

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CAREER PROGRESSION AMONG
CULINARY SCHOOL GRADUATES

by

Anthony Joseph Padavan

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2018

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CAREER PROGRESSION AMONG
CULINARY SCHOOL GRADUATES

by Anthony Joseph Padavan

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2018

APPROVED BY:

Meredith Park, Ed.D, Committee Chair

Mark Fliegelman, Ed.D, Committee Member

Alan Wimberley, Ed.D, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experiential phenomenological study was to describe the experience of a formal culinary education and its impact on job placement, job satisfaction, and career progression for culinary school graduates who are also members of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). The theory guiding this study was experientialism focusing on construction of knowledge as proposed by Kolb's experiential learning theory. Kolb's theory directly relates to the vocational nature of the culinary profession and helped to answer the research question: How do participants value a culinary education in relationship to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression? The sample size consisted of 15 participants from the local chapter of the ACF. The site was the location of the monthly chapter meeting. Data was collected through individual interviews, participant journals, and workplace observations. Data analysis utilized principles of experiential phenomenology to gain a thorough understanding of participant experiences. The result of this phenomenological study was the discovery of three major themes: passion, work experience, and knowledge, and creation of a related acronym for these themes, PWEK.

Keywords: Career development, career progression, constructivism, culinary education, experientialism, job placement, and job satisfaction.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Dedication	10
List of Abbreviations	11
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	12
Overview	12
Background	12
Historical	12
Social	14
Theoretical	15
Situation to Self	16
Problem Statement	18
Purpose Statement	19
Significance of the Study	20
Research Questions	22
RQ1	23
RQ2	23
RQ3	24
RQ4	24
RQ5	25
Definitions	25
Summary	26
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	29

Overview.....	29
Theoretical Framework.....	32
Experiential Learning Theory.....	33
Related Literature.....	36
Quality in Culinary Education.....	36
Evaluating Career Progression in the Culinary Industry.....	46
Employability of Culinary School Graduates.....	50
Summary.....	59
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD.....	61
Overview.....	61
Design.....	61
Research Questions.....	62
Site.....	63
Participants.....	64
Procedures.....	64
The Researcher’s Role.....	65
Data Collection.....	66
Interviews.....	69
Document Analysis.....	73
Data Analysis.....	73
Organization.....	73
Reading and Memoing.....	74
Classifying the Data.....	75

Interpreting the Data	75
Narration	76
Trustworthiness.....	76
Credibility	77
Dependability and Confirmability	77
Transferability.....	77
Ethical Considerations	78
Summary.....	79
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	80
Overview.....	80
Participants.....	80
Participant 1	81
Participant 2	83
Participant 3	85
Participant 4	87
Participant 5	89
Participant 6	91
Participant 7	93
Participant 8	96
Participant 9	97
Participant 10	98
Participant 11	100
Participant 12	102

Participant 13	103
Participant 14	104
Participant 15	106
Results.....	107
RQ1	108
RQ2.....	109
RQ3.....	110
RQ4.....	111
RQ5.....	112
Summary	112
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	114
Overview.....	114
Summary of Findings.....	114
RQ1: How Does Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program Influence Job Placement in the Culinary Industry?.....	115
RQ2: How Does Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program Influence Job Satisfaction in the Culinary Industry?.....	116
RQ3: What are Culinary School Graduates' Perceptions of the Value of Their Culinary Degree in Terms of Finding Appropriate Employment?.....	118
RQ4: What do Culinary School Graduates Perceive as Obstacles in Finding Appropriate Employment?.....	119

RQ5: How do Culinaricians Employed in the Field View the Value of Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program as it Relates to Overall Career Progression?	120
Discussion.....	122
Empirical.....	122
Theoretical	123
Practical.....	124
Implications.....	125
Passion	126
Work Experience	126
Knowledge	127
PWEK	128
Summary of Implications.....	128
Limitations	128
Recommendations for Future Research	129
Summary.....	130
REFERENCES	132
APPENDICES	140
Appendix A: Liberty University IRB Approval	141
Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Letter	142
Appendix C: Workplace Observation Form	143
Appendix D: Participant Journal Information and Directions	144
Appendix E: Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions.....	147

Appendix F: Consent Form..... 149

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and have striven for Summum Bonum. It is my hope that the greatest good comes from this work. A passage from the Holy Bible says more than I ever could:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24 KJV)

List of Abbreviations

American Academy of Chefs (AAC)

American Culinary Federation (ACF)

California Culinary Academy (CCA)

Certified Culinary Educator (CCE)

Certified Executive Chef (CEC)

National Restaurant Association (NRA)

Passion, Work Experience, Knowledge (PWEK)

Research Question (RQ)

World Association of Cooking Societies (WACS)

World Certified Executive Chef (WCEC)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The abundance of entry-level culinary employment positions raises some important concern for the culinary school graduate related to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). In this chapter, culinary employment concerns will be examined through a background investigation of the culinary industry. The situation to self will describe the relationship of my personal experience with culinary arts in school and the food service industry. The problem statement seeks to determine whether or not the cost of a formal culinary education is justified in relationship to overall success in the industry.

For the purposes of this research study, success in the industry was measured through first-person interview as related to career progression and overall job satisfaction. The criteria used to measure career progression and overall job satisfaction was career related questions. The measure of success was largely based on the overall satisfaction of the participant. The significance of this study is to provide educators and aspiring culinarians with a better understanding of whether or not the pursuit of the formal culinary education is worth the time, money, and effort that is required. The research questions were developed from the problem statement and a section of definitions explicates specific language used in this study. This chapter concludes with a summary and an overview of the remaining chapters.

Background

Historical

The foodservice industry has remained both popular and an essential part of everyday life. The media has publicized cooking while food preparation has become a popular television

show topic. As a result, culinary schools have experienced a high rate of growth over the last 40 years producing many graduates (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). Among culinary school graduates, an expectation of success parallels the investment made in formal culinary education (Gross & Manoharan, 2016). Furthermore, the popularity of the celebrity chef has reinforced the expectation of financial gain, particularly among young culinary school graduates (Hertzman & Stefanelli, 2008).

The problem is that the cost of a culinary education may not be justified in relationship to the compensation from employment as a return on investment. Of interest to both educators and prospective culinary students, is whether or not the choice of a culinary education is economically viable. Currently, no research has been completed on this topic (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). The study of culinary school attendance may help the prospective culinary student make a better-informed choice as to whether or not culinary school is an appropriate choice. Educators in the culinary field will have additional insight to share with students regarding career expectations (Madera, Dawson, Guchait, & Belarmin, 2017). Newly discovered information will add to the existing body of literature in several key ways. The culinary student will be able to make a well-informed choice about culinary school attendance. Furthermore, the culinary educator will have access to expanded knowledge concerning the value of a culinary education (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

In looking at the historical aspect of the culinary arts, it is important to realize that a painstaking attention to detail is what separates an amateur from a professional (Rury, 2011). Attention to detail is an essential aspect of the training that a culinary student receives from their instructor. Basic principles along with a desire to deliver the highest quality food help a culinary school graduate to become a professional (Ali, Murphy, & Nadkarni, 2014). Culinary arts are

based on a solid foundation of learning a craft which then can be developed into an artistic expression (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

Historically, culinary school graduates leave culinary school to enter the workforce and find employment that offers a relatively low-level of compensation (Fickensher, 2014). As a result, educators understanding the role culinary education plays in career progression is important (Hand, 2014). Newly discovered information can help ensure that culinary education focuses culinary training on the present food service industry. Exploring this topic is important due to the monetary investment required to attend culinary school (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). The weight of student loan repayment on the recent graduate cannot supersede the income earned as a chef or the experience of attending school would be futile (Saul, 2015).

Social

The current cost of a two-year culinary education exceeds \$60,000, according to the American Culinary Federation (ACF, 2017). Currently, over 550 postsecondary culinary arts programs operate in the U.S. with most offering an associate degree in culinary arts upon completion (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). As with most higher education, the cost has increased while the average starting salary upon entering the culinary profession is less than \$30,000 annually (ACF, 2017). By way of comparison, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, the total average income of full-time workers, age 25-34 in 2012 was \$38,000 per year and those with a bachelor's degree or higher earned \$50,000 as a starting salary (Phipps, Harrison, & Merisotis, 2013). Furthermore, the growth of the quick-casual restaurant segment places many entry-level positions for culinary school graduates in the \$8 an hour range (Fickensher, 2014). Therefore, many available culinary jobs are in the range of the federal minimum wage (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

The variation that exists between cost of the education and starting salary has the potential to create both social and economic problems (Gross & Manoharan, 2016). The repayment of student loans may place the recent culinary school graduate in a long-term debt situation that is indeed, noticeably higher than other professions. Using a conservative 3.8% interest rate, “an average loan of \$26,600 becomes a total of \$38,600 over 10 years, with an average monthly payment of \$320” (Denhart, 2013, p. 12). For many students, the jobs that are obtained after completing culinary school do not pay enough to cover living expenses as well as the student loans.

As related to a career path, quality of life is an important factor (Oh & Kawon, 2017). Financial debt can impact quality of life and create hardship. The implications of financial debt can overshadow the pursuit of a career and potentially devalue the culinary education received (Madera et al., 2017). Potential financial burden should be considered as part of the decision-making process of whether or not to attend culinary school. Furthermore, an informed decision is a time-honored method of choosing a career path that can potentially improve overall job satisfaction.

In order for the decision to attend culinary school to be viable, the benefits must outweigh the cost. Making this distinction can assist aspiring culinarians in making an informed decision of whether or not to attend culinary school. Without an informed decision based on sound economic thinking, the student may regret attending culinary school. Furthermore, the student more than likely will be in financial debt, having to repay the cost of culinary tuition regardless of whether or not gainful employment has been found (Fickenscher, 2014).

Theoretical

From a moral standpoint, educators should be able to feel that the service they are

providing is justified in terms of the cost and the potential for career success. The need exists to understand the value of committing to a formal education in terms of the benefit in career progression that is returned. The for-profit college operator Education Management Corporation agreed to a 1.2-million-dollar loan forgiveness to 80,000 former students in 2015 (Saul, 2015). The primary reason for this loan forgiveness was to compensate for the aggressive recruiting practices used for many of those 80,000 students.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Kolb's theory of experiential learning; the methods and natural progression of culinary education were explored and defined. This study sought to determine whether or not culinary school is a good return on investment in terms of the time and effort expended as compared to the overall career progression gained, from the perspective of the student. Related to the vocational nature of the culinary profession, a culinary school must provide progressive training as nearly all culinary work experiences develop from basic to more complex.

The level of experience in the culinary industry reflects the vocational development through the levels of apprentice, journeymen, and master (ACF, 2017). To the extent that vocational development is extremely important in career progression, the quality of a culinary training program is essential. It is important for a potential student to understand the quality factors of a school as a means of making an informed decision of whether or not to choose one school over the other. One measure of overall quality is accreditation that emphasizes professional skills and student performance.

Situation to Self

The pursuit of this study represents a natural progression in the lifetime that I have spent in foodservice. I have been a culinary school instructor in Central Florida for the last 10 years. I

have taught culinary classes at both the high school and college level. I am a certified executive chef as well as a certified culinary educator with the ACF and a certified Serve Safe instructor with the National Restaurant Association (NRA). As a result, I am an active member in the culinary community and well suited to seek understanding of the culinary students' perspectives. As a fellow culinary school graduate and instructor, I am very interested in finding out the personal experiences of culinarians and what impact attendance at culinary school has played in their overall career progression. I conduct my life from a biblical perspective and actively work to achieve the Lord's will.

While conducting research, I adhered to the development of good ethical principles based on my belief in God as the creator of the universe and I sought to fulfill his purpose in my work. As such, I sought to uphold the highest ethical principles guided by my experiences as a Christian human being. Furthermore, I sought behavior in others and myself that places the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance as a fulfillment of God's purpose (Rebore, 2001). Throughout this process, I endeavored to display a sense of empathy and kindness to all those with whom I worked, ensuring that the beliefs of study participants were accurately documented.

The paradigm that I used to guide this research was social constructivism as proposed by Vygotsky. The philosophical assumption that guided this study was based on epistemological foundation, supporting the notion that knowledge is constructed. Furthermore, understanding is built on pre-established beliefs, suppositions, and experiences of meaning (Rebore, 2001). I recorded the views of culinarians at various points in their careers to be included in the study so that formal culinary education could be evaluated as it relates to job placement and career progression.

The research focused on the common experiences of students attending culinary school. I sought to provide a clearer understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture (Patton, 2002). The nature of culinary education and knowledge was explored from the perspective of those who have graduated from culinary school, utilizing the principles of experientialism as a guide. The approach of this research design highlighted the culinary profession and the training that culinary school graduates undergo. The foundation of this approach was based on social and cultural development as proposed by Vygotsky (1978). In addition, I ensured that the study took into consideration the multiple realities constructed by people. Furthermore, the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others was analyzed (Patton, 2002).

Problem Statement

Career progression among recent college graduates is a concern for both students and educators (Hand, 2014). In looking at the culinary field, the cost of an education can exceed \$60,000 (ACF, 2017; Goodman, 2010). Many schools offer a postsecondary culinary arts degree (Hegarty, 2011). The cost of the education and the number of students who are being educated creates a problem related to the time and effort set forth in obtaining the education as compared to starting salary in the food service industry (Chiao, 2013). A majority of the positions available to culinary school graduates are just slightly above the federal minimum wage (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). No prior research has addressed the cost of education and employment of culinary school graduates (Oh & Kawon, 2017). The problem is that culinary school graduates may not see a return on the investment of their time, money, and effort in relation to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression (Godowsky, Zukin, &

Horn, 2011; Gross & Manoharan, 2016; Hertzman & Maas, 2012; Madera et al., 2017; Oh & Kawon, 2017).

The focus of this study was on the personal experiences of culinary school graduates as they relate to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression. The population sample were members of a professional organization, the ACF. The ACF population provides a group of potential participants for the study that met the criteria of the phenomenon, graduation from a two-year culinary school program. Members were interviewed, and their thoughts and feelings were sought in regard to the phenomenon of attending culinary school. The problem is no research giving a voice to the experience of culinary school graduation as it relates to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among these graduates exists (Hertzman & Maas, 2012).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study is to examine the experiential impact of a formal culinary education. A formal culinary education can impact many aspects of a young chef's life that are based on quality of life, specifically, income to debt ratio. The factors that were used to measure this impact include: job placement, job satisfaction, and career progression. Interviewing and description of the culinary school graduates was in vivid and accurate terms (Moustakas, 1994). For the purpose of this study, the graduation from a culinary school was generally defined as the completion of a two-year program leading to an associate degree in culinary arts.

The theoretical framework of this study was founded upon Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Klosterman, 2011; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). The views of culinarians with at least 10 years of industry experience were included in the study, ensuring that

experiences of formal culinary education can be evaluated as relating to job placement, job satisfaction, and career progression. The goal of this study was to select 15 participants so that the phenomenon could be explored, accurately representing a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Significance of the Study

The practical significance of this study is that it helps to extend the research done by Hertzman and Maas (2012) concerning the value of culinary education. Completion of culinary school was evaluated as to its significance on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the hospitality industry. Value of culinary education further builds upon research of educational costs and job placement outcomes from the perspective of previous researchers (e.g., Godowsky et al., 2011; Hertzman & Maas, 2012; Madera et al., 2017; Oh & Kawon, 2017). Previous research has reviewed quality of culinary education and the real-world application of skills learned in culinary school. Past research directly relates to the significance of the study; the value of a culinary education in relationship to the return on investment in terms of job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career placement in the culinary industry (Godowsky et al., 2011). Furthermore, the practical significance of this study helps to determine whether or not formal culinary education meets the demands of the foodservice industry (ACF, 2017).

The empirical significance of this study is that value of culinary education, as a return on investment regarding employment has not been researched. The gap that was identified in the literature indicates that comparing culinary school graduation to overall career progression has not been done and “there has been no previous study of this type” (Hertzman & Maas, 2012, p. 60). The gap in the literature was investigated by this research so that the experience of a culinary education can be explored for individual perceptions of job placement, job satisfaction,

and career progression in the hospitality industry (Oh & Kawon, 2017). Findings of this study allow future potential culinary students to make an informed decision of whether or not culinary school attendance is a viable choice in terms of job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression (Madera et al., 2017).

In looking at theoretical frameworks, experiential learning is central to job placement and career progression in the culinary industry. A guiding factor is the attitude of the individual student, while positive reinforcement and modeling from the chef instructor is essential (Ali et al., 2014). Students must be able to think about experiences and reflect on how these experiences positively alter their work (Kolb et al., 2001). Furthermore, “hands-on culinary skills education can cultivate behavior change by enabling students to apply abstract nutrition concepts to concrete experiences with food” (Daugherty, 2015, p. 65). Development of these skills enhances both job placement and career progression in the culinary industry.

Culinary school graduates were encouraged to look back in their history so that actions and experiences can be put into perspective (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Because the culinary field is based largely on hands-on experience, this perspective is unique and important to the study as a method familiar to the participants. Graduation from culinary school is a unique perspective as a recent culinary school graduate is entering the foodservice industry with formal training gained through academic pursuit (Ali et al., 2014). Perspective is important to this study because it is based on the career progression of culinary school graduates.

Future prospective culinary students will be able to benefit from the lived experiences of culinary school graduates and can use this information to determine whether or not culinary school is a viable choice. Other possible choices include on the job training and an apprenticeship where a cook learns the job in the workplace. In these situations, the hiring

organization can train the individual exactly to the specifications that are required. For the purpose of this study, on the job training and apprenticeship was not explored in regard to career progression as they do not represent a financial commitment. Therefore, the goal of this research was to determine the value of the formal culinary education as it relates to the employment gained for the cost of the education.

Research Questions

According to Hertzman and Maas (2012), there have not been any previous studies on the subjects of job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates. Although studies have been done by school type on a limited basis (see for example, Daugherty, 2015; Godowsky et al., 2011), the question of value has not been measured in relationship to overall career progression and cost of education (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). Previous studies have been limited in scope to individual quality of culinary training within a specific culinary school (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). Studies thus far have been primarily quantitative in nature. As a result, the individual voices of culinary school graduates in relationship to their job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression has not been explored (Hertzman & Stefanelli, 2008).

The individual opinions, thoughts, and feelings of those who are actually employed in the culinary industry have not yet been explored in a major study. The lack of exploration is significant in many ways and the information obtained can be highly valuable. The information is important to further research in the field, filling in a gap that exists in the literature. Furthermore, this information is helpful to educators and students alike as a means of better understanding what implications a formal culinary education can have on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career placement so that alternatives can be considered. These factors

were the focus of the research questions (RQs) of the study. The following questions guided this study:

RQ1

How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job placement in the culinary industry? Previous studies addressing culinary school curriculum (i.e. Godowsky et al., 2011) have noted that little has been done to understand the personal impact of culinary school graduation on job placement. This first research question was supported by direct personal experiences of 15 culinary school graduates (ACF, 2017). The conclusions that are drawn from this research may be helpful to educators and students in the future with regards to the quality and meaningfulness that is received from a culinary education. Specifically, this information may assist culinary school graduates in gaining an understanding of how their education impacts the types of employment available in the foodservice industry (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). Furthermore, the individual experience with job placement may help future potential culinary students decide whether or not to attend culinary school.

RQ2

How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job satisfaction in the culinary industry? Work experience can be seen as the actual determination of whether or not one has made a sound career choice (Demetry, 2013). In the foodservice industry, there is often a difference between the perceived work experience and the actual industrial experience (Birdir & Canackci, 2014). Participants in the study had the opportunity to discuss personal experiences with job satisfaction in the culinary industry. These experiences can make a positive difference within the foodservice industry as, prior to this study, these personal reflections had yet to be recorded (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014). These reflections of culinary school graduates can benefit

culinary training for future students. With the publication of this research, more informed decisions can be made as to whether or not the culinary industry is a viable option for potential culinary school students. Furthermore, the actual teaching of culinary curriculum can benefit from a real-world perspective that only comes from personal perspective (Bourdain, 2006).

RQ3

What are culinary school graduates' perceptions of the value of their culinary degree in terms of finding appropriate employment? In looking at the value of a culinary education, a disconnect often exists between the perceived compensation for culinary employment and the actual compensation (ACF, 2017). This perception can be an important factor in whether or not attending culinary school is a wise choice economically. The return on investment of a culinary education is an important factor directly related to choosing that career (Hegarty, 2011). At the same time, potential culinary school students need to have a realistic expectation of what their starting salary will be upon graduation. Through this research I sought to improve the level of understanding that exists with actual experiences of culinary industry compensation (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014).

RQ4

What do culinary school graduates perceive as obstacles in finding appropriate employment? Building upon previous research questions, I sought to determine what obstacles the participants have experienced in finding appropriate employment. Participants were interviewed specifically in this area for their personal experience with these obstacles (Ricci, 2010). Based on industry research, some of the obstacles faced by culinary school graduates in finding appropriate employment include: job burnout, job stress, and employee turnover (Jung, Kim, & Yoon, 2012). Obstacles associated with culinary employment may cause lost

opportunity in finding appropriate employment (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). The experiences of culinary school graduates with obstacles in employment can potentially benefit future culinarians through communication of these obstacles (Shani, Belhassen, & Soskolne, 2013).

RQ5

How do culinarians employed in the field view the value of graduation from a two-year culinary program as it relates to overall career progression? This research question summarized the experience of the participants in regard to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates. Essentially, this information helped to determine whether or not attendance of culinary school was a good return on investment (Saul, 2015). Central to the research inquiry, is the question of whether or not attending culinary school is a worthwhile endeavor (Simon, 2014). Background information on career progression can help future prospective culinary students decide on whether or not to attend culinary school as a measure of future success (Zopiatis, 2010).

Definitions

1. *American Culinary Federation* - A professional organization of cooks and chefs with varying professional certification levels from cook to master chef founded in 1929, a member of the global organization; World Association of Cooking Societies (ACF, 2017).
2. *Career progression* - The factors of time and level combine to determine the rate at which someone moves up to positions of greater responsibility (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010).
3. *Classical training* - The informal method of learning a job or trade, built upon the on the job training approach (Hertzman & Maas, 2012).

