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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INTERNSHIPS ON
CAREER PATHWAYS: TRANSFORMATIONAL VERSUS TRANSACTIONAL
INTERNSHIPS

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

Internships provide a platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting and to gain hands-on experience (Simons et al., 2012). Moreover, internships can help students build networks and connections within their chosen industry, which can later prove valuable in their career development. This qualitative exploratory study investigated students' perceptions of their hospitality and tourism internships on how they perceive their career pathways after completing an internship in a four-year degree program. For this study, a group of Junior and Senior hospitality and tourism university students from a major university were interviewed. The researcher utilized a phenomenological approach to analyze the data to best understand their lived experiences and perceptions. This was further contextualized under the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2019) to help elucidate the students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways. From this analysis process, four themes emerged from their perceptions: 1) Servant Leadership, 2) mission and vision alignment, 3) mentors, and 4) connection of learning. This study addressed the gap in the current literature of transformational leadership and college students' perceptions of their career pathways after completing an internship by understanding how the 4i's of idealized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are positively or negatively perceived. A key finding of the study was that students' perceptions of their career pathways were positive in both transformational and transactional internships, and only differed in the 4i's constructs. However, students who completed a transformational internship could see themselves as leaders within the organization and could see a pathway for career advancement increasing retention within the organization.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

An internship is temporary work experience that provides practical training and exposure to a particular industry or field. An internship typically involves working under the guidance of experienced professionals to gain firsthand experience and develop skills relevant to the job. The modern era of internships in the United States began in the late 19th century and has been a part of academic curriculum in many disciplines since their development (Wentz & Ford, 1984). Internships are a requirement in both a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs. Internships can be found in the fields of engineering, accounting, arts and humanities, business, marketing, and in the medical industry. This study will focus on hospitality and tourism internships.

Hospitality and Tourism Internships

Hospitality and Tourism Internships (HTI) are common for many four-year undergraduate programs in the USA as illustrated in Table one below.

Table 1: Hospitality and Tourism Internship Requirements in Four-Year Universities in the USA

University Size	University Location	University Internship Requirement
72,000+	Southeast USA	3 - Internships, 250 hours each (<i>each internship more progressive than the previous</i>)
55,000+	Southeast USA	1 – Internship 500 hours + 500 work hours
50,000+	Midwest USA	2 - Internships - 400 hours in a Level 1 Internship + 400 hours in a Level 2 Internship

University Size	University Location	University Internship Requirement
49,000+	Midwest USA	2 - 150-hour internships (<i>one fieldwork, and one supervisory</i>)
28,000+	Midwest USA	1,000 work hours, no internships required
21,000+	Northeast USA	1 - semester of 200–300 work hours

HTI's can provide students with valuable work experience and help them develop skills that are relevant to their future careers. However, the perceptions of students regarding internships in this field can vary widely, depending on their individual experiences. Some students see value in the process, others feel it should not be part of the academic degree, while some students are frustrated with internships not leading to relevant networking or professional contacts. According to O'Connor and Bodicoat (2017) students' perceptions of their internships on enhancing their employability skills could be described as the student being either the "Engagers" or the "Dis-engagers". This concept of engagement versus disengagement is noteworthy to this study because it links closely with the proposed theoretical framework using transformational leadership theory versus transactional leadership theory to provide a point of reference for understanding the perceptions of students in their internship experience.

It is critical to differentiate what constitutes a transformational internship and what constitutes a transactional internship. For this study, the researcher used a purposive sample from a major four-year university in the Southeast USA with an undergraduate hospitality and tourism degree program. Internships are designed to offer students or recent graduates an opportunity to gain practical experience in a specific field while networking with professionals in their industry

of interest (Zopiatis et al., 2021). In contrast to an internship, a job is typically viewed as providing remuneration for services rendered and is often associated with long-term employment. A job offers no structure other than duties you will perform while working in the position. Contrary to an internship, a job is what the researcher considers a transactional internship.

Global Pandemic

The global pandemic that arrived in March 2020 catastrophically affected the hospitality and tourism industry. More than four million jobs or 25% of the industry's workforce were lost in the hospitality and tourism industry (Dill, 2021). At the height of the pandemic shutdown, the GDP loss was estimated to be \$5 trillion and affected more than 197 million people (Associated Press, 2020).

During this period, many employees and leaders that were on furlough or terminated due to the loss of the economy used their transferrable skills to transition into other industries. This became known as the Great Reshuffle (Meister, 2022). Never in the history of the hospitality industry had the workforce been literally shut down overnight. By the end of 2021, and into 2022, the Great Reshuffle had been in full swing, and employees were seeking or had sought jobs and careers in new industries (Meister, 2022). The once dynamic hospitality and tourism industry was now struggling to find trained and talented workers to fill the vacant roles.

The economy of 2023 had many organizations desperately trying to find a workforce and talent pipeline to fill those vacant roles. Although the general job market in the United States has already surpassed pre-pandemic levels, the hospitality sector is still far behind in its efforts to replace the 1.1 million jobs lost (U.S. Travel, 2022). This leaves industry leaders with the task of filling these roles within their organizations. Now more than ever, the hospitality and tourism

industry need talented workers to fill the roles from entry level to executive management. By understanding the perception of students of their internships and how they directly affect their career pathways, educational institutions can work to develop new professionals who can fill those needed roles and provide them with structured internship programs to advance students into careers within the hospitality and tourism industry. Institutions are aiming to better align their instruction/teaching of students to be a) better prepared for a post-graduation life into the workforce, and b) create and sustain a talent pipeline for industry needs, to fill the gap of workers needed in the hospitality and tourism industry. This study is timely due to the need to contribute literature and educate industry leaders on the students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways.

Therefore, the aim of this qualitative exploratory study is to investigate students' perceptions of their hospitality and tourism internships; transformational versus transactional internships and how they contribute to their career pathways. Utilizing the theoretical framework of Northouse's (2019) Transformational Leadership Theory, the researcher will investigate the students' perceptions on their career pathways after completing either a transformational internship or a transactional internship. In the future sections of this study, examples of the two types of internships and will be explored in detail.

Internships

Internships are an essential part of the learning and developmental process for students to utilize their classroom knowledge in live real-world experiences. Firsthand, through the eyes of the students, they can see whether the experience is relevant, or industry applicable. Using classroom learning and their internships, students can integrate the theories learned in class into the field of which they plan to start their careers (Teng, 2013). Internships are a platform to

discuss critical thinking and problem solving with leaders in the industry, while performing tasks that lead to skill development. Real world scenarios are the catalyst for students critical thinking and problem-solving skills – literally on the spot decisions must be made, and skillsets developed from such interactions. Internships are often the times where students can interact and engage with leaders and mentors, as part of the development process (Beggs et al., 2008).

Currently, the hospitality and tourism industry is rebounding from the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the workforce. From February 2020, the United States lodging industry lost more than \$46 billion dollars; with more than 4.8 million workers leaving the workforce (Shapoval et al., 2021). Now, since the pandemic policies have lessened, and people are out travelling and utilizing travel resources such as lodging, restaurants, transportation services, and tourism, educators are tasked with delivering a consistent flow of a trained and competent workforce.

Career pathways are part of the process that includes internships to prepare and develop students for careers to join the workforce. A career pathway is designed to create avenues of advancement for populations of people who are new to the labor market or underemployed, with the purpose of creating a consistent supply of qualified workers for an industry (Career Ladders Project, n.d.).

Problem Statement

The problem being investigated is limited educational and academic knowledge on students' perceptions of hospitality and tourism internships on their career pathways. Students can put the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to good use and apply it in real-world settings through the participation in their internships (Teng, 2013). Students' personal growth as well as their readiness for the workforce of the future can be significantly advanced by

participating in internships within the hospitality and tourism industries and within their respective fields. According to Hughes et al. (2013), it is essential to incorporate internship training into students' academic programs to adequately prepare them for careers in the hospitality and tourism industries. Therefore, it is imperative that institutions of higher education understand the students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways. The negative problem of not understanding students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathway is that the students may either a) drop out of the program completely, or b) leave the industry altogether, impacting the much-needed talented workforce. The latter was evident by the great resignation after the pandemic (Meister, 2022).

The high demand for educated and prepared employees to enter the hospitality and tourism industry and fill the empty positions in this industry is directly connected to how students perceive their internships and their career pathways. To create the required workforce pipeline, students need to stay in the industry of which they are studying and participating in their internships. Filling the gap in this research will be beneficial to educators in internship programs of hospitality and tourism as they strive to create relevant and purposeful programs.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is the process through which an individual engages with others and establishes a bond that increases the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2019). For this study, the student is considered the “follower”, and the employer is considered the “leader”. In transformational leadership, the leader is continually trying to assist the follower to reach their fullest capability, to reach their goals, or in this case, their career pathway. Transformational Leadership incorporates four factors, the 4 i's: idealized influence and charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual

stimulation; and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2019). These four factors are the structure for Transformational Leadership Theory.

Idealized influence and charisma are the emotional components of leadership; these leaders are deeply respected, trusted, and are considered to hold high standards and display the utmost ethical conduct (Antonakis et al., 2013). Leaders who are strong role models create a relationship with their followers, providing them with a sense of purpose, vision, and mission (Northouse, 2019). This style of leadership often leads to followers emulating the leader's behavior allowing them to identify and connect with them even more. An example Northouse (2019) uses as a charismatic and idealized leader is Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

Inspirational motivation is the factor that describes leaders who use strong communication and descriptives to motivate followers to join in and be a part of the "shared vision" of the organization (Northouse, 2019). Followers put their self-interest behind that of the leader and the organization, developing a more team-driven direction rather than a self-centered one. An example of a leader displaying this factor is a sales manager using affirmative and appreciative words to entice the team to reach their goals.

Intellectual stimulation is the factor that leaders use to encourage followers to think on their own, and to be innovative and creative in the process (Northouse, 2019). Followers are motivated to think of challenges and find solutions for the challenges, inspiring them to engage in the company's values, goals, objectives, mission, and visions, and to align them with their own values, goals, objectives, mission, and vision – alignment between what the organization wants to achieve, and the follower wants to achieve. An example of a leader utilizing intellectual stimulation is asking a follower to find a solution to a problem the organization is having.

Individualized consideration, the final “i” factor is the one most aligned with this study. Individualized stimulation refers to leaders who mentor and guide their followers in one-on-one personal interactions (Northouse, 2019). Leaders listen to their followers needs and provide a supportive and inspiring environment for the followers to grow and develop in. An example of this type of leader is a leader who meets regularly with their team and makes actionable advances to their career pathways.

Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional Leadership Theory is a different approach to that of Transformational Leadership Theory where the follower or the student is simply experiencing an exchange between the employer or organization by way of a paycheck (Northouse, 2019). In Transactional Leadership, the follower basically receives compensation for their services, with no influence, no motivation, no stimulation, and no consideration. Transactional Leadership neglects the attributes and factors that Transformational Leadership contains. However, according to Aga (2016), transactional leadership can still be considered beneficial to a follower contingent on the reward or compensation they receive. Transactional leadership does not individualize the “needs of followers or focus on their personal development”, (Northouse, 2019, p. 173). Transactional leaders use contingent rewards and management by exception to advance their own agenda and their followers’ agenda (Northouse, 2019).

Contingent reward in transactional leadership is an exchange process between leaders and followers. As part of this style of leadership, leaders will quantify successful efforts or behaviors with a reward system. In transactional leadership, the follower must have a clear understanding of what the effort or task is required, and what the reward will be upon successful completion (Northouse, 2019).

Management by exception utilizes two forms to deliver corrective criticism, negative feedback, and negative reinforcement: active and passive delivery (Northouse, 2019). In transactional leadership, a leader that is using active management by exception will observe the follower's behavior and tasks and provide immediate feedback either positive or negative, to correct the behavior. A leader that is using passive management by exception will not provide any feedback to the follower after rules have been broken or negative behaviors have been observed (Northouse, 2019).

Research Questions

Therefore, the aim of this qualitative exploratory study was to investigate students' perceptions of their hospitality and tourism internships; transformational versus transactional internships and how they contribute to their career pathways.

The research question investigated:

1. What are the students' perceptions of transformational internships' characteristics of influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration on their career pathway?

Theoretical Framework

Formal hypotheses are not often utilized to structure qualitative research investigations; however, a theoretical or epistemological framework may serve as an inspiration (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007). For this study, the researcher used the transformational leadership theory to investigate students' perceptions of internships on their career pathways as the theoretical framework. To create questions for the participants, the researcher used the Transformational Leadership Theory and the four i's: idealized influence and charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2019).

The researcher framed the analysis of leadership using transformational and transactional leadership theory. Leadership is essential for not only motivating followers and mobilizing resources toward the accomplishment of the organization's mission, but also for driving organizational innovation, adaptation, and performance (Antonakis & House, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to explore students' perceptions of hospitality and tourism internships on their career pathways based on their transformational or transactional experience. This exploratory study took a qualitative approach in interviewing hospitality and tourism students in a major tourist destination in the USA, to identify the perceptions of their career pathways after completing an internship.

