</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Ms. Lawton</td>
<td>Vice President of Human Resources</td>
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<td>Mr. Gregor</td>
<td>Vice President of Sales</td>
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<td>Ms. Jones</td>
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<td>Ms. Bradley</td>
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<td>Mr. Beare</td>
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Research Themes

The goal of the research was to identify aspects of the mentoring relationship that held meaning for the participant in order to enhance understanding of relationship qualities that cultivate hospitality workplace competencies and prepare students for supervisory employment within the hospitality industry. The overarching research question providing foundation for this study was: *How do past student-participants of a formal hospitality college mentoring program perceive their mentoring relationships?*

The focus was on both the relationship and its impact on post-graduation employment. As such, the research questions and sub questions were intended to seek perceptions of mentor behaviors, relationship activities, development through the mentorship, and impact on hospitality workplace competencies.

A number of themes emerged from the data. Overall, the findings showed a positive perception of the mentoring relationship by past student-participants. Analysis of accounts illuminated relationship aspects valued in hospitality mentoring. The relationship aspects did not stand separately and were often mentioned in tandem by past student-participants when discussing their mentoring experience. Meaningful relationships were described by the past student-participants as the continuous process of understanding the student’s career aspirations and development needs, structuring activities based on aspirations and needs, and reflecting on experiences both within and outside the scope of the mentoring relationship. The past student-participants’ perceived development was focused on gaining an insider’s perspective and was characterized as a realistic job preview of hospitality management, real-world experience, and increased confidence. Overall, past student-participants stated that the impact of the relationship
was personal and professional development through different management perspectives, employment and career path support, and a continued relationship. Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the findings.

The study determined that behaviors related to mentor engagement and commitment were found in meaningful college relationships within the hospitality environment. Mentor engagement and commitment were demonstrated through time and accessibility, employment sponsorship, coaching, serving as a role model, and demonstrating care and concern for the student. Past student-participants shared that meaningful relationships were ones that were not just focused on professional development, but also looked to expand the competencies of the student as an individual.

Findings confirmed that mentoring relationships are two-sided, thus student accountability was also found to be important in creating a meaningful relationship. There was a perception that the time and effort the student put into the relationship correlated with the benefit received. From the mentor-participant perspective, student accountability was manifested not only through the giving of time, but also in keeping relationship commitments, demonstrating passion for learning, knowing what they hope to achieve, and understanding the value of the relationship. Study findings suggested that mentors were willing to reciprocate the time the student put into the relationship, thus the development outcomes were somewhat self-directed by the student-participants. Mentor engagement and commitment and student accountability behaviors linked to meaningful mentoring activities. These relationship activities were structured, provided exposure, allowed students to be involved with work and projects, incorporated learning discussions, and assisted with aspects of the student’s academic life. Activities were
Meaningful College Mentoring Relationships Within the Hospitality Environment

**Relationship Activities**
- Structured Relationship
- Learning Discussions
- Work Assignments
- School Assistance
- Exposure

**Mentor Behaviors**
- Time and Accessibility
- Employment Sponsorship
- Coaching
- Role Model
- Care for Student

Enhanced Career Growth — Provided Real-world Perspective, Linked Classroom Knowledge to Industry, Demonstrated Care and Concern for Student Success — Instilled a Higher Level of Confidence

Insider’s Perspective
- Realistic Job Preview
- Real-World Experience
- Increased Confidence

Personal and Professional Development
- Different Management Perspectives
- Employment/Career Path
- Continued Relationship

Workforce Readiness Within Hospitality Industry

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*Figure 6.* Visual representation of the findings.
customized based on a deep understanding of the student’s needs and included both preparation and reflection components which guided understanding of what was learned or accomplished, valued, and relevant to the student’s professional growth plan.

Apparent in the findings was the interdependency among mentor behaviors and mentoring activities. One without the other was not sufficient in fostering a meaningful relationship. Effective mentoring relationships required mentors to facilitate customized development opportunities through utilization of effective mentor behaviors.

Past student-participants expressed that the perceived development of the mentoring relationship was not tied to task-related workforce competencies, but rather in a broader base understanding of how work is accomplished in the hospitality environment and the expectations of managers in reaching organizational goals. Past student-participants reflected that the learning of the realities of hospitality work at the supervisory level, including long hours, unpredictable schedules, high-level projects mixed with menial tasks, did not always align with classroom teachings. Obtaining the insider’s perspective was a “gut check” needed to confirm passion for a segment of the industry. Overall, past student-participants felt they were more prepared to begin their careers in hospitality due to the mentoring relationship because they had an understanding of what to expect.

The study examined relationships with a minimum of 1.5 years separation from the formal mentoring program. The perceived long-term impact was described as personal and professional development through acquiring different management perspectives, influencing employment and career path, and a continuing relationship.
Research Question One: Mentoring Activities and Mentor Behaviors

Analysis of collected data revealed several key themes relevant to research question one: How do participants describe mentoring activities (specified pursuits promoting the development of the student) and mentor behaviors (observable personal attributes of the mentor) experienced as part of the mentoring relationship? (a) Why were the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors considered meaningful? These findings provided perspective on what transpired in the relationship with recalled accounts uncovering meaningful aspects of the relationship. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the domain analyses for research question one. Appendix D defines the domain terminology used to describe the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors discussed in the findings.

The five mentoring activity themes described by past student-participants were structured relationships, exposure opportunities, work assignments, learning discussions, and school assistance. The five mentor behaviors described by past student-participants were time and accessibility, coaching, care for the student, serving as a role model, and employment sponsorship.

Past student-participants stated that the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors were important because they interdependently enhanced career growth and development, provided a real-world perspective, linked classroom knowledge to industry, demonstrated care and concern for the student’s success, and instilled a higher level of confidence. The following subsections provide explanation and accounts of both activity and mentor behavior themes.
Figure 7. Research question one domain analysis: mentoring activities.
Figure 8. Research question one domain analysis: mentor behaviors.
Relationship Activities - Structured Relationship

A theme discovered through the data analysis was the ability of the student-participants to become involved, develop professional skills, and gain industry-related knowledge through a structured relationship. The components of the structured relationship included planning activities, preparing students for activities, and reflecting on experiences. Examples of structured relationships ranged from a systematic process of scheduling the student-participants to meet executives in departments of interest to coordination of department rotations and training programs specifically designed to the student’s development needs. Winnie, recalled:

Every week, she would rotate me to spend time with different departments to have a full understanding of the property operation. I remember being exposed to the HR department, where I got to sit with all the managers from the Compensation Manager to the Training Manager to the Director of Employee Relations. [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

Past student-participants reflected that the structured relationship established a foundation for development opportunities and program expectations set by the mentor. Allison provided her perspective on the setting-up of ground rules for the relationship:

He pretty much laid the ground rules for what he expected, he pretty much told me that, as his mentee, I would be in touch with as many of his connections as he could make for me, and I would go ahead and meet them, and he had very commonsense expectations. You cannot be late. You need to follow up, things like that, and it just was much more structured environment than what a lot of my other friends have described to me, so I knew that he was serious about the program, and I knew that if I worked on these expectations there would be a lot of great outcomes for me. [Allison, Past Student-participant]

Data revealed the duration pattern between interactions was weekly or bi-weekly however, the time between did not seem as important as the structure itself. Allison further reflected on her relationship:
I actually liked the structure because it gave me something to expect, and I also knew that that would keep me on track with meeting with Mr. Gregor regularly because I know one of the complaints that I had gotten from some of my friends is, “Oh, I actually don’t meet my mentor enough.” Or, “I haven’t seen him in a while,” but because I had all these meetings planned with people from different divisions that he worked with, I knew that I would regularly be seeing him. [Allison, Past Student-participant]

Planning activities through a customized program was key to the structured relationship. Allen recalled that his mentor asked questions to ascertain his interests and development needs:

He definitely asked me enough questions to see what I wanted to know more of, but also at the same time like knew when to give more information. It wasn’t just something where it was like, “Okay well let’s do, like let’s do this,” and not show you anything. He did this, and then gave me an explanation of why this is done. It was a good feeling to know that it’s like you’re guiding a student pretty much. [Allen, Past Student-participant]

This approach provided the student an opportunity for structured self-directed learning as reflected by Danika:

He kinda asked me what’s my long term goals. Like what do I see myself doing? Where do I wanna go outside of school? He told me to make a list of things that I wanna learn more about and things I wanna accomplish within the next year and that he’d help me do it. [Danika, Past Student-participant]

Part of the structured relationship was preparing the student for activities and interactions. The student preparation varied taking the form of assigned readings, prior discussions, and the preparation of questions. Danika described the interaction:

He always made sure I was prepared for the meetings, so he’d pull me in 15 minutes before I would go meet someone on property. He’d be like, “Read this article. This will help you. Let me tell you about the person,” so I never went in blindsided. Like not knowing what to expect and he always prepared me with questions to ask, and things I should do, and, to kinda make it a good experience too. [Danika, Past Student-participant]

Drake viewed student preparation as key for making a positive first impression:
He **provided me with the contacts and the background** so that I could make a solid impression with the people I was meeting. It was key. [Drake, Past Student-participant]

The final component of the structured relationship, reflection, emerged continually during the interviews. Comments from the past student-participants indicated reflection as a necessary aspect in understanding the operation and how management contributes to its success. Winnie noted:

**By telling me why she thinks a certain way and makes the decisions that she does,** I learned to deal with a variety of challenging situations in a professional manner. [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

Jake felt that reflection component was the key to the mentoring. He recalled:

I felt in the mentor relationship, you can see things occur whether it's a management style or an employee being disciplined or an employee being talked to, yet there's always that mentoring thing. Wait a second. **Let's talk about that after the fact. Why did that person take these actions? You don't get to replay it in real life.** [Jake, Past student-participant]

Whether the activity was a meeting with an executive, reading of an assigned hospitality article, or observing department activities; students expressed that there was benefit in the reflections afterwards. Tony noted:

Throughout this experience, Mr. Webb took the **time and effort to make sure I understood what I was being exposed to and constantly quizzed me on what I had learned.** [Tony, Past student-participant]

As part of the structured relationship, reflection coupled with planning and preparation provided the conduit for the student-participant to understand the nuances of the hospitality industry.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants’ views regarding the structured relationship aligned with past student-participants. Illustrating the level of structure
provided in mentoring relationships, the following narrative is from an e-mail correspondence with Mr. Gregor describing his facilitation style:

Mr. Gregor created a folder with the student’s completed interest survey enclosed. **On the other side of the folder, he took notes about the dates that he and his mentee met and what was accomplished during those appointments.** He scheduled monthly one-on-one meetings with the student and was vigilant about taking notes. Mr. Gregor’s “mentor folder” providing detailed accounts of his meetings with the student reflected the importance that he placed on the program and his role in the development process. **Mr. Gregor also facilitated a methodical process in which to ensure successful networking opportunities for the student.** From beginning introduction to the feedback at the conclusion of each meeting, the mentor program was structured to set the student up for success and provide for the ultimate development opportunity. [Mentor-participant, E-mail Correspondence, 2010]

The three-pronged approach of planning activities through the development of a customized program, preparing students, and reflections were included in the responses of mentor-participants. Mr. Beare described the initial meeting geared to gaining an understanding of the student’s development needs in order to plan a customized program:

The first meeting that I have is just a general conversation, kind of get to know the student. **I throw out there that the experience will be as limited or as expansive as they want it to be.** That can mean everything from homework assignments to shadowing, not only at this property, but at other properties through relationships that I’ve built in the industry. Whatever they want it to look like is what we’ll do. Typically, what I’ll do is present it that way and say what I’d like for you to do is think about what it is you want to see and do. Then shoot me an email with your big things that you want to experience, whether it’s shadowing or whether it’s just something that’s more limited. [Mr. Beare, Mentor-participant]

Preparing students for activities and interactions was also stressed. Mr. Gregor commented:

My mentee represents me and I won’t be embarrassed. **Prepping her made sure that she was well prepared, would benefit from the interaction, and represented me well.** [Mr. Gregor, Mentor-participant]
Mentor-participants also acknowledged the importance of reflection. Ms. Jones commented:

> It’s a lot of information, so **you’re trying to show them what you’re looking at and what you’re going through, what these numbers mean and why they’re important.** [Ms. Jones, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations described the structured relationship providing additional perspective. One student reflected on the three-component approach to the structured relationship:

> From the start of the program I was given the opportunity to interact in any department within the XYZ Organization. **Every Thursday I was allowed to spend 4-5 hours inside the department of my choice. Each week we would make e-mail or telephone contact to discuss the past Thursday events, and agree on the next week’s adventure.** My mentor program exposed me to Revenue Management for over 9000 rooms within 5 different hotels, working closely with the revenue staff. I was afforded the opportunity to work directly with the Director of Catering & Conference services with exposure to several ongoing events. I was introduced to the VIP Operations, Human Resources, Front Desk, Housekeeping Quality Control, Engineering, and Ambassador/Concierge Departments. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Findings concluded that the structured relationship of planning activities to facilitate a customized program, preparing students for activities and interactions, and reflection enhanced past student-participants perceptions of the mentoring experience.