4. *Formal culinary education* - The completion of a culinary degree as opposed to classical training where learning takes place from an experienced chef (Gisslen, 2007).
5. *Value of culinary education* - The feeling of worth experienced by a culinarian when considering the formal culinary education in terms of effort, money, and time invested and the return on investment in job progression, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry (Hertzman & Maas, 2012).

Summary

The culinary field places significant personal and professional demands upon those who enter the profession. The formal culinary education requires a solid commitment of time, money, and effort to complete. The purpose of this study is to determine the value of this formal education process in terms of the job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry. Seeking to provide educators and aspiring culinarians with a better understanding of whether or not the pursuit of the formal culinary education is worth the time, money, and effort that is required is the rationale. The aspiring culinarian will be able to make a more informed decision of school attendance based on availability of this information.

The research questions are designed to determine the feelings of culinary school graduates about their education and the relationship that it has with their overall career progression. As a lifelong culinarian, this research is important to my role as a culinary educator and can help future culinarians determine whether or not to attend culinary school. Furthermore, as a culinary instructor I have concerns from an ethical standpoint. Because I am part of the school as an instructor, I feel personally responsible for ensuring that the education received by my students represents a good value as it relates to the cost of the education.

The research questions were addressed through the use of interviews, journals, and observations that represent the experiences of the participants. The written reflections helped to support the research questions through a different dynamic. What was stated during interviews was one aspect, while the participant also provided personal reflection in the journal. The written journals helped to provide a different perspective of the feeling that participants may have on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression. Observations in the workplace allowed the researcher to gain an additional perspective of the participant interaction with fellow culinarians.

The study was qualitative, using a descriptive phenomenological approach seeking to better understand what role formal culinary education plays in job satisfaction, job placement, and overall career progression. The descriptive phenomenological approach is based on the writing of Moustakas (1994) where “a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (p. 13). This was accomplished through analyzing the opinions and perceptions of those who have experienced the phenomenon, using the works of Moustakas and Patton (2002) as a guide to ensure high-quality interviewing methods and procedures. The participants were members of the ACF and the sample size consisted of 15 participants. The interviews were face-to-face, one interview per participant.

Chapter One included an introduction to the research question, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions associated with the study, significance of the study, definition of terms pertinent to the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, role of the researcher, and the conceptual framework in which the study was grounded. Chapter Two discusses the current literature as it relates to the purpose and significance of the study. The

literature review covers topics that are relevant to this study of career progression among culinary school graduates as it relates to job satisfaction. Specifically, topics addressed include identifying quality in culinary education, evaluating progression in the culinary industry, and employability of culinary school graduates are reviewed. Chapter Three discusses the research method used in the study and outlines the sample, procedure, survey instrument, and the research design used for data collection. Chapter Four presents the results of the study and Chapter Five presents the recommendations, summary, and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review sought to determine whether or not relevant primary literature sources are included or excluded. Inclusion or exclusion of sources was based on whether or not quality of education, employability, and career progression in the culinary industry are included as key elements of the article titles and/or subject terms. Currently, the culinary education industry as it directly relates to culinary employment in the foodservice industry were examined. Examination of the literature was accomplished through the use of the inclusion factors as cited from the broader, scholarly literature of the primary source.

The history of culinary education was critically examined so that the current research can be placed in the historical context of culinary education. The determination of value in education in relationship to career placement is an important topic and central to the purpose of this literature review. Information discovered may enhance the culinary career field through well-informed culinary school graduates. Ultimately, this research seeks to help fill a gap in the literature as it relates to education and employability in the culinary field.

During the last decade, focus on postsecondary education in terms of the rising tuition costs and the increased levels of student debt has been gaining focus in the literature, as well as the resulting higher default rates on student loans (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). Culinary schools are a part of this group and the Secretary of Education has stated: “colleges and universities must become more transparent about cost, price, and student success outcomes” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 4). Clearly, the cost of a culinary education is a concern to students, parents, and the federal government. The practices that were used in recruiting students to attend culinary school have often been misleading about the value of a culinary education and the job

prospects available after graduation (Demetry, 2013).

In terms of student success, a need exists to gain further understanding about job placement of culinary students upon entering the culinary industry. Job placement specifically addresses the immediate return on investment upon graduating from culinary school.

Essentially, job placement is the first indicator of whether or not attending culinary school has led to a higher entry point as compared to not attending school (Gross & Manoharan, 2016).

While society portrays the culinary profession as glamorous, the reality can be startling. In the purest economic sense, career success can be measured against student loan debt (Sherry, 2010).

Newly discovered information may be useful to a prospective culinary student so that an informed decision of whether or not to attend culinary school can be made.

Associated with the cost of a culinary education, there is a perceived value in terms of cost of education versus expected earnings. Recently litigated in a court case against the California Culinary Academy (CCA), the case involved the cost incurred by the student for the education versus the future earnings (Career Education Corporation, 2011). Among the claims were: “A CCA education does not significantly increase the graduates’ income and opportunities in the food service industry and/or does not increase them to an extent that makes a CCA education worth the tuition” (Career Education Corporation, 2011, p. 12), the plaintiffs were awarded a settlement in excess of \$40 million dollars. Similar stories exist where the newly graduated culinary student owes significant student loans while earning a smaller than expected wage. “

In a recent court case a culinary student, halfway through his program and already carrying debts of about \$10,000, was alarmed to see many graduates taking jobs paying as little as \$8 an hour washing dishes and busing tables (Goodman, 2010). According to Le Cordon Bleu

(Chiao, 2013), graduates have attained positions of responsibility, visibility, and entrepreneurship soon after completing their studies. The job placement results that the school files with accrediting agencies suggest a different outcome. From July 2007 to June 2008, students who graduated from the culinary arts associate degree program landed jobs that paid an average of \$21,000 a year, or about \$10 an hour.

The case of *Berkowitz v. Le Cordon Bleu* (Chiao, 2013) raised the question of value of education in terms of the return on investment in employability:

Claimants in the case against Le Cordon Bleu allege that they were victims of a fraudulent scheme to convince them through deceptive advertising and recruiting practices that if they borrowed \$30,000 to \$50,000 to attend one of the Le Cordon Bleu culinary training courses that they would 1) easily find a job as a Chef immediately upon graduation; 2) immediately earn salaries of \$40,000 to \$80,000; and 3) easily be able to service their loan obligations. Claimants allege that Le Cordon Bleu and its parent company, Career Education Corporation knew these representations were false, and further knew that upon graduation the students: 1) would still have to work their way up the culinary ladder from the bottom; 2) would make no more than \$10 to \$12 an hour to start and it would take years for them to work their way up to \$14-\$15 an hour; and 3) it was highly unlikely or impossible that they would be able to service or even pay off their loans working in the culinary industry. (p. 1)

This quote from the related court case raises some important concerns and speaks directly to the significance of this study. Culinary students were led to believe that they would leave culinary school and find employment that would help to quickly raise their standard of living. Demonstrated in this court case is the disconnect between the perceived success and the reality

that exists for a culinary school graduate in the hospitality industry. This legal example reinforced the reason for conducting this study, knowledge of the individual experiences of culinary school graduates helps others to make an informed choice.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout the culinary industry, the apprenticeship tradition has provided evidence of life-long learning, where knowledge is passed from the master to the apprentice (Gisslen, 2007). In many ways, the culinary arts represent a field that builds upon previous knowledge and experiences (Godowsky, Zukin, & Horn, 2011). In that regard, it is essential to have a solid foundation where initial learning is both accurate and thorough. This study was built upon Kolb's theory of experiential learning "as a framework to explain the implications of how knowledge creates experience" (Daugherty, 2015, p. 65). Experiential learning serves as the master-apprentice model of education in the development of culinary skills.

Culinary skills are developed by building upon the very knowledge and creativity of cooking (Mitchell, Woodhouse, Heptinstall, & Camp, 2013). Furthermore, an experiential learning approach is essential in the performance of effective culinary demonstrations using a hands-on approach to teaching (Daugherty, 2015). The hands-on approach is an essential part of culinary arts, directly related to Kolb's theory of experiential learning. As in Kolb's learning theory, the culinary arts reflect the development of one skill as a building block upon learning the next skill. The initial experience of knife skills for example, is a basis for further skills such as recipe production and garnishing. Furthermore, the interviews and description of the culinary school graduates have been presented in vivid and accurate terms (Creswell, 2013). Theories and practices as described by Moustakas (1994) were utilized as a theoretical frame of reference.

Experiential Learning Theory

The significance of experiential learning theory to this research is based on cognitive development and deep understanding of the impact that culinary education has on career progression in the culinary industry. Building upon the experiences of the culinary school graduates, learning is viewed as both complex and non-linear. This framework makes the views of culinarians unique as the individual experience. In essence, the construction of knowledge and experiences of the culinary school graduates are bound to the individual environment where they occurred, based on a learned ability to draw upon personal experience (Mitchell et al., 2013).

Kolb's theory of experiential learning considered the views of culinarians at various points in their careers (Daugherty, 2015). My overall goal in this study was to evaluate formal culinary education as it relates to job placement and career progression through the experiences of the participants. The quotes from the participants provided evidence of their personal experience and their feelings of career progression in relation to graduation from culinary school.

The significance of the experiential learning approach is the common experience of attending culinary school, with this study seeking understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013). Interviews and observations were shaped by individual experiences linked to the common thread of attending culinary school. The most important aspect was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation (Moustakas, 1994).

In culinary instruction, there is an understanding of learning and flexibility at a deeper, yet more comprehensive level (Daugherty, 2015), especially when classroom culinary theory is applied in a kitchen lab in the practical sense. In the culinary world, learning relates to developmental changes among individuals that are rooted in society and culture. Changes may

occur when speech and practical activity converge in culinary activities. Activities may include preparing recipes to both written and verbal direction (Mitchell et al., 2013). The skills and knowledge that are learned must be internalized, moving from the written and verbal to internal.

From a theoretical framework perspective, Kolb's theory of experiential learning enhances the tradition of culinary arts training (Murphy, 2007). Skills are passed down from one cook to another. The individual that has learned the skill masters it and passes it on to others in the field. Applying this framework to formal culinary training, the students are a product of the skill level that the instructor has mastered. The interdependency of the student-instructor relationship clarifies thought and speech where both the infant and the sage are schoolmates (Liu & Matthews, 2005). The chef instructor and the culinary student continue the tradition of passing down knowledge in the culinary arts field.

In looking at career progression among culinary school graduates, experiential learning can be viewed as an integral part of overall job placement and job satisfaction. Throughout culinary school training, culinary students are given a strong sense of idealism. Culinary students are taught the art of cooking the right way by caring culinary instructors (Oh & Kawon, 2017). Students graduate from culinary school with a sense of pride and a feeling that they can make a positive contribution to the culinary world.

Upon placement at the first job after attending culinary school, a sense of realism may conflict with the sense of idealism. In terms of compensation, the culinary school graduate may find that the actual amount received falls short of what was anticipated. The idealism taught may impact job satisfaction and result in a harsh realism (Alhelalat, 2015). Furthermore, a survey of culinary professionals indicated that over 25% of recent culinary school graduates working in cook level positions were not satisfied with their job position or salary (American Culinary

Federation, ACF, 2017).

In looking at the idealism of job placement, a recent culinary school graduate may find a different sense of reality (Sherry, 2010). Upon completing culinary school, the new graduate may have a sense that he or she is ready to become a chef, to run a kitchen. While this scenario is possible, it is at the same time unlikely. The reality of the situation is that the recent culinary school graduate lacks the experience to run a kitchen. Therefore, most establishments would be unwilling to allow a recent culinary school graduate to run a kitchen due to that lack of experience. The idealism of job placement does not match the reality of culinary employment.

The reality of culinary employment can potentially impacting job placement. and ultimately impact job satisfaction. Throughout the culinary educational experience, the theoretical framework of experiential learning is vital to the development of the culinary student. At a minimum, “some basic moral standards are robustly justified, and schools should promote subscription to these standards by means of both moral formation and directive moral inquiry” (Hand, 2014, p. 35).

The culinary classroom teaches professional ethics and professional business practices that speak directly to the formation and direction of moral inquiry. The culinary arts are a trade that is vocational in nature, it is essential that the culinary instructors teach and display high moral standards throughout all classroom activities. High moral standard can be described through experiential learning, combining experience, cognition, and behavior (Chang & Tse, 2015).

The future behavior of the student is often a reflection of the behavior learned from the instructor. Because the culinary arts is built upon tradition and learning that is passed down from one cook to another, it is essential that a strong moral standard remain in place. Furthermore,

students can apply their academic skills to real-world settings in the community, ensuring they acquire professional skills that propel them to personally satisfying careers (Daugherty, 2015). Skills exhibited by the student are a direct reflection of the quality of instruction and the level of student mastery.

In the culinary arts, planning is a vital aspect to the efficient operation of a foodservice establishment. However, “outside the halls of academia, planning and related public-sector initiatives are under severe attack from a well-funded and sophisticated pro-market ideology” (Klosterman, 2011, p. 325). As a result of the popularity of cooking, due largely to cable television cooking shows, the culinary arts field has undergone a massive change in the way culinary education is marketed (Goodman, 2010). Potential students are left with an impression that culinary school graduation correlates with stardom, as portrayed on the Food Network.

Related Literature

This literature review examines the quality factors of a formal culinary education and overall employability of culinary school graduates. First and foremost, the quality of the culinary education was examined. Quality of relationships among culinary school graduates and fellow employees also were examined with emphasis on how a culinary school graduate typically interacts with management and other staff. Career progression of the culinary school graduate was examined through the expectations and career decisions of these graduates. Overall employability of the culinary school graduate was examined through job satisfaction and success in the culinary industry.

Quality in Culinary Education

Quality of an education received is closely aligned to the cost of the education and can be a determining factor in assessing the overall value of the education (Oh & Kawon, 2017). The

value of a culinary school may be difficult to assess as so many schools have opened in recent years. Summarizing this point: “It is difficult to assess and compare how well schools are teaching, retaining, and preparing students in the industry” (Hertzman & Maas, 2012, p. 67). Measuring what the student has learned against the demands of the industry can be very subjective rather than objective. Furthermore, Jauhari (2013) called for “more research to help educators improve their programs and better prepare students for lifelong careers in the industry” (p. 273). Jauhari based the need for further research on the current disconnect between culinary training and industry requirements. Through this research study I sought to help clarify the disconnect between culinary training and industry requirements, contributing research in a largely unexplored area.

According to authorities in the field of culinary education, key indicators of quality include: “Sanitation of kitchen laboratories, industry experience of the faculty, subject experience of the faculty, required internship, and job placement rates” (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010, p. 209). Sanitation of the kitchen labs is an essential basis of the educational journey, developing a high standard for the workplace. The experience of the faculty member can help shape the experience of the student in a positive way. Quality factors of job placement rate and required internship align with this research in that the participants were asked questions directly related to these aspects (Hegarty, 2011). Responses helped to determine the overall quality of the culinary education experience, an area that has not been previously researched.

Since 1985, emphasis has increased on measuring quality in higher education (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). According to Hertzman and Ackerman (2010), five theoretical qualities are: exceeding high standards, zero defects, fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformation. Standards are used to measure many culinary schools by accrediting bodies. Factors are

important in the foundation of culinary education with regards to how quality of the culinary education impacts the job placement and career progression (Ali, Murphy, & Nadkarni, 2014).

Lacking a solid foundation can create difficulties for a culinary student to achieve success because the culinary profession builds upon experience. In the case of a culinary school, one such accrediting body that evaluates culinary education is the ACF (see www.acfchefs.org). This is a professional organization of cooks and chefs that also retains membership in the World Association of Cooking Societies (see www.worldchefs.org). The World Association of Chefs' Societies (World chefs) is a non-political professional organization, dedicated to maintaining and improving the culinary standards of global cuisines. As an authority and opinion leader on food, World chefs represents a global voice on all issues related to the culinary profession.

Quality of faculty. Along with the accreditation that comes from a professional organization, a staff of caring culinary instructors who can combine a strong desire to teach with the integration of professional experience is necessary (Ko & Chung, 2015). In the culinary arts, this is very important as the skills that are being taught are primarily hands-on. The culinary instructor must be able to demonstrate professional experience and provide good modeling of professional behavior for the students. Professional modeling includes the instructor's returning to the foodservice industry periodically to gain new skills and a willingness to expand their professional experience (Spicer, 2006). Combining professional experience with learning new teaching techniques can help ensure that the culinary instructor improves quality in education and ultimately, student satisfaction (Ko & Chung, 2015).

The perceived quality of teaching is central to this study and can be viewed as having three different aspects that affect teaching quality: overall teaching quality, teaching quality of the school, and the teaching quality of the educator (Pavilina, Pongrac, & Zorica, 2011).

Teaching quality can be measured in several key ways. Overall teaching quality pertains to the instructor integrating work-related knowledge in the classroom. At the same time, it is important for the instructor to understand different career paths and provide the students with appropriate career related advice. Teaching quality of the school is evident by a culture of support for the student and faculty. Quality of the educator is demonstrated through positive attitude, strong personal morals, a passion for education, and updates to provide the students the latest knowledge (Ko & Chung, 2015).

In looking at the field of culinary arts, the faculty member needs to have a clear understanding of the vocational aspect and be able to present this in a cognitive higher education framework (Hegarty, 2011). Presentation of the vocational aspect is based on the ability of the faculty member to relate culinary theory to the practical application. Demonstration of hands-on skills to the student is primarily where this type of vocational training takes place. Vocational mastery is critical to the future success of the students as both entrepreneurs and skilled culinarians. Summarizing, simply teaching the student how to cook is not enough; teaching of administrative skills is imperative to the student managing a kitchen.

Helping the student make that connection is one of the key elements to the student to reaching a higher level, moving from a cook to a chef, journeying from an artisan to a master. In this sense, the student “develops a marriage between precise inquiry and the creative intuition of the artist and the poet—in essence, a marriage between the rational and spiritual imagination” (Hegarty, 2011, p. 56). Summarizing the essence of culinary arts, this quote illustrates the blending of a learned craft and artistic expression. In the culinary world of the future, this blend of both practical and theoretical skill helps the culinary graduate master the art of culinary management.

The instructor should be able to distinguish how theories relate to practice and assess the suitability of a student for different career paths. In the foodservice industry, many opportunities exist in career paths far beyond simply cooking. Options regarding career paths need to be communicated to the student by the instructor so that the individual skills of the student can be utilized effectively. The ability to expand opportunities for industry-academia cooperation such as internship programs represents another quality factor of the educator.

The educator is responsible for ensuring that the student receives a quality internship experience, as this is often a part of the education process. Furthermore, multiple other factors also can contribute to the overall quality such as: the students, the purpose of the teaching, the teaching objectives, teaching materials, learning environment, and administrative support (Ko & Chung, 2015). Perhaps the most important aspect of all is the teaching quality of the educator. Hertzman and Stefanelli (2008) found that good teaching quality includes: supervisory skill, communication, and technical skill. A blended teaching process results in a supportive environment where the culinary student can learn essential skills.

The teaching of professional ethics relating to food is perhaps the ultimate measure of quality in teaching as this allows the student to leave culinary school with the essential skills to run an honest business. Upon graduation from culinary school, a student must have a solid understanding of professional ethics, especially relating to the preparation of wholesome, safe food. Culinary arts graduates represent the future of gastronomy and the understanding of professional ethics in the culinary industry.

During culinary education, students should be exposed to useful knowledge, behavior skills, and responsible professional behavior so they may lead the industry along a sound moral path (Shani, Belhassen, & Soskolne, 2013). Based on this viewpoint, culinary faculty must be

able and willing to expose culinary students to ethical issues. Critical discussion of ethical situations related to values in the classroom can help the culinary student reflect on their role in the foodservice industry while understanding how to make sound ethical choices. Sound ethical choices are an essential part of chef management in a professional kitchen as the employees in a typical kitchen represent diversity in the workplace.

The culinary instructor must ultimately deliver a unique product to the student. Product delivery is represented by an ability to combine practical and theoretical skill in the overall management of a kitchen. Summarizing this point, a blend of cultural imagination that is inspired by the individual creativity of the student (Hegarty, 2011) opens a window of opportunity for the student. Through engagement on personal, cultural, and artistic levels, the culinary student is receiving from the culinary instructor a transformational educational experience that can be shared with future culinarians. Transferability of those skills validates the work of the culinary instructor through the possibility of creating a better world.

Student perceptions of quality. Quality of education can be measured through the satisfaction that students experience in areas such as academic achievement and learning facilities. In the technical and vocational world of education, the ability to think logically and solve problems are essential parts of learning (Wang, 2015). Furthermore, the overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the educational experience can be a strong predictor of learning success or failure. Student satisfaction and perceived quality of education is a balance between the professional attributes of the instructor, the abilities of the students, and the learning environment (Spicer, 2006).

One of the leading factors in the quality of a culinary education is the ability to be innovative. The creator may come up with an idea while a dreamer figures out how to turn ideas

into a profitable reality (Pinchot & Pellman, 1999). Considering this factor, the culinary education process includes the development of a business plan. The students are required to develop a restaurant concept from the ground up with floor plans, menu, facilities design, marketing strategies, and a financial plan to open the restaurant. Collectively, this is a perfect example of how innovation and entrepreneurship can be brought into the culinary education (Oh & Kawon, 2017). Innovation can assist the culinary school graduate in enhancing both job placement and career progression.

Validating quality. While evaluating the quality of a culinary education, the source of the information is important in determining trustworthiness. One of the limitations of the source can be “the majority of the participants were ACF members who obviously have strong opinions of the organization but may not be representative of all culinary educators and industry chefs” (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010, p. 221). Directly related to this study in that the participants in were members of the ACF. In the modern culinary world, membership in the ACF is recognized as a professional distinction that is widely respected.

Trying to determine quality in the culinary arts programs can be viewed as a particular problem for culinary schools (Godowsky et al., 2011). Several factors for this include the fact that culinary school education in the formal setting is relatively new. The traditional training process took place as an apprentice would learn the trade on the job. One area where the academic and work worlds agree is the sanitation of the kitchens (Wang, 2015). Therefore, sanitation can be viewed as a sign of good quality. Applying the viewpoint of sanitation to this study, the condition of the kitchens visited can be seen as an indicator of quality. On a broader level, good sanitation practices are essential to the preparation of wholesome food.