Significance of the Study

Internships are an important practice in many academic programs. Internships allow students to utilize their classroom education and translate their learning into real-world applications (Baum, 2007; Major & Evans, 2008; Teng, 2013). Internships in the hospitality and tourism industry are important for students' development, and to prepare them for their future careers. Researchers recognize that embedding internship courses into the curriculum is necessary to prepare these students to work in the hospitality and tourism industry (Hughes et al., 2013; Major & Evans, 2008). Additionally, internships have been a catalyst for industry engagement, and often open doors for academics to engage with industry (Prigge, 2005). Previous research of internships focused on student attitudes of internships (Busby, 2003; Cho, 2006; Ju et al., 1998; Lam & Ching, 2007; Walo, 2001; Waryszak, 1997), attitudes of industry partners and internships (Harris & Zhao, 2004; Lee et al., 2006), and stakeholders' attitudes of internships (Beggs et al., 2008; Collins, 2002; Moscardo & Pearce, 2007; Zopiatis, 2007).

There is limited research on how students' perceptions of their internships influence their perception of their career pathways. This study will explore the students' perceptions of how they connect their internship with their career pathway. What is their perception of their internship on their career pathway after completing a transformational internship versus a transactional internship? The significance of this study lies in the fact that the results can direct or influence industry stakeholders to create internship programs for hospitality and tourism students that will keep them in the workforce for this industry. Adding to the significance of the study is enrollment into hospitality and tourism programs of higher education is declining due to the industry reputation of being low paying, long hours, and having to deal with bad guests (Krzak, 2022).

Delimitations

The delimitations utilized by the researcher in this study were established by an aspiration to better understand students' perceptions of internships on their future careers, and their career pathways. The researcher selected a population of students that are studying hospitality and tourism, in a major tourism destination at a 4-year public institution. To best understand the students' perceptions and control the scope of the study, the researcher will only recruit participants who are in an internship class, of a Junior or Senior standing, and after completing the Summer 2023 semester.

Limitations

Limitations of this study are that the sample was from only one student population in a large four-year university, in a major tourist destination, in one single state. The geographical location, and the size of the program may prove difficult to replicate at a smaller university or program (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

Many variables outside the control of the researcher may impact the students' internships such as the availability of internships during the chosen sample semester; the financial situation of the student and ability to accept the transformational internship; and the location of the internship and the ability for the student to participate in that internship.

Definition of Terms

To provide clarity for terminology that is frequently used throughout the study, the following definitions are provided.

Career Pathway. A Career Pathway is a series of structured and connected education programs and support services that enable students, often while they are working, to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training (Career Ladders Project (n.d.). Career development, professional development, professional advancement, career development, career advancement, career progression, occupational development, and advancement are all similar ways to state, “career pathways” (Career Ladders Project (n.d.).

Career Readiness. Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management (Kim et al., 2010).

Internship. The position of a student or trainee who works in an organization to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification (Baum, 2007; Major & Evans, 2008; Teng, 2013, Zopiatis et al., 2021).

Phenomenological Approach. The phenomenological approach is a form of qualitative research that emphasizes experiential, lived aspects of a particular construct – that is, how the phenomenon is experienced at the time that it occurs, rather than what is thought about this experience, or the meaning ascribed to it subsequently (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007).

Qualitative Research. Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lunenburg & Irby, 2007)

Transactional Leadership Theory. A transactional approach begins with the premise that all employees are motivated by outside rewards. A good illustration of this would be monetary compensation. It is predicated on the assumption that individuals lack the ability to motivate themselves (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2019).

Transformational Leadership Theory. Transformational leadership affects both social systems and individual behavior. In its ideal state, it brings about significant and constructive change in the followers with the ultimate objective of transforming followers into leaders (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2019).

Organization of the Study

Throughout this paper, the researcher utilized Transformational Leadership Theory and the four i's: idealized influence and charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2019) as the framework to understand the literature review and methodology, and to analyze the findings and results.

In chapter two, the literature review will provide a comprehensive review of internships and career pathways in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Chapter three will provide a robust schematic of how the researcher will utilize qualitative research and the phenomenological approach to explore students' perceptions of hospitality and tourism internships on career pathways.

Chapter four will comprise of the results and findings, clearly organized to include direct quotes from the interviews. The themes of data and chunks of interviews will be presented in a clear and logical format including figures and tables to disseminate information.

Chapter five will present the conclusions of the research, including limitations and implications for future research. The study will conclude with suggestions for future research.

Summary

The significance of this study lies in the fact that the results can best direct industry stakeholders and internship programs for hospitality and tourism students. Further emphasizing the critical need to explore this topic further, according to Teixeira and Baum (2001), the single biggest connection between universities and industry is an internship. Chapter one provided the overview of the following chapters, the definition of terms used throughout the paper, the methodology proposed, and the research method. A clear picture was painted to describe what an internship is, how it develops students, and the importance of internships in academic programs.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Internship Overview

An internship is an activity that focuses on experiential learning, connecting a student with real-world experience during their academic studies. Internships have come to the attention of higher education programs as a crucial component of modern pedagogy (Zopiatis et al., 2021). Internships, regardless of whether they are required, elective, paid, or unpaid, give students a realistic preview of the workplace in a way that academic settings cannot. As a result, internships offer substantial benefits, at least in theory, for all parties involved, including the students themselves, the organizations that host the students, and the academic institutions that teach the students.

Internships are an important practice in many academic programs. Internships allow students to utilize their classroom education and translate their learning into real-world applications (Baum, 2007; Major & Evans, 2008; Teng, 2013). Internships in the hospitality and tourism industry are important for students' development and to prepare them for their future careers. Researchers recognize that embedding internship courses into the curriculum is necessary to prepare these students to work in the hospitality and tourism industry (Hughes et al., 2013). According to Major and Evans (2008), it is essential to incorporate internship training into educational programs to adequately prepare students for careers in the hospitality and tourism industries.

Additionally, internships have been a catalyst for industry engagement and often open doors for academics to engage with industry (Prigge, 2005). Internships can be a promoter for industry engagement, as they provide an opportunity for students or recent graduates to gain hands-on experience and develop practical skills in a real-world setting. This type of engagement

can also help academics and researchers to stay up to date with current industry practices and challenges, which can inform their teaching, research, and collaborations. Internships can also open doors for academics to engage with industry by facilitating networking and relationship-building opportunities. For example, an academic who supervises an intern at a company may have the opportunity to meet with other professionals in the field, learn about new technologies or approaches, and potentially identify areas for collaboration or further research.

In addition to benefiting academics, internships can also be valuable for companies, as they can provide a source of fresh ideas and perspectives and help to identify potential future employees. By engaging with interns, companies can also help to shape the next generation of workers and contribute to the development of a skilled and diverse workforce (Prigge, 2005). Overall, internships can be a valuable tool for facilitating industry-academic engagement and fostering collaboration.

Previous research of internships focused on student attitudes of internships (Busby, 2003; Cho, 2006; Ju et al., 1998; Lam & Ching, 2007). Busby (2003) conducted a longitudinal study over eight years on tourism degree internships. He found that a substantial internship helped to differentiate between applicants. Students who participated in an internship had a higher level of maturity and confidence in themselves and their work ability. Busby's (2003) research concluded that students' attitudes of their internships were to learn as much as they could throughout the process while reflecting on the vocational-educational balance, creating a realization of being grown and adult, while learning new skills. Cho's (2006) research ranked the level of expectation of the student (what field of study?) before they were placed in an internship and then after they were asked the satisfaction of their internship. Cho found that students' expectations of their future career development ranked number 2 on their list of 11 with a mean of 3.754 on a 5 point

likert scale before their internship. After being placed in their internship, students' satisfaction with their future career development went down significantly to number 8 out of 11, with a mean of 2.873 out of 5. His findings concluded that students' expectations of their internship were higher (3.578 mean) than their satisfaction of their internship (3.000 mean). This literature adds to the significance of the study, understanding students' perceptions help academics to determine if their experiences meet their expectations, which influences their post-graduation career decisions.

Ju et al. (1998) investigated Korean students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their internships (in what field?), and their relationships between their internship experience and aspects of the internship program. The results concluded that Korean students' overall perceptions of their internship experiences were not positive. Less than 50% of the students (42%) thought that "improved personal career goal setting" was an aspect of the internship program that was positive. These results demonstrate that students do not think internships assist them in their career goals. Although not identified in the study as transactional internships, the internship details and expectations had the attributes of a transactional internship.

Lam and Ching (2007) examined students studying in Hong Kong universities expectations and perceptions of their internships. Results that came from a 5 point Likert scale concluded that "broad work experience" ranked number 1 in both their expectations (3.81 mean) and their perceptions (3.73 mean) followed by "good opportunity for future employment" at rank number 2 in their expectations (3.73 mean) and "able to develop technical skill" for their perceptions (3.66 mean). The students perceived their internships to be a plausible means to be hired for their first job post-graduation. They viewed their internships as a stepping-stone into hospitality and tourism industry careers (Lam & Ching, 2007).

Barron and Maxwell (1993) conducted a study of students at the beginning of their hospitality internship course, and again after they had completed a semester working at their internship. Their study found that students' perceptions contrasted with the reality of their experience in their hospitality and tourism internship. The students have a glamorized perception of what an internship would look like from popular media. Discussion in Barron and Maxwell (1993) provided suggestions to change the image of the hospitality and tourism industry, by providing a realistic impression of the industry, and accurately portraying the work environment. Thirty years later we are again investigating student perceptions of their internships. This study will help to contribute by modernizing a body of knowledge on student internship perceptions by providing an examination three decades later, in a new era of higher education, in a post-pandemic world.

Additional researchers have concluded that female students were more committed to hospitality and tourism careers than males (Gamboa et al., 2013; Ko, 2008; Koyuncu et al., 2008). Gamboa et al. (2013) examined high school students and their transition from high school to careers, concluding that exploratory activity (meaning trying new career paths) was positively related to new contexts of learning or working in internships. Students who completed internships were more likely to advance in their career exploration and pathways. Specifically female students had more favorable exploratory activity than males (Gamboa et al., 2013). Ko (2008) examined the factors of student's job satisfaction while completing an internship and the relationship between satisfaction with training, job satisfaction, and confidence about their future careers. The researchers in this quantitative study hypothesized and concluded that training during the internship would provide higher job satisfaction and confidence for a future career for the student, specifically with female students (Ko, 2008).

Koyuncu et al. (2008) examined the relationship of work values and educational program experiences on the commitment of Turkish university students studying tourism to stay and work in the tourism industry post-graduation; to create a more robust workforce in Turkey's hospitality and tourism industry. Their research concluded that the students with more engagement with their university had a grander commitment to stay with careers in the tourism industry, and vice versa. Students who felt a disconnect from their university were more likely to lessen the level of commitment to careers in tourism.

Baum (2007) examined front office workers in Eastern Europe that were new to the hospitality industry and working in a "Westernized" hotel property. His research concluded that most of the entry-level employees were over-qualified in comparison to other organizations. The employees' perceptions of the work were tied to their cultural and economic background.

Kuslivan and Kuslivan (2000) determined that students' general attitudes and perceptions of working in the hospitality and tourism industry were negative, due to insufficient information on working conditions and careers in the industry. A more negative factor that influenced students' perceptions were lack of family time or work-life balance, low pay and insufficient benefits, unqualified managers, and co-workers with poor attitudes. Chen et al. (2009) documented that emotional and social support play an important role in the achievement of job satisfaction for students. They also declared internships were required for students to recognize their abilities, network, and gain work experience and to have knowledgeable expectations for their future careers.

Chen et al. (2012) two major findings of research on students reasoning for not participating in an internship were the lack of understanding of the importance and value of the work experience and the students overall lack of drive and determination. These researchers

concluded that more proactive initiatives were needed to encourage the students to participate in internships. Ko's (2008) research also found that school mentors positively affect the students' experience during their internship. School mentors that receive instant feedback can determine if the student is receiving a quality internship. Busby et al. (1997) investigated placement of students into hospitality and tourism internships, and found employers expected students to have benefit opposed to other employees due to the placement factor. They concluded that the placement manager supporting students in their internships should have previously worked in the industry and have visited the host internship companies and locations to be aware of the skills required for each position/location.

Breakey et al. (2008) conducted research on an internship program with three objectives in mind: foster a tourism partnership between the a) local government and operators, b) the community-at-large, and c) educators and academics. Their research concluded that by including the community and local government in the beginning, they had their buy-in and support for the internships program by involving the two together in projects.

King et al. (2003) examined hospitality and tourism undergraduate students who took courses in Hong Kong, China, and Melbourne, Australia. The researchers were examining: 1) assessing the career progression of graduates, including levels of responsibility achieved, working conditions encountered, and incidence of attrition; 2) to evaluate the extent to which graduates believe that the student experience provided a thorough preparation for immediate employment and for professional life more generally; and 3) to identify the learning needs of graduates and the extent to which institutions can respond to their professional and educational needs. Results concluded that when assessing the students course experience, students felt the first strength was internship and cooperative education. The researchers go on to state little

research has been conducted on graduate career paths and perceptions of the quality of courses (internships included).