**Relationship Activities – Learning Discussions**

The act of learning discussions was powerful in students broadening their knowledge outside the classroom. Study participants described a variety of learning discussions that took place during the course of the mentorship. Discussions were based on the mentor’s work environment, hospitality articles, books, and news headlines, or the student’s current classes. Danika felt the learning discussions were the highlight of her mentor interactions. She remembered:
Although I have had the opportunity to meet many interesting people, the one-on-one meetings with Mr. Beare are the ones that I value the most. We discussed articles about the hospitality industry, how it is evolving and what it takes to be successful today and in the future. Mr. Beare’s guidance has allowed me to grow and expand my knowledge. [Danika, Past Student-participant]

Mentors linked classroom learning with work application through learning discussions.

Tony commented:

I mean interacting and teaching me, going deeper for my studies, that’s perfect. That’s exactly what a mentor is supposed to do, right? You take that classroom example, and he gives a real-life example. It really puts it into perspective...

We had several one-on-one conversations in his office throughout the course of the year. The first thing we would do is catch up for a few minutes. This would inevitably lead to what I was learning in school that week. The next step always amazed me. One time we were talking about employee retention and well-being. He immediately took me into the “war room” took to the white board and asked me what I thought reasons for employee unhappiness were both from a personal perspective and then from an employer perspective. Another time we were discussing risk management. Midway through the conversation, he called the Director of Surveillance in to emphasize a point about hotel security and risk. He always made sure that I had a real-world perspective from what I was learning in the classroom. [Tony, Past Student-participant]

As this instance showed, the learning discussion provided an opportunity for students to see how knowledge learned in the classroom environment translated to the hospitality work environment.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also viewed learning discussions as important component of the mentoring relationship. Ms. Wolfe recalled:

I talk about, with them, the fraud things that I do. They always want to help me with the fraud stuff, and how I am able to identify a floor supervisor who’s doing fake ratings. A lot of them have been with me during the time I was doing fraud, so they got to go to surveillance with me and deliver the paperwork and see the reports. In their little file, I’ll leave a copy of the reports so they get to see what happened and what we did with it and if the floor supervisor was arrested or if they were just allowed to quit. [Ms. Wolfe, Mentor-participant]
In addition, text from Mentor of the Year nominations corroborated with past student-participants’ perceptions of the value of learning discussions. A student wrote:

She always **gave multiple examples of how she handled things and made sure I understood what she said**. I was also able to borrow wedding books from her that she had in her office as a resource. **Being able to borrow these resources from her enhanced my understanding of the wedding industry** and how endless the possibilities are of making a wedding dream come true. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Learning discussions provided an opportunity for students to process information, contribute, and generate their own conclusions versus just simply receiving information. Participants reflected that this active learning approach was the preferred form of erudition during the mentoring process.

**Relationship Activities - Exposure**

Past student-participants described different forms of exposure to hospitality operations that included attending meetings, walking the floor with their mentors, shadowing department staff on busy nights, and networking with executives both inside and outside of the mentor’s department. Attending meetings provided a realistic view of management. Bond noted:

**He invited me to this meeting called Monday Morning Leadership that went simultaneously with the book that he had prescribed to all his staff. We were sitting there and kind of discussed the chapter and it was an interesting meeting to go to. I was really just impressed by the respect that he had by all his staff members. There were food and beverage directors and some really important people that would sit in the meetings. I’d get there early and we’d be sitting around, and the minute he walked in the room, you knew, court was in session.** [Bond, Past Student-participant]

Activities outside of the mentor’s work environment provided occasion for networking, learning, and interpersonal skill development. Drake recalled:

(Since I picked slots as my area), I actually spent one week at every single property in the brand. **I spent time with all the manufacturers, just meeting**
with them, kind of learned more about what they do. What’s interesting, those relationships to this day—the people that I met just for a few hours, are the people I’m doing business with today. [Drake, Past Student-participant]

Job shadowing was recalled by past student-participants as being meaningful.

Shadowing took the form of within department exposure, outside department learning, and day-to-day shadowing with mentor. During his interview, Tony provided insight as he discussed his relationship with a General Manager from a casino property:

He said, “Listen man, I run this place, so anything you want to see, you pretty much can.” Any part of the hotel operations, and I took full advantage of that. I had a two hour one on one with 15 different department manager directors. Through shadowing him and his team, he did what a mentor was exactly supposed to do – he took the classroom example and he provided real-life example. It really puts it into perspective. One of my favorites was facilities. To see the nuts and bolts of what goes on in a 600 room casino hotel. I mean I’m talking about—like I mean I’m geeked about it, like the boiler room. To see how big the water main has to be and the water softener, and all this kind of stuff on that huge level. [Tony, Past Student-participant]

Jake, recalled the power of “seeing his mentor in action” while walking the floor:

It was seeing him in action, seeing people come up to him, asking him about this finance on this line item and then hearing about a problem regarding a VIP customer from one of his managers, to overhearing a guest speak about a butler and then him jumping in, all the way through to seeing paint chipped off the wall in a public area and picking up the phone and calling the assistant director of housekeeping to get that taken care of immediately. [Jake, Past Student-participant]

Kimmy preferred shadowing the day-to-day activities of her mentor to traditional mentoring meetings and discussions. She expressed:

I felt like I was in a sorority and I was getting paired with my big sister. I thought this would be a catalyst into getting into my career. Instead it was an opportunity to walk the floor with her and see how conventions and special events are done. I liked that we shadowed more than talked. [Kimmy, Past Student-participant]
Exposure opportunities provided the opportunity for participants to engage with a variety of industry professionals and directly led to immediate positions after the mentoring experience for five of the students interviewed for the study.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also viewed exposure as an important component to the mentoring relationship. Mr. Meyer expressed that he facilitated exposure opportunities to assist the student in building future relationships:

> My key goal is to introduce them to a lot of the people on the property that make the hiring decisions. So when they get out they’ve already built those relationships. Whether it’s casino—even if it’s something else—if it’s in Las Vegas, all these people are tied together somehow. You know somebody at XYZ Resort used to work for somebody at the ABC Resort, which can make the call, “Hey, I’ve worked with this person.” [Mr. Meyer, Mentor-participant]

Mr. Gregor further described exposure, particularly attendance at events as not only a learning experience, but also an opportunity to “see what all the hard work transpires into.” Student-participants agreed as evident by the numerous Mentor of the Year nominations that cited attendance at industry award ceremonies, special events, and tours as a highlight of the mentoring relationships as the exposure allowed for the formation of relationships outside their mentor’s immediate area.

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations corroborated with past student-participants’ perceptions of the value of exposure. A student wrote:

> I have met with my mentor at least once every two weeks since September observing both inside and outside his department - he has shown me a side of the hotel industry I had never seen before. As the opening of the hotel grew closer in December, I spent more time with him and his team as they were preparing for the soft and hard opening in true Las Vegas style. **On the day the property open, I spent about 8-9 hours not only helping his team but learning from him as well.** [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

This exposure provided an opportunity for students to both learn and participate. One student noted during a conference call meeting:
I was flabbergasted when the VP introduced me on the call as well. Not only was I introduced, they asked me my opinion on what I thought of the packaging for the products. It was surreal. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Overall, exposure was an important need and expectation of students participating in the program. Whether the exposure occurred inside the mentor’s department or externally, it appeared to be principal to the relationship. One student wrote:

It is all about our network. One of the best things about being Mr. Kish’s mentee is that he has resources that few other mentors have. I was introduced to dozens of executives and managers and executives. [Student-participant, Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2009]

Through the exposure aspects of attending meetings, walking the floor with mentors, shadowing department staff, and networking, participants found value in the experience as they directly engaged with the day-to-day hospitality operations.

**Relationship Activities - Work Assignments**

Work assignments as part of the mentoring relationship provided applied experience for students. Examples of work experiences as a beneficial aspect of the mentoring relationship were evident throughout the interview data. Through completion of daily work as well as involvement with projects, gaining experience through the mentoring relationship was perceived as important. Winnie described her experience:

She let me do a lot of different stuff and I also got to know a lot of people. I also had the opportunity to run the reports she does by myself, which was a great experience for me, and I really appreciate that I was given that chance. She also familiarized me with the parts of her work when they are running investigations of employees or customers, and about what have happened to them, and so on, which was really interesting. [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

The ability to work on company projects provided both a realistic job preview and an opportunity for students to extend learning outside the boundaries of the classroom.

From assisting on new marketing campaigns to investigating table games fraud, students
enjoyed the opportunity to contribute as well as learn, develop skills, and work with others.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also viewed work assignments as important. Mr. Hunt provided an example of his mentee’s efforts that not only developed skills, but also helped save jobs within his department:

I told (my mentee) that I was thinking about eliminating some positions in a casino, but I wasn’t sure if I should because my labor cost to my revenues were excessive. I said that I can’t spend the time at 5:00 in the morning to see how many people are playing, and how many tables are open, and what the house advantage is on this game, and what theoretically we’re supposed to win. Here’s your project: 5:00 a.m. go down there and watch the tables. **He had to get up at 5:00 a.m., and for three hours he watched our tables and he charted the bets from a bar area or a slot area. He watched. He came back with solutions trying to save jobs.** [Mr. Hunt, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of the value of work assignments. A student wrote:

He helps me get involved in Kaizen Program, which is a program trying to enhance the customer service. Kaizen is Japanese, which means improvement. It is invented in Toyota, encouraged the employees all over the company to contribute ideas in improvement. It is a brand new idea in the hospitality industry. I was honored that my mentor helped me to get involved in the whole program. The program goes through all the departments in the hotel including cocktail server, retail, supply, front desk and so no. **I am assisting him in recording waiting time of each customer in retail store, casino floor using different time formulas.** After discovering problems from observation, there were the brainstorming sessions with the employees in different departments. He also encouraged me attend those sessions to discuss problems with the employees and managers in the front-line. I learned the first hand information from them. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2010]

Work assignments provided for active engagement of learning and aided participants in the understanding of the type of work required by supervisors within hospitality. The kinesthetic approach of mentoring by doing, not just observing and
meeting with his or her mentor, was an important aspect of the meaningful mentoring relationship.

**Relationship Activities - School Assistance**

The providing of school assistance was as an aspect of the relationship that held meaning for the past student-participant. The assistance varied from providing tours of the property for classes and student clubs, assisting with a homework assignment or project, securing a donation for a university event, to speaking in classes. Allison felt a sense of pride when recalling the assistance provided by her mentor:

*I asked him to help me set up a property tour at one of the hotels that he works for, and he ended up not only getting all of this arranged for me, but he ended up leading my tour for me, and he brought out a lot of executives as well for us to meet, which was really a huge point for us, so I think that was when I was really impressed.* I was like, “Wow, I thought you would just really just send out a few emails, tell me who to meet at what point, at what time,” but he went ahead, and he took the time to do that for me, and I was like, “Oh, I'm so proud to be your mentee right now. I'm so impressed to be able to tell all my friends that I know you. That’s not just the Senior Vice President of Sales. That’s my mentor. I see him all the time.” [Allison, Past Student-participant]

Danika remembered that Mr. Beare’s assistance provided a unique perspective for a class project:

*He scheduled a meeting with Ronald Smith, the Director of Entertainment at the XYZ Resort. This meeting helped me achieve a unique perspective on the entertainment industry that became invaluable when completing my final report for TCA 373 (Hotel Entertainment Course).* [Danika, Past Student-participant]

Past student-participants valued the support provided as it reinforced the mentor’s commitment to the student while the assistance increased the value of the mentoring relationship.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also expressed the importance of
providing school assistance. Mr. Grant recalled assisting with school assignments as well as facilitating tours as part of his mentoring relationship:

I was an adjunct in the Hotel College for many years, so I understand the needs of the students and how difficult it is to make contacts for school and club interactions. I assisted with connecting my mentee with contacts for assignment interviews as well as hosted my share of tours. [Mr. Grant, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of the value of the mentor providing school assistance. A student wrote:

Not only did my mentor spend his time teaching me and putting me in contact with others that I could learn from, but he was also receptive to ideas I had about connecting him to my life at UNLV. I wanted to integrate him into the campus culture by introducing him to some Hotel College professional staff members, and also invited him to speak in one of my gaming courses. He was highly receptive to the idea and was able to clear a four-hour block of time to accommodate it. I was really pleased to see him willing to do this favor for me because UNLV has become my home for the past few years and so in a way it was like inviting him to meet part of my family. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2009]

Data suggested that school assistance through presenting in classes, providing tours, assisting with homework, and securing donations was an aspect of a meaningful mentoring relationship.

Mentor Behaviors – Time and Accessibility

A behavior revealed to have a positive influence on the mentoring relationship was the allocation and effective usage of time. As reflected in the following comment by Tony, the students understood their mentors were busy and truly valued the time spent together.