One important measure of the quality of culinary education is the effectiveness of the

curriculum pertaining to real world employment. From a historical aspect, the chef's job classification status did not change from domestic to professional in the United States until 1971 (Klosterman, 2011). Although the culinary trade is a highly respected profession, the domestic servant image persists among some who see it as strictly a vocation, a trade rather than a formal qualification. Potentially, this may have an impact on this research due to the fact that those who see a trade rather than a profession may see quality of education and career progression differently (Ali et al., 2014). The training and career opportunities are potentially different for a hands-on position as opposed to a management position, vocational skills as opposed to management skills. Furthermore, this may have impacted career progression among culinary school graduates.

Quality and experientialism. Looking at quality through the theoretical framework of experientialism is interesting for examining the impact that chefs have in the kitchen environment. Furthermore, considering the impact that supervising chefs have on their subordinates on job satisfaction is an important level of understanding. In the kitchen environment that culinary school graduates enter, internally created pressures (i.e. chefs create constraints via their managerial style) exist combined with external demands" (Demetry, 2013, p. 576). Internal pressure impacts how restaurant workers use the kitchen space during particular times as well as what forms of speech they deem acceptable in those moments (Fickenscher, 2014). Potentially, the management style of the chef is an important factor on the behavior of the recent culinary school graduate. Management style and personality may very well be a factor in how satisfied a young culinarian is with the work environment. Certainly, they must be willing to accept the fact that kitchen leadership prioritizes the organization of time and space in achieving goals often at the cost of personal creative expression (Demetry, 2013).

Quality and the reality of the kitchen. Through education and work experience, one can often observe the clash of idealism and realism. Anthony Bourdain (2006) spoke to this when he stated, “Few things are more beautiful to me than a bunch of thuggish, heavily tattooed line cooks moving around each other like ballerinas on a busy Saturday night” (p. 27). Bourdain continued, “Seeing two guys who’d just as soon cut each other’s throats in their off hours moving in unison with grace and ease can be uplifting as any chemical stimulant or organized religion” (p. 27). On the surface, most people would not expect to see the level of cooperation between the two described line cooks.

The reality of the kitchen may be quite different from the ideal image that a young culinarian is taught in school. Furthermore, the education continues beyond culinary school and the overall quality is impacted both by the idealism of school and the reality of the work world. In the workplace, a young culinarian may have to rely on the “thuggish” type of kitchen worker to gain experience, influencing how satisfied and how successful one becomes in the kitchen.

Quality in the work environment. The importance of quality on both culinary education and the work environment is a key factor in the group culture of the kitchen. The kitchen environment is truly shaped by external factors in a space that can be small against the constraints of time. As noted by Fine (1990), kitchens are “temporal worlds” where a cook must be willing to prepare a meal within exact timing, typically 15 minutes or less in a confined space. In fact, cooks are “metaphorically held captive by the diners on the other side of the swinging doors, unable to take personal breaks, such as run to the bathroom or smoke a cigarette” (Demetry, 2013, p. 578). The diners represent one of the main external factors that can impact the quality of the work environment as well as the dynamic of the kitchen group culture. Considering the space and time factors, the quality of the work environment can impact job

satisfaction immensely.

Social interaction can have a profound impact: “Time and space are not just dependent on the mere place and physicality of a restaurant but local forces, such as that of a head chef in the kitchen, can alter time and space” (Demetry, 2013, p. 578). The social interaction that takes place between the chef and the recent culinary school graduate can have a decisive impact on both job satisfaction and advancement within the kitchen (Ali et al., 2014). If the relationship with the head chef is not good, both the work environment and the quality of the surroundings likely are perceived as failing to meet the expectations of the recent graduate. The relationship with the chef can have a profound impact on the perceived quality of the workplace as a disappointment of the ideal presented in culinary school, instead facing a reality that can potentially be a hostile work environment (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

Workplace communication has an impact on the demands of time and space that are typical in an average kitchen. The idea that temporal demands control all forms of work can often be overlooked by management (Fine, 1990). Quality that is produced in the workplace can be a direct result of how an employee is treated, as simple as how they are spoken to. Furthermore, workers are highly sensitive to managerial presence and the organizational space where they work is fragile (Spicer, 2006). The feeling that a cook has about their work environment may have a profound impact on the quality of the food that is being produced. For this study, understanding how the participants feel about their individual workplace was an important factor in understanding overall quality from education through career progression. Included in this understanding were the actual workplace conditions, compared with expectations established in culinary school.

According to Alhelalat (2015), “Hotel executives believe that hospitality graduates have

better communication, teamwork, situation analysis, operational skills, information search, critical thinking, initiative, organizing, and self-development skills than the non-hospitality graduate employees” (p. 46). Furthermore, the selected skills that best distinguish hospitality graduates from non-hospitality graduates in the workplace include: operations, information search, knowledge demonstration, and teamwork (Alhelalat, 2015).

While an overall positive response to the skill sets of the hospitality graduates exists, the same group of hotel executives has experienced a sense of lacking. From the experiences that these executives have with hospitality graduates, they expressed a general feeling that hospitality educators should spend more time on certain skills. Skills include problem solving, technology, languages and cultural knowledge, and leadership skills. The quality of a formal culinary education from a skill set perspective may need improvement to meet the demands of the hospitality industry.

Evaluating Career Progression in the Culinary Industry

In evaluating career progression, an important consideration is the skills required to be successful in the culinary industry. Understanding what skills are important can help educators and curriculum developers within the culinary schools ensure that they are delivering the right skill sets to students. The “students entering the field of culinary training have perceptions and expectations of what they should be taught to be successful and how well their culinary school is meeting their needs” (Simon, 2014, p. F6). In the culinary industry, perceptions are formed “on how well the educational system has prepared the students for their positions as cooks and chefs” (Jauhari, 2013, p. 274). Balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the industry that offer culinary school graduates’ employment is an important factor for culinary school administration. Therefore, further research as in this study helps provide educators with

information that can balance the curriculum needs.

Four main factors serves indicators of career progression. “These factors in order of importance are 1) the industry-person congeniality 2) social benefit 3) opportunity for professional development and 4) job competitiveness” (Amoo & Neequaye, 2014, p. 167). Factors of career progression are important to this research due to potential impact on the career progression of participants. The information discovered was included in the research questions and as a factor during analysis. Factors such as relocation and travel may have influenced the decision made by the individual in pursuing a career (Ali et al., 2014). Apart from culinary school, personal factors and choice also play a role in overall career progression.

Aligning experience with industry requirements. In looking at the scale of career progression, industry, teaching, and subject area experience all had important ratings” (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). For the culinary school graduates that are entering the field and beginning their careers, these factors can help determine the level and the rate of career progression. The culinary instructors that have taught these students have a unique blend of experience in both the industry and the classroom. In some cases, one level of experience may outweigh the other. Having excellent professional experience in industry does not automatically mean that one can teach well. Because teaching is an art unto itself that requires education and experience, the culinary students may not always receive the best possible instruction though the instructor may be an authoritative industry professional.

Upon culinary graduates entering the industry, this instructional deficit can result in graduates not being able to perform tasks that the industry demands. Therefore, lack of proper training may result in a lackluster career progression, as the culinary school graduate may not have the tools to succeed. Alternatively, proper training may result in a career progression that is

relatively rapid. Consideration of training level was included in the research questions to see what impact, if any, the quality of instruction has had on career progression. Determining experience level was accomplished through interviewing culinarians and inquiring specifically about their educational experiences.

In looking at the career progression of culinary school graduates, another important factor is how closely aligned hospitality-management competencies are with the curriculum that is taught in the culinary schools. One of the key competencies that both academia and industry agree upon was adapting creatively to change (Hand, 2014). This concept is difficult to teach as it involves confidence based on solid experience. For the recent culinary school graduate, gathering this experience may take some time, while the industry demands experience right away. The concept of hospitality-management competencies was included in the research as part of the interview process as well as reviewing documents in the workplace that reflect the competencies required by the specific establishment. As the participants are chosen for the study, the competencies of each organization will be defined in the findings chapter.

Impact of the individual. A potential factor in career progression is reflected in the individual learner; a key question is whether the differences in learning patterns are a determinant of career progress (Hertzman & Maas, 2012). The ability of the learner to comprehend the culinary education received may be a factor in overall career progression. Furthermore, many issues which surround the relationship between vocational education and job experience as alternative forms of learning (Hand, 2014). Through personal observation, some students are more technical learners while others may be better theoretical learners, impacting the ability to learn. The culinary education process is a blend of both vocational and technical training that gives the graduate the means to be successful in the culinary industry (Oh &

Kawon, 2017).

The impact of society. Over the last 20 years, the media has brought notoriety to the culinary profession and the number of celebrity chefs has increased. The popularity of celebrity chefs has influenced the student population at culinary schools in several key ways. In some cases, the celebrity chefs serve as a role model and may also be an inspiration to attend culinary school. The success of the celebrity chef may lead the culinary graduate to perceive a false sense of the potential for success (Lane & Fisher, 2014). Potentially, the culinary graduate may be disappointed by the reality of the foodservice industry that may differ greatly from the idealized world of the celebrity chef.

Choosing the culinary career. The choice of a culinary career begs the question of whether or not it was ultimately a good choice or not. Although opinions vary widely, the following quotation from Burrow, Smith, and Yakinthou (2015) summed up the choice of a culinary career from an interesting perspective:

Although I found a lot of things really hard I don't regret choosing this career, not one bit. However, this job isn't for everyone. If you want to be a chef in a good kitchen you have to be prepared for it to take over your life completely, to lose all of your friends, miss out on normal social life, miss important family events, be tired, stressed, upset, ill and still want to go back to work all day, every day. If you are not ready for that, don't cook. If you are prepared to keep your head down, work non-stop for at least six, seven, eight years, listen and learn everything you are told, everything will fall into place.

You'll have endless possibilities, be able to work anywhere in the world, doors will open, and you will have a job that you love. Sure, there are some negative sides to the industry but cooking in a good kitchen is fun, rewarding, exciting, creative, challenging, inspiring,

and more, all in one day. I wouldn't do anything different. I could not work in an office, where's the fun? (p.675)

Burrow et.al. (2015) offered an insightful summary of what to expect in the kitchen.

Choosing a culinary career has many similarities with enlisting in the military (Bourdain, 2006).

A culinary career is service through and through, to something larger than the individual. This level of service requires unwavering devotion to duty that is certainly not for everyone.

Employability of Culinary School Graduates

The employability of culinary school graduates is a true measure of either the success or failure of the school in preparing the student. Industry chefs often complain about a lack of skills among recent culinary school graduates (Godowsky et al., 2011). A perceived lack of skills can cause problems for both the student and the school. Some students may experience difficulty in finding or retaining employment. As far as the school, poorly perceived skills of the students can be viewed by the culinary industry as a problem. Negative perceptions of the student can tarnish the image of the school (Ali et al., 2014). Further study such as this research may help to alleviate this problem by providing educators with additional information in formulating a curriculum that is synchronized with industry needs. Ultimately, the gap between education and industry may decrease.

Required skills. In looking at the needs of the hospitality industry, having a guideline of exactly what skills are required for culinary school graduates to succeed is important. As Alhelalat (2015) argued, "One of the most important skills required is the ability to communicate clearly, concisely, and correctly in the written, spoken, and visual form that fulfills the required purpose" (p. 48). Closely related to a great sense of communication, the ability to reframe information and ideas to achieve a clear level of understanding is essential. An understanding of

math principles and the ability to solve problems related to costs and budgeting accurately is an integral skill. Understanding and use of appropriate technology is a highly desirable skill that requires continuous maintenance. Collectively, the ability to use and share these skills with others in groups or teams is a natural extension of these essential employability skills (Alhelalat, 2015).

The chef's profession is composed of many elements including creativity and the ability to innovate. Although these skills are essential to the hands-on aspect of being a great chef, other skills are essential to success:

Almost all active culinary curricula focus primarily on chef-specific competencies (the art) disregarding critical management competencies (the science) essential for a prosperous career as a chef. The prosperity of any profession is inherent in the stakeholders' ability to portray its true qualities, values, and 'success' competencies to all parties involved; namely the individuals wishing to pursue such a career, the educational institutions and the industry. (Zopiatis, 2010, p. 466)

While the art is vastly important in the quality of food production, management competencies as the science determines the success of the business (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

Running a business requires a keen understanding of both human and financial management. In looking at the overall responsibility of higher education administrators in developing curriculum that will benefit the future of hospitality training, certain implications include:

Administrators within higher education programs offering hospitality management training should be cognizant of the program's shortcomings in terms of a non-standardized curriculum in comparison to peer institutions and programs. These

individuals should not attempt to train managers for all segments of the hospitality industry; rather, a focus on specific required job competencies by those currently practicing and regarded as experts in the industry of choice (i.e., lodging, food service, attractions, etc.) may lead to greater industry acceptance and respect. Administrators of hospitality management college programs must have close working relationships with lodging industry managers, so they can continually revamp, refine, and perfect their curricula based on industry feedback. By working closely with industry, the teaching of job competencies deemed important among hospitality industry leaders will be more likely to become an integral part of the educational offering. (Ricci, 2010, p. 230)

Popular demand factor. As one looks back through the last 40 years, “there has been a substantial growth in demand for formal culinary education in the United States” (Hertzman & Maas, 2012, p. 53). Along with this demand for formal culinary education, a demand exists for quality by both the students and the industry that impacts the employability of culinary school graduates in the foodservice industry. During recent years, for-profit career education has been scrutinized by the federal government for the cost of education and the return on investment gain in employment opportunities (Saul, 2015). This places employers and student alike in a situation where employability may actually be determined by the perceived quality of the institution.

The difference between a good and bad school reputation may mean the difference between a job and no job offer. From the student perspective: “Over the past few years, the relationship between the cost a student pays for his or her postsecondary education and his or her subsequent earnings has emerged as a measure of the value of the education” (Hertzman & Maas, 2012, p. 57). Value perception could impact the employability of the student in many ways, such as a feeling of not receiving a value for the price paid. Perceived value is an

important factor to this research and was included in the study as questions during the research interview as well as feedback from professional culinary colleagues.

The reality of culinary employment. In the culinary profession, employment longevity can often be determined by the ability to persevere. Clearly, the long hours, working nights, weekends, and holidays require a high level of dedication. In that regard, whether or not someone remains employed depends on the individual breaking point. The duality of the career path can be viewed as “the culinary arts- which here include cooking baking, and other means of preparing dishes- are very special for, like certain crafts, they have a survival-based side as well as a cultural-aesthetic one” (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014, p. 179). The sheer will and determination to continue working the industry is a determining factor of employability. During the research, this factor was addressed and the thoughts and feelings of this sense of determination were included in the findings.

The culinary school graduate enters the culinary industry prepared to ascend to positions of greater responsibility such as the position of executive chef. Associated with the greater responsibility are higher levels of stress. Specifically, recent research has indicated that executive chefs working in hotels, restaurants, and bars commonly experience seven primary stress factors. Primary stress factors include: staff shortages, excessive workloads, lack of feedback on performance, feelings of being undervalued, insufficient management support, and poor communication between staff (Ali et al., 2014). Furthermore, while lack of control is a factor of stress, having responsibility as an executive chef is also one of the main causes of stress (Birdir & Canakci, 2014). Job related stress may have profound influence on employment as well as job satisfaction and ultimately, may have an impact on career progression.

One of the challenges of the culinary industry is the availability of qualified personnel

and motivated employees. Personnel shortages may negatively impact the executive chef and the overall ability to manage. One such issue is emotional burnout that can cause exhaustion and cynicism within the executive chef. Another factor may be a breakdown of administrative responsibility where the executive chef may “lack vigor, dedication and absorption” (Birdir & Canakci, 2014, p. 209). Factors may contribute heavily to the inability to employ kitchen personnel for long-term periods as well as the employment experience of the chef.

Job placement is a major consideration in determining career progression and often a quality internship experience can lead to a permanent position for the culinary school graduate. The placement of student interns is a very important task that needs the full attention of both the faculty member and the student so that a quality experience can be arranged. In addition, faculty and their subject experience can provide valuable guidance that can enhance job placement as well as job satisfaction (Ali et al., 2014). Therefore, it is essential that culinary educators understand the significance that they potentially have on overall career progression of culinary school graduates (Hertzman & Maas, 2012).

The creativity factor. The culinary profession is an art form and the ability to create is an essential factor in employability: “Culinary arts are a discipline that requires a knowledge of food science, food preparation, nutrition, cooking techniques, aesthetics, and cultures” (Fickenscher, 2014, p. 15). The culinary arts profession places strong demands on the individual that pursues a career in the industry. Demands placed on the individual may be a factor in determining employability. Not all culinary school graduates possess the entire package of skill sets that are required to be successful. As part of this research, it was valuable to determine what impact these skills have had on employability. Through questions and notes taken during the interview, I sought to determine the impact of skill on the employability of the individual

participant.

In the culinary profession, creativity and innovation are vital to employability. It is not enough for the food to taste good; it must be presented in an appetizing manner. In addition, food has to reflect evolution in culture and changes that take place in society. Therefore, a chef must be willing and able to adapt food to the demands of the current market: “Chefs must have some innovative competencies to create new recipes, meals, and service experience to surprise customers” (Gisslen, 2007, p. 11). One method of building innovative skills is through cultural awareness, specifically the ability to learn about other cultures and the willingness to do so. In fact, “Cultural enrichment allows chefs to acquire the ability to create works of vitality” (Gisslen, 2007, p. 13). Individual creativity is an important factor in determining employability and were included in this research through questions and notes.

Global impact. In the current global economy, employability of a culinary school graduate can be determined by the individual ability to work on the global marketplace: “The world today faces multiple challenges as emerging economies open their doors to global firms and liberalize various sectors of the industry” (Jauhari, 2013, p. 268). Culinary school graduates must be willing to go where the job is available and that may mean an international assignment. Global availability is an important part of the current marketplace and was considered in the research as a factor of employability.

Student and teacher relationship. In the culinary education process, the student/teacher relationship can be an important factor in job placement as well as career progression. The principal business of higher education is to provide education for students. Further analysis of the university environment revealed that when students perceived a positive relationship with teachers, they tend to report a higher quality involvement in university experiences overall,

especially in course learning activities (Klosterman, 2011). The success of the student and future employability may very well originate with the relationship that the student establishes with the instructor. Student/instructor relationship is an interesting consideration that was included in the research questions with regards to how the participants remember the teachers that taught them the trade.

Expectations of the culinary graduate. The three most important areas that impact students' career decisions include salary, benefits, and advancement opportunity (Yen, Cooper, & Murrmann, 2013). The average culinary graduates have an expectation that they will receive a compensation package that can support a secure lifestyle, being able to pay for reasonable expenses such as rent, car, food, etc. A recent survey of culinary school graduates indicated some discrepancies between the student perception and the reality of the industry. The three most important factors of salary, benefits, and advancement opportunity were compared from the perception of the student to the reality of the culinary industry.

The recent culinary school graduate may enter the industry and find that the reality of the workplace differs greatly from the perception that was established during education. Differences between the perception and the reality of the culinary industry may influence the culinary graduate to decide not to enter the foodservice industry. Furthermore, knowledge of the available employment opportunities in the culinary industry is lacking among recent graduates of culinary programs (Yen et al., 2013). From the perspective of the industry, managers share a responsibility in providing a workplace that demonstrates consistency (Ali et al., 2014).

Managers must become aware of the extent of their decisions and how those decisions influence the performance of their staff. Managers should realize that in the hospitality industry employees have a need to see equitable rewards. Findings show that employees not only look to

see fair procedures in place for the distribution of rewards, but the actual fairness of the distributed awards are also critical in both voluntary turnover decisions and organizational citizenship behaviors (Hegarty, 2011). Managers must develop human resource management procedures that are fair, and the end results of the procedures must be perceived as fair (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010).

Changing perceptions of the culinary school graduate. In looking at the culinary student, some changes in perception may occur before and after the completion of the program. The students potentially may see changes that can positively impact their skill level, overall knowledge of subject matter, and likelihood of future career success (Srinivasan & Karmarkar, 2014). Conversely, some students struggle with course content as well as academic requirements. The majority of these students do overcome these obstacles and complete their coursework (Daugherty, 2015). While some students change their mind about the program choice, the majority of students are satisfied with the culinary course of study (Srinivasan & Karmarkar, 2014).

Upon entering the culinary industry, the new graduates become part of the new manpower required to sustain the industry. Facing the realities of the industry that may differ from the ideals taught in school, the culinary graduate faces a decision whether or not to continue working in the industry (Ali et al., 2014). While this can be based on many factors, key determinants include the “work itself, growth and upward mobility, supervision, and coworkers” (Sangaran & Jeetesh, 2015, p. 1). The decision to leave the job position can be classified as turnover, a loss of employees.

Turnover can either be a positive or negative effect to the establishment. The effects depend on a great deal whether the employee is a high or low performer. Turnover tends to be

greatest among employees that are high performers and low performers (Oh & Kawon, 2017).

The employees that perform in the middle range tend to stay longer in establishments. Turnover of low performing staff may be positive for the institution. Turnover of high performing staff can be negative to an institution as without the high performing employee, overall performance levels go down (Lane & Fisher, 2014).

The type of work as well as job performance are key influences of employee turnover as well as representing essential factors of job satisfaction. The main factors of job satisfaction that lead to turnover were wages/salary and opportunity for advancement/career progression. The analysis also revealed a need for a balance in order to attract and maintain potential employees as all factors that affect job satisfaction directly leads to turnover. Job satisfaction and effect on employees is an area that should be respected and developments for these areas should be a priority (Sangaran & Garg, 2012).

One of the contributing factors of employee turnover is the level of occupational stress that exists in the workplace. Problems related to task and pay as well as effective management of an employee's schedule negatively influence turnover. Conflict with job responsibility including working with other departments contributes to turnover. Unfair treatment that is triggered by a lack of a reward system affects turnover intention as well as a lack of employee support from management. Furthermore, elements of organizational culture including policy and organizational climate are also factors of occupational stress (Hwang, Lee, & Park, 2014).