Transformational Versus Transactional Leadership Theory

Decades of research and development by Bass and colleagues have amassed a large body of literature on the imperative need for transformational leadership in organizations (Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993a; Bass & Avolio, 1993b; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Seltzer & Bass 1990). Since the early 1990s, this work subsequently permeated into the hospitality and tourism literature (Hinkin & Tracey, 1994; Tracey & Hinkin, 1994), and was further developed in recent years with works extending hospitality transformational leadership research to mitigating stress and burnout (Gill et al., 2006), non-leadership and employee job satisfaction, (Rothfelder et al., 2012), innovation behavior (Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2015), employee voice (Liang et al., 2017), and many others.

At its core, transformational leadership inspires followers toward a shared vision, whereas transactional leadership is exchanged-based, meeting the self-interests of the leader and the follower (Bass, 1999). Transformational leadership is characterized by four interrelated dimensions, known as the “4 i’s” and includes idealized influence or charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1999; Rothfelder et al., 2012).

Prior research has demonstrated that transformational leaders who successfully embody more than one dimension are able to achieve higher organizational results, in addition to their followers achieving higher job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Seltzer & Bass, 1990). Research in the hospitality context has confirmed the value of transformational or inspirational leadership in terms of attaining desired organizational goals and reaching greater employee satisfaction (Gui et al., 2020; Rothfelder et al., 2012; Prikshat et al., 2020). By comparison,

transactional leadership often takes the form of management-by-exception, personified when leaders provide exchange rewards or monitor subordinates' work closely, taking corrective actions when things go wrong (Bass, 1997; Seltzer & Bass, 1990; Rothfelder et al., 2013).

Transformational leadership research and development has been adopted into the educational context since the early 1990s (Leithwood, 1994) and leveraged to advance leadership in K-12 educational systems (Kirby et al., 1992), in secondary education (Anderson, 2017), and in higher education (Pounder, 2001).

Using the transformational leadership characteristics four interrelated dimensions, known as the “4 i’s” of idealized influence or charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, the researcher differentiated a transformational internship versus a transactional internship by the job title and job description. This difference is of importance to this study as this is how the internship will initially be classified as transformational or transactional, by the content on the job description.

Figure One below illustrates what the researcher concludes is transformational internship job description as it includes the location of the internship departments, the hours per week, and the hours per semester. Personal and identifiable information has been redacted for confidentiality.



All students regardless of discipline preference, Rooms or Food and Beverage, will have a structured back of the house internship in the following departments and roles in the order outlined

Figure 1: Transformational Internship Example

Internships are designed to offer students or recent graduates an opportunity to gain practical experience in a specific field while networking with professionals in their industry of interest (Zopiatis et al., 2021). In contrast to an internship, a job is typically viewed as providing remuneration for services rendered and is often associated with long-term employment. A job offers no structure other than duties you will perform while working in the position. Contrary to an internship, a job is what the researcher considers a transactional internship.

Figure two below illustrates what the researcher concludes is transactional internship job description as it is not rotational or does not provide any development or mentoring for the student. Personal and identifiable information has been redacted for confidentiality.

Job Description

Job Title: Receptionist
Company: [REDACTED]
Reports To: Human Resources Management

Effective Date: December 2018
Department: Human Resources
[REDACTED]

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Display high level of professionalism in the front reception area at all times. Provide customer service excellence to service professionals and guests in a courteous and unwearied manner. Perform daily in a wide range of clerical functions under the direction of the HR department head or other management staff.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- Provides general office support with a variety of clerical activities and related tasks.
- Ensures the reception, boardroom, storage and overall office areas presentable and organized.
- Answers phones in a professional and courteous manner.
- Coordinates various tasks on a daily basis including scheduling appointments, meetings, etc.
- Provides assistance with verification of employment for inbound inquiries.
- Greets all guests, potential job applicants, job interviews with excellent customer service.
- Assists HR staff with research projects and/or special projects.
- Coordinates assembly and delivery of new hire packets.
- Ensures reception computers are available for walk-in applicants.
- Submits orders for office, beverage and kitchen supplies as needed utilizing proper ordering procedures (purchase orders, order approvals, add expense to checkbook).
- Supplies automobile decals and assigns lockers to service professionals.
- Supplies name tags and time cards to service professionals.
- Updates office calendars and conference room scheduling.
- Receives, dates, and distributes all inbound department invoices.
- Receives and distributes incoming mail to the HR staff.
- Maintain accurate office supply inventory, including promotional items, décor, etc.
- Verify HR main office number for messages and forward accordingly.
- Assists with monthly, quarterly or yearly audits (I-9, locker inventory, employment files, etc.).
- Assists with updating posters, dashboards, recruiting postings and bulletin boards.
- Assists with distribution of payroll checks, payroll stuffers and monthly department newsletter.
- Assists with tasks associated to recognition/programs as directed by department head.
- Answers general questions from our internal guests and redirects them when necessary.
- Performs data entry functions as needed.
- Organizes and maintains employee files current and accurate.
- Other duties as assigned.

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Figure 2: Transactional Internship Example

Convergence of Transformational Leadership and Learning

Since the late 1970s, transformative learning theory has undergone robust development, introduced by the early works of Mezirow (1978; 1992) and others (Cranton, 2016; Kitchenham, 2008). Defined as “a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated” (Cranton, 2016, p.2), Mezirow (2012) explained that the focus of transformation learning theory is on “how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others -- to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers” (p. 76). The key dimensions of transformational learning theory center on the cognitive processes of the learner, inclusive of their experiences, critical reflection, affective considerations, individual development, communication, and consistent dialog with trusted others (Brown & Posner, 2001).

The intersection of two research streams, transformational leadership, and transformational learning are well documented (Argyris, 1991; Brown & Posner, 2001; Trautmann et al., 2007). Brown and Posner (2001) proposed that the way in which people learn was related to how they lead, and in a sample of 312 mid-level managers utilizing the Learning Tactics Inventory (Dalton, 1999), their results demonstrated that high action learning tactics were positively correlated with successful leadership practices (Brown & Posner, 2001). In other words, those managers who were high thinking and used cognitive approaches, exhibited more success in their leadership endeavors than did their counterparts in the study who were low action thinkers (Brown & Posner, 2001). With a focus on leadership practices, Kouzes and Posner (2002) identified five behaviors in transformational learning which include ‘modeling the way’ by doing things first as the leader; ‘inspiring a shared vision’ by communicating beliefs

passionately; ‘challenging the process’ by enacting ideas into action; ‘enabling others to act’ by empowering followers; and ‘encouraging the heart’ by celebrating individual and group achievements (Voelkel, 2019).

Transformational Learning and Internships

Few scholars have applied transformational learning and transformational leadership theories to experiential learning and internships. One study noted the challenges with executing effective internship programs in business schools without depleting institutional and departmental resources and recommended instead the application of experiential learning projects as a substitute (Kosnik et al., 2013). Based on Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 2014), the researchers’ findings advocated for smaller experiential learning projects, where students’ learning was self-directed and transformational, providing opportunities to apply their skills, expand their academic knowledge, and develop moral character for successful leadership in the global business market (Kosnik et al., 2013). Trautmann et al. (2007) advanced and validated the relationship between transformational leadership and learning in the ‘real world’ context through internships. Their results revealed that learning from real world work experiences, as opposed to classroom-based learning only, was significantly and positively related to transformational leadership (Trautmann et al., 2007).

Sherman and Crum (2009) outlined a higher education internship model to promote an experience which would facilitate transformational leadership in academic administration. Although their model was offered in the educational leadership context, theoretical and practical support put forth was consistent across multiple disciplines under the higher education umbrella. The key takeaways for transformative internships which would develop transformational leaders included (1) establishing an internship collaboration between the student, the university, and the

company; (2) purposefully designing a collaborative internship program fostering a multilayered approach; (3) organizing formative internship experiences using multiple sites; (4) securing and training both educational mentors and mentors from the organization; (5) organizing moderated panels for students and mentors from their organization to reflect upon their internship experiences; and (6) following up with post-internship meetings to identify opportunities for improvement and future growth (Sherman & Crum, 2009).

In the hospitality context, prior research has demonstrated the value of transformational leadership of managers and supervisors on imparting brand values to interns in order to model the organization's values in the hopes of recruiting and retaining the intern as a permanent employee (Hu et al., 2018; Morhart et al., 2009). Utilizing an experimental design and the 30-item Student Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2002), Crawford, Weber, and Dennison (2014) tested two groups of students to determine the value of hospitality coursework and internships as predictors of student leadership potential. Their findings established the importance of assimilating theory with practice through experiential and relevant internships with parallel reflection assignments designed to underscore leadership practices (Crawford et al., 2014).

While an abundance of transformational leadership and transformational learning research has demonstrated the effectiveness of lifting the morale, motivations, and engagement of those involved across a variety of internship experiences, related research in the hospitality management context is scarce. Particularly considering employee empowerment, which characterizes the hospitality industry in meeting and exceeding the needs of consumers, transformational leadership is the basis upon which followers are signaled and supported to deliver high quality service (Bass, 1999; Crawford et al., 2014). Extending this view, it is

reasonable to envision the potential for hospitality internships to mirror the constructs of transformational learning and leadership endeavors, as the future hospitality leaders have the potential to accelerate idealized and inspirational leadership performance based on their internship experiences.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are programs designed to address industry and employers' long-term needs by preparing students with the skills necessary to be successful in a particular industry. The hospitality and tourism industries are under pressure now more than ever to hire and retain employees (Bugsby, 2003; Cho, 2006). The need is dire for the industry to fill an ever-growing need for talented managers and team members (Lee et al., 2013).

In Table Two, career pathways success factors are detailed, providing the educators with a schematic of best practices for a successful pathway program. Institutions of higher education are the perfect places to lay the groundwork for career pathway programs.

Table 2: Career Pathways Success Factors (Career Ladders Project, n.d.)

Include on-ramps or bridge programs for disadvantaged and diverse populations including underprepared students with limited basic skills and youth and adults with barriers to employment.
Span the entire range of instruction from entry level, intensive “bridge” programs through occupational certificates and academic degrees.
Are stackable in design with certificates “nested” in longer transfer and degree structures and with each course and program preparing students for the next step.
Contextualize basic skills and technical content to the knowledge and skills needed in a specific occupation or group of occupations.
Provide an effective framework for workforce development by integrating the programs and resources of community colleges, other educational institutions, workforce agencies, adult education programs, social service providers, and other stakeholders.
Focus on careers in demand that provide family-sustaining wages and ongoing advancement opportunities.
Include work-based learning opportunities through structured experiences which could be credit-based work experience, internships, or service learning.
Use and promote data and focus on continuously improving efforts.

Table Three provides the toolkit for successful career pathway programs. All stakeholders are responsible for the success of the pathway program, specifically the educators and trainers who are tasked with preparing the qualified employees for the employers and occupational sectors. According to the Career Ladders Project (n.d.), by creating marketable credentials during the pathway, and linking them to technical certificates or diplomas, this provides the student or learner the opportunities to advance in each step of the pathway, not just at the end when the “degree or diploma” is completed.

Table 3: Core Career Pathway Components (Career Ladders Project, n.d.)

Strategic partnerships comprised of employers, education and training providers, and community-based organizations in key industries and occupational sectors.
Multiple ways to enter and exit postsecondary pathways, with marketable credentials at each step, linking noncredit and credit training and short-term certificates with longer term credentials.
Active participation by employers in pathway development, worksite training, internships, placements, or financial support for worker learning to address regional workforce needs.
Innovations in program content and delivery such as new technical certificates and diplomas, contextualized and accelerated basic skills, flexible class schedules, experiential learning, cohort-based instruction, and combinations of online and face-to-face instruction.
Integrated support services, such as career and academic coaching, financial aid, access to public benefits, or other safety net supports provided by a range of partners.

Students need to see a corroborated career pathway in hospitality and tourism develop from their internships to perceive them to be successful (Griffeth et al., 2000; Gustafson, 2002).

Career Placement and How it Impacts Institutions of Higher Education

Many colleges and universities have seen a decline in enrollment over the past few years, with an even deeper decline in a post-pandemic world. Across the United States, four-year institutions saw a decrease in enrollment of 6.6% and two-year colleges saw a decrease in enrollment of 13% from Fall of 2019 to Fall of 2021 resulting in more than 1,000,000 less students enrolled (Nadworny, 2022). Media reports and other research data suggest that students

are not seeing the value a degree in higher education provides, or what the economic impact will be on their future career earnings and this is impacting their choice to enroll in postsecondary education. Currently, the unemployment rate is low, and there are jobs available for low-skilled workers with an ever-increasing rate of pay. Industries such as hospitality and tourism and retail that have low barriers of entry have increased hourly pay at unprecedented levels. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), the hospitality and tourism industry increased hourly wages by more than two dollars and the retail industry by more than one dollar and twenty-five cents from 2021-2022. With increasing wages, students are now opting to go straight into the workforce and forgo colleges and universities (Smalley, 2022).