I was gratified that anybody who took their time out of their day to do it. It wasn’t like they were doing work while they were with me, right. They were
taking the time to show me their part of the business and tour their department. 
[Tony, Past-student-participant]

The act of providing time to make the mentee a better person, student, and industry leader was critical as part of the mentoring relationship. Winnie described the impact of time on her relationship with Ms. Wolfe:

*Ms. Wolfe is, she’s busy, but she always make time for me.* When I can come I can spend time for with her because with them having a good amount of time spending with each other I wouldn’t think our relationship can get this like really good like this. Because we spend a lot of time together. *We talk, we learn, and we understand each other. I think time is the most crucial thing.* [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

Value was especially placed on being accessible and making time for the student. “Not feeling like a bother” was important to the student-participants. As John noted:

I would not want to feel like I am taking time away. *I want the person to want to mentor me.* [John, Past Student-participant]

Kimmy mentioned feeling like a burden and that her experience was not as good as it could have been because of the lack of initiative set forth by her mentor:

I could have reached out more. Ninety percent of the time, I reached out, but I still should have done more to maximize the experience. *I did feel like a burden.* [Kimmy, Past Student-participant]

Katie also felt like a burden and that her relationship was not effective primarily because of lack of time. She reflected:

Our schedules just never matched-up. She was opening a property and working 12 to 14 hours a day – *she didn’t have a lot of free time.* [Katie, Past Student-participant]

The effective use of time had both tactical and behavioral components. At the tactical level, past student-participants reflected that it was important to schedule meetings in advance, keep all appointments, return e-mails, texts, and phone messages quickly. From the behavioral standpoint, it was important that the mentor-participant use time
effectively by remembering details from previous conversations, preparing ahead of time, and seeking ways to further develop the student.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Similarly, mentor-participants also felt that a large amount of success in the relationship was the investment of time. Mr. Hunt expressed:

**Time. I spend the time.** I tell them how important they are to me. That I want to see them have a career. They are not only important to me, I look for where I can develop them. [Mr. Hunt, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of the importance of time and accessibility. A student wrote:

**Ms. Smith is available even when she is not available.** Quickly becoming Facebook friends after our first meeting, we always knew what the other was doing. We kept in contact through text message, emails, and phone calls. If I needed her for anything, she would respond as soon as she could. Over the year, we tried to meet every couple of weeks depending on her travel schedule. Our meetings were a mixture of professional and casual. Sometimes I would meet her at her work where we would discuss business, other times we would go to restaurants and just catch up. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

The findings indicated that time and accessibility was a critical mentor behavior. Being available no matter how busy the mentor was reflected the importance the mentor felt towards the relationship and the student-participant.

**Mentor Behaviors – Coaching**

Past student-participants cited the importance of providing guidance through coaching to include the aspects of feedback, counseling, and career assistance. Allen reflected that the coaching aspect of the mentoring relationship was meaningful because it guided career decisions:

Well I say that because it’s like at that point in time in my life when the mentorship came up I was still very lost in my career path. Because it’s like, well I know what I wanna do. Okay cool. I wanna go to UNLV. I want to graduate with a hotel degree, and become something in the hotel. Right? There was no like grip there. There was no like honest like where to pull me. **For what he was**
showing me, and for what was going on it was kinda like, okay, so this is **pulling me in the right direction.** The kind of organization I wanna work for, the type of people I wanna become. Like it’s pulling me in the right direction. That was kind of up to me that once I was on that kind of path that the wondering student kinda turned into, “Okay, let’s take this step. Then let’s try this step.”

[Allen, Past Student-participant]

Allen further discussed how the mentorship progressed from feedback to overall career assistance and development:

> It became more of a personal and honest mentorship I guess you can say. We’ve done this and done that, but **he wanted to become a career mentor kind of thing.** When he did that he took on a greater responsibility of digging deeper into who I was. **Like what like drives me, but what also should drive me.** It became much more of not just the, “Well this is the property I work for,” but “This is my life experience. **And then how can I help you? What can I do to help you?**” as he put it, “**like getting your swagger, your career swagger.**”

[Allen, Past Student-participant]

The mentor’s commitment appeared to move beyond coaching to counseling – discussing more personal issues such as the challenges of balancing work and family, childhood memories that leave a lasting impression, college classes that the student is excelling, interested, or struggling in, and favorite movies and music. Being away from parents, mentors were called upon for support and guidance as reflected in the following comment from Winnie:

> Since, I don’t have any family here in the U.S. so I feel lonely and emotionally drained from being stressed from school and work environment. Sometimes, I am not sure on how to overcome the difficulties that I am facing at the moment making it hard to improve myself. **Once I had an opportunity to meet with Ms. Wolfe, I could ask her anything from my ideas about my dreams and life, which she became my life coach.** [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

Although the aspect of coaching was predominantly viewed as a positive aspect of the mentoring relationship. Findings revealed that not all personal viewpoints were welcomed by the past student-participants. Jake recalled:
I guess (he was talking about a) life lesson—there was something about family, as in no matter what you do throughout your career, you're gonna want to ensure that you stay close to your family because you're gonna realize you work a lot of hours, and you're gonna be forced into a lot of situations where you have to work even more hours that you don't necessarily want to. People, friends, partners, are gonna choose to leave you or disconnect with you because of the career you have. Therefore, if you don't have a family that's really—that you're really close to, you're gonna find the business to be hard to be in on a day to day basis. **It was three weeks in. He meant very well and I know he did, but on the flip side, I didn't feel like I knew him well enough to really take that information and commit it as a value.** [Jake, Past Student-participant]

Bond also recalled an awkward time when he felt his mentor lacked the confidence to coach:

> When I told him I was opening up the *XYZ Hotel* and I had gone to culinary school,… I remember one line that spit out that was kind of awkward. **He said that he didn’t quite have the pedigree that I had, but he would like to still help me the best he could.** [Bond, Past Student-participant]

Reflected in these findings, effective coaching in the mentoring relationship required an understanding of the student’s needs, appropriate timing, and emotional intelligence on the part of the mentor.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants felt coaching and the mentor’s willingness to provide feedback to be significant to the personal and professional aspect of the mentoring relationship. Mr. Beare commented:

> I was honest with her. It comes down to that. I was willing to have her conversations with her. **I was willing to give her unfiltered feedback.** [Mr. Beare, Mentor-participant]

Mr. Hunt agreed, stating that feedback was a necessary component of the relationship. He reflected back to a conversation he had with his mentee regarding management dress and decorum:

> When he came to me he wasn’t dressed appropriately. He wasn’t. He didn’t have the social graces to stand up when a lady walked into the room and I would introduce. I actually had to go to square one and say, “This is how we’re gonna
dress. This is how we’re gonna act. This is how, what we’re gonna do.” I said, “You know what? When you come out of here you’re gonna be a management type person.” I said, “But the first thing we gotta do is get you dressed appropriately, so from now on this is what I expect.”  [Mr. Hunt, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ predominate perceptions of coaching behaviors. One student wrote:

I have only known Ms. Smith for about seven months, but she is part of my life like a second mother. However, this mother helps me with training in the field that I aspire to be part of some day. She aids me in achieving my goals and to later succeed in a world of meeting planning and services that is very competitive.  [Student-participant, Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2009]

The findings indicate that mentors connected on several levels through coaching, appearing to adapt to the students needs and stages of professional development. The behavioral aspect of coaching added value to the mentoring relationship, especially when it was customized to meet the student’s needs so that is furthered their knowledge and skills.

Employment Sponsorship

Past student-participants cited employment sponsorship as a meaningful behavior impacting both work experience while in school as well as upon graduation. Participants referenced opportunities for interviews, offers for hourly and internship positions, as well as assistance with full-time placement after graduation. The level of sponsorship appeared to be based on the mentor’s level within the organization. Management and supervisory-level mentors put “good words in with colleagues” while more senior-level executives were able to directly impact placement. Hal described:

(My mentor) wanted to keep me on because he liked my performance throughout the mentor process. They didn’t really have much, so, like, “Can you work at the pool?” Okay, so I worked at the pool, managed some 17, 18-year-old kids for the summer, got a tan, it was awesome. I got paid to hang out at
the pool. Then, just ended up meeting some more people in the company throughout that position, and ended up going over to corporate as a slot analyst. [Hal, Past Student-participant]

At the time of his interview, Hal was a Slot Operations Manager for the same brand and credits his mentoring relationship for his current role.

**Triangulated Evidence.** From the mentor-participant perspective, Mr. Beare provided an example of employment sponsorship behavior:

> When she came to apply for XYZ Company, I sent the hiring manager a very simple email that I would greatly appreciate it if you would interview this candidate. She’s my current mentee. I believe she’s got good leadership skills, etc. She may not have front desk experience or industry experience, but if you could, at the very least, interview her, that’s all I would ask. [Mr. Beare, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of employment sponsorship. One student wrote:

> Some of the opportunities that he provided me include the ability to meet and openly talk with an industry leader, other department interviews, an internship, and as a direct result from my involvement, a job at the front desk. (My mentor) made sure that doors were opened for me; it was my job to walk through them. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Overall, findings revealed that employment sponsorship was both a mentor behavior and a tangible outcome of the relationship. The ability for a mentor to provide employment assistance was viewed as a value-added aspect of the relationship.

**Mentor Behaviors – Role Model**

Essential to providing the level of support and guidance desired by students was the role modeling behaviors of the mentor including exhibited interpersonal skills and effective management style. Students not only listened, but also watched and noted their mentors’ behaviors when working with guests and fellow team members. Bond noted:
I respected that he was very hands-on. We were walking through the casino one morning and one of the cocktail servers was working on making some kind of advertisement with like poster boards and pens. They had come up to him and consulted him on his opinion, and I think for him, being in the position he was but involved on line-level activities like that, I thought that was really a good connection to have. [Bond, Past Student-participant]

Hal’s thoughts correlated with Bond as he took note of the time that his mentor, a senior leader with the organization, took with casino guests and team members.

One of the other things that has really stuck with me since going around with him is he was always on the floor on the weekend nights. All the players knew him and all the team members knew him. People were constantly coming up to him and just they loved him. He was a great GM to have and you still see it today, I mean, going around. In my analyst role, we had slot reviews and he worked at quite a few properties. Still, he has GSAs coming up to him, just to say “Hey” The whole group will be going off doing something and he’ll be five minutes behind talking to team members. [Hal, Past Student-participant]

Allen was also struck by his mentor’s management style, so much so that he strives to have the same style:

He always walked up with his head up. He always walked around with a smile. He always stopped and said hello to people. Whether they were guests or people that worked at the property. That’s what kind of like, it’s what I wanna strive for myself. It’s taking on the responsibility for as much as it’s, the smallest responsibility taking that little piece on. Even knowing that you’re the biggest person in the whole hotel. [Allen, Past Student-participant]

Tony felt a sense of awe from listening to his mentor’s experiences and took notice of the impact his mentor had not just at one casino property, but in the gaming industry as a whole. He commented:

This man has been through the modernization of the gaming industry. His war stories made me starry eyed as I listened to his journeys to distant continents, opening up new markets for well-known companies. The adventures he had, the successes he made, and the people he met and befriended the world over seemed more like a gaming “Indiana Jones” installment than a man’s career. Every lunch we shared gave me more respect for him and also wonder how I could make an equal difference in the industry. [Tony, Past Student-participant]
Reflected in these findings is that the role modeling aspect of the mentoring relationship was important because it provided an example of effective leadership while inspiring past student-participants to stay focused and achieve professional goals.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also felt that modeling professional behaviors was as an important component of mentorship. Mr. Cordell commented:

As a younger manager, I really try to be a role model. I am in my twenties and have reached a good level of success. I think it is important for students to see a younger person that is successful in achieving organizational goals and working with others. [Mr. Cordell, Mentor-participant]

Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of role model behaviors. One student wrote:

I believe that (my mentor) defines success in many ways, one of which is by the strength of his network and relationships with people. He is a person that is capable of interacting well with line level employees and then able to turn around and also converse intelligently with senior level management. However, what I think makes his network grow even stronger is his ability to introduce the people he works with to others. That statement really rings true when I recall memories of telling industry people that I was his mentee and they would tell me to be a sponge and learn all I could from him, or that he is one of the people in this industry that works with a high level of integrity, fairness, and is always willing to listen to comments and issues. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2010]

Throughout the findings, participants commented on observed behaviors. Words like, “respect”, “unwavering discipline”, “person I look up to”, and “passion” were openly expressed. Through the mentor exhibiting role model behaviors, it was apparent that the student-participants were positively influenced during and after the formal mentoring program concluded.

**Mentor Behaviors – Care for the Student**

The care that the mentors took to personally and professionally develop students was stated as a behavior needed in order to be a successful mentor. Care through
guidance and a genuine interest in wanting to see the student succeed was described in all types of mentoring activities including structured activities, exposures, and learning discussions. Katie commented:

> You really are looking for someone who cares enough about you to learn about your needs. Time, setting up tours and exposure, talking about what you learned is all part of it. **It starts and ends with caring.** [Katie, Past Student-participant]

Guidance was a primary motivator for students to seek mentorship. Past student-participants were not looking for a quick fix, but a long-term friendship that would last beyond the structured mentorship period. Comments like my mentor is “someone that I will continue to learn from beyond the mentor program” and “she is my friend as well as my mentor” demonstrated the importance of the relationship component for the student. Gloria participated in the program twice and reflected that her relationship was better with the mentor that expressed care and concern:

> I mean they’re different relationships, but I’d say I had a better relationship with my first mentor just because I felt like he reached out to me more. He initiated the emails and the contacts and—we’d go to lunch and he would be genuinely interested in what I had done so far with applying, whereas my other mentor did reach out to me, but we kind of planned everything in advance. It was kind of like okay, on this date, this date, this date—it was already pre-planned so there was no need for her to reach out to me. The relationship ended when the program ended. [Gloria, Past Student-participant]

Reflected in the findings was that care was an important aspect of the mentorship appearing to be a foundational component of a meaningful relationship.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants expressed the importance of genuinely caring for students. Ms. Bradley, reflected on her relationship:

> I genuinely care. Reflecting back on my last nomination, that for which I was named Mentor of the Year, she said that not only did she find somebody that was a mentor, but somebody that was her friend, somebody that she felt like she’d
have a relationship with for a lifetime, somebody that she felt like she could tell anything to and those types of things. [Ms. Bradley, Mentor-participant]

Mr. Beare compared the level of care to a parental relationship:

*If there was anything that I did, it’s just like mom and dad. I know that mom and dad care about me because they’re willing to give me more than just the false smile* that they’re willing to go in and have conversations that maybe I don’t want to hear. They spend the time. Like I said, I don’t know anything other than being honest. [Mr. Beare, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of the importance of caring for the student. A student wrote:

He was proud to have me as his mentee. He has always been supportive and helpful, writing letters of recommendation, giving me tips on making it in the industry. I truly believe that he is committed to seeing me succeed. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2008]

Care was expressed in a myriad of ways including: “helpful, patient, and willing to teach”, “feel like I am part of the team”, “patient and understanding – it impressed on me the importance of self-confidence and self-respect”, “remembered my concerns and ideas which proved his dedication”, “asked about my plans and focused on how to execute them properly reinforcing my career goals”, “he boosted my ego, man did he boost my ego” and “someone that believes in you more than you believe in yourself.”