The mental and physical demands of the culinary profession can also play a factor in the employee's decision to leave the job or profession entirely. Recent research indicates "culinary workers experience mental and physical exhaustion out of stress, which drives up turnover intent, rather than thinking about job movement because of stress arising from performing their

roles in the organization” (Jung, Kim, & Yoon, 2012, p. 2159). The demands of the culinary industry as well as the issue of turnover was discussed during this research, both as factors of employability.

In this research I focused on filling this gap by providing insight into what impact that academic culinary education has on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry. Furthermore, this research provided a baseline of comparison between academic culinary education and traditional apprenticeship by defining how each contributes to the success of the individual. The goal of the research was to find what role, if any, the turnover and job-related stress has had on the employability of the participants. Furthermore, foodservice industry requirements and culinary training was compared to help determine whether or not the training received in culinary school matches the demands of the culinary industry (Hegarty, 2011).

Summary

In the culinary arts profession, many factors relate to job placement and career progression. The foodservice industry has been transformed in recent years as a glamorous profession. The reality of hard work comes as a surprise to many young culinary school graduates that have perceived the image presented by the global marketplace. Success in the culinary world can be measure by many factors and through research, many more may be discovered.

One of the fundamental measurements is the overall quality of the culinary education received, through both the perceived value and the return on investment. The return on investment can be measured in several important ways. The first of these is initial job placement in the culinary industry after graduation. Another measurement is the overall career progression

of the culinary school graduate. Career progression can be further examined to include the work environment, and the perception of the culinary school graduate. In looking at the overall culinary school experience, many factors impact success or failure that have not yet been studied or studied very little. The goal of this research was to develop positive theory that can benefit the field of education and the foodservice industry collectively.

The related literature has looked at the background of the culinary industry through quality of education, employability of graduates, and the overall career progression. Many factors of this background begin with the individual. Through individual interviews, this research sought to determine how each culinary school graduate has experienced the food service industry. This experience was analyzed using the methods that are described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the impact of a formal culinary education on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry. The following chapter will provide an overview of the research plan and design for this study. The rationale for choosing a phenomenological study will be discussed. A description of the research design, research questions, setting, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis will follow the rationale discussion. This chapter will conclude with how the trustworthiness of the study was addressed, as well as an overview of the ethical considerations.

Design

I used a qualitative approach to study career progression among culinary school graduates. Specifically, I attempted to find what the culinarians, experienced as well as how they experienced it, using a phenomenological approach. This approach was appropriate to studying the shared experiences of culinary school graduates who have worked in the industry (Creswell, 2013). The thoughts and feelings of the culinary school graduates were the primary focus of this study, as represented by their lived experiences.

In the phenomenological approach, knowledge of appearances and reasoned inquiry are not the end of knowing (Moustakas, 1994). Instead, knowledge opens the door for further experiences and understanding in the chosen field of study. Through this research, I sought to display the foundation of meaning in the shared experiences of the participants (Husserl, 1931). Furthermore, I believe this research will help future students and teachers become the well-informed citizen that finds himself placed in a domain that belongs to an infinite number of

possible frames of reference (Schutz, 1970). Multiple frames of reference may be helpful in future culinary career planning and development as a guide of experience.

This study included a cross-section of experiences from a people with a minimum of 10 years' experience in the culinary profession through retirement. Diversity of experience ensures the field of culinary school graduates is well represented with an established minimum experience level. A long period of work experience may include changes of perspective that can take place throughout a career (Ali, Murphy, & Nadkarni, 2014). In reflecting back on a career, individuals may have a sense of rationalization for what occurred, while this study was presented from a present perspective (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this study I utilized a hermeneutical approach to describe the impact culinary school graduation has had on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study using an experiential phenomenological approach.

RQ1: How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job placement in the culinary industry?

RQ2: How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job satisfaction in the culinary industry?

RQ3: What are culinary school graduates' perceptions of what might improve the value of their culinary degree in terms of finding appropriate employment?

RQ4: What do culinary school graduates perceive as obstacles in finding appropriate employment?

RQ5: How do culinarians who are employed in the field view graduation from a two-

year culinary program relating to overall career progression?

Regarding previous studies, little has been done to understand the personal impact of culinary school graduation on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression (i.e., Day & Newburger, 2002; Godowsky, Zukin, & Horn, 2011). The general research questions guided this study of what culinary school means to the experienced graduates. Lived experiences were documented and analyzed for emerging themes. The emerging themes provide a basis of knowledge useful to future prospective culinary students of whether or not to attend culinary school.

Site

The research study was conducted at the local chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF; see <http://www.acfchefs.org/>). The ACF (2017) is a professional culinary organization that was formed in 1929 in the city of New York as a merger of three chef clubs. Since then this organization has grown into a national organization of cooks and chefs that also holds membership in the global organization, World Association of Cooking Societies. This organization was chosen for several important reasons. First, a majority of the ACF membership have a culinary education. Another important reason was the central location of the potential participants, for the purpose of gathering information efficiently.

Upon obtaining IRB approval, I spoke with attending members about the proposed research and requested participants. Discussions at the meeting served as a starting point of selecting participants for the study, finding out who was interested and recording contact information. During the meeting, I had an ideal opportunity to explain the purpose of my study, build interest, and answer any questions about the research. Based upon interest expressed during the meeting, I was able to follow up with individual members who were interested, to

schedule formal interviews, request personal journals, and schedule workplace observations.

Participants

The ACF membership represents about 70% of culinary school graduates and 30% who were trained on the job (ACF, 2017). Culinary school graduates were the exclusive focus of this study, excluding the classically trained professionals. The ACF membership represented a population of culinary school graduates who could have served as potential participants for this study. With members of a professional culinary organization, I had a high likelihood of finding willing culinary school graduate participants.

The goal of this study was to select at least 15 participants, so the phenomenon could be explored utilizing a group that had shared experiences (Creswell, 2013). The sample I drew from suited the purpose of the study by providing a cross-section of culinary school graduates at various stages of their careers. The pool of participants consisted of 75% male and 25% female; 58% were between the ages of 35 and 54, with 13% age 55 and older, and the mean age of 42.2 years (ACF, 2017). Drawing from this group of culinary professionals helped to ensure that a cross-section of the group was represented, giving the study a balance of both male and female participants at various ages. Furthermore, different levels of experience, specialties, and overall knowledge helped the study represent a robust variety of culinary professionals.

Procedures

First, I obtained consent and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the research plan (Appendix A). I also secured permission from the ACF prior to conducting research. I recruited participants from the membership of the local ACF chapter, using a letter for participant recruitment (Appendix B). I began data collection the first meeting, with initially collecting contact information for the individuals who were interested in completing the study

and who consented to do so. I collected contact information of interested ACF members on a sign-up sheet. I chose individuals based on interest and a minimum of 10 years of professional experience as a professional chef in addition to completion of a culinary degree. I protected the identity of all participants by restricting entry into my password protected computer.

Following initial contact, I conducted formal, structured interviews, scheduled with the participants individually at a mutually convenient time and place. As an alternative, interviews could have been scheduled via Skype if a mutual face-to-face meeting was not possible. The goal was to establish a framework of common themes attributed to the phenomenon.

Furthermore, for data analysis I used Kolb's theory of experiential learning "as a framework to explain the implications of how knowledge creates experience" (Daugherty, 2015, p. 65). The interviews were conducted using the in vivo coding system to ensure that terminology used by the participants was well represented (Strauss, 1987).

The Researcher's Role

As a chef instructor, I conducted qualitative research using a phenomenological research design from an ontological perspective. I sought to identify the nature of reality from the views of the participants. Multiple realities exist in the culinary profession and identifying the differences in individual experiences was important. Due to my extensive background in the foodservice industry and my genuine passion for the culinary industry, I was conscientious in bracketing my ideas so as not to influence the information provided by the participants (Creswell, 2013).

As a professional organization, the ACF emphasizes the importance of education and is generally very concerned about job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression in the culinary industry among the ACF membership. Therefore, the ACF received this study well,

and I believe that as a member I was able to describe the value of the study to the ACF leadership. The information that was obtained from the research can help benefit the ACF and the culinary industry as a whole. Therefore, the most important role that I had to consider as part of this research was the capability of demonstrating the value of this research to the participants as well as to the ACF leadership.

Data Collection

The data collection from interviews, journals, and workplace observations closely aligned with the phenomenological inquiry viewpoint; that data collected provides evidence for the experience being investigated (Creswell, 2013). The rationale for data collection was that it provides a logical sequence for collecting the data without overlooking anything. While being straightforward and organized, following an organized method also provided a lower likelihood of error. Locating the participants was the first step and was accomplished by identifying the local chapter of the ACF a potential source of culinary school graduates.

The membership of the ACF was a viable resource of culinary professionals with sufficient industry experience to have established career progression. Because the goal of this study was to review a sample with industry experience, using a professional culinary organization was an ideal method. Furthermore, the membership of the ACF represented a highly regarded level of culinary professionalism and achievement in the foodservice industry.

Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Specifically, purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). The ACF organization was a great source for

purposeful sampling due to the fact its membership is largely made up of culinary professionals who have graduated from culinary school. Furthermore, many of the ACF members are professionally certified in the culinary field at various levels, from certified culinarian through certified master chef.

The primary form of data collection consisted of a face-to-face interview with each participant. The triangulation of data for the phenomenon was achieved through individual interviews, participant journals, and workplace observations. The data included all interview transcript, journal entries that represent the personal reflections of participants, and workplace observation forms (Appendix C). The organization and reporting of data followed an analytical approach where research questions guided the development of interview questions.

I organized the interview questions chronologically, so the participants could express answers in order of experience after culinary school graduation. Specifically, I asked participants about experiences related to job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression, as well as their personal journey from the time they left culinary school until the present point in their career. I aligned the data with the research questions to determine job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates.

The recording procedures included an observational protocol so all participants received interviews with similar conditions in place. I recorded all interviews on audio tape and then transcribed by hand during the research process. I stored the data with great consideration and care so the privacy of all participants is maintained. I stored all data on a computer that is password protected, and I am the only person who has access. Furthermore, I evaluated the data through triangulation taking into consideration “multiple and different sources and methods” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251).

As a fellow culinary school graduate, I had the viewpoint of an insider. Therefore, I actively worked to get as close as possible to the participants being studied (Creswell, 2013). This insider approach was beneficial to the research process and as a member of the ACF; I was able to communicate with my peers in the culinary industry. I was careful to avoid any personal bias that I may have introduced into the research dynamic through crosschecking with my culinary peers. Furthermore, I made every effort to recognize personal bias, and consciously suppressed the natural tendency to apply my biases.

Participant journals provided the opportunity for personal reflections of the culinary school graduates on their career progression and job satisfaction. Individual journals provided a different perspective than the face-to-face interviews and were used as a tool to crosscheck the data. The substance of the personal journals was the expression of experience related to the individual participant's perspective. The participants had the opportunity to write personal reflections and add things they thought of after the main interview (Appendix D). Furthermore, the individual experiences of participants were paramount to this phenomenological research.

I employed triangulation in this study through the use of peer review among fellow instructors at the school where I work. Additionally, the ACF local chapter provided a great resource for purposeful sampling. Word of mouth among the members led to snowball sampling. The primary form of data collection was one face-to-face interview with each participant. The triangulation of data for the phenomenon was conducted through interviews, journaling, and observations.

Member checking ensured that the voice of the participants was accurately portrayed in the study. Additionally, member checking added valuable insight enhancing the overall research. I thoroughly analyzed the data to ensure that thick, rich description accurately

described the findings and properly represented all who are involved, while verifying that what was perceived by the researcher was actually what the participant meant. I accomplished this accuracy by reviewing participant statements with the participants for accuracy of meaning through member checks.

As an insider in the profession, I actively worked to get as close as possible to the participants being studied (Creswell, 2013). The focus was description of experiences rather than analyses (Moustakas, 1994). Individual interviews sought to determine the method through which knowledge is known as a central focal point (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, using an experientialist viewpoint to seek understanding of the world in which the participants lived and worked, I examined the significance of attending culinary school (Creswell, 2013).

Individual experiences that are linked to the common thread of attending culinary school defined the process of the interviews and personal journals. I utilized the principles of experientialism to both interpret and construct from the interviews and personal journals the perceived reality of attending culinary school (Patton, 2002). I used this reality to measure the impact of culinary school graduation on job placement, job satisfaction, and career progression for culinary school graduates.

Interviews

During our first meeting, I conducted “an open-ended interview” and I took “interview notes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 160), primarily to establish a relationship with the participants. The establishment of this relationship was crucial to this study. As a researcher, establishing a level of trust with the participants was vital, so they could speak openly about their views. The information gathered during this phase was helpful in planning how the subsequent meetings were conducted; finding the right types of questions to ask during the interview was the major

focus.

Recording the interviews was helpful in following a rigorous (Creswell, 2013) approach to data collection so the opportunity to see emerging themes would be apparent. Throughout the interviewing process, I ensured the participants were comfortable in expressing their true thoughts and feelings on their individual experiences. I did this through direct conversation, ensuring the participants' comfort throughout the entire interview and research process. Even through careful interviewing procedures, interruptions or personal bias were still possible shortcomings. I made every effort to ensure that any obstacles were overcome, and the data remained intact.

The primary methods of data collection included a semi-structured interview, an audiotape of the interview, and a transcription of the interview (Creswell, 2013). Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews, the peer review helped to determine validity and appropriateness of the questions. The peer review occurred at several ACF meetings where ACF members provided feedback on the interview questions. I designed the participant interview questions to gain a rich, thick description of their experiences in culinary school as well as the experiences of the participants (Appendix E). The overall goal was that the interview questions accurately reflected the research questions.

I audio-recorded the interviews both with a small mp3 player, for ease in handling digital files, and a cassette recorder, in case of mechanical failure. Both devices had the ability to pause and make the task of transcribing relatively easy. The primary timeline for each interview was an hour; the time of a chef is very valuable with regards to managing a kitchen. Therefore, I did not want to take more than an hour of the chef's time. I took notes during the interview and used those notes for further ideas in developing both the research and future questions.

I created the interview questions with the research questions in mind. The primary goal of the research questions was to clarify what impact the formal culinary education has had on career progression and job placement for the culinary school graduates. Thus, I directed the interview questions towards the five primary research questions. The end result should be a clear indication of how the formal culinary education impacts both career progression and job placement of the culinary school graduates.

Interview questions 1 through 7 were background questions, designed to determine whether or not the participant has educational experience in culinary arts and overall educational experience. These questions are an introduction to the purpose of the study, to find the impact of formal culinary education on job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates. Furthermore, these questions were meant to establish a clear line of communication between the participant and me, helping to ease any anxiety existing in the interview process (Patton, 2002). Because each individual participant perceives and answers questions differently, I made adjustments so the overall information obtained was similar.

In questions 8 through 10, I directly addressed Research Question 5, how culinarians employed in the field view the value of graduation from a two-year culinary program relating to overall career progression. I placed these questions in the interview process with the intent of focusing participants on this theme. Speaking directly to the overall theme of the research, I formed questions to discover if the attendance of culinary school was worth the time, money, and effort invested (Saul, 2015). Thus, the participants transitioned from the general theme of the study to a personal reflection of their individual experiences, expressed in the remaining interview questions.

With questions 11 through 13 I focused on the first research question, how graduation

from culinary school influences job placement in the culinary industry. Godowsky et al. (2011) noted that little research has been done to understand the personal impact of culinary school graduation; therefore, information from this study may help to shape the personal experience focus of the study. New reflection may assist culinary school graduates in gaining an understanding of how their education impacts the type of employment available in the foodservice industry (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). The individual experiences with job placement may help future potential culinary students decide whether or not to attend culinary school.

Questions 14 and 15 directly related to the second research question, how graduation from a two-year culinary program influences job satisfaction in the culinary industry. Work experience is one determining factor of whether or not someone has made a sound career choice (Demetry, 2013). The actual experience can differ from the perceived experience portrayed during the culinary education (Birdir & Canakci, 2014). These specific questions helped determine the impact of personal experiences on job satisfaction, information that has yet to be recorded (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014). With the publication of these findings, more informed decisions can be made as to whether or not the culinary industry is a viable option for potential culinary school students.

I centered questions 16 and 17 on the third research question, the individual perception of the value of the culinary degree in terms of finding appropriate employment. Because a disconnect can often exist between the perceived and actual compensation of culinary employment (ACF, 2017), this area is an important component of the overall research. Return on investment is an important factor in choosing a culinary career (Hegarty, 2011). Therefore, potential culinary school students must have a realistic expectation of what the starting salary

will be upon graduation. Furthermore, this research may improve the level of understanding that exists with actual experiences of culinary industry compensation (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014).

Questions 18 and 19 directly reflect Research Question 4, the obstacles that culinary school graduates perceive in finding appropriate employment. I interviewed participants specifically in this area for their personal experiences with these obstacles (Ricci, 2010). Based on industry research, some of the obstacles faced by culinary school graduates in finding appropriate employment include: job burnout, job stress, and employee turnover (Jung, Kim, & Yoon, 2012). These factors associated with culinary employment may cause lost opportunity in finding appropriate employment (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). The experiences of culinary school graduates with obstacles in employment can potentially benefit future culinarians through communication of these obstacles (Shani, Belhassen, & Soskolne, 2013).

Document Analysis

The goal of the overall document review was to determine what factor, if any, completion of culinary school has had on the initial offer of employment and subsequent promotion. This information directly addresses Research Question 1 and may be reflective of job placement and overall career progression in the culinary industry. In addition, this information was useful in shaping additional interview questions. The views from the outside perspective of the employer may prove valuable in determining how culinary school graduates are perceived in the culinary industry.

Data Analysis

Organization

The process of organization began by reviewing the transcribed interview data and studying the material through the methods and procedures of phenomenological analysis

(Moustakas, 1994). To ensure a high level of representation of how the participants experienced the phenomenon, recurring themes were discovered through horizontalization (Creswell, 2013). From this stage, meaning of the data was determined and clustered into common themes removing overlapping and repetitive statements (Moustakas, 1994). Clustered themes evolved into the textural descriptions of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). A filing system for all data was created and organized. All transcripts of the interviews were organized in files on my computer, so they are readily available. This process of organization of all relevant data ensured efficiency in review (Creswell, 2013).

In applying theory to practice, I interviewed the 15 participants and transcribed each interview from the source tape using qualitative research software NVivo. All data with similar meaning was reviewed and anything repetitive was grouped so common themes were recognized for further analysis. I took these grouped meanings and formulated the genesis of the phenomenon I am studying. This included the factors formal culinary education has had on job placement and career progression of the culinary school graduates.

Reading and Memoing

Prior reading back through the transcribed interview data, I reached epoche, where “the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of, prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation” (Patton, 2002, p. 485). Because I have worked in kitchens for many years, I have developed a sense of not being judgmental. Through various experiences, I have come to realize that meaning and reasoning for the way things are in a professional kitchen is not always apparent. Through observation and learning about the participants, I was able to reach epoche and not have an opinion upon beginning the research.

I read through all related text carefully. From the initial reading, I broke down the interviews section by section and wrote memos that analyzed the statements of the participants, while I was looking for themes. I noted themes and grouped similar statements from different participants into initial codes (Creswell, 2013). Codes helped to illuminate the meaning and the factors related to job placement and career progression in the culinary industry.

Classifying the Data

I organized all significant statements and themes and grouped into units for further analysis (Creswell, 2013). In the tradition of Husserl, I bracketed the data for serious inspection (Patton, 2002). I applied the principles of bracketing by first seeking out the parts of the phrases and statements directly relevant to the phenomenon of attending a culinary school. Maintaining a sense of epoche, I processed these statements and developed meaning of how these statements impacted the phenomenon.

As a crosscheck, I clarified the meanings with the participant to ensure that I had a clear understanding of what was said. I compared these meanings in relationship to the larger phenomenon to gain an understanding of how these factors fit together. I created a statement of the common themes that emerged with great frequency. I used this statement of common themes as a tool in developing a theory of the impact that culinary school graduation has had on overall career progression for the participants.

Interpreting the Data

I analyzed the data for both textural and structural descriptions. I developed a central essence or theme from these textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2013). The principles of bracketing were the major factor in interpreting the data. The interpretation phase culminated with creative synthesis, bringing together “the pieces that have emerged into a total experience,

showing patterns and relationships” (Patton, 2002, p. 487). Interpretation ensured that I recorded new meanings related to the phenomenon in a unique, creative way.

Through the experience of working in a professional kitchen for over 30 years, I have gained an intimate understanding of human nature through repeated interaction. The principles of bracketing were applied using this understanding of human nature. The most difficult part of this process may very well have been keeping an objective viewpoint. Using the principle of epoche, I actively worked to avoid the personal aspect in interpreting the data.

Narration

The narration consists of the essence of the experience that was organized into results. I discussed the essence of the findings with participants and created well-organized summaries of these discussions (Creswell, 2013). Throughout the process of narration, I utilized the hermeneutic circle as an “analytical process aimed at enhancing understanding, offers a particular emphasis in qualitative analysis, namely relating parts to wholes and wholes to parts” (Patton, 2002, p. 497). Through a key understanding of the professional kitchen operation, I was able to make sense of how these moving parts interact and impact the outcome. Therefore, I applied this to the understanding of meanings and how they are related and inter-connected in the larger scheme of things, through the lived experiences of the culinary participants.

Trustworthiness

One of my primary concerns in conducting this research was the trustworthiness of the process and the results of this study. All interviews were audio recorded for accuracy of statements and transcribed by the researcher. The recordings and all documents pertaining to this study have been stored in a locked filing cabinet. As a basis for establishing trustworthiness, I followed Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) model, focusing on three areas to establish

trustworthiness: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, and (c) confirmability. Included here are member checks, peer review, and triangulation.

Credibility

I utilized member checking to ensure that the study remains credible throughout the data analysis process. I asked participants to review the data collected from the interviews and the personal reflections. I transcribed the interviews in Word documents and emailed copies of these documents as an attachment to participants for their review. This participant review was intended to provide feedback on the accuracy of the findings and to help determine if additional data collection is necessary (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). I requested that participants contact me if they had any concerns or corrections regarding the transcripts. No participant expressed concern and no participant requested corrections be made.