According to National Research Clearinghouse High School Report (2021), students are not immediately enrolling in college after graduation, the rate has dropped from 4%-10 % depending on degree and program. High-poverty and low-income schools are disproportionately affected, with enrollment dropping from 73% to 45%. Based on this reality, the literature details a need for institutions of higher education to fill the continual vacancies for a trained workforce. Internship programs are instrumental in keeping that pipeline full and preparing the future workforce specifically in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Workforce Level Data in the Career Development Space

Career-building institutions and educators confront the difficult task of providing quality education that is receptive to varied and constantly changing workforce needs (Chen et al., 2012). Research conducted on why students choose degrees and different professions supports the claim that institutions of higher education are up against an ever evolving and consistently changing needs of society. O'Mahony et al. (2001) conducted a study on typology of adult-student motivations for choosing careers. Results concluded that there were many types of goals

that lead the learner to make such choices including career, social, cognitive, escape or stimulation, personal fulfillment, role development, obligation fulfillment, practical skills, and health and well-being.

To present a clear picture of the value a degree in higher education provides, institutions should furnish career growth projections that include salaries, job satisfaction, and other pertinent information for degree programs. Currently, there are organizations that provide detailed data with information on salaries, pay scales, and job satisfaction (Indeed.com, LinkedIn, Salary.com, Payscale.com, and Glassdoor.com). Institutions of higher education can harness the information already created and gathered by these organizations to provide transparency to students who want to study in certain degree programs.

Utilizing workforce level data (salaries), institutions of higher education can empirically quantify if an educational program is producing economic impact and make policy decisions based on the data. However, more than salaries should be used to make such policy decisions. Some of the lowest paid salaries are for positions and industries that are imperative for an educated world. Teachers are among the lowest paid (annual salary of \$47,000-52,000), however play a pivotal role in creating an educated society (Krug et al., 2021). Policy should be based on its development of society and its economic impact.

Summary

The literature summarizes that student internships are an integral part of many collegiate programs. Internships are the bridge for students to merge their classroom education with real world experience (Prigge, 2005). Career pathways are the goal at the end of a successful internship. Creating a pipeline of talented and trained workforce will only benefit society at

large. Transformational versus transactional internships are part of the literature and an important part of deconstructing and understanding internships overall.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary goal for this study was to understand students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways. Using Transformational Leadership Theory as the theoretical framework, the researcher interviewed student participants using questions framed around the "4 i's"; idealized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2019). The students were compared depending on what type of internship they participated in for their internship; transformational or transactional. The methodology used to test the research questions will be presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into eight sections: research questions, role of the researcher, research design and rationale, research method, data collection, interview protocol, implementation and procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

Utilizing the phenomenological approach, the author aimed to understand the meaning and experiences of student's perceptions of hospitality and tourism internships on their career pathways. As described by Creswell and Poth (2018) "phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p.121). Lunenburg and Irby (2008) described phenomenological research as clarification research in recognizing the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participants. The researcher employed constructivism philosophy by trying to understand the student's own perception of reality (or notions) through cognition and their lived experiences (internships). Employing inductive qualitative research assists in informing policy change, procedures, actions in society, and inform organizations.

Utilizing phenomenological research, the researcher aimed to understand the perceptions the students have after completing an internship. How does the internship affect their career pathways? The realistic implications of this research can guide programs of hospitality and tourism to create specific internships to align with the students' career goals to stay working in the hospitality industry.

Research Question

Therefore, the aim of this qualitative exploratory study was to investigate students' perceptions of their hospitality and tourism internships; transformational versus transactional internships and how they contribute to their career pathways.

This research question was investigated:

1. What are the students' perceptions of transformational internships' characteristics of influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration on their career pathway?

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to provide a window into the lived experiences and perceptions of students. By conducting qualitative research utilizing the phenomenological approach, the researcher aimed to understand the meaning and experiences of student's perceptions of HTI's on their career pathways. The researcher is obligated to conduct rigorous and ethical research, to analyze the information obtained via interviews, and to organize the results and findings into a logical discussion to best understand the students' perceptions of internships on their career pathways (Lunenberg & Irby, 2007).

The researcher is a faculty member at a hospitality college, thus having the positionality that internships are beneficial to all programs and enhance their curriculum and development of students.

Setting

The setting for this study was a large four-year public institution with a hospitality and tourism program located in a major tourist destination in the United States of America. This location was chosen as a purposive sample due to the topic being explored. The purposive sample provided the opportunity to investigate the phenomenon, perceptions of student's internships on their career pathways. The institution's hospitality and tourism program are large enough to support this study, with over 3,000 students enrolled. The institution is a Hispanic serving institution, and holds the HSI designation, and has more than 25% Hispanic student population. The average age of the students at this institution is college age of 18-24 years old.

Population

The population for this study was students who are currently enrolled in an internship course. Students are required to complete multiple internships in this program. According to program enrollment data, more than 600 students take an internship course each semester. By utilizing the purposive sampling approach, the researcher focused on this student population (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007).

To support a diverse sample, the study consisted of 10 participants of varied demographics including different genders and ethnicity. Diversity was ensured by using the Internship Profile Survey that includes demographic information of the student. Sample selection was done using HFT XXXX Internship II and HFT XXXX Internship III students *Internship Profile assignment* to identify participants based on their gender, age, and ethnicity, and their

type of internship. From the profiles, the researcher purposively selected the students via their type of internship (transformational or transactional) According to Lunenburg and Irby, (2007) a diverse sample for qualitative research consists of 1-20 people or participants.

Selection of Participants

The criteria for selection of students consisted of a) junior or senior standing students enrolled in an internship course, b) interning in either a transformational internship or a transactional internship. The researcher identified their internship as transformational or transactional by their job title.

To recruit participants, the researcher contacted participants via email. Each participant was selected for their involvement and participation in an internship. The students were chosen due to the type of internship they were participating in – either a transformational internship or a transactional internship determined by their job title/description. The goal was to interview at least five students who completed a transformational internship and five students who completed a transactional internship. To choose the participants, a student might have a job title of “Recreation Intern” or a job description including a) rotating through multiple departments, b) a start and end date of the internship, or c) a designated project or end of the internship presentation; then based on this, they would be classified as transformational. Or a student might have this job title/description of “Recreation Attendant” and have none of the characteristics listed in a transformational internship/job; then they would be classified as transactional. The students were interviewed at the completion of their summer and/or fall internship in the Fall 2023 semester.

The researcher chose the participants from a transformational internship and a transactional internship by the position title given on their Internship Profile assignment. This

assignment is mandatory for each student, and contains the position title, name of company the student is interning at, the supervisor contact information, and the estimated number of hours they will work.

To choose the participants, the researcher used the Internship Profile Survey for the summer 2023 semester. See Table Four below for step-by-step instructions for selecting the participants.

Table 4: Instructions for Selecting Participants

Step One	Download Internship Profile Assignment (Survey) from Qualtrics for Summer/Fall 2023 students
Step Two	Sort and filter to only keep HFT XXXX Internship II and HFT XXXX Internship III students in the data set by the question that asks (Q37) “ Which internship course are you currently enrolled in ”
Step Three	Sort and filter data set to separate students with job titles as “ staff or team member ” in the data set by the question that asks (Q40) “ Which of the following best describes your current position ”.
Step Four	Sort and filter data set to identify any students that indicate the word “ intern ” into their position title in the data set by the question that asks, (Q40) “ Which of the following best describes your current position ”.
	The students have self-identified themselves as an intern by their job title.
	Utilizing the data sets questions, the goal is to identify a diverse sample from the data set by choosing different (Q24) majors, (Q26) ages, (Q28) genders, and (Q27) ethnicities.
Step Five	Choose five students with “ intern ” in their position title for participants in a <i>transformational internship</i>
Step Six	Choose five students with a generic title, such as coordinator, or other non-intern titles . This will be the “ <i>transactional internship</i> ” participants.

Research Method

To best capture the participants perceptions and experiences due to the phenomenological approach, the researcher began the study by preparing thoughtful semi-structured open-ended interview questions following the literature review and gaps in research (see Appendix A). The researcher followed Silverman's (2017) instructions for research and prepared quality questions and organized a well-constructed interview, to best allow the researcher to enter their world, to understand their experiences, and to understand their perceptions, in order be that "window" into their world and tell their stories. Following the overall research questions, the researcher used Transformational Leadership Theory as the theoretical framework and interviewed the students following the "4 i's"; idealized influence and charisma (4 questions), inspirational motivation (4 questions), intellectual stimulation (4 questions), and individualized consideration (4 questions) (Northouse, 2019). Each open-ended question allowed the researcher to follow up on a participant's response with: "and tell me why" or "can you elaborate on that for me" or "in what ways does this...".

Implementation and Procedures

Each interview was approximately 45-minutes allowing for rich descriptions of experiences to be shared. During the interview, the researcher was observant of the nonverbal cues, progress of conversation, and practiced careful listening (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The researcher attempted to build a rapport with the interviewee by beginning with casual conversation prior to the interview starting; and help research bias and positionality by reflecting on post interview notes and observations (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). All interviews were conducted virtually via the ZOOM platform.

To recruit participants, the researcher sent an email with the explanation of research, purpose of interview, and timeline to the specific student population.

In preparation for each interview the following information was sent to the participants via email: a) the overview of the study; b) the secure link for the virtual interview; c) the proposed time required; d) some proposed dates to choose from for the interview; e) the research explanation; and f) how the interview was to be recorded.

Data Collection

The following steps were used after the recruitment phase to interview participants. No data was collected until the IRB had been approved and the selection of participants had been completed.

1. The interview began with the researcher describing the research study and sharing the interview questions on the screen during the virtual interview. The researcher explained that this is a conversation to learn about their perceptions, therefore no answer would be considered incorrect. The answers are from their specific perception, so there can be no right or wrong answers. The interviewer started the conversation with asking how they were doing in school, using this phenomenological method to create a safer and more tranquil environment (Skukauskaitė, 2012) before starting the interview.
2. The researcher read the consent form and asked for verbal consent to a) participate in this study, and b) for the interview to be recorded.
3. The researcher reminded the participants that no identifiable information would be collected, and their responses would not be traced back to them.

4. The interviewer started the conversation with an icebreaker question “Tell me a little bit about yourself” to start a casual style conversation (Lunderberg & Irby, 2008).

Data Analysis

After collecting the 10 interviews, the data was analyzed to understand the students’ perceptions of their internships on their career pathways. The following steps were taken to analyze the data:

1. Prior to starting the interviews, the researcher obtained approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB was approved for the Exemption Determination for the minimal risk involved with this study.
2. Each interview was transcribed numerous times, first using the ZOOM transcription after each interview.
3. The second layer of transcription used the Otter.ai transcription software and was conducted digitally via the Otter.ai transcription to verify transcription.
4. The third and final transcription was done manually, chunking the data in themes (Creswell, 2007).
5. Through the processes of transcription, the researcher used thematic analysis, identifying themes, and capturing patterns of data; all transcriptions were substantiated for correctness and for familiarization with the interview data as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).
6. Finally, the researcher took notes during the virtual interviews, and compared the notes with the transcription. A question guide was used to organize the questions into different categories.

7. To get a better grasp on the responses told by the participants, the researcher investigated the fundamentals of plot structure (Yussen & Ozcan, 1996). Each of the components of plot structure was evaluated in relation to each of the responses.
8. After the data had been transcribed multiple times, the researcher followed the Morse (2008) editorial piece and looked for areas to “chunk” the data together, using the content analysis method.
9. Data was systematically reviewed line by line to identify major commonalities amongst the data in the interviews and field notes were used to create a table to systematically organize them into chunks of data to best provide a robust picture of the lived experiences of the students and their perceptions of their internships on their career pathways.
10. Data saturation was reached the by fifth participant in a transformational internship and by the fifth participant in a transactional internship.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

According to Davies and Dodd (2002), qualitative research has a purpose and place in understanding the social world. This includes ethical behavior in data collection and analysis. Ethics are a set of principles that are an essential part of rigorous research and should never be taken for granted; they should be responsive to change and inflexible. Ethics are not independent of each other or of research; ethics and research are cohesive partners.

Research is conducted by humans, and humans are susceptible to bias, which can influence interpretation of the data. By employing multiple layers of transcription, chunking the data together, and adding the layers of semantic and latent theming, the researcher took extra care in providing the most trustworthy and ethical analysis. The researcher used best practices in

rigorous data collection and analysis to remove any biases and keep reflexivity in the research. According to Skukauskaite (2012) using reflexivity and making transparent decisions helps to guide the researcher in becoming a better interviewer.

Lastly, the researcher utilized member checking as a method to confirm that the transcription as performed is what the participant meant, and the meaning was properly conveyed. This final step was important to keep the trust of the participant and to provide the most accurate results or findings. By employing the triangulation and using intercoder validity, the researcher used the best practices for qualitative research and analysis. The phenomenological activity of bracketing was used to unpack the phenomenon, by peeling away the symbolic meaning and layers until all that was left was the participants' lived experience (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007).