Students expressed an underlying theme of care when describing effective relationship activities, viewing it as an essential aspect of the mentoring relationship.

**Summary of Research Question One**

The previous subsections provided explanation and evidence of both activity and mentor behavior themes described by participants. The five mentoring activity themes described by past student-participants were structured relationships, exposure opportunities, work assignments, learning discussions, and school assistance. The five
mentor behaviors that were valued by students were time and accessibility, coaching, care for the student, serving as a role model, and employment sponsorship. The next section will provide findings for research question two focused on perceptions of development.

**Research Question Two: Perceptions of Development**

While the first research question addresses relationship aspects, the second question: *How do participants perceive their development through mentoring?* explores perceived development. These findings provided perspective on student-participants’ perceptions of development with recalled accounts uncovering meaningful aspects of the relationship. Figure 9 illustrates the domain analysis for research question two. Appendix D defines the domain terminology used to describe the perceptions of development discussed in the findings.

Past student-participants’ reflections on their development focused on gaining an insider’s perspective of the hospitality business. The three development aspects perceived by past student-participants were the acquiring of real-world experience, obtaining a realistic job preview, and increased confidence. Throughout the study, participants emphasized the importance of obtaining an insider’s perspective. Winnie and John recounted:

There isn’t a class at UNLV that is going to teach you how to be pit clerk and the ins and outs of the casino - **you have to experience it.** [Winnie, Past Student-participant]

I remember hearing the general manager’s stories about the hours and commitment needed to get to the top. **I realized that if I wanted to be something, I would need to work hard and be prepared for a tough road.** [John, Past Student-participant]
Figure 9. Research question two domain analysis: perceptions of development.
Through relationship activities and mentor behaviors, participants witnessed the work that goes on behind the scenes as well as obtained an understanding that reaching individual personal and professional goals requires hard work and commitment. The following subsections provide explanation and evidence of the perceptions of development themes.

**Real-world Experience**

The participants as a whole reflected that a development aspect of the relationship was obtaining real-world experience described as practical contact and observations within the hospitality environment. Hal recalled an evening spent observing a player on the casino floor:

> One night I came out to the property and they had an executive dinner at the pasta room. We had actually gone back up to his office and they had a large player in that time, and closed down a game just for this one guy. **He was really just absolutely kicking their ass, and so just kind of watching him in the—him watching the action on the screen. Just seeing, I guess, from a GM perspective, how they react to the floor.** [Hal, Past Student-participant]

Hal added that the experience develops students into hospitality managers by allowing participants to experience all facets of the operation and understand how these components fit together to create guest experiences. He stated:

> It’s a different world from just about anywhere else that you’ll find. I mean, there’s so much going on under one roof that it’s, I mean, not like a financial office or any other kind of production type of business. **We’re not really producing anything, but there’s still a lot of moving parts and a lot of different departments…Learning that prepared me for my first positions out of school.** [Hal, Past Student-participant]

Drake noted that watching daily interactions whether working with a guest, team member, or vendor provided a learning and development experience:

> I knew that some of the best ways that any learning takes place, any development, one on ones, role playing, **watching someone do something, watching them do**
something to actually see the actual behavior manifest itself. Then have it internalize. [Drake, Past Student-participant]

Gloria reflected that she was provided with the real-world perspective that profits can be made from different types of room brands. She recalled:

I was a little bit oh my God, I’m at the XYZ Hotel. Man, I loved it there too. It’s great when you’re in hotels, it’s one product. It doesn’t matter if you’re at the XYZ High End Hotel or ABC Low End Motel; they still sell the same thing. I mean some of his perspective on the room side was if you give ‘em a clean product… I learned a lot from him. [Gloria, Past Student-participant]

John also felt the relationship broadened his perspective on different hospitality business models:

It opened my eyes. That is the first time I realized there was management companies like that. Since then, I have known and seen companies like that and I had no idea that they existed. [John, Past Student-participant]

Allen explained that experiencing the real-world aspects of the business provided the building blocks for his current position:

I was stoked. It’s not normal to step foot into a place and be able to acclimate so fast I guess you can say. I thought it was very interesting to me that I’m the only person not on the payroll. To me it was like one of the most like fundamental like building blocks of like my start at the property. I learned that these are all real people. I’m a real person and part of this. [Allen, Past Student-participant]

Reflected in the findings was a view that the real-world perspective enhanced development. Student-participants felt more qualified, experienced, and connected because of the mentoring relationship.

Triangulated Evidence. Mentor-participant comments correlated with past student-participants findings regarding real-world experience as a perceived development factor adding that the mentoring relationship provided a preview of what to expect as managers in the hospitality industry. Mr. Meyer recalled:
I think they really appreciate—cause that’s what they will say at the end of it, “You know what I really appreciate giving me the opportunity to go, and I’m meeting the directors and the vice-presidents. I’m getting the chance, not only to meet the top people, but also even go in housekeeping, go work on the floor with the girls to see what they’re doing, ask questions, and kind of understand the whole process of how everything comes together.” [Mr. Meyer, Mentor-Participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participants’ perceptions of development through real-world experience. A student wrote:

I never would have dreamed for this experience to influence me in so many enlightening ways. Working with his staff is great and because of them; I have experienced the real aspects to working under this environment. This experience has not only taught me more about working in a bakery but has taught me about respecting the work that is put into each and every task in the kitchen. That is something valuable to know and to comprehend for my future endeavors. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Real-world experience through the mentoring relationship provided an opportunity for participants to experience the business first-hand and have a deeper understanding of the operation as a whole.

**Realistic Job Preview**

Understanding both the positive and negative aspects of jobs through a realistic job preview was revealed as a perceived development factor of the mentoring relationship. John reflected:

Students don’t know what they don’t know - the mentor’s job is to give the students exposure to all aspects. [John, Past Student-participant]

James discussed the importance of understanding the realities of management. He noted:

I felt like I understood what it was going to be like when I was a manager and it was a mix of a lot of work, hours, and a little enjoyment. [James, Past Student-participant]
Hal noted the importance of the realistic job preview for him was understanding his career direction:

I mean, at that time, I didn’t really have a direction on where I wanted to go as far as specific places in the casino. Through the program I felt like an insider and learned what I wanted to do. [Hal, Past Student-participant]

Jake felt that the mentoring relationship helped him to realize that a job in casino operations was not the right fit for him. He remembered:

I had learned a lot from my mentor program from overseeing these different managers, that wasn't a career path that I wanted to go down in the immediate future. I thought for sure that out of school, that's exactly what I wanted to do. Go into a luxury service role with a big casino operation. [Jake, Past Student-participant]

Through relationship activities including exposure, learning discussions, and work assignments, past student-participants recalled the value of understanding both the positive and negative aspects of hospitality jobs through the mentoring relationship experience.

Triangulated Evidence. Mentor-participants agreed that of most value was in understanding the pragmatic aspects of a career in hospitality. As the following instance shows, Ms. Bradley purposely exposes students to all aspects of her job in order to provide them with a realistic job preview:

You need to come in at 8:00 a.m. and don't expect to leave until you are about ready to die. This is not fun. It's totally chaotic and you better be ready to run. Eventually reality check is this is not glamorous. This is not something that I was thinking it was. On the outside you have all that makeup, high heels and nice suits, but really it's at the end of the day it's more of a gut check. [Ms. Bradley, Mentor-participant]

Mr. Meyer concurred stating that realistic job preview was important in understanding the student’s employment preferences. He stated:
So let’s say I want to try banquets, I want to try hotel front desk. **You actually are given like a realistic job preview because I’ve had a couple students that said after working at the front, “You know what, this is too crazy. I don’t see myself doing it.”** [Mr. Meyer, Mentor-participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations also aligned with past student-participant’s responses. One student wrote about learning valuable skills through a realistic job preview:

**She has taught me valuable skills that I will take with me throughout my career.** Some of the skills she has taught me include: preparing BEO’s for the *XYZ Company*, communicating with all different departments in a large hotel property, creating proposals for a wedding (which included a breakdown of all line items), executing a planned event, finalizing event details, reducing costs when a couple’s budget decreases, and conducting phone appointment. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

Findings revealed that the realistic job preview was a perceived development factor as it aligned student expectations with a realistic view of supervisory duties within the hospitality industry.

**Increased Confidence**

Increased confidence was also reflected as a perceived development factor.

Allison recalled an interaction with her mentor that resulted in her feeling more confident about career decisions. She recollected:

I think it was about a year after I finished the mentor program. I think because I had already graduated, and I had just—I called him out of the blue because I really needed his guidance on what some of my career options were because I was getting ready to finish my management training program, and I had—it came down to two options, both of which had a lot of pros and cons, and I called him, and I said, “I really need to meet with you because I really don’t know what the best route is for me,” so he sat down with me and really looked at what both of these options could do for me in the future, and then we were able to narrow it down to one choice, and that’s where I am now. **Being able to talk about where I was at and needed to go provided (me with) confidence.** [Allison, Past Student-participant]
Five years after her mentoring relationship, Gloria reflected that the experience allowed her to gain confidence and a realization that she had chosen the right career:

> After my two mentoring experiences - both so different from the level of property to the mentors, I knew that hotel operations was what I wanted to do. That provided me with so much confidence to know that getting out of school. Today, I am grateful for the experience because I knew what I wanted to become through the program. [Gloria, Past Student-participant]

Also reflected was the opportunity given through the mentor program for the student to strategically think about life after graduation and overall career goals. Tony recollected:

> He asked me what my goals were. He helped me complete my goals. He spent time with me, and taught me deeper about my education as well, and used his background and his experiences to help me understand things about the business. I’m about to graduate here at the time, and he didn’t know everything he knows today, right. It took him the time, so it’s kind of like speeding up my process of learning stuff. [Tony, Past Student-participant]

Findings from past student-participant interviews concluded that confidence was increased through the mentoring relationship because students gained a knowledge base through the experience and/or was able to seek advice and counsel from a mentor whose opinion was valued.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Comments from mentor-participants also indicated a sense that student’s confidence was improved through the mentoring relationship. Mr. Gregor commented:

> Then the other thing is the confidence that they gain in themselves. They feel more comfortable when they’re done, but I don’t know that they would be able to articulate that. [Mr. Gregor, Mentor-participant]

Mentor of the Year nominations correlated with the confidence factor. Students wrote:

> Knowing my mentor for almost a year, I have matured to be a more grown up who can comfortably network in business settings, who learned to manage my time with multiple projects, who found passion in sales and marketing,
and who promised to give back what I have got from my great mentor to my mentees in the future! This Hotel College Mentorship Program will forward positive influences to others in multiple ways just like the movie “Pay it forward.” [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

I learned things like how to communicate with others, how to be a good leader, and how to be an ethical businessman. These are all the great values that contribute to the success he has today. I am very grateful that this program has given me the chance to be influenced by him. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2008]

Overall, past student-participants expressed a sense of increased confidence through comments such as, “because of the program, I knew in my heart that I was determined to succeed”, “he really gave me a sense a taste of what it is to be an executive…I’ve kinda been striving to get there since then”, and “I feel that I will be well prepared to enter the hotel profession.”

Summary of Research Question Two

The previous subsections provided explanation and evidence of participants’ perceptions of development from the mentoring relationship. The three perceptions of development themes focused on gaining an insider’s perspective and were described as real-world experience, realistic job preview, and increased confidence. The next section will provide findings for the third research question focused on the impact of the mentoring relationship.

Research Question Three: Mentoring Relationship Impact

The final research question: How do formal college mentoring relationships affect workplace competencies and prepare participants for hospitality employment at a supervisory level post-graduation? (a) How do participants view the relationship post-graduation? (b) How do participants perceive the impact of the relationship on supervisory employment post-graduation? addressed the perceived impact of the
mentoring relationship. These findings provided perspective on the impact of the development opportunity from the participant perspective with recalled accounts uncovering meaningful aspects of the relationship. Figure 10 illustrates the domain analysis for research question three. Appendix D defines the domain terminology used to describe the impact of the mentoring relationship discussed in the findings.

The three impact aspects focused on personal and professional development and were described by past student-participants as different management perspectives, and influence on employment and career path, and a continued relationship.