Dependability and Confirmability

To help ensure the credibility and confirmability of this study, I requested a peer review from another educator's perspective. This person has achieved a Ph.D. in history, which is outside the culinary field. After I determined emergent themes and interpretations of the participant interviews and reflections, I requested his review to specifically give an objective overview, avoiding any personal bias. This provided an unbiased perspective on the participant's responses, from a source outside the culinary perspective.

Transferability

To further strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of this study, I asked each participant to provide any additions or corrections to ensure accuracy of the synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). Validation of the data and findings provided a framework of explanation for the study (Gall et al., 2007). Participants helped to validate the accuracy of what they stated

during the interview process. This well-documented approach helped ensure that individual aspects of the study can easily be transferred.

Ethical Considerations

One potential issue was that culinary school graduate participants may feel alienated from others in the workplace who did not attend culinary school. Over the course of my culinary career, I have frequently noted a distinction made between culinary school graduates and classically trained culinarians. Any distinction was addressed by openly discussing the study and explaining the rationale of the study. In addition, I emphasized the voluntary nature of the study, and I took great care not to pressure anyone into participation. Another potential issue was the Hawthorne effect where participants may try to provide answers and feedback that they think pleases the researcher. I addressed this by assuring the participants that I wanted to know their actual thoughts and feelings and that I was not looking for any particular answer.

Among the important ethical considerations, I made sure my research procedures adhered to guidelines of the Institutional Review Board. As part of the IRB approval process, I ensured that my informed consent for the participants met the high Christian values practiced at Liberty University (see Appendix F). In an effort to protect the identity of all participants, no real names were used throughout the process. I have experience in protecting confidentiality with the students that I teach.

As an example of my past experience with blind evaluation, while students are completing an exit cooking practical, no names are provided to the judges who are in another area. All the judges see is the finished food product. This helps to avoid any bias against the individual student. For this research I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Furthermore, all forms of data were treated as classified material. The documents

and electronic data are kept in a secure environment that only I am able to access.

Summary

Chapter Three provided an overview of the procedures, research design, and analysis of this study. This phenomenological qualitative study sought to gain an understanding of job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates. I asked members of the local chapter of the ACF to volunteer for the study. Data collection consisted of interviews and personal journals of culinary school graduates who have spent a minimum of 10 years in the culinary industry. Culinary school graduates who were interviewed were able to answer questions based on this level of experience. The benchmark of 10 years of experience was so all chefs who were interviewed had at least a set minimum amount of education and experience. Furthermore, this benchmark helped ensure that career progression among culinary school graduates was evaluated in a standardized manner. All data collection and data analysis were conducted in ways to establish trustworthiness of this study. Next, Chapter Four will present the results of the study based upon the methods presented here.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to understand the experiential impact of a formal culinary education regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression among culinary school graduates. This chapter initially discusses the background information of the study's 15 participants. After the discussion of the sample, the results of the study are presented through the use of the study's five research sub-questions, which are aligned to both the theoretical framework and the central question of the study: What are the experiences of culinary school graduates regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression? Common themes identified in the study will be discussed in the context of the five research questions.

Participants

Participants for the research study were sought at the local chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF; see <http://www.acfchefs.org/>). The ACF is a professional culinary organization formed in 1929 in the city of New York as a merger of three chef clubs. Since then this organization has grown into a national organization of cooks and chefs that also holds membership in the global organization, World Association of Cooking Societies. This organization was chosen for several important reasons. First, a majority of the ACF membership have a culinary education. Another important reason is the central location of the potential participants, for the purpose of gathering information efficiently.

Upon IRB approval, I spoke with attending members about the proposed research and requested participants. Discussions at the meeting served as a starting point of selecting participants for the study, finding out who was interested, and recording contact information.

During the meeting, I had an ideal opportunity to explain the purpose of my study, build interest, and answer any questions about the research. Based upon interest expressed during the meeting, I was able to follow up with individual members who expressed interest to schedule formal interviews, request personal journals, and schedule workplace observations.

The ACF membership represents about 70% culinary school graduates and 30% who were trained on the job (ACF, 2017). Culinary school graduates were the exclusive focus of this study and did not include the classically trained professionals. The ACF membership represents a population of culinary school graduates that can be potentially interviewed. As members of a professional culinary organization, the likelihood of willing culinary school graduate participants was high.

The goal of this study was achieved in selecting 15 participants, so the phenomenon could be explored utilizing a group that has shared experiences (Creswell, 2013). The sample I drew from suited the purpose of the study by providing a cross-section of culinary school graduates at various stages of their careers. The pool of participants consisted of 75% male and 25% female; 58% between the ages of 35 and 54, 13% were age 55 and older, and the mean age was 42.2 years (ACF, 2017). Drawing from this group of culinary professionals gave the study a balance of both male and female participants at various ages. Furthermore, different levels of experience, specialties, and overall knowledge were part of the study representing a robust variety of culinary professionals.

Participant 1

Participant 1 was selected for the study based upon his experience and background. Our meeting began with a workplace observation where I noticed the level of respect the staff had for this participant. Overall, the kitchen and workspaces were neat and organized. Furthermore, I

observed safe knife handling and good sanitation procedures. Participant 1 gave me a full tour of the facility and then we sat down to discuss the study. Participant 1 is a middle-aged male who is Hispanic and grew up in the Bronx, New York City, which is significant to the study because this participant represents the great diversity among those who participated in the study.

Participant 1 attended culinary school in New York City in 1984. This participant spent one year in formal culinary school and one year serving an internship, combining the experience of formal education with the experience of on-the-job training. He also studied music and sees the relationship of food and music, stating that “music and restaurants are tied together.” To attend culinary school, he worked more than one job, worked over the summer, and did everything he could to earn \$11,000 to attend school.

One of the experiences that helped this participant attend culinary school was an early influence from his grandmother. As a young boy, he would help his grandmother in the kitchen and developed a love for cooking that he carries to this day. Participant 1 highly recommends a formal culinary education to “learn the basics.” At the same time, he thinks that chefs should “work first and gain experience.” Participant 1 also believes that “life happens, I am always working, always looking to gain knowledge.” Participant 1 also referenced the change of “being a chef in the pre-computer age and how he had to transition his knowledge by learning computer skills.”

Participant 1 spoke about starting out as a prep cook 30 years ago making \$7 an hour. In those days, “everything was done from scratch: butchering meats, weighing meats and fats, pasta, etc.” His first kitchen experience was working at a summer camp in New Hampshire. Although it “was not what I was looking for,” he was able to gain experience. For his next position, he was hired at a restaurant in New York City straight out of culinary school. The

hiring chef “interviewed me on the spot because I went to culinary school and he took a chance on me by hiring me.” Looking at his starting salary, he stated it was “rough in the beginning, making about \$20,000 a year.”

Regarding cultural background, Participant 1 stated that he spoke Spanish, so he was viewed as “one of them” by his fellow chefs with the exception that he had a formal culinary education. Attending culinary school “helped build my self-esteem; I had more tools in the toolbox, increasing my confidence and creativity.” Participant 1 recommended culinary school to “anyone who has the passion” and “advises working in a kitchen first, if you can handle the stress, attend culinary school.” Participant 1 also mentioned that the “guys who really run the show” are the cooks and dishwashers, and that “better financial planning for retirement should be taught to them.” Overall, this interview was very informative and, as the first interview, established the groundwork for emerging themes that developed during the study.

Participant 2

Participant 2 was selected as a participant who met the requirements of the study as a culinary school graduate who had 10 years of industry experience. Participant 2 is a middle-aged male immigrant from Jamaica who has spent many years as an educator of hospitality management. His education began with a certificate in culinary arts followed by a bachelor’s degree in hospitality management, a master’s degree in business administration, and an educational specialist degree in instructional leadership. While he has left the industry for quite some time, he “has been teaching for 22 years, 13 years at a culinary school.” In looking at his total educational experience he “spent \$100,000 on education in today’s value.” Participant 2 perceived “hospitality easier academically than pre-med, so I switched majors, as an international student I had to complete education in 4 years.”

One of the highlights of his education was volunteering for catering events, in particular a “large event for the Miami Dolphins football team.” Participant 2 remembered that “I ran into the coach of the team 6 months later and he remembered me due to great customer service.” One of the hardest parts of the hospitality education was the general education courses, “especially foreign language class, Spanish.” One of his biggest challenges in school was “making sure that his grades stayed high.” The experience of attending hospitality school “helped me to focus on and achieve goals.” He stated that it is very important to realize that “not everyone is cut out for hospitality or culinary.” Furthermore, many culinary students “lack the personality required for management positions in the hospitality industry.

One of the emerging themes in the study made an appearance during this interview. Participant 2 stated that culinary is “not an easy field” and that one needs to “have a passion for culinary and/or hospitality.” As an educator, one “has to keep up with classes and the industry to stay current.” As such, he plans on completing his credits, because he “only needs two more courses to complete my master’s in hospitality management.” One of the most important areas of his overall career progression was being “happy with what you are doing.” Having “passion for what you are doing, having to model, sets a great example for students.” On career progression, “the possibilities are limitless in the foodservice industry.”

Starting out in the hospitality industry, Participant 2 stated that things were not easy. He “started at a front desk position, earning minimum wage.” He was given the responsibility of “supervising two people who were earning more money”, so he “quit after the first day.” On his second job in a hotel kitchen, the chef “handed me a broom and a dustpan, I quit after the first hour.” At that point, Participant 2 was asking himself: “Why did I pick this degree?” He soon realized that he “couldn’t keep quitting.” As far as his education and starting salary, “attendance

at school did not play a factor in starting salary, it was a joke.”

In finding appropriate employment, Participant 2 described the work experience as being “very helpful, made me feel good.” As he looked back on his educational experience, he realized that “what I learned about writing taught me how to be an excellent communicator in the workplace.” As far as the relationship between work experience and desire for formal education, he recommended “work in the industry for six months.” After working for six months, “if you still have passion for what you are doing, then consider attending culinary school. It is important to see the reality of the industry prior to a formal education.”

In looking at obstacles in employment, Participant 2 recommended that one “look at school as if it is your job.” The “habits that you develop in school will follow you to the workplace.” It is “important that you build good habits regarding attendance and punctuality. Some other key thoughts include his view on making a mistake. He stated that “making a mistake can be good if you see it as a learning opportunity.” Participant 2 concluded by stating that it is wise to “set goals to pursue your passion. Don’t let failure stop you; it is important to learn from your mistakes and move on.”

Participant 3

Participant 3 was selected as a graduate of both a culinary program and a wine and spirits management course. This participant is a middle-aged woman who is a business owner. She stated during the interview that people have to place “hospitality on the menu.” That statement really sums up her educational background, which consists of both back and front of the house training as both a kitchen and a dining room manager. Participant 3 studied nursing and real estate prior to culinary arts and really felt that her education has “layered on top of each other.” She stated that she still uses her “skills from nursing school.” Looking at her culinary education,

she “enjoyed the entire experience,” was very driven and focused making it an “overall joyful experience.”

Summing up the best part of her culinary school experience, this participant stated that she was given the “tools to open my own establishment.” Participant 3 also felt that “while culinary management is a very different business model, the education was very thorough.” One major frustration that she experienced in school was that “not everyone was as passionate as I was, especially in the academic courses.” Furthermore, she stated that the “food network has not done justice to the culinary profession.” She “would not recommend a culinary education if you just want to cook; if you really want to cook, find a good chef to work for.” Regarding customer service, “not having these skills is a big mistake.” One key point that she made regarding study was that she was “looking at studying holistic nutrition” and felt that “people have forgotten how to eat.”

In looking at her job placement, Participant 3 felt that her “personality has helped me a lot.” One of the hardest things that she had to learn in running her business was “being able to trust people, letting go, and delegating so that others can do the work.” At this point after being in business for almost 10 years, Participant 3 felt that she was “working on the business rather than in the business.” In looking at her starting salary, because she opened her own business right out of school, “you don’t get paid.” Therefore, she felt that “culinary school really did not impact the starting salary of the business.”

As far as her job satisfaction, she felt that she was well placed in the culinary industry. She views her education as a “great investment” and that “knowledge from culinary school was very helpful.” Participant 3 went on to explain that “school mirrors real life, people who don’t show up at school usually will also not show up at work.” In launching her own business,

Participant 3 felt that the overall experience was “a validation, a confidence builder.” Regarding appropriate employment, this participant stated that “before someone attends culinary school, you need to have work experience; without this industry experience, culinary school is not as beneficial.”

In looking at the obstacles Participant 3 has faced regarding employment, she stated that “if I could go back nine years, I would try not to be so accommodating.” She has relied on her education during challenging times stating, “it gave me the tools I use every day.” Participant 3 expanded this viewpoint by adding that she has “the ability to be more patient, more aware of what goes on in the kitchen and so much that I learned is used every day; culinary school was one of the best times in my life.” Finally, Participant 3 stated that “culinary school teaches you about being aware of customer profiles so that you can improve your level of customer service.”

Participant 4

Participant 4 was chosen for his completion of culinary school. Furthermore, Participant 4 has a high level of experience as a culinarian and as a retired member of the U.S. Navy. Participant 4 has also been an educator and is highly credentialed in the ACF. Within the ACF, he is a certified executive chef, a certified culinary educator, and holds membership in the honor society, American Academy of Chefs. After retiring from the U.S. Navy, he returned to school to earn his teaching credentials, going back to school at the age of 40. Of this experience, he simply stated that it “was very challenging; it took five years to complete teaching credentials.”

In his lifetime, “culinary and the field of education were my two major areas of study.” Becoming a teacher after 20 years of military service taught him “a different style of leadership as a teacher than in the military.” The hardest part of attending school was “learning to be a student.” The best part of this experience was “going back to school at 40 made me feel young.”

Overall, he felt that his culinary education “taught me so much.”

In looking at his education and overall career progression, one of his best experiences was “the achievement of completing his educational degree.” Contrasting that experience, his most difficult part was “driving almost two hours each way twice a week to attend school while also working.” As an accomplished culinarian, this participant highly recommended “a culinary education but not right out of high school.” Instead, he highly recommended “working in the industry for four to five years.” Continuing his education, he just completed the world executive chef program with the World Association of Cooking Societies, a global culinary organization that the ACF belongs to. For his next certification, he is considering the world master chef program. At the time of the interview, he was “working on a syllabus to certify chefs as culinarians within the World Association of Cooking Societies.”

In looking at his career progression, Participant 4 was very proud of his military service. In 1979, he was promoted to Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy after eight years of service, he was the “youngest chef in the Navy.” Although he felt that his entire military career was phenomenal, one of his greatest accomplishments was “as the diving officer on a submarine.” Participant 4 stated that he was “very lucky as the military paid for most of my education.” The money that he did spend out of pocket he “views as an investment in myself.” Overall, “education played a big part in my career; working with fellow teachers, I learned the teaching skills, which complimented culinary skills that I already had.” Because he was “committed to doing my best, the overall educational experience made me feel young, much better about myself.”

As far as finding appropriate employment, Participant 4 recommended that “someone really think over what they want to do.” He recommended “going to school full time rather than

part time as it is much more effective in gaining your education.” Participant 4 also stated that “a technical college or vocational program gives you the foundation, and that you can always transfer to a four-year program.” In looking at his own career path, he “would not change much, might be a bit more patient.”

In looking at overall career progression, Participant 4 said that “education has taught me to never stop learning, to learn something new every day.” The culinary industry has been a major part of his career and he was very passionate about all things culinary. Participant 4 felt that the “culinary industry is the greatest industry in the world.” Participant 4 also stated that the culinary industry is very inclusive and there is “always room for everyone to succeed.”

Participant 5

Participant 5 is a culinary professional who earned a “culinary certificate from Baltimore School of Culinary Arts, a two-year program and a great hands-on school.” Participant 5 was a member of the ACF as well as an educator. Looking back on his career, he has studied other fields such as nursing while he “kept going back to cooking.” The study of nursing has come in handy in the kitchen as the “science that I studied was very helpful in kitchen chemistry.” One of the hardest things he has done in his culinary career was “working for certification as a certified executive chef.” Looking back at his culinary education, the “best part of earning my culinary arts degree put me above most, knowledge helped me to move up the ranks faster.”

Participant 5 had a great feeling about attending culinary school. While “it may not be worth it for some”, culinary school was a great experience that “allotted me travel of the world.” He would “highly recommend” the experience of attending culinary school, while stating that “you have to love the culinary profession.” Participant 5 plans on “completing the World Executive Chef certification and becoming a member of the ACF honor society, the American

Academy of Chefs.” Thinking back on his career, Participant 5 was very satisfied that he “chose to go to college first and that he became a member of the ACF.” The experience of “working under a master chef” after leaving culinary school really helped expand his career options.

Upon graduation from culinary school, Participant 5 stated that his “first job out of school earned \$25,000 annually and was hired strictly because of schooling and experience.” Because Participant 5 became a member of the ACF while a student, he was able to quickly complete his certified working chef certification. Looking back on his student loans, he “was able to pay back loans within three years of completing culinary school.” The total sum that was paid back in three years was approximately \$25,000.

Looking back at the overall culinary school experience, school was “very helpful in learning how to prepare food but did not teach how to work with other people.” The experience of attending culinary school at a young age was not very easy. Participant 5 remembers it was very “exciting to attend school far from home.” While at school Participant 5 held a part-time job and said that looking back, “it was hard going to school and working.” Realizing the responsibilities of school and work, Participant 5 soon realized he had to be “self-disciplined, I couldn’t stay out all night.”

Over the course of his career as a chef and educator, Participant 5 has advised many aspiring chefs about attending culinary school. Participant 5 advises that a student should “attend a small, vocational school first to see if they are really interested and can always transfer to a four-year program later.” Another key area was “becoming a member of the ACF, helping to build your network through membership.” Looking back at his career, Participant 5 felt that he “should have gone to the Cordon Bleu in France for an apprenticeship and that he should have stayed at the Greenbrier longer.” The Greenbrier is a “renowned culinary apprenticeship training

facility in West Virginia.”

Participant 5 concluded with an overview of his culinary experience; “the culinary experience has given me the desire to always want to learn and this resonates with me as a teacher, passing that knowledge onto students.” The culinary school experience “helped me to get into management quicker.” As a result of attending culinary school. “I have always had good jobs and received adequate compensation.” The one great downfall of the culinary industry “is the hours worked, I have lost a lot of relationships and it has been tough on my family.”

Participant 6

Participant 6 was chosen as both a mentor and friend for over 30 years. Participant 6 was my inspiration for attending culinary school and we have the same alma mater, Johnson & Wales University. When I was a high school student, I completed an internship at a restaurant in New York City called Fraunces Tavern. At that time, Participant 6 was the sous chef and served as my direct supervisor during my six-month internship. It was truly an honor to have this gentleman participate in this research.

Participant 6 completed his culinary arts degree at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. Aside from culinary arts, Participant 6 has taken “various classes in sanitation and a course in German.” Participant 6 recalled that “sanitation contributes to the job while the German course was taken for a job experience that never materialized.” Participant 6 stated that he has “invested about \$40,000 in his education. Recalling the hardest part of culinary school, Participant 6 stated that “general education courses such as English and other related courses were very difficult.” The “best part of the degree was learning many things in a short period of time, a base of knowledge that may otherwise have taken about 10 years to learn.” Looking at “the best and hardest part, the experience of attending culinary school was

worth it at least for the first few years of my career.”

In looking at the experience of attending culinary school, Participant 6 stated that he “wouldn’t recommend it because there are many easier ways to make a living.” Participant 6 continued that “if working in a kitchen is really what you want, then pursue a culinary degree and establish a network.” At the present time, Participant 6 has “no current plans to continue education, I try to self-educate but nothing formal.” Overall, Participant 6 stated that he was “very satisfied with career path, currently a multi-unit manager, somewhat happy doing what I am doing now.”

In looking at the first job in the culinary industry after school, Participant 6 was “hired as a union cook in New York City earning \$17 an hour. Participant 6 stated that he was “hired immediately due to culinary school, certainly got me in the door.” Attending school was also helpful in that “a school mate recommended me for the position.” In looking at his starting salary, “the starting salary was okay compared to the money spent attending culinary school.” Participant 6 was “able to pay off student loans within a couple of years of culinary school graduation.”

In looking at his overall job satisfaction, culinary school gave him a “broad base of knowledge, got me an interview and a job offer.” Looking at the daily responsibilities of the culinary profession, “if you are set on working in the kitchen, it is great.” Participant 6 felt that “I might have been better suited for other professions.” As far as everyday working experiences, Participant 6 stated that “most days are different in the culinary world.” While it “has ups and downs, the culinary profession is an overall satisfying career.”

In finding appropriate employment, Participant 6 has some keen insight to share. Participant 6 “would recommend to someone very interested in culinary to attend a two-year

program in culinary arts from a regionally accredited culinary school.” As Participant 6 looks back at his career, his “job choices would remain the same, I wouldn’t change much. While Participant 6 was “winding down his career”, he still sees the value of attending culinary school. Even today, many years after attending culinary school, Participant 6 stated that “the basics learned regarding food and sanitation are still useful.”

Participant 6 recalled the experience of attending culinary school as very beneficial. If he were to live that experience today, he “would probably focus more on academic studies, special functions, staying after class, and building a network.” Participant 6 added that he believes “regarding a career path, you need an enormous amount of talent to be pretty good.” While the culinary industry can be very demanding of an individual, Participant 6 stated that “it’s been pretty good overall as a career path.”

Participant 7

Participant 7 was chosen as a highly experienced culinarian whom I have known for over 20 years. We attended culinary school at the same time and completed our student teaching together at the same school site. Furthermore, both of us have a degree in education specifically designed to teach culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. To conduct this interview, I traveled to Participant 7’s workplace in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. It was truly an honor to have this culinary professional take part in my research.

Participant 7 recalled that “his culinary degree took four years and the bachelor’s two.” The culinary program “required two years of apprenticeship and two years of study to complete.” After completing his culinary education, Participant 7 “studied education and management technology.” The total that Participant 7 spent on his educational experience was \$90,000. Rating his total educational experience, Participant 7 stated “on a scale of one to 10, a 10;

connected to a lot of associations in the culinary world that led to positions in the culinary industry.”