Positionality

Understanding one's positionality is crucial in qualitative research, as it acknowledges that the researcher is not just a neutral observer but is an active participant in the research process helping to recognize potential biases, assumptions, and blind spots that may impact the research (Creswell, 2007). The researcher's personal experiences, including lived experiences and prior knowledge, can significantly influence a researcher's approach to a topic (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007).

The researcher has been the Director of an Internship Program at an institution of higher education for more than seven years. In this position, the researcher develops new internship programs, mentors' undergraduate students on their internship journey, and assists with career readiness for future graduates. Additionally, the researcher has previous work experience in *transactional style entry level positions* and *transformational style leadership positions* in the

hospitality and tourism industries. The researcher reflected on their positionality and considered how it may influence every stage of the research process, including formulating the research questions, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Awareness can lead to more transparent, reflexive, and inclusive research practices and facilitate a deeper understanding of the complexities of the phenomena being studied (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007).

Summary

This chapter provided a clear and logical overview of the research methodology used to conduct this qualitative research study. The number of participants was 10 junior or senior standing students completing an internship at a large four-year institution of higher education located in Southeast of the USA. Utilizing the phenomenological approach, the researcher explored students' perceptions of hospitality and tourism internships on their career pathways through semi-structured interviews. The data was analyzed multiple times, identifying themes to explore the students' perceptions. Trustworthiness was conducted via member-checking.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter illustrates the results of the 10 participant interviews conducted for this qualitative study. The phenomenon explored was students' perceptions of their hospitality and tourism internships whether transformational or transactional and how it contributed to their career pathways.

The research question that directed this research was:

What are the students' perceptions of transformational internships' characteristics of influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration on their career pathway?

Five participants were selected who identified working in a transformational internship, and five participants were selected who identified they were working in a transactional internship by their job titles. The qualitative study utilized Creswell's (2007) data analysis strategy as described in Chapter 3. Participant profiles will be discussed to understand their lived experience within their internship, including their type of position, segment of the industry, type of company, their self-declared major, and whether their internship was transformational or transactional. Data saturation was reached by the fifth participant in both a transformational internship and a transactional internship. The four themes had clearly emerged that will be discussed in detail further in this chapter. The interview questions provided a robust look into the students lived experiences, so no more than 10 participants were interviewed.

The overarching idea that emerged from the study was that most participants, no matter whether they completed a transformational or transactional internship, wanted to continue working in the hospitality and tourism industry. Four themes were identified and are discussed in

alignment with the theoretical framework of Northouse's (2019) Transformational Leadership Theory: 1) Servant Leadership, 2) mission and vision alignment, 3) mentors, and 4) connection of learning.

Participant Profiles

Table 5: Participant Profiles

Participant Pseudonym	Type of Industry	Major	Position aligns with major	Type of Company	Type of Position	Transformational OR Transactional
Aspen	Sports Entertainment and Tourism	Event Management <i>Minor in Marketing</i>	Yes	Sports Association	Events and Services Intern	Transformational
Archer	Golf and Country Club	Hospitality Management <i>Certificate in Managing Sporting Events</i>	Yes	Country Club	Golf and Retail Intern	Transformational
Aiden	Lodging	Hospitality Management	Yes	Limited-Service Lodging	Intern	Transformational
Asher	Lodging	Hospitality Management <i>Certificate in Beverage Management</i>	Yes	Full-Service Lodging	Restaurant Operations Intern	Transformational
Avery	Sports Entertainment and Tourism	Hospitality Management <i>Certificate in Managing Sporting Events</i>	Yes	Major Sports Team	Intern- Sales & Community Relations, National Campus	Transformational
Alex	Lodging	Lodging & Restaurant Management <i>Certificate in Beverage Management</i>	Yes	Luxury Lodging	Concierge / Club Level Service Attendant	Transactional
Atlas	Theme Park	Hospitality Management Restaurant and Food Service Management <i>Certificate in Beverage Management</i>	Yes	Theme Park	Part-Time Food and Beverage	Transactional
Addison	Lodging	Hospitality Management	Yes	Luxury Lodging	Recreation Attendant	Transactional
Arya	Theme Park	Hospitality Management <i>Theme Park and Attractions Track</i>	Yes	Theme Park	Attractions Attendant	Transactional
Angel	Theme Park	Hospitality Management <i>Theme Park and Attractions Track</i>	Yes	Theme Park	Attractions Attendant	Transactional

Aspen:

Aspen is a student studying event management with a minor in marketing. She completed her transformational internship at a national sports association as an events and services intern.

This was her final internship course. She discussed immersing herself into the internship to really get everything out of the experience. She rotated through two different departments and spent the semester both in the office completing administrative tasks, and outside during event operations.

Aspen's demeanor and overall positive attitude was evident from the first question "tell me a little bit about yourself". One thing that Aspen said during her interview was she wanted to "work in nonprofits" and what she learned changed her viewpoint on the entire hospitality and tourism industry. Her *idealized influence* was **positively** affected by this transformational internship. She found it could be fun and interesting all at the same time while being an "advocate for people to participate in sports, and to look after their health and wellness in general". She discussed how sports can provide "inclusivity for all".

Aspen said that she was skeptical of the organization due to some negative comments from fellow classmates, however, due to her professional interests, she decided to give this company a chance, and quickly found their company culture aligned with hers and her *inspirational motivation* **positively**. She was able to work with a diverse team, multiple vendors and suppliers, and guests from all over the world and the United States, creating a robust view of the industry.

The bi-monthly meetings with her director provided her a sense of belonging, and she felt **positive individualized consideration** - like part of the team. Her leaders and other staff members provided words of encouragement and after a big event they would all go out to eat and celebrate. This consistent communication and positive reinforcement created a safe space to discuss career advancement. Her sense of purpose is to serve others while "challenging herself to go for things she never thought possible before". Her career goal now is to take what she has learned and bring it back to her community. Her home country is not known for tourism and

events, and she hopes to change that mentality and create a place where tourism thrives. Aspen's *perception of her career pathway* after completing this transformational internship was "I think the one thing this internship did was take away any doubts that this is the career for me... I never really realized how much I genuinely enjoy being of service to people".

Archer:

Archer is a high performing student, involved with multiple student organizations on campus; he is a leader of four of those student organizations, showcasing his organizational and time management skills and expertise. Archer completed his transformational internship at a luxury country and golf club as a golf and retail intern. He is a hospitality management student that is also completing a certificate in Managing Sporting Events. His rotational internship allowed him to learn in two departments: the golf course and the retail store. He reported to two different leaders during the rotations, learning communication skills from both leaders.

Archer has a career goal to become a country club general manager in the future. He described working in a country club as "providing a second home" type atmosphere to all his guests including both full-time and part-time residents. This was the first time he was working at a five-diamond country club property. Archer spoke of the training and standards required to work in a five-diamond property as "I hold myself to a higher standard . . . I treat members and guests with a higher standard". This training had a **positive** impact on his *idealized influence and charisma*.

This was the first time this location hosted an intern, so Archer felt there were some points that were a "little rocky . . . but still felt valued and part of the team". He was able to expand on his critical thinking skills and learn how to conduct inventory of the retail shop, providing him **positive intellectual stimulation**. Using innovation, Archer was able to create a

new system for inventory that was more efficient and timelier. He says part of his drive is to leave a “place better than the way he found it”. His leaders at his internship communicated words of encouragement and a clear open line of communication, creating a *positive* experience an *individualized consideration*. Archer’s *perception of his career pathway* after completing this transformational internship was that “once I graduate, I can take the next steps on doing either a management-in-training program, or straight into a full-time position at a golf and country club”.

Aiden:

Aiden is a non-traditional student studying hospitality management. She completed her transformational internship at a limited-service lodging organization as an operations intern. She had a challenging experience in her transformational internship – she felt her work ethic was not aligned with the company’s; and her standard of work was lowered when she interned with this organization, creating a *negative* feeling of *inspirational motivation*. She felt that “it did not take much to impress the leaders at this organization . . . she lost respect for the property she was at, but not the organization overall”.

Her internship was rotational between three departments: food and beverage, housekeeping, and front desk. She felt part of “the team” in two of the three departments, leaving her feeling “less than impressed” with the internship overall. Aiden stated “the department that made her not feel welcome increased her critical thinking skills . . . I was new to the segment of the hotel, so learned new things . . . in an unforgiving environment”, leaving her with a *negative intellectual stimulation* feeling. Although her critical thinking was used, she did not feel like part of the team, affecting how she perceived her career path with this particular property.

She only met with her leaders one time on the first day of her internship, and they never met again, leaving her with a *negative individualized consideration* feeling. She thought this

“internship provided a realistic preview of how bad it can be” and when asked if she is career ready, she stated “no, and the reason I say no, is I do not know what I want to do for my career path”. Aiden’s *perception of her career pathway* after completing this transformational internship was “I feel like I can get really high [in a position] I feel like I have a lot of motivation, I am just trying to figure out where I need to use that motivation”.

Asher:

Asher completed her internship at a full-service lodging organization as a restaurant operations intern. Her dream is to own her own bed and breakfast one day and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to learn under a leadership team for food and beverage. She is studying hospitality management with a certificate in Beverage Management.

Asher worked in food and beverage only, across the multiple outlets in the front of the house in her transformational internship. She was mentored by the Director of Food and Beverage who took her to some of the board meetings during her internship. She felt part of the team “and always in the loop . . . she never felt left out of the conversation”, providing her with a *positive inspirational motivational* experience.

This internship also developed her creativity and allowed her to use her classroom learning in a real-world scenario. She worked on a project of menu costing “creating a menu . . . placing the order” and it took her back to her 2018 time in college when she was obtaining her associate degree. She was able to develop her innovation skills by creating new menu “concepts with colors . . . designing the food and beverage to fit the event, holiday, and colors” during this internship, leaving her with *positive intellectual stimulation*.

Asher was also able to pitch an idea to implement at that property, to increase positive guest experience and engagement. She came up with the idea to host “lunch and learns” and

teach the guests about different food and drinks from around the world; “the room will be decorated with the country’s (colors and flags), and the chef and the bartender will create drinks and food to fit that country or region”. She was able to be creative within the few months during her internship, making her feel “connected to the brand and possibly complete the Management-in-Training program”. She feels career ready, but also thinks “she has a lot of work to be done to maintain the standards that have been created (in her career)”. She is ready to start her career path, but also says “there is always something to learn”. Asher’s *perception of her career pathway* after completing this transformational internship was stated as “there is still a lot of work to be done [on my career pathway] and I am creating a legacy and amazing experiences on the way [in the hospitality and tourism industry]”.

Avery:

Avery completed his transformational internship in the sports tourism and entertainment industry with a major sports team as a Sales and Community Relations Intern. He is completing his degree in hospitality management with a certificate in Managing Sporting Events. He describes his sense of purpose as “a place where I feel respected . . . without stepping over anyone or being the cause of someone’s unhappiness”. His internship was only 30 days, and he worked in event operations in multiple positions.

Avery felt the company’s mission and vision aligned with his as “the new generation are embracing different ideas, embracing change, and having a culture of respect”. He felt the leadership did not just talk the talk, they were down there helping with the events to make the experience for the fans and attendees safe and fun. His leadership team was “energetic and full of passion” for the work, and it was felt across all the staff and interns, creating *positive inspirational motivation*.

This was a fast-paced environment but still provided time for positive reinforcement to the interns via a token system. He felt this was “a tangible way to support you, other than just telling you that you were doing a great job . . . it was cool”. He described feeling as part of the team, even in the fast-paced environment over a 30-day internship. He developed his critical thinking skills to ensure a safe environment for the attendees, even without a specific project, Avery felt his critical thinking, creativity, and innovation were cultivated during this internship, experiencing *positive intellectual stimulation*. He felt his career advancement would be enhanced with this particular’s “company brand” on his resume. This internship “boosted my confidence in the industry, my confidence I belong in the industry, and I can do great things in the industry”, creating a *positive* feeling of *idealized influence and charisma*. Avery’s *perception of his career pathway* after completing this transformational internship was “there are more opportunities out there [in the hospitality industry] that I was not aware of before . . . this internship has broadened my spectrum of what I can do . . . and not just narrow myself to a single line [within the hospitality industry]”.

Alex:

Alex completed his transactional internship as a concierge/club level service attendant in a luxury lodging property. He is majoring in Lodging and Restaurant Management with a certificate in Beverage Management. Although this position was considered transactional from the position title, Alex worked in two different departments during this internship. He worked at the concierge desk answering questions about Orlando tourism, and in the club level lounge in food and beverage operations.