Twelve of the past student-participants reflected positively on the impact of the relationship. Allen expressed:

(The program impacted me) ridiculous amounts. Like I can’t even explain it. I think that if I had a different mentor I’d maybe be on a different life path. Like it’s just, it’s affected me so much and I don’t know how to truly explain it until I’m older and I’m explaining it to my mentee. [Allen, Past Student-participant]

Three of the past student-participants interviewed did not feel their experience was impactful. Findings revealed that the lack of time, mentor engagement and commitment, and student accountability were the primary reasons for the relationships not progressing to meaningful levels. John discussed his lack of accountability:

Mr. Rubin was nice, he was always responsive. Any question I had he tried to answer to the best of his ability. The type of hotels he was working for is not what I wanted to pursue. That was the main reason why – if he had been working at XYZ Company I would have taken a lot more interest and a lot more not aggressive, determination to be there and pursue a career with him. Keep him as a mentor through my career. [John, Past Student-participant]
Figure 10. Research question three domain analysis: relationship impact
The three past student-participants that stated they did not have meaningful experiences reflected a neutral stance regarding the relationship. The consensus was that the interactions they had through the mentorship were of value, but that overall the relationship did not have an impact on their post-graduation supervisory employment.

For the participants who expressed satisfaction in their mentoring relationships, general competencies described were learning about supervisory obligations, priorities, and time management, which perhaps provided them with an edge in their first positions after college. The next subsections discuss the impact themes of different management perspectives, employment and career path, and continued relationship that emerged from the data.

Different Management Perspectives

An impact expressed by participants was exposure to different management perspectives. Jake reflected:

I think it showed me a different perspective of someone in a senior management role. Growing up, obviously, my parents were in senior roles, but it's been—it was so distant for them when they remember it being right out of school that you couldn't really begin to sort of understand what it was going to be like. I think in his position being 10 or 11 years out of school, he still sort of remembers those first couple of steps, so I think that helped greatly in sort of understanding what moves were good moves to make and what moves were bad moves to make. I also think that it allowed me just to gain exposure to another—a different type of operation and various management styles, for sure. [Jake, Past Student-participant]

Jake further discussed that through his discussions with his mentor, he learned to be a proactive manager and not to become involved in negative aspects of the work environment. He stated:

One thing I learned is that you never want to be the manager that’s associated with the drama occurring in the operation. [Jake, Past Student-participant]
Allison learned and today practices the open door policy instilled by her mentor:

It was actually something really small that he said in a passing in a conversation, but it stuck with me, but **what he was describing to me at that time was just how important it is that even when you get to a level that he has attained that you still are in touch with your employees**, I think, and it’s just being able to draw them back, so one thing that I do try to do my best on, sometimes I can’t necessarily do it due to time constraints, but I **try to make myself as available to my employees as possible, so even if I don’t have rooms to check per say, I will make a genuine effort to go on the floors**. I want my employees to know who I am. I want them to know that they can come to me, and that I am a resource for them, so that’s definitely something that I try to do.  [Allison, Past Student-participant]

Gloria reflected that she learned and now practices the art of positive management:

I played soccer in college, so I probably didn’t have as positive relationship—or the relationship I had with my coach was kind of a negative relationship in like—everyone’s always yelling. You’re always in trouble. **When I saw Ms. Swan on the professional side, it’s like oh. They may be in trouble but she always went about it so professionally. There was never no yelling or any of that. I definitely bring that to the workplace.**  [Gloria, Past Student-participant]

Findings from past student-participant interviews concluded that exposure to different management perspectives through the mentoring relationship positively impacted their leadership style today.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants also discussed that an impact of the relationship was different management perspectives. Mr. Cordell noted a development change he has seen in one of his mentee, which he attributes to the mentoring relationship. He stated:

**What is cool is that today I see a change in her. I see pieces of myself and the manner in which I conduct work and I think she learned that from me.**  [Mr. Cordell, Mentor-Participant]

Text from Mentor of the Year nominations aligned with the comments of past student-participants. Students wrote:
One of many things I learned from her but that I will never forget is that being humble and friendly to everyone including your staff and clients is critical in convention services. Some of the least expected staff members will help you accomplish a project when no one else will. Because of her, my eyes and heart have been open to make friends and accept people from everywhere no matter how small or underappreciated their department may be. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2010]

Mr. Ronald understands that the best way to teach is to lead by example and he has provided many opportunities for me to learn how the ABC Hotel provides the level of customer service that is known worldwide. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2010]

The thing that I will take most from this experience is how Mr. Friedman focused on creating a unique culture of leadership. Mr. Friedman is unwavering in his commitment to be visible and available to all of his Team Members. Within his first week of being transferred from XYZ Casino Hotel to ABC Casino Hotel, he made it a priority to meet all of the Team Members on property. This showed me that he believes that the most important people on the property are the line level Team Members and wanted to show them that he does care about them. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2010]

Overall, the data reflected that the relationship activities and mentor behaviors, particularly exposure and role modeling aspects, impacted the development and workforce readiness of the participants.

Employment and Career Path

An impact reflected in the responses was the influence on the past student-participant’s employment and overall career path. Bond commented that the experience provided him with the confidence to move forward in his career:

Meeting with somebody of his caliber when I was as young as I was made it much easier to walk into my current position and interview, and ask for a nice salary and ask to be taken care of. I don’t think I would have been able to talk to do that if I hadn’t have had encounters like that before. [Bond, Past Student-participant]

Nine of the fifteen student-participants reflected that their mentoring experience brought them to where they are today. Hal reflected:
I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for the program. I fully believe that. Like I said, everything has kind of started from that program. I mean, I couldn’t tell you where I would be. I wouldn’t be here. I mean, I’m in a position where I’ve been with the company for three years, I guess, three and a half years, and I still have opportunity to move up. I mean, to slot director and then AGM, GM maybe, I don’t know. I mean, there’s a lot of opportunity that I’ve been presented with and it’s mostly because Mr. Black was my mentor, and the position that he’s in is willing to still sit down and help groom my career. [Hal, Past Student-participant]

Ruby also felt that her relationship was a contributing factor to her current supervisory role. She stated:

She pointed me in the right direction and I have stuck with it for the last three years. [Ruby, Past Student-participant].

Evident in past student-participant data, mentoring relationships provided personal and professional development, which positively influenced employment and career paths.

**Triangulated Evidence.** Mentor-participants reflected on the career impact of the mentoring relationship. Ms. Bradley remembered a conversation with one of her mentees right after she received a job offer:

She made it a point—she was like, I wouldn't have gotten this job without you. She said, My entire interview process, everything that I gave them as an example was based on my mentorship with you. It was not based on any previous work experience and things that I had done. It was based on everything that we had done together. She attributes that to why she got the job. I was like, that is amazing that I was able to give her all those different experiences and things to be able to speak to in an interview to be able to show how awesome she is. [Ms. Bradley, Mentor-participant]

Mentor of the Year nominations also concurred with the impact on future career choices and employment. One student noted:

Prior I only knew of my chosen vocation through reading and had it not been for my mentor, I would not feel as secure as I do today that I have made the right career choice for myself. It was his consistent dedication of showing me much of which I knew not of from first hand that convinced me how blessed I am to have him as my mentor. I would feel he is privy to such acclaim because he has
impacted my life in a positive manner which keeps me consistent on my path. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2011]

From encouragement to assisting with employment, past student-participants cited their mentors as a contributing factor in their careers today. There was a consensus from both past student- and mentor-participants that hospitality workforce readiness is a combination of education, work experience, and interpersonal skills. Findings reflected that the mentoring relationships had an impact on these development components.

**Continued Relationship**

Participants expressed that a value of the mentorship was in forming relationships with their mentors and others that they were exposed to through the program, some of which they continue to work with today. The majority of past student-participants were proud that they were able to create a long-term relationship with their mentor. Two past student-participants remarked:

Well it definitely made me feel like I **had accomplished something in my mentor program in the way that I developed a solid relationship** with someone who would be willing to help me out, and I feel like in this industry, especially in this city, it’s really about who you know, and every single time that you help someone out, I think karma does come back, and it pays you back. [Allison, Past Student-participant]

**He's someone I know that I could bounce an idea off of or ask a question about anything, really, and not be judged**, versus via someone that I report to directly the same question, they immediately jump to the conclusion of judging me. [Jake, Past Student-participant]

A couple of students who did not have a long-term relationship with their mentor, expressed disappointed. Gloria stated:

I can tell you one thing that, I guess, **I was a little disappointed…It was a six-month relationship, and that was the line.** I’ve tried to kind of reach out again, but nothing. [Gloria, Past Student-participant]
Of the 15 past student-participants who were interviewed, 10 continue to have a relationship with their mentor. Relationships range from close connections to touching base every three to six months by phone, e-mail, or social media.

**Triangulated Evidence.** The continued relationship was also expressed as important for the mentor-participants as well. Many recalled specifics regarding last conversations as the following reflection shows:

My second mentee is all the way across the country, so she and I are emailing back and forth and things. **She's going on a trip to Asia right now and when she gets back I told her, "You better send me photos. I wanna see about your trip. You have to tell me how it goes."** [Ms. Smith, Mentor-participant]

**We actually have lunch next week.** We try to meet when we can. [Mr. Cordell, Mentor-participant]

Mentor of the Year nominations confirmed the desire for a continued relationship as reflected in the following excerpts:

**I do not only consider Mr. Baker my mentor, I consider him a friend - someone that I will continue to learn from beyond the Mentor program.** Honestly, I don't want to share him with any other students. [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2009]

**Ms. Dickens will always be a mentor for me and I hope to keep in touch with her beyond this year and hopefully in the future, I want to continue to learn from her and be her little mentee.** [Mentor of the Year Nomination, 2009]

Findings revealed that an indicator of a meaningful mentoring relationship is one that continues after the formal mentoring program has concluded. A direct impact of the experience is being able to keep the connection fostered through the formal program.

**Summary of Research Question Three**

The previous subsections provided explanation and evidence of how mentoring relationships affected workplace competencies and prepared participants for hospitality employment at a supervisory level post-graduation. The three effects focused on
personal and professional development and were described by past student-participants as different management perspectives, influence on employment and career path, and a continued relationship.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the findings of a case study in which the researcher explored (a) the experiences of past student-participants from a formal hospitality college mentor program and (b) their perceptions of how the relationship prepared them for hospitality employment at a supervisory capacity post-graduation. The researcher identified aspects of the mentoring relationships that held meaning for the participants, which enhanced understanding of relationship qualities that cultivated hospitality workforce competencies and prepared students for supervisory employment within the hospitality industry.

Findings illustrated the activity aspects of structured relationship, exposure opportunities, completion of work assignments, learning discussions, and school assistance intertwined with the mentor behavior aspects of time and accessibility, coaching, care for the student, serving as a role model, and employment sponsorship to form a meaningful experience for the past student-participant. The perceived development aspect of the relationship focused on gaining an insider’s perspective and was characterized as a real-world experience, realistic job preview, and increased confidence through a broad based understanding of how work is accomplished in the hospitality environment and awareness of the expectations of managers in reaching organizational goals. The perceived long-term impact was described as personal and
professional development through acquiring different management perspectives,
influencing employment and career path, and a continuing relationship.

Chapter 5 discussed the findings relating to previous research and conceptual
models of the study, suggested practical implications, and identified research needed in
the future.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand, from the past student-participant perspective, mentoring relationship aspects that contributed to a development experience and prepared students for supervisory employment in the hospitality environment post-graduation. This chapter presents (a) discussion of the findings, (b) implications for conceptual models and practice, (c) recommendations for future research, and (d) conclusions.

The case for this study focused on the relationships formed while participating in the Hotel College Mentor Program within the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The findings were based on data collected from 15 past student-participant interviews, 14 mentor-participant focus group sessions and interviews, 63 Mentor of the Year nominations, and other program materials. The data generated multiple perspectives towards understanding the mentoring relationship experiences and perceptions of the participants. Three research questions focused on meaningful mentoring activities and mentor behaviors, perceptions of development, and impact on workplace competencies post-graduation were used to guide the study.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed numerous aspects that were important for a meaningful mentoring relationship. Most notably was the need for structured relationships that focused on gaining hospitality-specific knowledge, facilitating operational exposure, coaching specifically to the students’ development needs, learning vicariously through role modeling behaviors exhibited by the mentor, and the providing of career assistance.
Common threads in meaningful relationships included mentor engagement and commitment and student accountability manifested not only in relationship activities, but also in the care exhibited towards the relationship. The past student-participants who deemed their mentoring experience meaningful felt that their mentors cared about them, their development, and their future. The findings demonstrated that meaningful mentoring is not just a program, but also a relationship.

Perceptions of Meaningful Mentoring Activities and Mentor Behaviors

The term “mentoring” has been used to describe a variety of development activities ranging from formal programming (Roberts, 2000) to informal assistance (Murray, 1991) and from intellectual development to career support (Blackwell, 1989). In the current study, students were seeking a mentoring relationship that provided learning outside of the classroom to expand their sphere of knowledge while at the same time making them more sought after in the career marketplace. To that end, development within the hospitality environment required an applied approach through shadowing positions and department operations, attending meetings and events, and working on daily assignments and special projects. The data suggested that the power of the development opportunity for a student-participant rests with the mentor’s ability to assess needs through collaboration with the student.

Research by Whittaker and Cartwright (2000) depicted a four stage learning process as part of the mentoring relationship that included discussing recent actions, reflecting on the positive and negative aspect of those actions, drawing conclusions regarding behaviors, and planning strategies for better behaviors in the future. Data findings from this study reflected a similar learning pattern. However, what differed was
a focus on an analysis of external activity factors versus a personal focus on the student’s actions. Rather than discuss the student’s actions as a relationship focal point, attention was directed to a reflection of the activities the student-participant was experiencing as part of the mentorship.