Looking at the experience attending culinary school, Participant 7 stated that the “hardest part of earning the degree was the apprenticeship program.” Prior to qualifying for the apprenticeship, Participant 7 stated that he “had to successfully complete a blind taste test.” Participant 7 recalled that “a lot of the challenge was during this period and the chef I apprenticed for gave me a hard time.” Participant 7 now realizes that “if the chef didn’t think I had the potential, he wouldn’t have invested the time in me.” One other difficulty attending culinary school was “balancing school and work.” Participant 7 recalled the “best part of the degree was the exposure of the culinary world and the interactions with other people while earning it.” Overall looking at the best and worse parts of the culinary school experience, “the experience was worth it.”

In looking at the overall culinary school experience, Participant 7 stated that he “would recommend the education if someone has the passion for it.” Participant 7 continued with “a culinarian will need the skills from culinary school to compete effectively.” “If you want an upscale career path, culinary school is essential.” Participant 7 continued with “knowledge is the key to advancement, it is the difference between being told what to do and making decisions.” As far as education, “it is always ongoing, as I move up in the ranks, I am always learning.”

Regarding his career progression, Participant 7 has “no regrets, choices have been sound, opportunities were afforded at the right time.” Overall, “career growth and progression have been very satisfying, opportunities have always been presented, career path has been great.” Participant 7 “would recommend culinary school but that will also depend on where you go.” Both the “passion of others around you and the learning environment reflects whether or not the

experience is worth it.” Participant 7 has no plans to return to school; “work experience is the equivalent of attending graduate school.”

In looking at his job placement after completing his education, Participant 7 stated that because of his degree he “started as a supervisor.” Participant 7 continued, “my starting salary out of school was as a supervisor, pay was low, but I worked a lot of hours; the base salary that I started working with as a supervisor was \$30,000.” Participant 7 reflects that “without a degree, I would have been offered a lower salary.” Participant 7 felt that “the starting salary was worth it and working for the university helped compensate for books, etc.” Overall, Participant 7 felt that the “career path and choices were well worth it.”

In looking at overall job satisfaction, Participant 7 recalled that “knowledge from culinary school that helped was the transition from the kitchen to the front of the house.” “Understanding the different flavors of food and in particular, tasting food from the front of the house with culinary knowledge, helps to bridge the gap between back and front of the house.” Participant 7 continued, “looking back, I enjoyed the culinary school experience, I had a lot of fun, and I have made lifelong friends.” Participant 7 felt “a sense of pride when I can hire students who graduated from the same school.”

In looking at appropriate employment after a culinary education, Participant 7 advises “to a student who wants to attend culinary school, excellent curriculum is what you want, and a strong reputation for job placement.” In looking at his personal career, Participant 7 “would not change anything regarding education other than possibly completing a terminal degree.” Participant 7 stated that “when you can master both education and practical experience, that truly sets you apart.” Participant 7 felt that “culinary school still has an impact on my career, the name of the school carries a lot of weight, I have no regrets with attending culinary school.”

Participant 8

Participant 8 was chosen as a culinary school graduate and a member of the ACF. Participant 8 was one of my former students who left school with a strong sense of purpose and 10 years later, has moved up to the level of district manager with her company. I am extremely proud to have helped her in her educational pursuit and I am honored to have her participation in my research. Participant 8 represents another element of diversity in my study, being a Woman of a minority background.

Participant 8 began her culinary education with a background in information systems and networking, and she felt that her “previous education ties together only in the regimen of study.” Participant 8 earned a “bachelor’s in culinary management that took just shy of three years.” In looking at her total educational investment, Participant 8 stated that she “invested \$90,000 in education.” Participant 8 said that the “hardest part of attending culinary school was being consistent and staying with it while the best part was not only the cooking but also the management training that I received.” Overall, the “changes in task” made culinary school worth it.

In looking at overall career progression, Participant 8 stated “that is the difference one person can make in a company, having the ability to make positive changes is extremely important.” Participant 8 recalled that her starting salary out of culinary school was \$45,000. Participant 8 added, “having the degree allowed me to start with a higher salary and move quickly into the management program.” As a result, Participant 8 “was able to pay off the student loans with the starting salary within several years of graduation.”

In looking at her overall job satisfaction, Participant 8 recalled how helpful school was in establishing her career. Participant 8 said that “knowledge from school that helped was all that I

learned about safety and sanitation.” Furthermore, “the overall culinary school experience gave me many tools that I continually use at my job.” Participant 8 “would advise those interested in culinary school; be passionate and have a realistic expectation of what you will get out of it, if you start culinary school, stick with it.”

Looking back at her education, Participant 8 stated that she “would possibly have liked to start school earlier, and I probably would have started taking courses at a community college to help save on cost.” The overall experience of earning “the bachelor’s degree made a big difference in my career; the educational experience was inspiring.” Participant 8 felt that she was able to “learn from great people and the school environment itself was an important factor.” Participant 8 recalled that the “diversity in school was very helpful in absorbing information.”

Participant 9

Participant 9 was chosen as a member of the ACF and a culinary school graduate. Participant 9 teaches in a high school culinary arts program. Participant 9 has an associate degree in food management and he completed a certificate in culinary arts. Overall Participant 9 took “a total of three years to complete his education.” At the time of the interview, he was taking “education courses for teaching.” Participant 9 felt that the “educational experience has given me an edge, I learned classical cuts and techniques very useful skills in obtaining and holding a job.”

In looking at the hardest part of earning his culinary degree, Participant 9 remembers that “the hardest part was going to school and working at the same time; academic courses were harder, I wanted to work with my hands.” Overall, the best part of earning the culinary degree was the “foundation of knowledge and the sense of accomplishment” that I felt in finishing something that was difficult.” Participant 9 stated that “I am able to pass this sense of pride and

accomplishment onto my students on a daily basis.”

In looking at the value in career progression, Participant 9 spent a total of “\$15,000 on my education.” Participant 9 wisely observed that “some students have a gift for working in the kitchen, others don’t; the kitchen is not right for everyone.” According to Participant 9 “a big factor is attitude, culinary must be a good fit, you must love the kitchen.” As far as his educational goals, Participant 9 “would like to complete my bachelor’s degree and also the certified culinary educator certification.”

In looking at his job placement, Participant 9 was direct in saying that “career progression has not been great, I don’t see the point of staying in the same place.” Often, Participant 9 stated that there are “limited opportunities for career progression in many cases, loyalty to a company no longer pays off.” Participant 9 recalled that his starting salary was \$9 an hour; education made no difference in starting salary or pay.” While the starting salary didn’t “measure up, the overall culinary school experience gave me many tools that I continually use at my job.”

In looking at appropriate employment, Participant 9 felt that “what you put into culinary school is what you get out of it and students talk to other students at the school to learn their experiences.” Furthermore, Participant 9 stated that “key questions that the students ask should focus on job placement; research the school, and shop around.” Participant 9 stated that in retrospect, he “would have pursued a higher level of education sooner.”

Participant 10

Participant 10 was chosen as a member of the ACF who also completed culinary school. Participant 10 has a very interesting background and has been a member of the ACF for many years. At the time of the study, he was working as an executive chef in a healthcare facility.

Participant 10 completed his culinary certification that took him “one year to complete.” An interesting area that Participant 10 has studied outside of culinary arts was theology. Participant 10 stated that the “total experience of studying theology and culinary arts was very beneficial in that I learned many things from each degree.”

Participant 10 recalled that he spent a total of \$12,000 on his education. The “hardest part of my culinary education was going to school and working at the same time.” Participant 10 said that the best part of earning the culinary degree “was landing a job.” Contrasting the best and hardest part of his culinary education, Participant 10 said that it helped “build my confidence.” Participant 10 recalled that “I studied hard and I feel that I gained a lot from the education.” Participant 10 also stated that “cooking is easy, must be willing to do it.”

Participant 10 stated that he “would recommend a culinary education, the more you learn, the better you are.” At the time of the interview, Participant 10 had plans to complete his degree in theology. Participant 10 was “building a food truck, I have learned to be creative and I am ready to start a business.” Upon completion of culinary school, Participant 10 started by earning \$9 an hour and with or without school, the salary would not have changed.”

As far as job satisfaction, the “salary was not good, it didn’t match up with the cost of education.” As far as the training received in culinary school, the “hands on experience really helped, with working in the industry.” Participant 10 felt that “culinary school was worth it because knowledge is worth more than money.” Participant 10 would advise potential culinary school students that “knowledge is worth it, but the pay is not going to be what you think.”

Looking back at his career, Participant 10 stated that he “would have went to culinary school at a younger age.” Participant 10 said that “the study of food alone helps me to prepare above average food.” The most important aspect of culinary career success is “having heart for

the profession has a lot to do with it.” As Participant 10 concluded this interview, he parted with “looking forward to starting my own business.”

Participant 11

Participant 11 was chosen as a lifelong culinary professional and educator, culinary school graduate, member of the ACF, and former colleague. Participant 11 and I worked together as culinary instructors and went through certification together. We were both evaluated and tested at the same time and both were recognized as Certified Executive Chef in 2009. As a former colleague and a true culinary professional, it was an honor to have Participant 11 participate in this research. Participant 11 attended a different campus of my alma mater, Johnson & Wales University in Charleston, South Carolina.

Participant 11 earned both an associate’s in culinary arts and a bachelor’s in hospitality management. His educational experience only “took three years due to a previous degree.” Previously, Participant 11 “studied psychology and criminal justice, receiving a bachelor’s degree in each from Georgia Tech. In looking at his total educational experience, “psychology helps with working with other people, criminal justice gives a different insight from a legal standpoint.” As a total expense, Participant 11 “spent \$100,000 on education including the rent, books, etc..”

Participant 11 recalled that the “hardest part in earning a culinary degree was sticking with it, keeping up with the work, the dedication that it takes to complete, and working while attending school.” The best part of earning the culinary degree was “the sense of accomplishment, seeing it through to the end.” Contrasting the best and hardest part of earning a culinary degree, “knowing that I have what it takes to get the job done.” As evidence of that, Participant 11 “went somewhere, a new city, and easily found work without any connections, no

friends or family.”

Participant 11 would “recommend a culinary education dependent on the program.” Participant 11 felt that a culinary education “benefits someone who wants to be an executive chef, you will learn things that you would not learn in the industry.” Participant 11 felt that he “would like to earn a terminal degree, more than likely in psychology.” Participant 11 recalled that his “starting salary out of school was \$10 an hour and was offered a position after my internship.” Participant 11 felt that “graduating from culinary school showed that I had commitment, accountability, and responsibility.” Participant 11 felt that “starting salary was not great, but I was able to move up the ladder due to work ethic.”

In looking at overall job satisfaction, Participant 11 felt that “knowledge from school helped me to be organized, working in a professional manner.” As a whole, “culinary graduation made me feel proud, I probably would not have had the experiences that I had living in foreign countries such as Ireland, England, Amsterdam, all due to a friendship from culinary school.” When picking a culinary school, Participant 11 advised “people to check out program, what types of classes, and that it is a thorough program.” Participant 11 also recommends potential students to “go work in a restaurant prior to school to learn what it takes to make it in the industry.” In retrospect, Participant 11 stated that he “would have started his culinary career sooner.”

In looking at the future impact of his culinary degree, Participant 11 felt that it will “serve as a basis of knowledge, I have been afforded opportunities to grow as a chef.” Participant 11 has some keen insight on the value of culinary education, “you will get out of it what you put into it.” Participant 11 believed that “if you put your heart and soul into your education, it will prepare you for a successful career and will follow you in the work field.” Participant 11

concluded, “building good habits in culinary school will carry through to the workplace.”

Participant 12

Participant 12 was an esteemed colleague, a culinary school graduate and a member of the ACF. Participant 12 attended culinary school at a different branch of my alma mater, Johnson & Wales University in North Miami, Fl. Participant 12 was a Woman with a minority background, speaking to the diversity of both the culinary industry itself as well as this research. It was an honor to have Participant 12 take part in this research. Participant 12 was a highly experienced culinary instructor in a high school setting, specializing in teaching baking and pastry theory and principles.

Participant 12 has “completed an associate’s in baking & pastry, a bachelor’s in hospitality management, and a master’s in education.” Participant 12 felt that the overall educational background made me “well prepared in entering the workforce.” Overall Participant 12 recalled that she “invested \$80,000 in education.” The best part of earning the culinary degree was that it was “easy to get a job.” Participant 12 recalled that the “hardest part of earning the culinary degree was studying academic courses.” Comparing both the best and hardest part, Participant 12 felt that it “was definitely worth the experience.”

In measuring the value of career progression, chef stated that “it all begins in culinary school, put in the effort, don’t waste the time and money.” At this point in the educational process, Participant 12 has “no plans on continuing education.” One of the highlights of Participant 12’s career was “helping in the planning and design of the culinary academy at my school, a \$6.5 Million Dollar project.” Participant 12 felt that “the level of trust that was place in me as a teacher and a culinarian speaks volumes of the respect, I have been shown by school administration.”

In looking at job placement, Participant 12 said that her “starting salary out of school was \$12.50 an hour, and I started out making more than the average.” Although it was more than the average, Participant 12 felt that the “starting salary was okay but not great.” Overall, Participant 12 felt that “the degree made a difference.” In looking at job satisfaction, “knowledge from school helped in that I was used to working with different chefs, so I was better prepared for the challenge of different demands.” Another important factor was that “school was a bit stricter so that was also helpful in entering the industry with high standards and a strong foundation.”

Participant 12 has some excellent advice for prospective culinary students. Participant 12 stated “make sure that culinary school is something that you really want, you have to have a desire and passion to want to do this.” Looking back, Participant 12 “probably would have taken some community college courses first instead of paying full price for the same courses at culinary school.” Regarding future impact of her culinary education, Participant 12 felt that “training will not have much impact on future career path.” Overall, “the culinary school experience was great, and I have established great work relationships because of training from culinary school.”

Participant 13

Participant 13 was a member of the ACF and has been a Chef for many years. Participant 13 represents diversity in my study as she is a middle-aged Woman. This helps to bring balance to the study as with the other participants. Prior to becoming a chef, this participant “worked in customer service and technology.” After switching careers, Participant 13 attended a culinary certification program and felt “very good about the education that I received.” As a matter of fact, at the time of the interview, Participant 13 was “continuing on with a baking and pastry certification.”

In looking at the hardest part in earning her culinary degree, Participant 13 recalled that “it was hard to stay determined, to keep going.” Participant 13 recalled the easiest part as “discovering a skill and hidden talents that I didn’t know I had.” As far as starting her culinary career, Participant 13 “started very late in life, overcame an age difference, after that, the experience was awesome.” Looking back, Participant 13 said that “culinary is something that I have always been passionate about.” As far as recommending culinary school, Participant 13 said “I recommend if you have the passion, you really want to learn, if not, it really isn’t for you.”

One of the most satisfying parts of attending culinary school was “being considered for different positions.” Participant 13 adds that the “field is wide open, and I feel that I can go anywhere.” Participant 13 recalled that her starting salary after school was “\$10 an hour, while my starting salary was not that great, the money that I have earned since exceeded the amount that I spent for school.” Participant 13 recalled that the “knowledge that I learned in school was helpful to the point of being able to coach/teach others as well as sharing knowledge.”

One of the greatest things about attending culinary school was that “it makes me feel great, I found out things about myself.” Participant 13 said that “I am able to make things with my hands, follow my passion, and to be able to make a living at it.” One key to her success in the culinary industry was to “keep an open mind, dig deep, become more versatile in the kitchen.” Participant 13 expects her “career and, opportunities to grow.” Participant 13 concluded with “I am glad that I attended culinary school, it opened a whole new world for me and if you have the opportunity, go for it.”

Participant 14

Participant 14 is a highly experienced chef and a member of the ACF. Participant 14

attended culinary school many years ago and worked in the culinary industry. In recent years, chef has become a culinary instructor where “I can give back some of my knowledge and experience to the future of the culinary industry.” Participant 14 “completed a culinary program and I have a diploma in culinary arts, the program took two years.” One unique aspect regarding Participant 14’s education was “the fact that the campus was throughout the city of Washington, D.C; many of the classes took place in embassy kitchens.” Participant 14 recalled that he “spent \$20,000 for my education.”

Participant 14 recalled that the “hardest part of the degree was being eighteen years old and let loose in a big city.” Participant 14 recalled the best part of the degree was that he “felt a sense of accomplishment when I finished, what you put into it is what you get out of it.”

Participant 14 learned many things in culinary school including “learned life lessons and gained experiences through being in college.” Participant 14 felt that the culinary industry “needs to go back to an apprenticeship system, today’s school students have no practical experience.”

Participant 14 recommends “attending school but also gaining work experience, and work towards certification through the ACF.”

Looking back to when he completed culinary school, Participant 14 recalled that “I started earning \$8 an hour in my first job after culinary school and the culinary education didn’t matter with the starting salary.” Participant 14 has had “very eclectic experiences with food and learned many different styles of food while attending culinary school. Participant 14 recalled that “knowledge gained in culinary school helped me to be tolerant of others as well as understanding other cultures and I went to Washington, D.C as a boy and I left as a Man.” One regret Participant 14 has about attending culinary school “was that I was lazy in school and could have gotten more out of it.” Participant 14 advises others interested in attending culinary school

to “thoroughly research the school, don’t pay for a name brand school if you don’t have the passion, weigh all options.”

Participant 15

Participant 15 is a culinary school graduate and a member of the ACF. I have known this participant for about 10 years and we were colleagues teaching culinary management courses together. Participant 15 is highly educated in both culinary arts and hospitality management and attended graduate school at a renowned hospitality school, Cornell. It was truly an honor to have Participant 15 participate in this research as the final participant.

In looking at the culinary education that he received, Participant 15 felt “proud, opened a lot of doors, culinary school gives you the framework, but you have to make it happen for yourself.” In looking at his total investment, Participant 15 said that he “spent about \$200,000” on my education.” The “hardest part of culinary school was accounting and financial courses.” In looking at the “best part of earning the culinary degree was the foundation of operations and solid networking opportunities.”

In looking at his total educational experience, Participant 15 felt “that the experience was worth it but at the same time the downside was the earnings right out of school.” Participant 15 would “recommend culinary school to others and if they chose to continue their education, I would recommend them to broaden their lens by diversifying their fields of study.” At the time of the interview, Participant 15 was working on “professional certifications” as an effort in continuing his education.” Overall, Participant 15 has been “satisfied with my career progression including sales, global sales, and currently I am working on my own business.”

Participant 15 recalled his “starting salary of \$31,000, which was the cost of one year’s school tuition, it took 10 years to make decent compensation.” Participant 15 recalled that

“starting salary was very disappointing, it took a number of years for it to be worth it.”

Participant 15 stated that culinary school was a “positive experience, learned a lot, there was great networking.” Participant 15 would “advise students to learn as much as possible, get involved, try different things, network with peers, network with alumni.” Participant 15 concluded with “follow your passion, do what you love to do and hopefully, you can wake up and enjoy what you do.”

Results

The results of this phenomenological study were analyzed using participant interviews, participant journals, and workplace observations to achieve triangulation of data. Documents from the interviews, journals, and observations were coded utilizing the qualitative software, ATLAS.ti. This software was utilized to both store and organize 90 primary documents. Among these primary documents were transcripts of participant interviews, participant journal responses, and workplace observations. The use of ATLAS.ti software was helpful in organizing data, allowing for coding that was both simplified and accurate. Coding was completed across the various documents and tallied for the purpose of analysis. Furthermore, these codes were efficiently categorized for meaning, leading to the discovery of emerging themes.

The process of data analysis began by entering the documents into the ATLAS.ti software. This began with uploading transcript copies of each participant interview. These transcripts provided a highly accurate representation of the original recorded audio interviews. This was accomplished through double-checking the original audio interview with the written transcript and adjusting any errors to ensure complete accuracy. The next set of data entered in ATLAS.ti was the participant journals. All handwritten participant journal entries were transferred to document form and then entered. The last grouping of documents was the

workplace observation forms.

All documents entered in ATLAS.ti were analyzed for themes and were noted in the software. At this point, themes were arranged into sections and any overlapping themes were either consolidated or discarded for repetition. Based upon this initial coding, data was grouped into broad categories of: background, value in career progression, job placement, job satisfaction, appropriate employment, obstacles in employment and additional information. Initial reports were run in ATLAS.ti that categorized all participant data under these groups. This provided a broad overview of the interviews, journals, and observations.

The participant data was then categorized by research question. All relevant data for each research question was grouped and reports were created. The main categories of the research questions included the main themes of the study: job placement (RQ1), job satisfaction (RQ2), appropriate employment (RQ3), obstacles in employment (RQ4), and value in career progression (RQ5). The data was again analyzed by research question and from these grouped clusters, themes emerged and were identified. The following is an overview of the research question and the corresponding interview questions:

RQ1

The first research question, “How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job placement in the culinary industry?” aimed to identify the gap that previous studies addressing culinary school curriculum (i.e. Godowsky, Zukin, & Horn, 2011) have noted. Specifically, this addressed the personal impact of culinary school graduation on job placement. This first research question was supported by direct personal experiences of 15 culinary school graduates. The conclusions that were drawn from this research may be helpful to educators and students in the future with regards to the quality and meaningfulness that is received from a

culinary education. Specifically, this information may assist culinary school graduates in gaining an understanding of how their education impacts the types of employment available in the foodservice industry (Hertzman & Ackerman, 2010). Furthermore, the individual experience with job placement may help future potential culinary students decide whether or not to attend culinary school.

Three interview questions were aligned with Research Question 1. Question 11, “What factors satisfy you with regards to career progression?” explored the overall feeling of the culinary school experience. Specifically, relating to career success from the perspective of the individual culinary school graduate. Question 12, “What was your starting salary?” explored the direct result of attending culinary school on compensation. Question 13, “Based on your starting salary, what factor did completion of culinary school play in determining your salary?” is a direct exploration of the job placement of a culinary school graduate. Specifically, this question seeks to determine what the completion of culinary school is worth to a potential employer.