Alex discussed his sense of purpose being “a next-generation leader learning and observing leadership traits that he wants to use, and ones he wants to stay away from in his

career to becoming a hotel general manager”. He was concerned about turnover in his hotel, and how to lead future teams to keep turnover low. He watched the different management styles and behaviors to find best practices for his future career goals. His creativity, innovation, and critical thinking were put to the test during this internship since this was his first experience as a concierge, leading him to have *positive intellectual stimulation*. He had to use all his skillsets to answer questions for guests, plan, and book travel, and provide tourism advice and suggestions. He did not have a specific project but viewed his shifts at the concierge desk as a new daily project each day. Although this was a transactional internship, and no internship position title, Alex still met with his leaders once per month to ask how he was performing, and to obtain feedback on his performance, providing him *positive individualized consideration*. This was a testimonial to his dedication to providing an outstanding guest experience, and to prepare his servant leadership skills. Alex’s *perception of his career pathway* after completing this transactional internship was “I want to stay in a [guest focused] role like concierge . . . and push the bounds of what is possible to serve the guest”.

Atlas:

Atlas completed his transactional internship as a team member in a large theme park, working in food and beverage. He is double majoring in Hospitality Management and Restaurant and Food Service Management, with a certificate in Beverage Management. He described his sense of purpose as “giving back to the school and community”. Atlas is very involved on campus including being a leader for two student organizations and working on campus.

He felt his perception of standards lowered in the beginning of his internship as “the team members were just there for a paycheck . . . they did not care . . . they did not do their jobs”, leaving him feeling *negative idealized influence and charisma*. This often led to Atlas feeling

tension among the other team members stating they “did not like me . . . and they did not appreciate my hard work ethics”, making him feel a **negative** feeling of *inspirational motivation* during the first half of his internship. He quickly found other students and alumni that were studying or had studied hospitality as well and aligned himself with them for the remainder of his internship, turning his negative feeling of *inspirational motivation* into a **positive** impression. If there were no other “like-minded” team members he would not have stayed working in this internship for long.

There were no structured meetings or one-on-ones with leadership, however, he did receive compliments from other team members and from guests at the theme park. These acknowledgements provided him a sense of belonging, due to the “in depth written acknowledgment of one of the coordinators”. He did not have a structured project to advance his creativity and innovation, however he stated that each day “on the level of guest service, we were able to create moments for our guests that utilized his creativity” and a **positive** sentiment of *intellectual stimulation*. Atlas did state that one point of frustration was at the end of the semester he specifically asked for an “evaluation of his work in an email and in person and the leader ignored him”, resulting in him feeling **negative individualized consideration**. This changed his viewpoint on the hospitality industry but did not change his motivation to want to stay working in the industry for his career. Atlas’s *perception of his career pathway* after completing this transactional internship was “I know at the end of the day I want to give back and serve others [in the hospitality industry]”.

Addison:

Addison is studying hospitality management and was the youngest participant interviewed during this study. Addison completed her transactional internship at a luxury resort

as a recreation attendant. She described her internship as interesting since she started right in the middle of spring break with a 100% occupancy at the resort. The high occupancy and nice weather made the pool deck and recreation department very busy. However, she is used to change, having moved here 10 years ago, attending junior and high school with new people. She started her collegiate career as a global business major, however after getting a part-time job at a different luxury hotel, she knew she wanted to pursue hospitality management.

She experienced challenges working with the ultra-rich, and she described feeling “dehumanized and expected to do things other people would not be asked to do . . . due to her age and position at the resort”. This led her to feeling negative about the lodging industry overall and *negative idealized influence and charisma*. She still wants to work in the hospitality industry as a career, just not specifically in lodging. While she felt part of the team since she made a conscious effort to be part of the team; the team she was working with in the recreation department were “cliquish” and that presented challenges, leaving an overall *negative* impression of *inspirational motivation*.

Although this was a transactional internship, she was able to find a mentor, and have conversations regarding her career path within the organization. She developed her creativity and innovation by creating a “Team Board to increase team morale” in the breakroom, and although this was not a structured project, this gave her a *positive* feeling of *intellectual stimulation*. She was able to connect her classroom learning each week with her job duties. This created a sense of purpose for her to succeed within the organization. Addison’s *perception of her career pathway* after completing this transactional internship was “I definitely want to stay in hospitality, I just don’t know what section of the industry . . . I want to have a chair [seat] at the table”.

Arya:

Arya completed her transactional internship at a major theme park as an attraction's attendant. She is majoring in Hospitality Management with a Theme Park and Attractions track. She is involved on campus in three student organizations in a leadership role in all three. She described her sense of purpose as "to leave a positive impact on people . . . and to create an experience for her guests when she is working". This is why she choose to work in a theme park, to create those types of experiences for her guests.

She described working with different team members as "learning the different leadership styles . . . and not letting their low standards of work influence her high standards of work". Due to the entry level position, many of her team members did not have the same career goals as her, so their work ethics were not aligned, leaving her with a **negative** sentiment of *idealized influence and charisma*. This made her not feel part of the team. She felt that the company had a difficult time post COVID-19 "to recover and the focus has been on recovering financially, not operationally, which is the foundation of the company . . . the company has struggled when it comes to storytelling and building experiences . . . the pandemic was hard on the company and the people as well . . . real brand engagement could be improved upon" for team member morale, creating a **negative** sense of *inspirational motivation*. Even though this was a transactional position, she felt she did develop her critical thinking skills while in this internship, due to "a lot of fast decision making and multitasking", resulting in a **positive** feeling of *intellectual stimulation*. She wished she had an opportunity to develop her creativity and use innovation more, however, she was able to pitch an idea to increase guest engagement in her attraction. She felt overall no actionable advances on her career resulted from this internship, leaving her feeling a **negative** sentiment on her *individualized consideration*. Arya's perception of her career

pathway after completing this transactional internship was “how I was treated was a challenge . . . over time my perspective got better . . . I can always just go and try something else”.

Angel:

Angel completed his transactional internship as an attraction’s attendant at a major theme park. He is studying hospitality management with a track in Theme Park and Attractions. Angel described himself as sort of a “perfectionist, and highly motivated in everything he does”. He took this position as an attractions attendant due to his love of the theme park industry. He quickly found that “operations at a theme park” were not his final career goals, but working somewhere within the theme park was still his dream career.

There were no structured meetings during this transactional internship, however, he was able to ask for feedback throughout the internship and stated, “I had to find the coordinators and ask them for feedback if I wanted any”, leaving him feeling *negative individualized consideration*. There was no development of creativity or innovation during the internship, however he stated, “I definitely think it helped me develop my critical thinking being able to multitask especially in the outdoor position”, however, still felt *negatively* about his *intellectual stimulation*. He worked on developing his self-autonomy by making decisions on his own instead of going to his leaders first and stated, “I became an expert in our app . . . helping guests in different technical situations”. There were no actionable advances on his career, however he was able to apply for the trainer position but did not receive an offer after the interview. He felt the internship provided him a realistic view of the industry, and he wants to stay working in the hospitality industry, just not in operations. His sentiment of operations overall was negative creating a *negative* feeling of *inspirational motivation*. His final *perception of his career pathway* in the hospitality industry after completing this transactional internship was “this is a

journey of advancement . . . it could take a long time to get to my career goal . . . there are only so many positions of leadership at the top . . . it's attainable but I will need to be patient and competitive”.

Data

Lived Experiences

One of the final interview questions was “will you continue to work in the hospitality and tourism industry”? And most participants ($n=8$) said they will stay working as a career goal within the hospitality and tourism industry after graduation, and ($n=9$) said they would recommend this position to a fellow classmate, only one transactional internship participant said they would not recommend this position ($n=1$).

When asked the question, “what is your sense of purpose”, to serve others ($n=4$), to create a sense of belonging ($n=3$), to cause happiness ($n=2$), and to do the best I can ($n=1$) were the findings. This was very interesting that most of the participants had the intuition to put others in front of themselves, as servant leaders; this is a key soft skill that will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Perceptions of Transformational Internships

Table Six provides an overview of the participants positive or negative results for the 4i's Transformational Leadership Theory, the theoretical framework used for this study. If the participant provided a *positive* response for 3 or more questions for the i-characteristic, that characteristic was cataloged as *positive*. If a participant provided a *negative* response to 3 or more questions for the i-characteristic, the response was cataloged as *negative*. Each i-characteristic had four-questions, and the career ready section had four-questions each, totaling 20 interview questions for each participant.

See Appendix A for the specific interview questions.

Table 6: Positive or Negative Results

Participant	Transformational/ Transactional	Individualized Influence and Charisma	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration	Career Ready?
Aspen	Transformational	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Yes
Archer	Transformational	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Yes
Aiden	Transformational	Positive	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	No
Asher	Transformational	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Yes, almost
Avery	Transformational	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Yes
Alex	Transactional	<i>Negative</i>	Positive	Positive	<i>Negative</i>	Yes
Atlas	Transactional	Positive	Positive	Positive	<i>Negative</i>	Yes
Addison	Transactional	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	Positive	<i>Negative</i>	No
Arya	Transactional	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	Yes, almost
Angel	Transactional	Positive	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Negative</i>	Yes

The five participants who completed a transformational internship were overall very positive ($n=4$), with only one participant with negative comments about their internship ($n=1$).

The negative comments were not regarding the company, but specific to the location and leadership. The negative comments were mentioned when discussing the mentors, the lack of a structured project, and overall motivation to stay in the industry if they had to stay at that particular property/location. One participant stated, “I had to create my own project, so I just walked into the kitchen and would start cleaning . . . that’s the closest thing I had to a project”.

When asked if the participants knew the company’s mission and vision, five out of five ($n=5$) could not answer this question. One participant somewhat knew the idea of the company’s mission and vision but were unable to recite any elements of the mission and vision statement. However, when asked if the participants’ internship *related to their personal mission and vision* five out of five ($n=5$) participants said yes, they believed the overall company culture made them feel alignment with the organization’s mission and vision, even if they did not know the exact

statement. One participant stated that “this internship was very hands on, and adaptively allowed me to spend a majority of time in food and beverage . . . it gave me a view from the front and the back [side of the house]”.

They felt the organization embodied and embraced their own shared vision ($n=4$) with the same participant stating that the brand did – however, not that specific location ($n=1$). One participant stated, “this location does not have the shared vision of the overall company, and you can feel that in the team . . . they do not promote from within, they bring in outside people for leadership roles and the employees were angry about that”.

The participants thought the internship overall was ethical ($n=4$) in policies, procedures, and leadership, and unethical ($n=1$) in work ethics and a positive perception of standards, trust, and respect ($n=4$). They felt part of a team ($n=4$) overall and felt valued during their internship.

Most of the communication during their internship was less formal ($n=4$) using text messaging, emails, and messaging apps to communicate with their leaders. One participant ($n=1$) stated their internship had a weekly flyer with “positive words of encouragement, recognition of birthdays and anniversaries, an employee of the month, and other employee awards”. The participants described their one-on-one interactions with leaders as positive ($n=4$), and one stated they only met once in the beginning of the semester ($n=1$).

Critical thinking ($n=4$) and self-autonomy ($n=4$) were advanced with the participants stating working in a fast-paced environment requires you to “think on your feet” and “make decisions on the spot”. Creativity was developed by projects ($n=4$) including creating a new menu and flavor concept, inventory system, safety procedures, cleaning schedule, and event templates. These activities made the participants feel valued ($n=4$) and innovative ($n=5$). One

participant stated that “I had to think outside the box . . . we had a few families on property during the summer and we got to throw a reunion party for them”.

The perception of the participants internship on their career pathway was positive ($n=5$), the internship provided a realistic view of the hospitality industry ($n=5$), connected their classroom learning and education with their daily duties in their internship ($n=5$), and motivated them to stay working in the hospitality industry after graduation ($n=5$). There were actionable advances on their careers during this internship via alumni and mentor meetings ($n=2$), meetings with multiple leaders ($n=1$), and meeting with one designated mentor leader ($n=4$). When asked if they were career ready, ($n=4$) were positively ready, and ($n=1$) was still deciding on which department or area they wanted to work in once they graduated. The participants would recommend ($n=5$) this organization to a friend or classmate to participate in this internship opportunity. One participant stated that “if you’re a fan of sports, this was a great time . . . the people you work with . . . I created connections for life”.

Perception of Transactional Internships

The five participants who completed a transactional internship were somewhat negative ($n=4$), with only one participant with all positive comments about their internship ($n=1$). The negative comments were regarding the unethical behavior of guests ($n=1$), the lack of communication with leaders regarding career advancement ($n=5$), and the lack of creativity ($n=2$) and lack of innovation ($n=3$) that the internship provided. One participant stated, “some guests felt entitled to a level of service . . . that left me feeling dehumanized”. Another stated “even though this was a part-time role . . . it’s all about how you approach it, if you go in with a mindset to make a good impression . . . that you are there for more than a paycheck they [leadership] noticed that”.

When asked if the participants knew the company's mission and vision ($n=5$) could not answer this question. One participant saw the company's mission and vision on the wall in the breakroom but were unable to recite any elements of the mission and vision statement. However, when asked if the participants' *internship related to their personal mission and vision* five out of five ($n=5$) participants said yes, they believed the overall company culture made them feel alignment with the organization's mission and vision, even if they did not know the exact statement. They felt the organization embodied and embraced their own shared vision ($n=4$) with one participant stating that the brand struggled to recover post-pandemic and the engagement with the brand and the team members could improve ($n=1$). One participant stated that "everyone was very professional in that environment . . . their shared vision was to create a great guest experience . . . and they succeeded".

The participants thought the internship overall was ethical ($n=4$) in policies, procedures, and leadership, and unethical ($n=1$) in the behavior of guests and other team members. There was a positive perception of standards, trust, and respect ($n=5$). One participant stated that "my perceptions of trust actually changed a lot in a positive way".

The majority did not feel part of a team ($n=3$) overall and felt undervalued during their internship. One participant stated "unfortunately, I don't feel like a team always . . . I think a big thing for me is I am part-time only".

Most of the communication during their internship was less formal and only engaged if the team members asked for feedback ($n=5$). There was a somewhat open line of communication using time to speak for brief conversations, however it was only when working and random ($n=3$) through "walk and talks". The participants described their one-on-one interactions with leaders as negative ($n=4$) due to the fact they did not have scheduled time with any of their

leaders. One participant stated, “any one-on-one interactions were usually if I have a problem . . . early on it was very hard for me to talk about my feelings just because I do not want to be that person at work”.

Critical thinking ($n=3$) and self-autonomy ($n=3$) were advanced with the participants stating working in a fast-paced environment requires you to “multitask and prioritize certain tasks” and “empowered to make decisions first before asking a coordinator”. Creativity was developed ($n=2$) by being empowered and creating an engaged guest experience, however no structured projects were worked on or created during this internship. The lack of structured activities made the participants feel the internship lacked innovation ($n=2$). One participant stated that “in food and beverage I would say my creativity has definitely expanded . . . along with my thought process”.

The perception of the participants internship on their career pathway was positive ($n=5$), the internship provided a realistic view of the hospitality industry ($n=5$), connected their classroom learning and education with their daily duties in their internship ($n=5$), however only motivated ($n=3$) to stay working in the hospitality industry after graduation. There were no actionable advances on their careers during this internship ($n=4$) with only one participant stating they did have an actionable advance however it was from class and not the internship.

When asked if they were career ready, ($n=3$) were positively ready, and ($n=2$) are still deciding on which department or area they wanted to work in once they graduate. The participants would recommend ($n=5$) this organization to a friend or classmate to participate in this internship opportunity. One participant stated, “I would recommend this internship to other students . . . it was stressful at times . . . but it was a fun experience”.

Themes

Throughout the study, the researcher used thematic analysis to chunk the data into themes collected from the interviews, the students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways. The results were analyzed, and four themes emerged:

1. To serve others and be a Servant Leader
2. Students personal mission and vision aligned with the organizations mission and vision
3. The importance of mentors and leaders for career development and career readiness
4. The connection of their classroom education to the real-world and their internship

The themes were shortened to the following: 1) Servant Leadership, 2) mission and vision alignment, 3) mentors, and 4) connection of learning.

The themes will be explored in alignment with Northouse's (2019) theoretical framework of the 4 i's; 1) idealized influence and charisma, 2) inspirational motivation, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) individualized consideration.

Theme #1: Servant Leadership

To serve others and be a Servant Leader was a theme that emerged during the *idealized influence and charisma* and the *inspirational motivation* framework. The participants described their sense of purpose as serving others and to be a Servant Leader. This theme was consistent and not dependent on whether the participant completed a transformational or a transactional internship. One participant described his sense of purpose as "really to serve others, to be an extension of their home" and another participant stated, "during her collegiate experience she wanted to create a sense of belonging for others who don't think they can attain a degree".

Theme #2: Mission and Vision Alignment

Students personal mission and vision alignment with the organizations mission and vision was a theme that emerged during the *idealized influence and charisma* and the *inspirational motivation* framework. Most students felt that even if they did not know the exact wording of the organizations mission and vision, their shared mission and vision was in alignment due to the culture and brand of the organization. The shared vision allowed for the students who were completing a transactional internship to regard their individualized influence as a positive outcome of their shared vision with one participant stating, “the thing I was most impressed about was my training”. Many participants explained that they chose this position due to the brand, and the reputation of the brand, and how that would advance their career pathways from brand recognition.

Theme #3: Mentors

The importance of mentors and leaders for the student’s career development and career readiness, to create a positive career pathway was a theme that emerged from the very first interview. When asked “how do your leaders communicate with you at your internship? Any examples of affirmation/appreciative/positive words of encouragement?” the participants were able to identify if there was a structured mentor, or many mentors. For the students who had a negative experience in *inspirational motivation*, they were still able to state that they sought out mentors, or other like-minded people, or other college students or alumni, to align themselves with people of similar standards of work ethics and career goals, with one participant stating “my coordinator became my mentor . . . she never put herself in a position where she was over us . . . I never felt like I was being judged or misunderstood”. The participants were able to recognize the intent of the organization to try and provide positive words of encouragement via the token

system, team member shout-out's, coordinator notes, guest moments, and newsletters and community boards. The question, "do you feel part of the team or motivated?" and "who do you consider a mentor at your internship?" left many participants feeling negative *individualized consideration overall*. However, the theme of mentorship was consistent throughout the interviews, with some participants stating the lack of mentors was disappointing.

Theme #4: Connection of Learning

The connection of their classroom education to the real-world and their internship was consistent throughout each participants response. All participants could connect their classroom education with their internship, no matter what position they were interning with one participant stating "the biggest learning was from my guest service management class . . . learning the service recovery paradigm and the guest service principles" with another participant stating "I think the biggest thing I learned was the concepts of leading people with different leadership styles". The student participants who were working in the lodging industry connected their lodging operations curriculum including understanding the basic differences of each department at the hotel. All of them could see how their guest service management class taught them how to change service failures into service recoveries, how to work with diverse teams, and how to interact in challenging situations or engage with challenging guests. The students interning in a theme park connected their theme park operations class with understanding park dynamics, the different segments of the park, and different positions within the park. In each interview, the students were able to positively connect their college education and curriculum to their current internship and were able to provide specific examples of that connection. This theme added and supported existing literature by stating that by allowing students to utilize their classroom

education and translate their learning into real-world applications (Baum, 2007; Major & Evans, 2008; Teng, 2013), they understand the connection between the two.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory has been discussed throughout this study and is used as the theoretical framework. Transformational leadership is the process through which an individual engages with others and establishes a bond that increases the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2019).

Summary

This chapter articulated the data from 10 interviews conducted to explore students' perceptions of their internship experience on their career pathway. Four themes emerged after analyzing the data: 1) Servant Leadership, 2) mission and vision alignment, 3) mentors, and 4) connection of learning. The results were discussed in alignment with the theoretical framework of Northouse (2019) 4 i's; idealized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The hospitality and tourism industry is constantly seeking a talented and prepared workforce (Farmaki, 2018) and institutions of higher education are tasked with providing this workforce pipeline. This study interviewed 10 students completing internships in the hospitality and tourism industry at lodging establishments, both limited-service and luxury, theme parks, sports tourism and entertainment organizations, and a golf and country club. This study aimed to explore the students' perceptions on their career pathways after completing either a transformational or a transactional internship. The need to understand their perceptions as either positive or negative can provide hospitality and tourism organizations empirical data on the importance of creating transformational internships and leaders.

This study was conducted at a large four-year university in a major Southeastern city allowing for the researcher to have a robust participant population, and to interview the students after they completed an internship course. This permitted the researcher to recognize the perceptions of the students right after they completed their internship, providing a real-time glimpse into how those perceptions affected their career pathways.

Transformational Leadership Theory and Northouse's (2019) 4i's: idealized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration were utilized as the theoretical framework to guide this study. The research question for this study was:

1. What are the students' perceptions of transformational internships' characteristics of influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration on their career pathway?

To explore and examine this question, the researcher utilized qualitative methodology following the phenomenological approach, to best understand their lived experiences and perceptions. Northouse's (2019) 4i's were used in the development of the semi-structured questions, to examine and report the results, and in the discussion of findings.

Discussion of the Findings

Through the 10 student interviews, the students' perceptions of their internships on their career pathways were explored to identify either a positive or negative perception. Five students were interviewed that had self-described their internship as transformational via their position/job title that had the word "internship" in the title and five students self-described their internship as transactional via their position/job title that was just a generic title such as an "attendant". The internships were confirmed as transformational by asking if this was a structured internship where they rotated through at least two positions or departments, had a designated mentor, and it was for a pre-determined amount of time. The transactional internships were confirmed as a traditional part-time or full-time job with no end date confirmed, not rotational and spent the entire internship in one position, and no designated mentor. The results were analyzed, and four themes emerged:

1. To serve others and be a Servant Leader
2. Students personal mission and vision aligned with the organizations mission and vision
3. The importance of mentors and leaders for career development and career readiness
4. The connection of their classroom education to the real-world and their internship

The themes were shortened to the following: 1) Servant Leadership, 2) mission and vision alignment, 3) mentors, and 4) connection of learning. The themes were explored in

alignment with Northouse's (2019) theoretical framework of the 4 i's; 1) idealized influence and charisma, 2) inspirational motivation, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) individualized consideration.

One notable finding is that no matter whether the students completed a transformational internship or transactional internship, the students' perceptions of their internship were mostly positive in the *idealized influence and charisma* framework. They all had a strong sense of purpose to be *servant leaders* and to serve others. Their own *personal mission and vision aligned* with the organizations, even if they did not know the exact mission and vision of the company, the culture alone made them feel *alignment*. When asked the question, "what is your sense of purpose", to serve others ($n=8$), to create a sense of belonging ($n=8$), to cause happiness ($n=2$), and to do the best I can ($n=1$) were the findings. This was interesting that most of the participants had the intuition to put others in front of themselves, as *servant leaders*. This soft skill of serving others is a valued skill within the hospitality and tourism industry. The advanced soft skills that hospitality and tourism students possess are why the "Great Resignation and Great Reshuffle" were so fluid and successful (Meister, 2022) after the COVID-19 pandemic. Other industries need our qualified students and their *servant leadership* mindsets.

If there were no structured conversations about their career development or evaluation of their performance of their internship the students' perceptions were negative about their experience. The students who completed the transactional internship all perceived their internship as negative in the *individualized consideration* framework since none of their leaders had organized or direct communication with them, or one-on-one interactions. If there was a *mentor or mentors* that the students could connect with and count on, their perception was positive.

If the organization or the brand had some sort of recognition in place whether that was through a star's awards system or a shout-out (team member, leader, or guest) system, then the student felt that they were recognized even if they did not have those sit-down one-on-one conversations with leaders, resulting in most participants perceptions of *inspirational motivation* as positive.

Another interesting discussion point was that no matter if the student was working in a transformational or a transactional internship, the idea of will over skill was very evident in all the students' perceptions. It resulted in all of them having very positive perceptions regarding working hard and high standards of work ethics. All the participants could *connect their classroom learning* with their internship. They could identify different leadership styles, different industry jargon, service styles, different segments of the industry and different departments and positions.

If the student was given a structured project to work on, they felt positive *intellectual stimulation*. Some of the projects the transformational internship students completed were a) creating a new restaurant concept including menu and theme design, b) creating a safe environment for attendees at sporting events, c) creating an event template, and d) learning a new inventory system and suggesting efficient changes to the system. Chen et al. (2012) findings concluded that "more proactive initiatives were needed to encourage the students to participate in internships", and this was evident when the students had positive *intellectual stimulation* after working on projects. If the student was not given a structured project to work on, they still tried to find creativity and innovation within their internship by cleaning or organizing and creating engaging guest moments. This directly was influenced and *connected by their classroom*

education which was aligned with the findings from Teng's (2013) research that "students can integrate the theories learned in class into the field of which they plan to start their careers".

Research Question

What are the students' perceptions of transformational internships' characteristics of influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration on their career pathway?

The interviews resulted in nine out of 10 students saying they will stay within the hospitality and tourism industry for their career. One student said her transformational internship 100% solidified her decision to stay within the hospitality industry, and to go back to her home country and build tourism there using her skills she learned from her degree and her internship. Nine out of 10 students also stated they would recommend this internship to another student. The one student that stated they did not want to recommend the internship said they would recommend the company, just not that particular location.

When asked about their sense of purpose, the students were positive and answered with a *servant leadership* mindset. They understood the difference they could make in their future careers by caring about others and leading with that servant mentality. Their *idealized influence* was positive. One student stated they wanted to be a "next generation" leader and solve the problems of staffing shortages. The same student stated that due to his *servant leadership* attitude, when a major change happened at the resort, he could jump right in and accept the new changes along with his team and with the leaders. Another student watched as his leaders went on the field and helped during events, making sure the team had breaks, assisting with the attendee's experience, and providing help when needed. This *servant leadership* started at the top and was recognized by the student to emulate this behavior and want to be a *servant leader* himself.

All the students described their personal mission and vision in alignment with their internship as positive *idealized influence*. They could align their mission with the company culture even if they did not know the exact wording of the mission and vision itself. One student said his five-diamond training completely changed how he acts in his everyday life. It changed how he answers the phone, how he interacts at work, school, and home, and his overall respect for others. He met with leaders monthly to discuss his development and future career. His transformational internship completely transformed him, and he plans to go back to that same company to start his career after graduation due to the positive *individualized consideration*.

Another student stated that learning the new positions in his transactional internship were what made him want to stay with the company. Even though he completed a transactional internship, he felt positive *intellectual stimulation* due to him learning new skillsets, including the software system.

The overall perception of their career pathways after completing a transformational internship or a transactional internship were positive. The students had chosen this industry to study in college and wanted to continue working in the hospitality and tourism industry. What was interesting was that only two students mentioned staying with the same exact property or location after graduation, and one was a transformational internship student, and one was a transactional internship student. Another very interesting point that emerged during this research was the fact that if the student had completed an internship that was transformational and had the 4i's included with the idealized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration they could see themselves as a leader within that brand. The implications for this in the industry is that if a student can see themselves as a leader

within that brand that assists in retaining that top student and saves them from going to another brand to continue their career after graduation.

The students all confirmed positively that this internship provided a realistic view of the industry, and they were able to connect their classroom education with their internship. One student stated that she was taking the Introduction to Hospitality class during the same time as her internship course, and she was able to use what she learned each week on the job. Prigge (2005) stated that internships are the bridge for students to combine their classroom education with real world experience, and the students in this study were able to identify their learning, and connect that learning to their specific internship, no matter what discipline they were interning in, within the hospitality and tourism industry.

Implications for Practice for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The direct implications on the industry for transformational versus transactional internships was that the students who had completed transformational internships could see themselves in leadership positions within the industry. They could see themselves in a position to lead other students. This directly correlates to the retention of that student to stay with that brand. If a student can clearly see their career pathway, including one of career advancement by way of structured mentors, and a timeline of advancement, the student positively perceived their internship on their career pathway. This is imperative for the industry to restock and rehire the workforce that left after the global pandemic.

The students who completed transactional internships talked about their perceptions of their career pathways as serving others, so they still had that *servant leadership mindset*, but they did not connect the leadership part to being an actual leader within the organization. If a student can see themselves as a leader within that organization, their intent to stay with that same

organization is higher (Farmaki, 2018). This was evident in many of the transactional internships, that the students were ready for graduation, but actively looking for organizations and positions not solely focusing on where they completed their internship.

Kolb (2014) created an Experiential Learning Model that advocated for smaller experiential educational projects, where students could guide their own learning to apply their skills, develop moral character, and enhance their educational knowledge. Kolb (2014) found that students who participated in these smaller projects had developed transformational leadership qualities. Organizations need to invest resources into their training programs and create structured internships that have some sort of project-based activity at the end. The previous research from 10 years ago recommended this, and the empirical data found in this study support those findings.

Another recommendation to industry leaders is to provide robust training. Allocate ample resources to provide valuable training. One student stated they had a positive experience in his transactional internship in *intellectual stimulation* due to the fact he learned a new position and was properly trained during the internship. Previously he had worked in food and beverage, and when he took this position in guest services, he learned an entire new computer system. By providing useful training, the student had a positive experience in a completely new department. Ko (2008) hypothesized and concluded that training during the internship would provide higher job satisfaction and confidence for a future career for the student, specifically with female students. Do not try and save money on the bottom line by removing funds allocated to train new team members. Organizations should be investing in training for new team members, current team members, and leaders at every level including the executive level.

Create servant leaders and transformational leaders from the top. To lead servant or transformational leaders, you must have a servant leadership attitude. Research conducted in the 1990s by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Seltzer and Bass (1990) demonstrated that transformational leaders that have a positive grasp on transformational leadership and can deliver more than one of the 4i's characteristics achieved higher organizational results, resulting in their team members achieving higher job satisfaction. And a satisfied employee is going to stay, leading for better retention, and lower turnover. Mezirow's (2012) research concluded that "how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings" is how we increase the control we have over our lives, making us advanced decision-makers (p.76). By creating an environment where everyone is a transformative and/or servant leader, you are creating a talented team that can work well together, achieving better results, manage change positively, and make decisions that will be well thought out with not only the bottom line considered, but how it will affect the team as well. Use Northouse's (2019) Transformational Leadership Theory's 4i's characteristics to develop your training programs.

Implications for Practice for Institutions of Higher Education

A recommendation that was a direct result from the interviews with the students was to partner with institutions of higher education to create certificate programs that enhance a student's educational journey. Career Ladders Project (n.d.) recommends creating marketable credentials during the career pathway and linking them to technical certificates or diplomas provides the student the opportunities to advance in each step of the pathway, not just at the end when the "degree or diploma" is completed. What this means is that the student can develop specific skillsets to enhance their internship while in college. For example, if a student is working in a theme park restaurant, and completing a Bachelor of Science degree in theme park

management, by adding a “beverage certificate” that taught them how to a) create beverage menus, b) the differences between red and white wine, c) the Dram Shop laws, d) the different spirits, e) beverage cost control, and f) supply chain management with these skills, the student can obtain a higher level position within the theme park restaurant while still in college. In essence, advancing their career in college. Their career pathway is amplified by developing specific skillsets needed for a specific industry. Students interested in the sports industry that are studying traditional hospitality management could add on a “managing sporting events certificate” to their degree developing their a) sports tourism concepts, b) sports marketing, c) dynamic pricing in ticket sales, d) safety in large sporting events, and e) sports clubs and event operations. Again, their career pathway is amplified by developing their specific skillsets, in turn providing the students with more opportunities in that specific discipline within the industry.

Many students in this study had added on certificates (Beverage Management Certificate, Managing Sporting Events Certificate) and tracks (Theme Park and Attractions Track) to enhance their undergraduate degrees. Institutions of Higher Education can capitalize on the new trends in the industry without developing an entire new degree program. Certificates and tracks allow institution’s to be creative and meet the needs of students, and the ever-changing landscape of hospitality and tourism.

Partnering with institutions of higher education allows the industry to recruit new students while also assisting in updating new curriculum to introduce new trends within the industry. A direct pipeline of talented students who have chosen a career in hospitality and tourism industry can assist an organization’s recruitment and fill a gap in the workforce. Ko’s (2008) research found that school mentors positively affect the students’ experience during their internship. By partnering with the institutions of higher education, and connecting the school

mentor's, the industry leaders, and the internship, the students gained a positive outlook on their internship. Institutions of higher education need to create advisory boards for every degree program they offer and use those networks to create pipelines of structured transformational internships. Ask faculty to join professional associations and provide funds for them to participate as Board members in those organizations. This can create additional opportunities for faculty to connect students with new mentors and internships.

Recommendations for Further Research

In the hospitality context, prior research has demonstrated the value of transformational leaders on teaching brand values to interns to model the organization's values with the desire to recruit and retain the intern as a permanent employee (Hu et al., 2018; Morhart et al., 2009). The hospitality and tourism industry has a dire need to recruit and retain employees (Farmaki, 2018), so researchers must conduct current studies that address this issue, to be of service to the hospitality industry. Studies on why students stay with a certain organization should be conducted. A mixed-method study could be conducted on how many students stay with the same company that they intern with (quantitative) and then explore the characteristics of those students that do stay with the same company (qualitative).

The research conducted in this study added to the literature by exploring students' perceptions of their internship on their career pathways depending on whether they completed a transformational versus a transactional internship. This study only focused on hospitality and tourism students. Other disciplines should be explored to understand the dynamics of transformational or transactional internships that are guest facing and involve working with people such as social work, arts and humanities, and psychology. This study was conducted at a

large four-year major university. Replication of this study at a smaller four-year university, a two-year university or college, or a vocational school may provide different insights.

Using the Transformational Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2019) and the 4i's framework, future research can be conducted on different levels of degrees, to identify the areas where the students feel a positive or negative internship experience. Studies can be conducted at the undergraduate and graduate level, to decipher the differences students feel at different points of their educational journey.

After conducting this study, the researcher learned that students want to feel seen and heard, and to use their critical thinking skills, creativity, and innovation while completing internships. They do not just want to stand around and gain a paycheck, they want to feel part of the team, and feel like they contributed to the company.

What result that stood out most was if given the chance, every single student would have participated in some sort of structured internship opportunity, where they had a mentor, they worked on a project, and they developed skills to enhance their careers. What was most surprising was that the students were able to connect their classroom learning directly to their internship tasks. The researcher expected to hear a lot of "surface level skill connections" such as teamwork or communication skills. However, the students were able to articulate their learning from guest services and the service recovery paradigm to understanding the difference between leadership styles. This was very positive result, the ability to directly see the connection of higher education and internships.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions of students on their career pathways after completing a transformational or a transactional internship. Using Northouse's (2019) Transformational

Leadership Theory as the theoretical framework, and the qualitative methodology and phenomenological approach, the researcher was able to understand the lived internship experiences of 10 students.

Most students that completed a transformational internship had positive perceptions of *individualized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration*. They had a strong sense of purpose, could align their personal vision and mission with the organizations, had a designated mentor, and connected their classroom learning with their internship.

All the students that completed a transactional internship had a negative perception of *individualized consideration* due to having no designated mentor or discussions on the advancement of their career pathways. For *individualized influence and charisma and inspirational motivation*, many of the students had a negative perception of the internship due to less than expected standards at the organization, not feeling part of a team, and little positive words of encouragement. The students are predetermined to work in the hospitality industry (Farmaki, 2018) and by creating transformational internships, organizations can retain them as top talent for their workforce.

Discussion in Barron and Maxwell (1993) provided suggestions to change the image of the hospitality and tourism industry, by providing a realistic impression of the industry, and accurately portraying the work environment. Thirty years later we are again investigating student perceptions of their internships. This study contributed to the growing body of knowledge on student internship perceptions by providing an examination three decades later, in a new era of higher education, in a post-pandemic world. The results concluded that almost all the students wanted to continue working in the hospitality industry after completing their degrees. They

understood the industry and had a realistic impression of this industry after completing either a transformational or a transactional internship.

It does not take a yearlong experience to create a memorable internship. One student's 30-day immersive experience solidified his drive to continue and stay working in the hospitality and tourism industry as a career pathway. The hospitality and tourism industry need qualified and experienced employees. By creating more opportunities for positions to be transformational, the industry is creating more reliable streams of recruitment. Extending this view, it is reasonable to envision the potential for hospitality internships to mirror the constructs of transformational learning and leadership endeavors, as the future hospitality leaders have the potential to accelerate idealized and inspirational leadership performance based on their internship experiences.

Transformational internships that follow the 4i's of *individualized influence and charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration* are the best way to hire and retain top talent into the hospitality and tourism industry. Creating and developing such internship programs will enhance the organization in their retention needs to hire and retain a talented workforce and create an overall better environment for a student to start and stay in their career.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions:

Icebreaker:

- Tell me a little bit about yourself.

Idealized Influence and Charisma:

- Describe your sense of purpose.
- Has your internship related to your personal mission and vision? Explain.
- In what ways has this internship been ethical or unethical? Provide examples.
- How did your perception of standards change throughout your internship? Respect?
Trust? Ethics

Inspirational Motivation:

- Do you know the company's vision and mission? Yes/No please explain.
- Do you feel the company embodies, embraces, or follows their own shared vision? Why?
- How do your leaders communicate with you at your internship? Any examples of affirmation/appreciative/positive words of encouragement?
- Do you feel part of the team or motivated?

Intellectual Stimulation:

- Has this internship developed your critical thinking? Self-autonomy? Explain
- Has this internship developed your creativity? Explain.

- Follow-up question: any innovation development?
- Describe a project you worked on during your internship.

Individualized Consideration:

- Describe your one-on-one interactions with your leadership. How frequently do you meet?
- Has there been any actionable advances on your career during this internship? Describe.
- Who do you consider a mentor at your internship? Why?
- Has your motivation changed? Do you want to stay working in the hospitality and tourism industry?

Additional Questions:

- What is your perception of your career path in the hospitality and tourism industry?
- Did your internship provide a realistic preview of the industry?
- How did you connect your classroom learning with your internship?
- Are you career ready? Describe?

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

November 17, 2023

Dear Jessica Wickey:

On 11/17/2023, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Students' Perceptions of Hospitality and Tourism Internships on Career Pathways: Transformational Versus Transactional Internships
Investigator:	Jessica Wickey
IRB ID:	STUDY00005952
Funding:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRP 251, Category: Faculty Research Approval;• Internship Profile Assignment, Category: Other;• Interview Questions v2.docx, Category: Interview / Focus Questions;• Selection of Participants, Category: Other;• Study 5952 Email for Participants - Wickey Byrd, J_v5.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Study 5952 Email to send after the student accepts to participate in the study v2.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Study 5952 HRP-254 - FORM - Explanation of Research - Wickey Byrd, J v6.pdf, Category: Consent Form;• Study 5952 HRP-255 - FORM - Request for Exemption - Wickey Byrd, J v5.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in is detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Tamiko Fukuda
Designated Reviewer

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