A study by Allen et al. (2006) revealed that a mentor’s interpersonal skills had a direct impact on perceived program effectiveness by both mentors and mentees. The current study supported these interpersonal skills findings, with an emphasis placed on role modeling aspects. The role modeling aspect of the mentoring relationship is particularly valuable in hospitality as providing service and exceeding guest expectations is predicated on the interpersonal skills of the supervisory staff. It was reflected in the data that students not only listened, but also watched and noted their mentors’ behaviors when working with guests and fellow team members. The exhibiting of role-model behaviors in turn had a social exchange effect (Blau, 1964) as past student-participants reflected on observing operational norms that shaped their current supervisory behaviors.

Both Liang et al. (2002) and Allen et al. (2006) discussed the importance of mentor engagement and commitment. The researchers found that mentor commitment was essential given that meeting program goals hinged on the mentor’s actions to help the mentee’s development. Also important was the mentor’s position within the organization. The higher the mentor’s position within the organization, the greater the perceived value of the mentoring relationship. If a mentor did not have the power within his or her sphere of influence to provide opportunities perceived by the student as valuable, the relationship was not deemed as meaningful.
In addition, the data showed that equally important was the accountability of the student. Creating the relationship is a structured process requiring the mentor to assess the development needs of the student, implement activities, and reflect on outcomes. This level of engagement and commitment on the part of the mentor is influenced by the motivation and accountability of the student. The participants for the current study included views of both significant and insignificant relationships. Findings revealed that a mentor’s level of engagement and commitment correlated with the student’s level of accountability indicating that a determining factor for a meaningful relationship was the level of dedication on both sides of the relationship.

Stone (1999) discussed attributes of an effective mentee including a track record of success, demonstrating intelligence, exhibiting loyalty, a desire to achieve, valuing feedback, enjoying challenges, and taking responsibility. Current findings differed from Stone (1999) in that mentors found the attributes of passion for the industry, hard work, commitment, and a desire to learn to be critical for program effectiveness. Perhaps the difference is attributed to the formal nature of the collegiate mentoring relationship. In the informal mentoring environment, mentors self-select mentees they believe have potential to develop, thus a track record of success, demonstrated intelligence, and exhibited loyalty are measures to determine whether a candidate is worth the effort of mentoring. Within formal collegiate mentoring, mentors are assigned a student through a structured pairing process so the attributes of passion, hard work, commitment, and desire to learn are considered important. There is an adage in hospitality that hiring managers should place attitude above aptitude, as one can train a team member to perform job functions, but cannot teach that same employee to have a great attitude. The findings
support this, as mentors emphasized the mentee’s attitude as a critical attribute for fostering a meaningful mentoring relationship.

**Perceptions on Development**

At the core of the mentoring relationship is the ability to create in another person an insight that causes the individual to view the world in a different way (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). In a variety of experiences, past student-participants shared that their mentors assisted them as they began the journey from college student to industry professional. Specific reflections on their development focused on gaining an insider’s perspective through real-world experience and a realistic job preview. This is a critical development aspect for college students, as most join the hospitality workforce with a naiveté regarding the realities of the industry. Reflected in the findings was the opinion that the ability to effectively manage within the hospitality environment is primarily learned through experiences such as mentorship rather than classroom lectures and textbooks.

Research has shown that academic mentoring relationships offer a view of life in the business setting (Schlee, 2000) and “can extend and enhance the educational experience by providing connections to the practical world of business” (D’Abate & Eddy, 2008, p. 363). These findings align with previous research on the pragmatic aspects of mentoring while suggesting that exposure through a mentoring relationship also increases confidence as illustrated in the following recollection from Winnie:

*Ms. Wolfe gives me full exposure to the front and back of the house of XYZ Resort. She put me to work with her employees on the casino floor. I got to work with the Special Events department… For the first time in my life, I feel I am important.* [Winnie, Past Student-participant]
Students have a variety of concerns as they construct their career path including lacking direct experience, questioning career fit, and facing apprehension of whether they can manage the demands of leadership. These findings show that confidence was gained through strategically examining career goals, participating in activities to confirm or disconfirm interest in an area of hospitality, learning through observation, and acknowledging of personal and professional development gained through the mentoring relationship.

**Impact on Workplace Competencies**

Competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed to perform effectively in an organization (Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2003a). Surprisingly to the researcher, development of task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities such as learning front desk check-in processes or understanding the steps taken to rate a casino player were not a focal point of perceived impact by past student-participants. Perhaps, the impact of learning hospitality business acumen overshadowed memories of learned task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Confirmed by the data was the development of effective behaviors. Within the paradigm of the hospitality competencies needed for career employment, reflections from past student-participants corroborated with the need to develop leadership savvy and interpersonal competencies to work effectively with both guests and employees (Chung, 2000; Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Formica & McCleary, 2000; Huang & Lin, 2011; Kay & Moncarz, 2004; Kay & Russette, 2000). Past student-participants were affected by the creation of a long-term relationship with their mentors and other executives, the learning
of aspects of personal and professional development, and exposure to different management styles that impact the past student-participants’ current leadership efforts.

**Additional Findings**

The researcher examined both effective and ineffective mentoring relationships. Out of the 15 past student-participants, three stated that they did not have a meaningful relationship. Time and student interest were the primary factors why the relationship did not advance. Despite good intentions, if the mentor-participant or student-participant did not have time to devote to the relationship, it simply did not have the opportunity to prosper. Mentoring relationships were also unable to prosper if the student did not have an interest in the mentor’s role, department, or organization. Findings demonstrated that success in hospitality collegiate mentoring results from recruiting mentors who both have the time to mentor and ensuring through a careful pairing that the mentor’s position aligns with the career interests of student.

Coincidentally, from this study’s 29 participants, there were three student-mentor dyads. Through informal comparative analysis, mentor engagement and commitment and student accountability were clearly visible through mentoring activities, mentor behaviors, perceptions of development, and impacts of the relationship discussed during interviews and focus groups. Both past student-participants and mentor-participants positively acknowledged the relationship and valued the experience.

**Implications for Conceptual Models**

A primary influence for the study was Kathy Kram’s career-related and psychosocial mentoring functions (1985). This seminal mentoring model was developed through analysis of informal mentoring relationships in the business context. Career-
related functions of Kram’s model focus on the advancement of the mentee in his or her chosen career path and encompassed a range of behaviors and activities including exposure, sponsorship, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments (Kram, 1985). Similarly, findings from the current study correlated in the four areas of exposure, sponsorship, coaching, and challenging assignments. Protection was referenced only twice in the findings, as it is a behavior more closely associated with informal mentoring within an organization. Kram’s psychosocial mentoring functions focus on enhancing the mentee’s sense of competence and identity. Components of psychosocial mentoring relate to the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and mentee and include the behaviors and activities of role modeling, counseling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship (Kram, 1985). The study correlated with all functions with particular emphasis on the role modeling aspect. Students learned the art of navigating through the rapid-fire pace and politics of the hospitality environment through watching their mentors in action. Past student-participants recalled examples of mentors’ leadership in remarkable detail, demonstrating the meaningfulness of the role modeling behavior. This in turn had an effect on the past student-participants’ performance in supervisory roles post-graduation.

Research examining formal mentoring programs generally found that mentors provide more psychosocial support than career-related support (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). This was not confirmed in this study, as career-related support was found to be more evident. A reason for this may be attributed to the seven-month duration of the formal mentoring relationship under examination in this case study. Kram (1986) suggested that career-related functions emerge first followed by
psychosocial functions. Another reason for the emphasis on career-related functions is that hospitality students are inclined to focus on work experience, making these functions a focal point of the mentoring relationship.

A second study influence was Albert Bandura’s self-efficacy construct (1977). Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as a person’s judgment regarding his or her ability to perform a function or activity. Bandura (1977) concluded that self-efficacy is based on four source behaviors: performance accomplishments (working successfully through a task), vicarious experience (learning experiences through observing and modeling behavior), social persuasion (encouragement from others), and emotional arousal (increased anxiety level that motivates individuals to perform successfully). These source behaviors increase perceived self-efficacy, which influences individuals to approach tasks versus avoid, perform at a higher level, and increase persistence towards a goal. Critical self-efficacy sources related to mentoring are performance experiences and vicarious experiences (Hackett & Betz, 1995). Current student findings corroborated with the three of the four source behaviors: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, and social persuasion. Emotional arousal was not found to be a source behavior primarily due to the volunteer nature of the mentor program relationship.

Findings supported previous research that self-efficacy is linked to a number of workforce readiness variables including job satisfaction and job performance (Karatepe et al., 2007). Overall, past student-participants felt more prepared to begin their careers in hospitality due to the mentoring relationship because they had a broad based understanding of what to expect.
Figure 11 illustrates a mentoring model developed by the researcher based on the study’s conceptual models and data findings. An important contribution of this study is that it supports research findings from varied mentoring settings and different generational groupings. Both Kram’s and Bandura’s work is evident in the experiences found within the hospitality environment. Although society and workplace environments have evolved over the last forty years since mentoring was established as a development tool, the fundamental aspects of the mentoring relationship have remained consistent.

**Implications for Practice**

This study was conducted not only to understand student development through college mentoring relationships, but also to inform workforce development practice and research. Pragmatically and from the workforce development perspective, it is imperative to utilize the findings to increase the effectiveness of mentoring relationships by examining program implementation processes. Additionally, through effective mentoring relationships, strong ties between college programs and workplaces are established thereby garnering support from business leaders to hire graduates. This is a model that has often been rejected in higher education because it provides a vocational focus to the university experience.

**Determine the Population**

An implication of the current research is the need for administrators in collegiate hospitality programs to offer mentoring opportunities as part of broader range of development opportunities within college programming. Within the current case study, students who participated in mentoring relationships tended to be high performers. Based
College Mentoring Relationships Within the Hospitality Environment

Kram’s (1985) 
Career-Related Functions 
Exposure 
Sponsorship 
Coaching 
Challenging Assignments

Kram’s (1985) 
Psychosocial Functions 
Role Modeling 
Acceptance and Confirmation 
Friendship 
Counseling

Bandura’s (1977) 
Self-efficacy Construct 
Vicarious Experience 
Performance Accomplishments 
Social Persuasion

Workforce Readiness Variables 
Job Satisfaction 
Job Performance

Figure 11. Mentoring model.
on the research findings, it is the researcher’s belief that more meaningful development
would occur with students who may be unsure of their career direction or lack the
confidence to pursue a mentoring program on a more voluntary basis. Institutionalizing a
formalized mentoring program within the college’s hospitality curriculum would have the
effect of narrowing competency gaps, increasing workforce readiness, and enhancing
career-tracked employment opportunities for program graduates. Based on the findings,
the researcher recommends a tier model whereby Freshman and Sophomore level
students receive general career assistance and exposure to operations as part of the
university curriculum. Students who successfully complete the first tier relationship have
the opportunity to participate in a more formal mentoring relationship.

**Pairing Assignments**

Two elements found during the study to be critical to the success of the mentoring
relationship within the hospitality environment were mentor engagement and
commitment and student accountability. A common thread throughout student- and
mentor-participants’ discussions of effective relationships was the importance of the
pairing process. An outcome of the research is to incorporate mechanisms to increase the
level of motivation, time, effort, and resources through effective pairing of student- and
recommended that pre-selection in formal relationships be completed based on an
analysis of common interests, development needs, and career goals. In addition to the
criteria listed above, current findings suggest that a student’s brand level preference
should be taken into consideration when pairing as part of a college mentoring program
within the hospitality environment. As the following reflection from John demonstrates,
if students were dissatisfied with the brand level where their mentor worked, they were less likely to view the relationship with high regard, a factor found to compromise the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship:

*I remember not being super impressed by the property. That set a precedent for me so much so that I did not take full advantage of the opportunity. I wish that I had been paired with someone who was at a 5-star property. I would have taken the process a whole lot more seriously.* [John, Past Student-participant]

The importance of pairing based on brand preference is not exclusive to hospitality. Millennial students have both a high propensity towards brand preferences as well as a desire to have development programs customized to their interests and needs. Thereby it is important to consider brand preferences along with common interests, development needs, and career goals when deciding on pairing assignments.

The goal of facilitating mentoring relationships should not be simply matching up participants, but rather a strategic attempt to create a mutually beneficial relationship by examining all selection factors. An application process involving detailed questions, selection interviews to better ascertain a mentee’s growth needs, and an assessment of the mentor’s ability to provide development opportunities is a recommended practice based on the current findings.

**Training**

The current study identifies aspects of the mentoring relationships that are valued by participants. A training program designed based on relationship aspects identified in the study would aid in educating both mentees and mentors on aspects of the mentoring relationship that are meaningful and impact hospitality workforce readiness. A program focused on key mentoring relationship activities (structured relationships, exposure
opportunities, work assignments, learning discussions, and school assistance) and mentor behaviors (time and accessibility, coaching, care for the student, serving as a role model, and employment sponsorship) as garnered from this study, would set a foundation for this development experience, providing a solid starting point for the mentoring relationship.

**Evaluation and Measurement**

Implications from the study’s findings reinforce the need for evaluation processes to align with mentoring relationship aspects and mentor behaviors. The purpose of informal and formal evaluation processes is to collect data that will evaluate whether the mentoring program made a positive difference in the lives of the participants as well as the organization (Phillip-Jones, 1983). The evaluation process should focus on outcomes of the mentoring program, the relationship activities aspects, and mentor behaviors found to be meaningful during the study.

**Implications for Mentoring Millennials**

Data findings correlated with previous research denoting the value Millennials place on mentoring relationships. The relationship is viewed by Millennials as an opportunity for continuous development as well as a trusted source for guidance and assistance (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Gursoy et al. 2008). Specifically, study findings supported Millennials’ need for structured experiences, demand for immediacy and fast response to communication, use of kinesthetic learning over traditional textbook methods, search for role models, need for challenging work, interest in gaining awareness of different leadership styles, and desire for constant attention and recognition (Chen & Choi, 2008; Zemke et al., 2000).
Of particular importance was the emphasis past student-participants placed on the timeliness of responses. As Allison discussed, timeliness of response signified care and a feeling of importance for the student-participant:

It was when I was reaching out to him for an initial sit-down, and he was responsive and told me, “I'm actually currently in Europe right now,” and the time zone was totally whacked, but he still picked up my phone call, and he was still very nice, and he gave me information about when he was coming back. He is away all the time, but when I would call he would always reply quickly, “Is this urgent? Do you want me to call you right now, or can this wait until I get back from my trip?” I felt that (the relationship) was important – that I was important. [Allison, Past Student-participant]

Inherent in the past student-participant responses was the sense that the mentors gave of their time because they cared about the relationship. This feeling can be attributed to generational markers of Millennials, particularly to the correlation of fast response to communication and level of caring (Chen & Choi, 2008; Zemke et al., 2000). As part of the Millennial generation, the student-participants were predisposed to expect a mentor to deeply value both them and the relationship and to spend time cultivating both. To uphold their expectations requires training for mentors on fostering a positive learning environment through meaningful development activities and mentor behaviors described in this study. As a large percentage of mentors are Baby Boomers and Generation Xers, a paradigm shift is often required to facilitate a meaningful program.

**Implications for Hospitality Workforce Competencies**

The intent of the Hotel College Mentoring Program under examination is to accelerate the readiness of students as they prepare for employment after graduation. Wood (2004) discussed the responsibility of higher education institutions in the preparation of students to meet workforce challenges. The findings of this study demonstrate that teaching hospitality in the classroom environment is not enough to
instill hospitality workforce competencies; students need to encounter the positive and negative aspects of the industry through kinesthetic-based programs such as formal mentoring programs, internships, and compulsory work experience. These pragmatic experiences are weaved into the culture of the hospitality institution, increasing the college’s reputation for producing graduates who are ready for supervisory careers in hospitality.

Although the focal point of the interviews and focus groups was on mentoring relationships, work skills needed to be successful in hospitality and perceived student skills gaps were brought up continually in the discussions. Past student-participants reflected that being effective in their supervisory roles required a broad knowledge base, guest service skills, interpersonal management, decision-making, and communication abilities. An interesting insight from the data is that past student-participants did not recall deficits in their own competency levels. Perhaps, individuals are unable to see their own development path, assuming that the competencies they hold today were always present. On the other hand, mentor-participants candidly described behavior gaps associated with current college students including a sense of entitlement, a high maintenance mentality, lack of work experience, insufficient soft skills and workplace etiquette, naïveté about the real-world of hospitality work, and communication deficits.

Apparent in the findings is that educational programs teach the science behind the hospitality discipline, but not the interpersonal behaviors needed to supervise and manage employees and the service processes. As Mr. Cordell discussed, the classroom curriculum cannot teach the day-to-day competencies needed in the hospitality industry:

I mean if you’re—if you’ve been in the classroom, and you’ve read about it, and you know exactly what you should say. It’s different when you’re actually face to
face with that person, whether it’s an employee, whether it’s a customer, whether it’s a manager. Just to have that face to face interaction with a person, I think is a little bit different. Because you can teach anybody computers, and okay, we have LMS, okay, let me show you. But you can’t teach somebody personality, how to talk to people, empathy. Key things in the business that you have to - no matter where you go, it’s stuff that you have to use. [Mr. Cordell, Mentor-participant]

A general opinion of the study participants was that the mentoring relationship assisted with preparing for the realities of hospitality management. Through mentoring relationship activities and behaviors, student-participants were provided with an educational experience that cannot be replicated in the classroom environment, reinforcing the need for mentoring and experiential learning elements to be compulsory within hospitality curriculum.

Figure 12 illustrates a mixed learning model influenced by the data findings. As hospitality leaders examine future competency needs, the application of learning will take precedence over the learning itself. Both professional and cognitive competence will be the performance markers for which future leaders will be evaluated. Based on data findings, it is the researcher’s belief that mentoring relationships provide an integral development opportunity to meet the hospitality industry’s future workforce needs when used in conjunction with university curriculum.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This qualitative case study provided insight into mentoring relationship qualities that impact workforce readiness within the hospitality industry. The study was limited to hospitality mentoring within the collegiate environment and may not be generalizable to mentoring programs facilitated within a hospitality organization to promote employee growth and development. Future research is recommended to explore how the findings
Figure 12. Mixed learning model.
of the current study correlate to participants’ perceptions of formal mentoring relationships within hospitality organizations. A second recommendation is to examine diversity factors to determine if gender, race, or age has an impact on the relationship aspects and effectiveness of college mentoring relationships within the hospitality environments. As hospitality companies look to diversify their management ranks, a critical examination of the mentoring relationship from underrepresented populations would be of value. A final recommendation for future research is to conduct a direct comparison of student- and mentor-participants’ perceptions of the same relationship within the hospitality environment. The current study’s participant group included three student-mentor dyads, which inspired this research topic. Based on informal comparative analysis of the findings, it is the researcher’s belief that exploring the dimension of a relationship from both the mentor and student perspective would add to the growing body of literature on mentoring.

Conclusion

College mentoring within the hospitality environment is a mutualistic relationship achieved through a mentor’s commitment to fostering a student’s development beyond the classroom walls. It is bounded by mentor engagement and commitment and student accountability. The relationship thrives from understanding the desires and needs of the students, facilitating relevant activities, and providing reflection. Meaningful relationships affect workplace competencies by demonstrating a realistic view of hospitality, one that cannot be learned through textbook, but must be experienced.

The findings from this study supported and expanded much of the work of previous researchers in the area of mentoring relationships in both the business and
academic environments. The intent of a college mentoring relationship within a hospitality institution is to increase workforce readiness thereby enhancing an individual’s career success. To uphold this intention requires a mentoring relationship, through shared experiences, that enables the student to develop personally and professionally, increase workplace confidence levels, and learn different management perspectives. The mentoring relationship is comprised of not one, but a collection of meaningful relationship activities and mentor behaviors that contribute to this development experience.
APPENDIX A

HOTEL COLLEGE MENTOR PROGRAM INFORMATION

PROGRAM PURPOSE
The Mentor Program is an educational experience intended to accelerate the readiness of Hotel College students as they prepare for employment after graduation.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM
For one academic year, a mentor will be paired with a Hotel College student whose interest matches the mentor’s profession.

STUDENT BENEFITS
• Insight into the real-world.
• Exposure to new ideas and perspectives.
• Opportunity to network with local industry professionals.

MENTOR BENEFITS
• Improvement of leadership and coaching skills.
• Opportunity to network with other local industry professionals.
• Gratification of sharing knowledge and experiences with a future hospitality colleague.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
• Communicate with your mentor on a regular basis. Remember, the mentor is taking time out of his/her busy schedule to help you.
• Educate mentor about the Hotel College, UNLV campus, and classes you are taking.
• Dedicate enough time to the program to ensure success.

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES
• Communicate with your mentee, as he/she is eager to learn from you.
• Educate mentee about your background and profession. Invite him/her into your work environment to observe your role.
• Dedicate the time that you can comfortably fit into your schedule. The program is flexible and only requires you to meet with your mentor twice a semester.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS
• UNLV Hotel College student.
• Junior or senior standing.
• Minimum 3.0 grade point average.

MENTOR REQUIREMENTS
• One-year supervisory experience in a hospitality role.
• Willingness to provide time and guidance to a Hotel College student.
APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Contents

Data Collection Timeline
Participant Recruitment Letters
Interview Questions
Focus Group Questions

Data Collection Timeline

- February 6, 2013: University of Nevada, Las Vegas Institutional Review Board approval received
- February 16, 2013: Recruitment e-mails sent by researcher
- February 20, 2013 – April 26, 2013: Interviews with past student-participants
- March 26, 2013 – April 16, 2013: Focus group and interviews with mentor-participants
Dear (Name of Past Student-Participant),

I am writing to request your participation in a research project being conducted on the perceptions of past student-participants of their college mentoring experience within the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). As part of my dissertation study, I am interested in learning about past student perceptions of their mentoring relationship and the ways in which it impacted post-graduation employment. Donald Snyder, Dean and Dr. Pat Moreo, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the UNLV College of Hotel Administration have both endorsed this study, as it is anticipated that the research effort will enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of mentoring relationships within the hospitality collegiate environment.

You are being asked to participate in the study because you participated in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program between the years of 2008 and 2011.

There are several areas that I would like to cover with you as part of the study: current position, career progression, and your mentoring relationship experience. In order to cover these topics, I would like to interview you at a date, time, and location that are convenient for you. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes and will be digitally recorded. Following the interview, you will receive a transcript of the conversation to ensure your viewpoints were accurately conveyed. If you choose to participate and meet the selection criteria, all study information will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be used and no direct reference will be made to you, your mentor(s) or employer.

To participate, you must meet all of the selection criteria listed below:

1. participated in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program between 2008 and 2011 as part of your undergraduate hospitality studies;
2. graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the UNLV College of Hotel Administration;
3. currently employed in a supervisory position within the hospitality industry (supervisory is defined as a staff member who directs the work of line-level employees or facilitates project work); and
4. between 21 and 65 years of age.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me via phone or e-mail to coordinate an interview appointment most convenient for you. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Cecilia Maldonado or me. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Roberta Barnes  
Ph.D. Candidate, Workforce Development and Organizational Leadership  
(702) 895-5553  
Bobbie.barnes@unlv.edu

Dr. Cecilia Maldonado  
Faculty Advisor  
(702) 895-3410  
Ceciliam@unlv.nevada.edu
Dear (Name of Mentor-Participant),

I am writing to request your participation in a research project being conducted on the perceptions of past student-participants of their college mentoring experience within the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. As part of my dissertation study, I am interested in learning about past student perceptions of their mentoring relationship and the ways in which it impacted post-graduation employment. Donald Snyder, Dean and Dr. Pat Moreo, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the College of Hotel Administration have endorsed this study, as it is anticipated that the research effort will enhance our understanding of the phenomenon of mentoring relationships within the hospitality collegiate environment.

You are being asked to participate in the study because you have served as a mentor in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program between the years of 2008 and 2011 and received a Mentor of the Year nomination for your efforts.

There are several areas that I would like to cover with you as part of focus group session: mentor relationship structure, success strategies, and your mentoring relationship experience(s). In order to cover these topics, I have scheduled focus group meetings.

Select From One of the Following Options

Focus Group Session 1
Tuesday, March 26, 2013
11 a.m.
Student Professional Development Room – BEH 236
Located on the Second Floor of Beam Hall Next to the Elevators

Focus Group Session 2
Thursday, March 28, 2013
5 p.m.
Student Professional Development Room – BEH 236
Located on the Second Floor of Beam Hall Next to the Elevators

I would also be happy to schedule an interview with you via phone or in-person at a date and time most convenient for you.

To participate, you must meet all of the selection criteria listed below:

1) served as a mentor in the UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program between the years of 2008 and 2011;

2) received a Mentor of the Year nomination from your mentee (student-participant); and

3) between 21 and 65 years of age.

Your participation would be very much appreciated. If you choose to participate and meet the selection criteria, all study information will be kept as confidential as possible. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in the focus group setting, however, the information shared will be kept as confidential as possible through the use of pseudonyms for you, your mentee(s), and employer.
If you are interested in participating, please contact me via phone or e-mail to register for the focus group session most convenient for you. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Cecilia Maldonado or me. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Roberta Barnes  
Ph.D. Candidate, Workforce Development and Organizational Leadership  
bobbie.barnes@unlv.edu  
(702) 895-5553

Dr. Cecilia Maldonado, Associate Professor  
Faculty Advisor  
ceciliam@unlv.nevada.edu  
(702) 895-3410
Interview Questions

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this research study. I anticipate the interview will take approximately 90 minutes. I have a series of questions to ask focused on your current job, career progression, and perceptions of your college mentoring relationship with X as part of the Hotel College Mentor Program. Please feel free to speak openly. The information you share today is completely confidential as pseudonyms will be used for you, your mentor, and employer. If anytime you feel uncomfortable, please let me know and we will stop the interview immediately.

Researcher to review consent form and ask participant to sign.

Do you have any questions before we start recording the conversation?

1. Reflecting back to your mentoring relationship with X...?
   - Tell me about your first meeting.
   - Think of an incident that occurred as part of the relationship that holds significance for you.
     - Describe the circumstance and nature of the incident.
     - Describe the outcomes or results of the incident.
     - Explain why you consider it to be significant.
   - Tell me about a time when X behaved in a way that you felt should be encouraged because in your opinion it was a good example of mentorship.
     - Explain why you consider the behavior effective.
   - Tell me about a time when X behaved in a way that you felt was ineffective.
     - Explain why you consider the behavior ineffective.

2. Describe how the relationship progressed.

3. Tell me about a time when X provided you with assistance or support.
   - How would you describe the assistance X provided?
4. How did you feel about yourself during the mentoring relationship?

5. How do you keep in touch?

6. Reflecting back on our discussion of your relationship with X, how would you say it has affected your life and career?

7. Tell me about a typical day at work for you.

8. What skills are important to be effective in your workplace?

9. Of all the aspects we discussed, what is most important to you?

10. Is there anything else you would like to elaborate more on?
Focus Group Questions

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this research study. I anticipate the focus group will take approximately two hours. Please feel free to speak openly. The information you share today is completely confidential as pseudonyms will be used for you, your mentor, and employer. If anytime you feel uncomfortable, please let me know and we will stop the session immediately.

Researcher to review consent form and ask participant to sign.

1. What made you decide to participate in the Hotel College Mentor Program?

2. Reflecting back to your mentoring relationships…
   - How was the mentoring relationship(s) structured?
   - Describe assistance you provided.
   - Describe your interaction style.

3. Tell me about a time you felt you positively influenced your mentee.

4. How do you keep in touch with your previous mentee(s)

5. What do you think your mentee(s) would say about the mentoring relationship experience?

6. Of all the aspects we discussed, what do you believe is most important?

7. Is there anything else you would like to elaborate more on?
APPENDIX C

CASE STUDY CODING PROCEDURES

The coding procedures were completed using an Excel database and ATLAS.ti analysis software. Interviews and focus group data was professionally transcribed and the transcriptions along with the text of Mentor of the Year nominations and program materials were uploaded into the ATLAS.ti system and then coded by the researcher. The data was analyzed using the content analysis method (Merriam, 1998).

Using open, axial, and selective coding, meaning was derived through the construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the content (Merriam, 1998). The first data coding process, open coding broke down and categorized data. The second process, axial coding, made preliminary connections among the categories created through open coding. Finally, the selective coding process integrated the data into a cohesive whole providing insight into the phenomenon under investigation.

In the analysis of the primary study representation, past student-participants, a domain analysis was completed for each research question (Spradley, 1980). An attribution domain was used to analyze the interview responses. The attribution domain is defined as, “X is an attribute of Y” (Spradley, 1980, p. 105).

Throughout data analysis, the researcher followed the conceptual model used to organize the case study (Yin, 2009). All data was examined using the dual lens of Kram’s career-related and psychosocial functions and Bandura’s self-efficacy constructs model.
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AXIAL CODES

Impact
Career swagger, Different management perspectives, Effective management style, Employment opportunities, Expectations of management, Found my calling, Gained experience, Know more about overall operation, Increased confidence, Insider’s perspective, Inspired, Invaluable exposure/experience, Learning outcomes, Person I continue to learn from, Professional development, Real-world experience, Realistic job preview, Realized my passion, Understanding of success factors

Means Mentor and Mentee Keep in Touch
After relationship, continued relationship, Electronically communicating, Face to face communication, Phone communication

Mentor Behaviors
Accessible, Advice, After graduation employment, Awkward, Care for student – wanting to see them succeed, Career assistance, Coaching, Counseling, Employment sponsorship, Feedback, Hourly/Line positions, Inappropriate behaviors, Individualized attention, Interviews, Mentor success strategies, Mentor’s interpersonal skills, Protection, Role Model, Time, Treated with respect, Would like to have a more personal relationship

Relationship Activities/Attributes
Attend events, Attend meetings, Career guidance, Class/Homework support, Complete work assignments, Exposure activities outside work environment, Exposure shadowing day-to-day activities of mentor, Exposure different departments, Job shadowing, Learning discussions, Meet people within department, Network with different executives, Planning activities - customized program for individual, Preparing student, Property tours, Reflection, School assistance, Structured relationship, Student preparation
Student Accountability
(Mentee) commitment, preparation, time, Taking responsibility for outcomes

Student Feelings Toward Relationship
Feel blessed, Feel part of the team, Feeling I can succeed, Felt welcomed, First meeting, Fostered career growth, Hit-it off, Increased confidence, Initial impressions, longer relationship needed, Mentor for life, Mismatch, Not feeling like a burden, Proud to be his/her mentee, Self-efficacy

Student Work Skill Deficits
Appearance and dress, High maintenance, Lack of communication skills, Lack of professionalism, Lack of work experience, Need for constant reinforcement, Not understanding the real-world of work, Sense of entitlement

Supervisory Work Skills
Broad knowledge base, Communication – supervisory skill, Decision-making, Excel knowledge, Guest service skills, Interpersonal management, Mentee’s work responsibilities, Organization

Type of Relationship
Colleague, Educator, Fraternity elder, Friendship, Parent, Sibling
SELECTIVE CODES

(1) How do participants describe mentoring activities (specified pursuits promoting the development of the student) and mentor behaviors (observable personal attributes of the mentor) experienced as part of the mentoring relationship?

MENTOR BEHAVIORS
RElATIONSHIP ACTIVITIES/ATTRIBUTES

a. Why were the mentoring activities and mentor behaviors considered meaningful?

STUDENTS’ FEELINGS TOWARD RELATIONSHIP

(2) How do participants perceive their development through the mentoring relationship?

STUDENTS’ FEELINGS TOWARD RELATIONSHIP
IMPACT

(3) How do formal college mentoring relationships affect workplace competencies and prepare participants for hospitality employment at the supervisory level post-graduation?

STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY
STUDENT WORK SKILLS DEFICIT
SUPERVISORY WORK SKILLS

a. How do participants view the relationship post-graduation?

IMPACT
MEANS MENTOR AND MENTEE KEEP IN TOUCH
STUDENTS’ FEELINGS TOWARD RELATIONSHIP
TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP

b. How do participants perceive the impact of the relationship on supervisory employment post-graduation?

IMPACT
DOMAIN ANALYSES

Mentoring Relationship Activities

Structured Relationship:
Planning Activities - Customized Program
Preparing Students
Reflection

Learning Discussions:
Mentor’s Work Environment
Hospitality Articles and News
Student’s Curriculum

Work Assignments

School Assistance:
Property Tours
Class/Homework Support

Exposure:
Shadowing Mentor
Attending Meetings
Networking
Attending Events
Department/Job Shadowing
Mentor Behaviors

Time and Accessibility:
Not Feeling Like a Bother
Tactical Components
Behavioral Components

Employment Sponsorship:
Interviews
Hourly/Line Positions
After Graduation Employment

Coaching:
Feedback
Counseling
Career Assistance

Role Model:
Strong Interpersonal Skills
Effective Management Style

Care For Student:
Support and Guidance
Wanting to See the Student Succeed
Perceptions of Development

Insider’s Perspective:
Real-world Experience
Realistic Job Preview
Increased Confidence
Relationship Impact

Personal and Professional Development:
Different Management Perspectives
Employment/Career Path
Continued Relationship
## APPENDIX D

### DEFINITIONS OF DOMAIN TERMINOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Term</th>
<th>Researcher’s Definition</th>
<th>Manifest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care For Student</td>
<td>The student and his or her success are of interest and importance to the mentor.</td>
<td>He’s definitely been someone that’s always been supportive and there for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Giving of advice based on voiced concerns and/or suggesting strategies for accomplishing goals.</td>
<td>He provided me with advice on next steps. It was helpful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continued Relationship</td>
<td>An informal continuation of a relationship after the formal mentorship program has concluded.</td>
<td>I mean, even after that, he’s always been open and available to talk to. I’ve talked to him on numerous occasions since then. I mean, I used to be able to pop into his office a corporate when I worked there, and just kind of go through things and frustrations that I have. He’d sit down and talk with me about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Management Perspectives</td>
<td>Learning and evaluating different ways to manage and lead.</td>
<td>Really taught me just to-to be more patient with people, but that’s why I did that to be able to acquire the knowledge that every team member is a unique individual, and you have to kind of work with in their personality. You might have a certain goal, but not everyone’s gonna get that goal the same way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment/Career Path</td>
<td>Influencer over employment and career decisions.</td>
<td>I mean I have to say I don’t think I’d be where I was today if it wasn’t for my mentor. I don’t think without that little extra push and encouragement, even at the front desk. It’s a grueling job. There’s definitely guests problems, and just a hard job, and I always had that extra push. Like, just keep going. Like think outside the box. If you have to stay an extra hour or two like keep doing it, going on your days off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Sponsorship</strong></td>
<td>Providing an employment recommendation for a student or directly placing a student in a job.</td>
<td>I was able to get an internship at <em>XYZ Property</em> in HR due to her.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposure</strong></td>
<td>The act of viewing and/or experiencing through observation, networking, and attendance at meetings or events.</td>
<td>During the opening week of the <em>XYZ Property</em>, <em>Ms. Wolfe</em> gave me an opportunity to work with other pit clerks and floor supervisors at the back of the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased Confidence</strong></td>
<td>An increase in a person’s belief of their powers, abilities, and decisions.</td>
<td>Just the way she treated me was as if I was an executive. It made me feel good and made me feel so confident in who I was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insider’s Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Association with a limited number of individuals who understand the facts of a situation or share intimate knowledge.</td>
<td>A high level security. You know I had to sign an NDA on that, is it NDA, right, nondisclosure agreement. He really tried to expose me to everything that he did as well when I was with him. It was really very fruitful, very fruitful experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge acquired through talking with another person.</td>
<td>This came directly from a conversation because I was talking about it in class. They had a hospitality law class. We were talking about liabilities and people getting injuries and stuff like that. Basically someone sued him for like 100 grand, and all of this work to save all this money, just gone, just from one slip and fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal and Professional Development</strong></td>
<td>Acquisition of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors.</td>
<td>I think it’s a great experience, and it definitely—I mean as far as how it affected my career, I got to see, in college, kind of at a higher-level of where I wanna be. I think it’s like you see that and you’re like I want to get to that. You’re driven to take the steps to get there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real-world Experience</strong></td>
<td>Acquiring practical experience with an industry, department, and/or position.</td>
<td>Taking on this mentorship, I think the most important part was having them show you the back of the house. Like hey, here’s how housekeeping works. Here’s how front office works. Really, I found that intriguing in my mentorship. I was just like oh my gosh. Then when I actually got a job, I was like I didn’t even learn anything, and seein’ the back of the house. You have to be somewhere for a couple months to really learn it. I would say if you had to pass something on to them, it’s like a hotel kid, they wanna see the operation. I think it’s important to see their role in the operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Realistic Job Preview</strong></td>
<td>The understanding of the both the negative and positive aspects of a position.</td>
<td>What I did see was the reality of a job in this industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Model</strong></td>
<td>Exhibiting professional behaviors and setting an example for others to imitate.</td>
<td>I think it made you very comfortable with him, and you could relate with him. Even though he was in this distinguished position, had so many roles and responsibilities, he was still able to relate to you on like a personal level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Providing assistance with school including support with homework, coordination of tours, of facilitation of donations.</td>
<td>She has been there for me whenever I needed help with a homework assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured Relationship</strong></td>
<td>Well-defined association with predictable relation patterns and defined expectations.</td>
<td>I definitely think that first that list. Like being like, set out what your goals are. What do you want to learn more about different departments? I think I said like room rates or something like that. I wanted to learn more about like the operation side, so he’d sit me down with our director of front office and let me follow him for a day. Go over all the steps that they do to kinda be successful in that, and run that department. I thought that was really cool just getting that opportunity to kinda get to know people in the industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Accessibility</td>
<td>Allocation of time and availability to foster a relationship.</td>
<td>If you're not willing to make time, don't bother. I think a lot of people I knew that tried it, the people just—their mentor chose not to really make that much time for them. That'll end the relationship front and center, sort of. I think time's one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Assignments</td>
<td>Assignments of work for student to gain experience and/or better understand the operation.</td>
<td>It was interesting to work on aspects of projects and attend meetings to see how pieces fit together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review
Approval Notice

NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:
Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation, suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE:          February 6, 2013
TO:            Dr. Cecilia Maldonado-Daniels, Environmental & Public Affairs
FROM:          Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects
RE:            Notification of IRB Action

Protocol Title: A Qualitative Study of Past Student-Participants'Perceptions of College Mentoring Relationships: A Case Within a Hospitality College in a Higher Education Institution
Protocol #: 1301-4354
Expiration Date: February 5, 2014

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed and approved by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46 and UNLV Human Research Policies and Procedures.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year and expires February 5, 2014. If the above-referenced project has not been completed by this date you must request renewal by submitting a Continuing Review Request form 30 days before the expiration date.

PLEASE NOTE:
Upon approval, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the protocol most recently reviewed and approved by the IRB, which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent forms and recruitment materials. The official versions of these forms are indicated by footer which contains approval and expiration dates.

Should there be any change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a Modification Form through ORI - Human Subjects. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB. Modified versions of protocol materials must be used upon review and approval. Unanticipated problems, deviations to protocols, and adverse events must be reported to the ORI – HS within 10 days of occurrence.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.
REFERENCES


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Dissertation Title: A Qualitative Study of Past Student-participants’ Perceptions of College Mentoring Relationships: A Case Within a Hospitality College in a Higher Education Institution

Dissertation Examination Committee:
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