RQ2

The second research question “How does graduation from a two-year culinary program influence job satisfaction in the culinary industry?” aimed to help determine whether or not one has made a sound career choice through examining individual work experience (Demetry, 2013). In the foodservice industry, often a difference exists between the perceived work experience and the actual industrial experience (Birdir & Canackci, 2014). Participants in the study had the opportunity to discuss personal experiences with job satisfaction in the culinary industry. Furthermore, the actual teaching of culinary curriculum can benefit from a real-world perspective that only comes from personal experience (Bourdain, 2006).

Two interview questions were aligned with Research Question 2. Question 14,

“Considering the amount you invested in your education, and the amount you pay in student loans, how does your starting salary measure up?” is a direct inquiry of the perceived value of a culinary education based on individual, lived experience. Question 15, “What knowledge from culinary school helped you transition into the culinary field?” speaks directly to the perceived skills obtained from a culinary school education based on individual, lived experience.” Both of these questions are foundational to the entire research project in seeking to determine the value of a culinary education based upon the lived experiences of each participant.

RQ3

The third research question “What are culinary school graduates’ perceptions of the value of their culinary degree in terms of finding appropriate employment?” sought to determine the value of a culinary education in terms of perceived compensation for culinary employment and the actual compensation (ACF, 2017). This perception can be an important factor in whether or not attending culinary school is a wise choice from an economic standpoint. The return on investment of a culinary education is an important factor directly related to choosing that career (Hegarty, 2011). Therefore, potential culinary school students need to have a realistic expectation of what their starting salary will be upon graduation. Overall, this research sought to improve the level of understanding that exists with actual experiences of culinary industry compensation (Armoo & Neequaye, 2014).

Two interview questions were aligned with Research Question 3. Question 16, “How does the overall culinary school experience make you feel?” relates directly to the relationship between attending culinary school and finding appropriate employment. This question speaks to the essence of the culinary school lived experience and the resulting impact in the workplace. Question 17, “What advice would you give people interested in attending culinary school?”

speaks directly to assisting future culinarians in finding appropriate employment. Advice obtained from this research aims to assist the future culinarian in making an informed decision of whether or not to attend culinary school.

RQ4

The fourth research question “What do culinary school graduates perceive as obstacles in finding appropriate employment?” sought to determine what obstacles the participants experienced in finding appropriate employment. Participants were interviewed specifically in this area for their personal experience with these obstacles (Ricci, 2010). Based on industry research, some of the obstacles faced by culinary school graduates in finding appropriate employment include: job burnout, job stress, and employee turnover (Jung, Kim, & Yoon, 2012). Obstacles associated with culinary employment may cause lost opportunity in finding appropriate employment (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). The experiences of culinary school graduates with obstacles in employment can potentially benefit future culinarians through communication of these obstacles (Shani, Belhassen, & Soskolne, 2013).

Two interview questions were aligned with Research Question 4. Question 18, “Based on your experiences and knowing the culinary profession as you do now, what if anything, would you do differently regarding your education, career, and job choices?” speaks directly to any obstacles in employment that the participant has experienced. This question gives the participant the opportunity to express any regrets that they have or have experienced in terms of employment. Question 19, “What impact do you expect culinary school attendance to have on your future career?” give the participant the opportunity to reflect how culinary school attendance may influence future employment. These questions collectively give the participant an opportunity to reflect on the past, present, and future regarding culinary school graduation.

RQ5

The fifth research question “How do culinarians employed in the field view the value of graduation from a two-year culinary program as it relates to overall career progression?” summarizes the experience of the participants regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression. Essentially, this information helped to determine whether or not attendance of culinary school was a good return on investment (Saul, 2015). Understanding whether or not attending culinary school is a worthwhile endeavor is central to this research (Simon, 2014). This information revealed in this research can help future prospective culinary students decide on whether or not to attend culinary school (Zopiatis, 2010).

Three interview questions were aligned with Research Question 5. Question 8, “Can you contrast how the best and hardest part of earning your culinary degree made you feel?” speaks directly to the perceived value of the experience by the participant. This question summarizes two earlier interview background questions that addressed both the best and hardest parts of the educational experience. Question 9, “Why or why wouldn’t you recommend a culinary education”, speaks to the lived experience of the participant and based on that, how they would advise potential culinary students. Question 10, “What are your plans, if any, to continue your education”, speaks to the future plans of the participant regarding future education.

Summary

Interpreting the lived experiences of 15 culinary professionals who graduated from culinary school involved both structural and textual parts. The structural description explained how the participants experienced the culinary education while the textual description explained what the participants experienced as culinary school graduates (Moustakas, 1994). Through detailed analysis of the five major research questions, both the structural and textual descriptions

are synthesized. These descriptions are the essence of the lived experience, attending culinary school and working in the food service industry as a graduate.

The structural description of the culinary school experience begins with a background of the participant to help determine how they became a culinary student, how they entered the culinary profession. The culinary education is then evaluated in terms of the impact that the education has made on overall career progression. This section that is tied to Research Question 5 explored how the participant perceived the value of the entire culinary school experience. Specifically, how this value translated into how the participant was able to advance in the profession due to the education received. Structural description also related to how a participant was able to find employment after culinary school. This section focused on overall satisfaction and what type of compensation the participant received upon graduation.

The textual description of the culinary school experience focuses on what the culinary school graduate experienced in the food service industry. The culinary education is evaluated as to what impact that lived experience had on job satisfaction. This section sought to determine what the culinary education experience impact was on starting salary and industry knowledge. The following section sought to determine what impact culinary school attendance had on finding appropriate employment. The final section sought to determine what obstacles in employment the culinary school graduate faced upon entering the food service industry.

In the concluding Chapter Five, the major findings of the study will be summarized, supported with a discussion of both central elements and key themes. The major implications of the study will then be addressed regarding empirical, practical, and theoretical viewpoints. As a conclusion, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are described.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of culinary school graduates who have joined a professional organization (ACF) and have spent at least 10 years working in the culinary industry. The 15 participants represented a cross-section of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) membership and all were experienced chefs; many were also educators or managers. Semi-structured interviews, participant journals, and workplace observations were the three data collection tools for this study. Data were analyzed using the transcendental phenomenology model (Moustakas, 1994) that sought to find the common themes of being a culinary school graduate and a member of the ACF working in the culinary industry. As a method of organizing the data and coding clusters for theme identification, I utilized the ATLAS.ti program. The chapter begins with a summary of the findings in the context of the five research questions answered and continues with a discussion of the findings as they relate to the themes identified, relevant literature, and the three guiding theoretical frameworks. Implications of the study are then discussed as well as limitations of the study and future research recommendations. Chapter Five then concluded with a summary.

Summary of Findings

This transcendental phenomenological study was guided by the central research question: What are the experiences of culinary school graduates regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression? I used five research sub-questions to more specifically direct this central research, this section presents a concise summary of the findings from those questions.

The following five research questions informed the study:

RQ1: How Does Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program Influence Job Placement in the Culinary Industry?

Salary. From Research Question 1, four major themes were revealed: salary, work experience, knowledge, and passion. The first major theme, salary, was centered around the individual participants and the feelings that they had regarding compensation offered upon culinary school graduation. Several participants felt the starting salary received after graduation from culinary school was adequate. At the same time, several participants felt the starting salary after culinary school did not measure up to their expectations. Even though the starting salary was not great, several participants were able to advance quickly due to a strong work ethic.

Work experience. The next major theme revealed regarding Research Question 1 was work experience. Several participants mentioned that culinary school was a start of lifelong learning that has taken place in the kitchen. Through keeping an open mind, several participants have been able to build upon the initial knowledge obtained in culinary school. Regarding work experience, several participants mentioned they received fundamental culinary training in a school that has been greatly enhanced by actual work experience. A large part of the position of chef involves sharing knowledge with staff. This summarizes the fundamental concept that a chef both teaches and learns perpetually (Gisslen, 2007). Several participants noted that progression of a career does not end with advancement to executive chef, rather, through experience gained, the possibilities are only limited by the individual.

Knowledge. One theme reflected by Research Question 1 was knowledge, acquired while attending culinary school. Most participants reflected that culinary school was a great learning experience presented by a great group of chef instructors, indicating an overall positive experience with knowledge received. This point is significant and reflects the perceived value of

the majority in a culinary education. Several participants mentioned that the experience of attending culinary school has had a positive impact on both career and the job opportunities that have been presented.

Passion. A final major theme revealed by Research Question 1 was passion. Passion reflects how much individuals enjoy their profession, how much they love what they are doing. Several participants mentioned that passion for the culinary industry has been significant in building a strong work ethic. Without passion, performing in a professional kitchen would be very difficult. Several participants summed up job placement in the culinary industry with the overall sentiment that chefs need a passion for what they are doing; they have to model and be a good example for their staff.

RQ2: How Does Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program Influence Job Satisfaction in the Culinary Industry?

Salary. From Research Question 2, three major themes were revealed: salary, knowledge, and work experience. The first major theme, salary, was based on the individual perception of salary as compared to the payment of student loans. One participant felt that the starting salary after culinary school was only 10% of the cost of the education, taking many years after school was completed to pay back the debt. From an economic standpoint, several participants also mentioned that the starting salary and the debt from student loans made it very difficult to make ends meet for the first few years after leaving school.

Knowledge. A second major theme was knowledge, the essence of the value of the culinary school experienced relating to the actual performance as a chef. One participant felt that culinary school complimented culinary skills that he already possessed and that knowledge from culinary school improved his overall performance as a professional chef. The knowledge of

culinary school was a broad theme and is directly related to the culinary school experience. Most participants stated that culinary school provided a broad base of knowledge, which helped get a job interview and a job offer. The culinary school education was a central theme in finding gainful employment. From a different perspective, another participant felt that knowledge from culinary school helped in his transition to restaurant management.

The impact of knowledge obtained in culinary school was evident by the fact that several participants mentioned culinary terminology as a factor. Culinary terminology learned in school acted as a means to communicate professional knowledge. Through the use of this terminology learned in school, culinary school graduates were recognized by both peers and supervisors as a culinary professional. Several participants considered the use of culinary terminology a factor in their performance as a professional chef, leading to advancement in the workplace.

Work experience. The third major theme revealed by Research Question 2 was work experience. Participant 2 had a unique perspective on work experience, stating that “knowledge of hospitality courses was very helpful due to the fact that most of the instructors worked in the industry, and they brought daily experiences into the classroom.” Most participants mentioned that hands-on experience gained in culinary school was very helpful in working in the culinary industry. Many participants felt a sense of pride in culinary school graduation that also led to other experiences. Participant 11 stated, “I have lived in Ireland, England, and Amsterdam due to a friendship at my first work experience after culinary school. Without that education, that probably would never have happened.”

RQ3: What are Culinary School Graduates' Perceptions of the Value of Their Culinary Degree in Terms of Finding Appropriate Employment?

Knowledge. Three major themes were revealed from Research Question 3: knowledge, work experience, and passion. The first major theme, knowledge was a logical extension of the questions that sought to determine how culinary school attendance impacted appropriate employment. Several participants mentioned that the education received in culinary school added to their toolbox of knowledge. Some participants felt that culinary knowledge developed skills in communication and writing. Overall, the majority of participants recalled that culinary school and the myriad of skills learned was a significant factor in obtaining appropriate employment.

Work experience. The second theme revealed by Research Question 3 was work experience. Most of the participants had a very strong view of how work experience can help in finding appropriate employment. Many participants pointed out the value of work experience prior to attending culinary school as a factor in maximizing the culinary school experience. Prior work experience in the foodservice industry prepares the culinary student with basic skills that can be enhanced with professional instruction. Prior work experience can also help in finding appropriate employment as an added value in having both experience and education in the culinary field. Most of the participants placed significant value on work experience and education as a factor in finding appropriate employment.

Passion. The third theme revealed by Research Question 3 was passion. Most participants felt that passion was an important element in finding appropriate employment after culinary school. The desire to work in the culinary field has to be balanced with the reality of the industry. Several participants pointed out the importance of having realistic expectations of what

students can get out of the culinary school experience and how that can relate to appropriate employment. Most participants shared the sentiment of what students get out of culinary school is what they put into it. In this regard, the desire or passion to succeed in the culinary field is a significant factor in finding and keeping appropriate employment. Participant 13 stated: “Advice to others, research thoroughly, don’t pay for a name-brand school if you don’t have the passion; weigh all options.”

RQ4: What do Culinary School Graduates Perceive as Obstacles in Finding Appropriate Employment?

Knowledge. Three major themes were revealed from Research Question 4: knowledge, work experience, and passion. The first major theme revealed was knowledge. With participants reflecting on past and future experiences, knowledge was a very logical theme as people may find in life the lessons that are learned from their lived experiences. Several participants summed up the relationship between school and knowledge by viewing school as if it was their job. Without this viewpoint, a culinary school student may experience obstacles in finding appropriate employment.

Knowledge can be seen as a key element in overcoming obstacles in career progression. Participant 1 stated, “If I could go back nine years, I would try not to be so accommodating.” This participant was referring to the establishment of her business and speaking from the benefit of present knowledge. Several participants mentioned that knowledge from culinary school was a significant factor in overcoming obstacles in the workplace and the ability to solve common kitchen problems. Several participants reflected that culinary school provided the ability to understand the customer, to understand the different customer profiles. A thorough

understanding of the customer can help overcome obstacles in employment through excellence in customer service.

Work experience. The second major theme regarding obstacles in employment was work experience. Through the lived experience of work, many of the participants have been able to apply what they have learned in culinary school. A majority of the participants mentioned that the overall culinary experience promotes a desire to learn. Several participants expressed that students putting their heart and soul into their education will prepare them for a successful career that will follow them in the workplace, helping to overcome obstacles. Participant 13 summed up the culinary school experience by stating “culinary school opened a whole new world for me; if you have the opportunity, go for it.”

Passion. A third major theme regarding obstacles in employment was passion. Passion was a common theme among the participants in this study. Passion can be seen as a necessary ingredient in the pursuit of success in the culinary industry. In overcoming obstacles, Participant 2 stated, “set a goal to pursue your passion, don’t let failure stop you.” Several participants expressed that the study of food alone helps someone to prepare above-average food; having heart for the profession takes that to a level of excellence. Many participants felt that a successful culinarian has to follow their individual passion and do what they love to do.

RQ5: How do Culinarians Employed in the Field View the Value of Graduation from a Two-Year Culinary Program as it Relates to Overall Career Progression?

Passion. Four major themes were revealed by Research Question 5: passion, work experience, hard courses, and work-life balance. The first major theme that was revealed was passion. Passion has been a recurring theme throughout the entire research and speaks to the feeling that a culinarian has about the love for their vocation. Many participants stated that a

culinarian needs to have passion for culinary and hospitality. The field offers low pay and is not an easy field. Most participants shared a similar sentiment, that it is very important to realize not everyone is cut out for the culinary industry. A similar view among participants expressed that some students have a gift for working in the kitchen, others do not. The kitchen is not right for everyone. Several participants recommended a culinary education if a person has passion and really wants to learn; otherwise, culinary education would not be recommended. Various participants' viewpoints on overall career progression concluded that without passion, career progression will more than likely be hindered.

Work experience. A second major theme regarding value in career progression was work experience. Many of the participants would recommend a culinary education but not right out of high school; instead, they recommend working in the culinary industry for four or five years. Several participants described the culinary school experience as a dress rehearsal for working in the culinary industry. Several participants valued the culinary school experience, while the downside was the earnings right out of school without work experience. Several participants recommended culinary school but also getting established first with work and using that experience to enhance later education.

Hard courses. A third major theme regarding value in career progression was hard courses. Several participants shared their perspectives on experiencing difficulty with academic courses. Because culinary education is based upon vocational training that specializes in working with one's hands, this difficulty with academic courses makes sense. Participant 2 stated that the "hardest part was general education courses, especially foreign language class in Spanish." Several participants stated that the hardest part of the degree was related studies, the

general education courses that were required along with the culinary classes. Many participants recalled that related courses were harder; most participants would rather work with their hands.

Work-life balance. The fourth major theme that was revealed regarding value in career progression was work-life balance. Because a culinary education is vocational in nature, participants experienced long hours on their feet both at school and at work. Several participants stated that the hardest part was going to school and working a job. Several participants stated a similar sentiment, in that the hardest part in earning a culinary degree was sticking with it, keeping up with the work, the dedication that it takes to complete, and working while attending school. Several participants recalled that the hardest part of culinary certification was to stay determined, to keep going while working in a restaurant at the same time. Participant 5 reflected on the difficulty of work-life balance, “the bad side is the hours, I have lost a lot of relationships, it has been tough on my family.”

Discussion

The discussion aligns the research findings with the theoretical frameworks and empirical research that are the foundation of this transcendental phenomenological study. The purpose of this section is to discuss the findings of the study in relation to the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Following this discussion, the practical aspects of the findings are reviewed in terms of previous research.

Empirical

Based on a review of the literature, a gap existed in the research that addressed the cost of education and employment of culinary school graduates (Oh & Kawon, 2017). The prior research had unaddressed questions concerning culinary school graduates who potentially may not have seen a return on the investment of their time, money, and effort in relation to job

placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression (Godowsky, Zukin, & Horn, 2011; Gross & Manoharan, 2016; Hertzman & Maas, 2012; Madera, Dawson, Guchait, & Belarmin, 2017; Oh & Kawon, 2017). Because prior research did not address the cost of education and employment of culinary graduates, this study had no previous research to confirm or corroborate the career progression of culinary school graduates.

Concerning career progression, the participants lacked satisfaction regarding job placement. The type of employment available in the culinary industry could be a factor in this lack of satisfaction. Closely associated with initial job placement is the inconsistency regarding compensation. Because many participants expressed dissatisfaction with starting salaries. This dissatisfaction indicates a widespread problem in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the cost of a culinary education and the resulting student loans place the culinary school graduate into debt that may take many years to repay.

Theoretical

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Kolb's theory of experiential learning; the methods and the natural progression of culinary education were explored and defined. This study sought to determine whether or not culinary school is a good return on investment in terms of the time and effort expended as compared to the overall career progression gained, from the perspective of the student. Related to the vocational nature of the culinary profession, a culinary school must provide progressive training as nearly all culinary work experiences develop from basic to more complex. The experiences of the participants reflect a positive experience with overall culinary career progression based on individual passion, work experience, and development of knowledge.

The level of experience in the culinary industry reflects the vocational development through the levels of apprentice, journeymen, and master (ACF, 2017). Because vocational development is extremely important in career progression, the quality of a culinary training program is essential. It is important for a potential student to understand the quality factors of a school as a means of making an informed decision of whether or not to choose one school over the other. One measure of overall quality is accreditation that emphasizes professional skills and student performance. The majority of participants interviewed expressed a positive experience with the culinary education received in terms of overall quality factors.

Practical

The practical implications of this study are aligned with the decision of whether or not to attend culinary school. The entire purpose of this study was to give future culinarians enhanced ability in making an informed decision of whether or not to attend culinary school. Furthermore, culinary career progression was examined through the lived experiences of the participants. The study revealed that the decision to attend culinary school and the resulting career progression is largely based on the effort of the individual. Whether or not culinary school attendance is worth the time, money, and effort is based upon the passion one possesses for the culinary industry.

At the beginning of this study, the ACF agreed to allow members to participate. The understanding of this agreement was that results from the study would be shared with the members of the ACF. From a practical standpoint, the results of this study will be used by the ACF in helping future culinarians make an informed decision of whether or not to attend culinary school. The alternative to culinary school attendance is a traditional apprenticeship program sponsored by the ACF. The results of this study may help ACF members and others interested in the profession through the lived experiences of the participants.

According to Kolb's learning theory, knowledge is the ability to appropriately use and justify the use of concepts (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). In the culinary arts field, knowledge can usually be recognized as mastery of related concepts in a building block system. The overall success in culinary career progression is based upon the mastery of knowledge that one gathers through work experience. Work experience in the culinary profession gives one the practical time to build knowledge of concepts and ultimately master the knowledge required to achieve success in career progression. Just as important as the knowledge obtained is the work experience required to obtain the knowledge. The concepts of work experience and knowledge are synchronized in enhancing overall career progression.

Comparing the study's results to the literature, the results were very revealing. Because no prior research had been done on career progression of culinary school graduates (Oh & Kawon, 2017), no certainty existed of what the results would reveal. This study has served as a building block in a new direction of study, opening the possibility for further research. Suggestions of further research will be discussed later in this chapter. The novel contribution of this study is an acronym PWEK, that represents the major themes of this study: passion, work experience, and knowledge, which will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Implications

The findings of this transcendental phenomenological study suggest certain implications for the overall career progression of culinary school graduates in the culinary industry. The three identified themes from this study were passion, work experience, and knowledge. These themes structured the discussion and helped draw attention to the central elements of the study, which are listed as follows: appropriate employment, job placement, job satisfaction, obstacles in

employment, and value in career progression. These implications will be addressed through the three themes and summarized.

Passion

Throughout the spectrum of all research questions, the idea of passion was consistently brought up by all participants. The prominence of this theme helped to place it as a foundation of this research and the overall career progression of the culinary school graduate. Passion as a part of success is based on the individual. Individuals will usually either enjoy what they are doing in the kitchen or they will not. The feeling of passion is decided by the individual and can change over time. The great majority of participants have attributed their success to the fact that they truly love the culinary field and love being a chef. A common expression in the culinary field is for someone to speak about a culinary career with the statement: “You have to love it.”

Passion serves as a basis for the culinary school graduate. In finding appropriate employment, a graduate’s passion can serve as an important factor. Throughout this research, many participants were more interested in the type of employment found after culinary school than the actual starting salary. The passion they felt for the culinary industry overshadowed the value that compensation brought. The vast majority of the participants were well served by the passion expressed for the culinary industry. This passion extends through all aspects of the overall career progression including job placement, job satisfaction, and value in career progression. The two other prominent themes of work experience and knowledge build upon the foundation of passion for the culinary industry.

Work Experience

Work experience was a second major theme mentioned by all participants and this theme is directly related to the theme of passion. These two themes are related in the fact that passion

can be revealed by work experience. Through on-the-job experience, potential culinary school attendees can find out first-hand whether or not they have passion. Many of the participants recommended that a potential culinary school attendee first find a job in the culinary industry before attending culinary school. Through hands-on work experience, potential students can determine whether or not the reality of kitchen employment is something they want to pursue. This actual work experience can validate the passion that the individual feels and develop work experience, setting the individual up for development of knowledge, the third related theme.

Knowledge

Knowledge serves as the third major theme related to the themes of passion and work experience. The importance of knowledge was mentioned by every participant as an important factor in the culinary profession. Through initial passion and then work experience, the culinarian is setting the stage for the accumulation of knowledge. Building upon this viewpoint of knowledge, most participants have experienced a strong feeling of confidence. This level of confidence is rooted in the culinary knowledge obtained from culinary school and culinary school graduation. The majority of participants felt that culinary school prepared them well for the actual work that they found in the culinary industry.

Another aspect of knowledge expressed by a majority of the participants was the ability of managing a budget. Most participants left culinary school with a strong confidence in purchasing food as well as menu pricing. This knowledge is an important factor in making a profit and left most participants with the ability to manage their budgets. Another common viewpoint of knowledge expressed by many participants was the ability to work with others. Culinary school helped most of the participants to function as a member of a team, preparing them to work in very diverse environments throughout the culinary world.

PWEK

Combining passion, work experience, and knowledge, I have developed an acronym, PWEK. The reason that I have chosen this acronym to describe these three major themes is the relationship among the major themes. The major themes revealed by this research represent a building block system beginning with passion. First and foremost, one must have the passion, the desire to work in the culinary industry. As expressed multiple times throughout this research, the culinary industry is a tough business and one must love it to be successful. This feeling serves as the basic spark that motivates an individual to pursue culinary work experience.

Summary of Implications

Culinary work experience capitalizes on the passion, the desire to work in the culinary field. Over time, the individual gains valuable work experience, the second major theme, and contributes to the third major theme, knowledge. Knowledge in the culinary industry is the sum of the culinary experience, bringing together passion and work experience. These three major themes are both interrelated and interdependent. One relies on the passion of working in the culinary field to gain experience and to build knowledge. Furthermore, these three themes summarize the lived experiences of the majority of the participants in this study.

Limitations

For this study, limitations represent possible weaknesses in the research and other factors that are not in the control of the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Limitations to this study include the group of participants who were all ACF members, the sample size, and the study length. These limitations may have reduced the ability to generalize results to other culinary organizations, culinary industry demographics, and culinary school populations. Though the sample size of the study was designed to achieve data saturation for a phenomenological study

(Moustakas, 1994), the 15 ACF members may not be an authentic representation of culinary school graduates with 10 years of culinary industry experience. Furthermore, generalization could be limited by the fact that members came from one chapter of the ACF. The participants in the study did represent a cross-section of the culinary community and were well represented by minority groups.

A final limitation of this study was the researchers' own perspective and past experiences that could have interfered with objective and unbiased analysis. A researcher may have bias and preconceived judgments (Moustakas, 1994), I bracketed my preconceptions throughout the entire study. I was able to achieve this by keeping an open mind and ensuring that I represented the voice of the individual participant. Furthermore, I emphasized to each participant that I wanted to hear their true feelings on a question to avoid the Hawthorne effect.

Recommendations for Future Research

This transcendental phenomenological study contributes to the literature on career progression among culinary school graduates. Because the study concentrated on only the members of one local chapter of the ACF, further research could explore other chapters of the ACF. The ACF is a professional culinary organization in the United States; there are many other culinary organizations internationally. Furthermore, many professional chefs are not members of the ACF and still others are not culinary school graduates.

Because career progression among culinary school graduates has not been explored previously, many possibilities exist for future research. An interesting study might be a comparison of career progression among culinary school graduates and those who did not attend culinary school. This would be a further examination of the value of a culinary education compared with not having one. Another possible study could compare the career progression

among private culinary schools and public culinary schools. Because a significant difference in cost between a private and a public culinary education exists, this would be a great study.

Summary

This study aimed to understand the experience of culinary school graduates regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression. The central research questions focused on appropriate employment, job placement, job satisfaction, obstacles in employment, and overall career progression. After interviewing 15 participants who shared the experience of attending culinary school and working in the culinary industry for at least 10 years, I identified the following themes evident from analysis:

- Throughout the spectrum of all research questions, the idea of passion was consistently brought up by all participants. The prominence of this theme helps to place it as a foundation of this research and the overall career progression of the culinary school graduate. Passion as a part of success is based on the individual.
- Work experience was a second major theme mentioned by all participants and this theme is directly related to the theme of passion. These two themes are related in the fact that passion can be revealed by work experience. Through on-the-job experience, potential culinary school attendees can find out first-hand whether or not they have passion.
- Knowledge serves as the third major theme related to the themes of passion and work experience. The importance of knowledge was mentioned by every participant as an important factor in the culinary profession. Through initial passion and then work experience, the culinarian is setting the stage for the accumulation of knowledge
- Combining passion, work experience, and knowledge, I have come up with an acronym, PWEK. The reason that I have chosen this acronym to describe these three major themes

is the relationship among the major themes. The major themes revealed by this research represent a building block system beginning with passion. First and foremost, one must have the passion, the desire to work in the culinary industry. As expressed multiple times throughout this research, the culinary industry is a tough business and one must love it to be successful.

Based on these implications, the value of attending culinary school is determined by the individual. This study included a broad spectrum of culinary school graduates from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Although vast differences existed among the participants, the one common theme shared by most of them was the passion that one must have to be successful in the culinary industry. Passion is the vital first step in the process. Without passion, work experience and knowledge will not develop to a level of career progression that may be considered satisfactory. Passion is the key to career progression among culinary school graduates making the lived experience worth the time, money, and effort that is required.

REFERENCES

- Alhelalat, J. A. (2015). Hospitality and non-hospitality graduate skills between education and industry. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 6(4), 46-55. doi: 10.20867/jbsu.21.2.2
- Ali, A., Murphy, H., & Nadkarni, S. (2014). Hospitality students' perceptions of digital tools for learning and sustainable development. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, & Tourism Education*, 15(1), 1-10. doi: 10.1016/j.jhlste.2014.02.001
- American Culinary Federation. (2017). *2011 salary e-survey*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.acfchefs.org/2011salary/e-survey.html>
- Armoo, A. K., & Neequaye, K. (2014). Factors used by Ghanaian students in determining career options in the tourism and hospitality industry: Lessons for developing countries. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 6(2), 166-178. doi: 10.1108/WHATT-12-2013-0053
- Birdir, K., & Canakci, S. D. (2014). Managerial problems confronted by executive chefs in hotels. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 4(3), 207-216. Retrieved from: <http://search.proquest.com/openview/b1b7f96e27d459db749bab029e9511d4/1?>
- Bourdain, A. (2006). *The nasty bits: Collected varietal cuts, usable trim, scraps, and bones*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Burrow, R., Smith, C. J., & Yakinthou, C. (2015). "Yes chef": Life at the vanguard of culinary excellence. *Work, Employment, and Society*, 29(4), 673-681. doi:
 10.1177/0950017014563103
- Career Education Corporation. (2011). *Form 10-Q*. Retrieved from
http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1046568/000119312511126158/d10q.htm#tx173567_5

- Chang, S., & Tse, E. C. Y. (2015). Understanding the initial career decisions of hospitality graduates in Hong Kong: Quantitative and qualitative evidence. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 34(4), 57-74. doi: 10.1177/1096348012461544
- Chiao, C. (2013, June 17). Kirtland & Packard announces culinary school lawsuit case huge victory for students. *Global News Wire*, pp.17-21. Retrieved from:
<http://globalnewswire.com/news-release/2013/06/17/554594/10036618/en/Kirtland-Packard-Announces-Culinary-School-Lawsuit-Case-Huge-Victory-for-Students.html>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Daugherty, J. (2015). Impact of service-learning experiences in culinary arts and nutrition science. *Journal of Public Scholarship in Higher Education*, 5(1), 61-78. doi: 10.2374/894X235467892
- Day, J. C., & Newburger, E. C. (2002, July). *The big payoff: Educational attainment and synthetic estimates of work-life earnings* (Publication No. P23-210). Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Demetry, D. (2013). Regimes of meaning: The intersection of space and time in kitchen cultures. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 42(5), 576-607. doi: 10.1177/089124161348356
- Denhart, C. (2013, August 7). How the college debt is crippling students, parents, and the economy. *Forbes Magazine*, pp.12-14. Retrieved from
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/specialfeatures/2013/08/07/how-the-college-debt-is-crippling-students-parents-and-the-economy/08/07/2013>

- Fickenscher, L. (2014, May 5). Star chef prepares recipe to address job crisis; So many restaurants, too few workers; Daniel Boulud's fix. *Crain's New York Business*, pp. 15. Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA367417579&v=2.1&u=vic_liberty&it=r&p=ITOF&sw=w&asid=4a43b261d22a89b115324796e117067e2
- Fine, G. A. (1990). Organizational time: Temporal demands and the experience of work in restaurant kitchens. *Social Forces* 69(1), 95-114. doi: 10.1093/SF/69.1.95
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.) New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gisslen, W. (2007) *Professional cooking* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Godowsky, J., Zukin, C., & Horn, C. (2011). *Unfulfilled expectations: Recent college graduates struggle in a troubled economy*. Retrieved from <http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/research>
- Goodman, P. S. (2010, March 13). The new poor: In hard times, lured into trade school and debt. *The New York Times*, pp. 21-23. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/business/14schools.html?hpw>
- Gross, M., & Manoharan, A. (2016). The balance of liberal and vocational values in hospitality higher education: Voices of graduates. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 28(1), 44-57. doi: 10.1080/10963758.2015.1127165
- Hand, M. (2014). Towards a theory of moral education. *Journal of Philosophy in Education*, 48(4), 519-532. doi: 10.1111/1467915212116
- Hegarty, J. A. (2011). Achieving excellence by means of critical reflection and cultural imagination in culinary arts and gastronomy education. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, 9(1), 55-65. doi: 10.1080/15428052.2011.580705

- Hertzman, J., & Ackerman, R. (2010). Evaluating quality in associate degree culinary arts programs. *Quality Assurance in Education, 18*(3), 209-226.
doi:10.1108/096848101109865.22089
- Hertzman, J. L., & Maas, J. (2012). The value of culinary education: Evaluating educational costs, job placement outcomes, and satisfaction with value of associate degree culinary and baking arts program graduates. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology, 10*(1), 53-74. doi:10.1080/15428052.2012.650609
- Hertzman, J. L., & Stefanelli, J. (2008). Developing quality indicators for associate degree culinary arts programs: A survey of educators and chefs. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism, 9*(2), 135-138. doi: 10.1080/152800802235466
- Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General Introduction to pure phenomenology*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing.
- Hwang, J., Lee, J., & Park, S. (2014). The impact of occupational stress on employee's turnover intention in the luxury hotel segment. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism, 15*(1), 60-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2014.872898>
- Jauhari, V. (2013). Building employability in the hospitality industry. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 5*(3), 268-276. doi: 10.1108/WHATT-02-2013-0009
- Jung, H. S., Kim, Y. J., & Yoon, H. H. (2012). Effects of culinary employees' role stress on burnout and turnover intention in hotel industry: Moderating effects on employee tenure. *The Services Industry Journal, 32*(13), 2145-2165. doi: 10.1080/02642069.2011.574277
- Klosterman, R. E. (2011). Planning theory education: A thirty-year review. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 31*(3), 319-331. doi: 10.1177/0739456X11413601

- Kolb, D. A., Boyatzis, R., & Mainemelis, C. (2001). Experiential learning theory: Previous research and new directions. In R. Sternberg & I. Zhang (Eds.), *Perspectives on cognitive learning and thinking styles* (pp. 228-247). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ko, W. H., & Chung, F. M. (2015). Learning satisfaction for culinary students: The effect of teaching quality and professional experience. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 7(1), 1-13. doi: 10.5897/IJVTE2014.0158
- Lane, R. S., & Fisher, S. M. (2014). The influence of celebrity chefs on a student population. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 614-628. doi: 10.1108/BFJ-09-2013-0253
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Liu, C. H., & Matthews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Education Journal*, 6(3), 386-399. doi: <http://ied.cjb.net/1443.1475>
- Madera, J. M., Dawson, M., Guchait, P., & Belarmin, A. M. (2017). Strategic human resources management in hospitality and tourism: A review of current literature and suggestions for the future. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 48-67. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2016-0051>
- Mitchell, R., Woodhouse, A., Heptinstall, T., & Camp, J. (2013). Why use design methodology in culinary arts education? *Hospitality & Society*, 3(3), 239-260. doi: 10.1386/hosp.3.3.239_1
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Murphy, E. J. (2007). A review of Bloom's taxonomy and Kolb's theory of experiential learning: Practical uses for prior learning assessment. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 55*(3), 64-66. doi: 10.1080/07377366.2007.10400135
- Nadiri, H., & Tanova, C. (2010). An investigation of the role of justice in turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior in hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 29*(1), 33-41. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.05.001
- Oh, H., & Kawon, K. (2017). Customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer value: Years 2000-2015. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 29*(1), 2-29. doi: 2-29 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ICCHM-10-2015-0594>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pavilina, K., Pongrac, A., & Zorica, M. B. (2011). Student perception of teaching quality in higher education. *Procedia Social and Behavior Sciences, 15*(1), 2288-2292. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.04.095
- Phipps, R., Harrison, K., & Merisotis, J. (2013). *Students at private, for-profit institutions* (NCES Report No. 2000-175). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Pinchot, G., & Pellman, R. (1999). *Intrapreneuring in action: A handbook for business innovation*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Rebore, R. W. (2001). *The ethics of educational leadership*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ricci, P. (2010). Do lodging managers expect more from hospitality graduates? A comparison of job competency expectations. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism, 9*(1), 218-232. doi: 10.1080/15332840903455059

- Rury, J. L. (2011). Response: History, theory, and education. *History of Education Quarterly*, 51(2), 218-228. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-5959.2011.00331.X
- Sangaran, G., & Garg, A. (2012). Magnetizing & retaining the finest talent in hospitality sector, an empirical study of determinants of job satisfaction and effects on employee turnover in the hotels of Kuala Lumpur city center. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems*, 5(2), 1-8. doi: 10.7127/6277-0989.1001243
- Sangaran, G., & Jeetesh, K. (2015). The effects of job satisfaction towards employee turnover in the hotel industry: A case study of hotels in Kuala Lumpur city center. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 4(1), 1-5. doi: 10.4172/2167-0269.1000142
- Saul, S. (2015, November 16). For-profit college operator EDMC will forgive student loans. *The New York Times*, 19-20. Retrieved from: <http://nyti.ms/1lrM51p>
- Schutz, A. (1970). *On phenomenology and social relations*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Shani, A., Belhassen, Y., & Soskolne, D. (2013). Teaching professional ethics in culinary studies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(3), 447-464. doi: 10.1108/09596111311311062
- Sherry, A. (2010, January 17). As for-profit colleges flourish, focus turns to grads' success and debt. *The Denver Post*, p. 3. Retrieved from http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_1420938
- Simon, C. C. (2014). Culinary schools speed the rise of hopeful chefs. *The New York Times*, p. F6. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/culinary-schools-speed-the-rise-of-hopeful-chefs/

- Spicer, A. (2006). Beyond the convergence-divergence debate: The role of spatial scales in transforming organizational logic. *Organization Studies*, 27(1), 1467-1483. doi: 10.1177/0170840606067515
- Srinivasan, S., & Karmarkar, A. (2014). Changing perception of students towards hotel management course while pursuing the course. *International Journal of Informative & Futuristic Research*, 1(9), 101-114. doi: IJIFR/V1/E9/018
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wang, R. (2015). On culinary teaching steps from the perspective of problem-based learning. *The Journal of International Management Studies*, 10(2), 5-14. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282885544_On_Culinary_Teaching_Steps_from_the_Perspective_of_Problem-Based_Learning
- Yen, C. L., Cooper, C. A., & Murrmann, S. K. (2013). Exploring culinary graduates' career decisions and expectations. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 12(1), 109-125. doi: 10.1080/1533245.2013.752707
- Zopiatis, A. (2010). Is S art or science? Chef's competencies for success. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 459-467. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.12.003

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Liberty University IRB Approval**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 13, 2018

Anthony Joseph Padavan
IRB Approval 3335.071318: A Phenomenological Exploration of Career Progression Among
Culinary School Graduates

Dear Anthony Joseph Padavan,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Letter

May 1, 2018

Potential Participant
ACF Gulf to Lakes Chefs and Cooks Chapter
P.O. Box 1179
Eustis, FL, 32727

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a degree. The purpose of my research is to discover from experienced industry chef's whether or not attendance at culinary school is worth the time, money, and effort required as a return on investment regarding job placement, job satisfaction, and overall career progression, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, a culinary school graduate with at least 10 years of industry experience, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to participate in a workplace observation, interview, and create a reflective journal. It should take approximately 2-3 hours for you to complete the procedures listed. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, contact me to schedule an interview. You can e-mail me at ajpadavan@liberty.edu or call me via cell phone at (352)457-1625. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the study.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a \$20 Publix Supermarket gift certificate as a token of my appreciation. In addition, you will be helping future prospective culinary students to make a better-informed decision about culinary school attendance based on the real-world feedback that only experience can provide. Thank you for your consideration of assistance in this important research project.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Padavan, Ed.S, CEC, CCE
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Appendix C: Workplace Observation Form

Career Progression Among Culinary School Graduates

Participant's Name:				
Work Location:				
Supervisor:				
Observer:			Date:	
Description	Yes	No	Not observed	Comments
Wears required personal protective equipment				
Follows safe work procedures and policies				
Ask questions when does not know how to do a task safely				
Practices good housekeeping				
Demonstrates a safe attitude every day				

General comments and observations:

Appendix D: Participant Journal Information and Directions

Good Day and thank you for taking part in this important research! The future of the culinary profession begins with the new graduates that you may potentially help to make an informed decision about attending culinary school. To this end, we will focus on the individual career progression of you, the participant. Your participant journal will be used to supplement the interviews and observations that I will be conducting. You will be expected to write as you see fit, adding any additional thoughts a full month after we complete our interviews.

Here are some guidelines:

Based on the interview questions (see below), please pick a minimum of five questions that you would like to expand upon. Please add any thoughts or ideas that you may have come up with after our interview. The journal is your reflection, your opportunity to contribute to the future of the culinary profession.

Please return the completed journals to me one month after our initial interview. I will be contacting you at that time to retrieve the journal. You can contact me any time via cell phone at (352)457-1625. Thank you again and I applaud your efforts!

Here are the interview questions, please pick **at least five** to reflect on in your journal:

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Do you have a culinary arts degree?
2. How long did it take to complete your degree?

3. What other fields have you studied?
4. If you have studied other fields, how does the total education experience make you feel?
5. If so, how much did you invest in your education?
6. How would you describe the hardest part in earning a culinary degree?
7. Can you recall the best part about earning a culinary degree?
8. Can you contrast how the best and hardest part of earning your culinary degree made you feel?
9. Why or why wouldn't you recommend a culinary education to others?
10. What are your plans, if any, to continue your education?
11. What factors satisfy you with regards to career progression?
12. What was your starting salary?
13. Based on your starting salary, what factor did completion of culinary school play in determining your salary?
14. Considering the amount, you invested in your education and the amount you pay in student loans; how does your starting salary measure up?
15. What knowledge from culinary school helped you transition into the culinary field?
16. How does the overall culinary school experience make you feel?
17. What advice would you give people interested in attending culinary school?
18. Based on your experiences and knowing the culinary profession as you do now, what if anything, would you do differently regarding your education, career and job choices?

19. What impact do you expect culinary school attendance to have on your future career?
20. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about your culinary educational experience and your future career opportunities?

Appendix E: Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Do you have a culinary arts degree?
2. How long did it take to complete your degree?
3. What other fields have you studied?
4. If you have studied other fields, how does the total education experience make you feel?
5. If so, how much did you invest in your education?
6. How would you describe the hardest part in earning a culinary degree?
7. Can you recall the best part about earning a culinary degree?
8. Can you contrast how the best and hardest part of earning your culinary degree made you feel?
9. Why or why wouldn't you recommend a culinary education to others?
10. What are your plans, if any, to continue your education?
11. What factors satisfy you with regards to career progression?
12. What was your starting salary?
13. Based on your starting salary, what factor did completion of culinary school play in determining your salary?
14. Considering the amount, you invested in your education and the amount you pay in student loans; how does your starting salary measure up?
15. What knowledge from culinary school helped you transition into the culinary field?
16. How does the overall culinary school experience make you feel?
17. What advice would you give people interested in attending culinary school?

18. Based on your experiences and knowing the culinary profession as you do now, what if anything, would you do differently regarding your education, career and job choices?
19. What impact do you expect culinary school attendance to have on your future career?
20. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about your culinary educational experience and your future career opportunities?

Appendix F: Consent Form

The Liberty University
Institutional Review Board has approved
this document for use from 7/13/2018 to 7/12/2019
Protocol # 3335.071318

CONSENT FORM

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CAREER PROGRESSION AMONG CULINARY SCHOOL GRADUATES

Anthony J. Padavan
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of career progression among culinary school graduates. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of the ACF who has completed a two year culinary arts program and has a minimum of 10 years industry experience. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Anthony J. Padavan, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine if the attendance at culinary school was worth the time, money, and effort required as a measure of career progression.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. The first task will be to schedule a workplace observation. I would simply like to spend 15-30 minutes observing your operation.
2. The second task will be a 60-90-minute recorded interview regarding your experiences in culinary school and your career. Ideally, this interview will take place along with the workplace observation.

3. The third task will be the completion of a provided personal reflection journal that will be due back 30 days after the interview. Specific direction will be included.
4. The fourth task will include both member checking/going over study results through a 30-minute phone conversation with each participant.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include helping future potential culinary students to make a decision based on real world input and experience.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. As a token of appreciation, each participant will receive a \$20 gift card from Publix super markets. Participants will be compensated at the conclusion of the study when the journals are returned. Failure to complete the study will result in a loss of compensation.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- In order to protect your privacy, you will be assigned a number (1-15) for the purpose of the study. Your name will not be associated with the research material. Furthermore, I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Per federal regulations, data must be retained for three years upon completion of the study. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the American Culinary Federation. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Anthony J. Padavan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at (352)457-1625 or via e-mail at ajpadavan@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Meredith Park, at mjpark@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records. **Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator