

**MENTORING INITIATIVES AS TALENT MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT:**

**Purpose**

This chapter aims to critically explore the nature of mentoring initiatives, through the conceptual lenses of social capital and communities of practice (CofP) offering a distinctive understanding of talent management (TM) innovations in the international hospitality industry.

**Methodology/approach**

It achieves its aim through identifying and analysing current mentoring initiatives operating in the international hospitality sector, and scrutinises how they provide a sector level approach to talent management challenges.

**Findings**

Industry level mentoring initiatives emerge as TM innovations connecting employees within networks across the international hospitality sectors. Mentoring creates bonds and bridges between senior and junior employees beyond their own workplaces, connecting them to the industry and supporting TM by enhancing the identification of opportunities and the recognition of talent. These initiatives also act as learning communities where contemporary TM dilemmas can be explored by participants from diverse backgrounds and between generations.

**Research limitations/implications**

The findings rely on the identification and exploration of publically available data, and therefore future primary data collection would yield richer insights into the experiences of stakeholders of these mentoring initiatives as TM innovations.

**Social implications**

Mentoring initiatives can exemplify innovative ways of supporting TM and addressing diversity and inequality issues in fragmented and dispersed sectors, such as the international hospitality industry.

**Originality/value of paper**

The exploration of contemporary mentoring initiatives in the international hospitality industry identifies the value of cross-industry TM innovations stretching beyond stakeholders, such as educators, employers and policy-makers. It identifies mentoring initiatives as mechanisms for creating

bonds and bridges between those industry aspirants at various career stages where diversity and inclusion may be a challenge in a fragmented and dispersed sector.

**KEYWORDS:**

1. Mentoring
2. Talent Management
3. Social capital
4. Communities of Practice
5. Learning

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The challenges of managing talent within the hospitality sectors has been widely acknowledged (Baum, 2008; Cismaru & Iunuis, 2020; Jooss, McDonnell, Burbach & Vaiman, 2019; Sheehan, Grant & Garavan, 2018) and stem from some wider human resource management tribulations (Baum, 2008; Nickson, 2013). This chapter sets out to explore mentoring initiatives, through the conceptual lenses of social capital and communities of practice (CofP) to offer a distinctive understanding of Talent Management (TM) innovations in the international hospitality industry. Most TM studies adopt an organisational lens highlighting the value of identifying, developing and retaining human resources with the requisite knowledge and skills to sustain competitive advantage (Baum, 2008; Madera, Dawson, Guchait & Belarmino, 2017). While larger organisations, such as multinationals, may be able to devote attention and resources to TM strategies and practices, they are faced with perennial difficulties in attaining consistent depictions of talent across their geographically and culturally disparate, multi-branded and diverse ownership structures (Jooss, Burbach & Ruël, 2019; Jooss, et al., 2019). While the challenges of large organisations present one version of TM quandaries, the small and medium sized organisations (SMEs), which comprise the majority of hospitality organisations (Nickson, 2013; Sheehan, et al., 2018), face a different set of TM dilemmas. These SMEs are less likely to have the strategic ability to identify talented human resources or be able to afford the resources to target their identification, development and retention (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018; Sheehan, et al., 2018). These TM predicaments across the international hospitality sector necessitate remedies, which stretch beyond organisational approaches and practices, and the adoption of community-based initiatives to identify, develop and retain talent.

Our investigation aims to explore the capacity for mentoring initiatives in the hospitality sector to act as TM innovations. We draw on evidence of mentoring initiatives which coalesce a variety of stakeholders in the international hospitality sector; small, medium, and multinational players, professional associations, former State training agencies concerned with training and labour markets, interested third parties/consultants and trainers and educators at different levels. This chapter draws on theoretical lenses of social capital and CofP to understand how mentoring relationships can expand beyond the immediate likely benefits to the mentoring dyad, and support wider organisational, social and community initiatives for identifying and developing talent in a fragmented and diverse industry. Through a multiple case study approach we identify how mentoring interventions build upon mentoring relationships to foster social capital, networks and communities seeking out and supporting talent beyond organisational boundaries. Our analysis suggests nurturing industry or sector level

learning opportunities, network connections and affiliations through mentoring programmes can create CofP, which support TM. Finally, we offer recommendations on the value of theoretically reframing TM approaches and practices beyond organisational dilemmas and remedies, and developing sustainable mentoring programmes to address talent crises within the international hospitality industry.

### **EXAMINING DEVELOPMENTS IN MENTORING INTERVENTIONS**

Mentoring is typically defined as a one to one supportive, developmental relationship where a less experienced individual learns through the guidance of a more experienced person (Mullen, 2017; Rock & Garavan, 2006). This traditional framing has long established origins in 'The Odyssey', Homer's epic poem, and while more focused academic attention was given to mentoring in the 1970s (Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976 ) it was not until Kram's (1983; 1985) research that mentoring achieved its first real focused academic evaluation. In the intervening years we have witnessed an evolution in definitions and variations in mentoring as part of a flourishing field of research (Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010; Gibb, 1999; Rock & Garavan, 2006).

This evolution now encompasses more contemporary variations of mentoring which deviate from this traditional format, and include relationships of learning through peer mentoring (McManus & Russell, 2007), or reverse mentoring more experienced individuals being mentored by less experienced younger mentors about technology), or particular diversity and inclusivity characteristics (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012; Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012), or reciprocal mentoring where mentors are paired to engage in mutual exchange and learning free from hierarchical dimensions (Harvey, McIntyre, Thompson Heames, & Moeller, 2009; Harvey, Moeller, & McPhail, 2017). Such variations in mentoring highlight its adaptable nature and capacity to offer learning and development opportunities at various different points in the life stage, across educational levels, career stages and key transition points (Mullen, 2017; Stokes & Merrick, 2013).

Academic attention on mentoring has progressively addressed key features of these variations in the nature, contextual orientations and formats of mentoring. Mentoring can be informal, formal or semi-formal, and many studies have sought to understand how naturally occurring, or informal mentoring, may cultivate different outcomes for mentors, mentees and communities (Mullen, 2017; Clutterbuck, 2008). For example, informal mentoring in professions has at times led to the exclusion of opportunities and support to women and other minority groups where leaders tend to affiliate with mentees in their own image (Sheerin & Hughes, 2018). Other studies have compared the efficacy of

informal mentoring relationships to those originated through formal mentoring programmes and cited issues with engaging partners to achieve the same outcomes as naturally occurring mentoring partnerships (Holt, Markova, Dhaenens, Marler, & Heilmann, 2016). The blurring of boundaries between the nature of formal and informal mentoring relationships highlights the challenges of designing effective mentoring initiatives (Abbott, Goosen & Coetzee, 2010; Gibb, 1994; Gibb & Megginson, 1993).

Technological advancements have enabled mentoring to take place at a distance and through different safeguarded formats (Bierema, 2017; Bierema & Hill, 2005). While primarily conceived as a face-to-face interaction, mentoring is currently often accomplished via other media and asynchronous, synchronous arrangements (Sanyal & Rigby, 2017). These innovations have allowed more flexibility in mentoring provision with virtual mentoring systems facilitating anonymous mentoring for those in institutional contexts (Bierema, 2017; Sanyal & Rigby, 2017). The adaptable nature of mentoring facilitates its deployment for an increasing range of individual, organisational and social remedies. Initial conceptions of mentoring may have encouraged individuals to seek out experienced practitioners to support their career development or deal with specific challenges (Holt, et al., 2016; Murphy & Kram, 2014). Subsequently, many education, occupational and work settings realised the value of deploying mentoring to support socialisation (Chen, Liao & Wen, 2014; Gannon, 2020). More recently, mentoring has been adopted by organisations and those representing different interest groups to support social inequalities and disadvantage (Gannon & Washington, 2019; Mullen, 2017; Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2013).

The value and benefits of mentoring should not be accepted without acknowledgement of the dark side of mentoring where individual factors, the framing of mentoring relationship and wider organisational and societal factors can generate unfavourable outcomes for participants (Barker, 2006; Washington & Cox, 2016). Recognising toxicity in mentoring relationships is vital for participants and scheme managers, as such relationships not only harm the immediate dyad but can contaminate other mentor-mentee dyads and require tactful management (Barker, 2006).

This generic overview of mentoring and mentoring initiatives advances valuable pointers for how the flexibility of mentoring offers advantages at the personal and collective levels yet cautions against spontaneous adoption of mentoring. There is a duty to understand the investments required to establish sustainable mentoring programmes with clear aims and foster meaningful learning

relationships. With these caveats in mind we review the mentoring research undertaken in the hospitality and tourism industries.

### **Mentoring in the international hospitality sector**

Mentoring in the hospitality and related industries has received a relatively consistent level of attention from early work in the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on the career benefits of mentoring in the hotel sector (Rutherford, 1984; Rutherford & Wiegenstein, 1985) and later, Lankau and Chung (1998) identified the mental health benefits of mentoring. The challenge of building careers in the sector, and specifically issues of mobility, was considered in Ayres' (2006) work on mentoring. Chew and Wong (2008) adopted an organisational perspective when they highlighted how career mentoring can help retain staff and enhance organisational commitment. Research has also addressed both the organisational and the individual dimensions of mentoring and its possible benefits. Simmonds and Zammit-Lupi (2010) examined an organisational innovation using e-mentoring to establish a global mentoring scheme and highlight the capacity technology has to engage mentees to drive mentoring interactions and outcomes. Gannon and Maher (2012) investigated how mentoring supports hospitality graduates' transitions and retention into the industry assisted by sector executives, while Kim, Im, and Hwang (2015) found that role stress, job attitude and turnover intention were all favourably influenced via mentoring for hospitality employees. Neupane (2015, p.123) builds on the assertions of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), arguing that mentoring (and coaching) in the UK hotel industry, can be understood as part of TM approaches and practices because the emphasis is placed on 'the development of special skills that benefit the company as well as the individuals or they assist people to develop new thinking processes which help them conquer obstacles and develop their careers through enhancing relationships with more experienced individuals.'

More recently, Eissner and Gannon (2018) highlighted the benefits and drawbacks of mentoring where navigating hospitality career development opportunities may be challenging. Mentors in this study were particularly keen to emphasise the TM dimension of mentoring, specifically as participation in initiatives allowed access to, and better understanding of, those committed to the industry, and indicated ways of identifying, developing and retaining high quality engaged mentees within their own organisations and beyond. Sharples and Marcon-Clarke (2019) identified a mentoring innovation aimed at supporting young professionals in the tourism sector led by a trade organisation and magazine. The article focuses on the experiences of participation and the problems faced in ensuring

mentoring relationships were successful for participants. Another study from Taiwan (Uen, Chang, McConville & Tsai, 2018) highlighted that supervisor mentoring of newcomers improved their innovation performance within the hotel sector, reinforcing the valuable role mentoring can play in enhancing socialisation, interaction, communication and creativity. Sipe and Testa (2020) report on a mentoring initiative designed into a distance learning Master's programme to support leadership development and the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Gannon (2020) also highlights the role formal and informal mentoring can play in supporting leadership development in international hospitality companies, specifically in the context of developing careers, where expectations of mobility necessitate recurrent socialisation and the need for strong networks. Most recently, Deale, Lee & Bae (2020) explored differences in perceptions of mentoring in undergraduate hospitality and tourism students. Their findings indicate that while some variation in perceptions of mentoring exist between different groups of students, male and female, and first and non-first generation students, all felt making mentoring meaningful and relevant should be the priority for mentoring initiatives implemented by higher education institutions. Cismaru and Lunuis (2020) explored group reverse mentoring in two international hotel companies and the reactions of hospitality students to these innovations as part of TM practices. Their findings identify how reverse mentoring can shift views of the industry and talent within it and enhance engagement. Finally, Dashper's (2020) work highlights the contribution mentoring makes to tackling some of the career barriers women face and being recognised as talent in the hospitality sector. Her use of gender analysis offers a distinctive contribution to our understanding of careers and the role mentoring can play in their advancement.

These studies reflect the adaptable nature of mentoring across the hospitality and tourism sectors, from educational settings to organisational settings, from practice aimed at retaining staff, socialising managers and new entrants, improving innovation, to attracting graduate level employees, supporting academic development, developing leadership and management acumen and connecting employees within and beyond their own operating units. This empirical evidence highlights the benefits accrued to mentors and mentees, organisations and the wider industry possibly remedying some of the sectors' notorious human resource management (HRM) challenges (Baum, 2008; Nickson, 2013). This versatility of mentoring can be conceived as both a boon and a hindrance where different participants and stakeholders engage with mentoring initiatives with different expectations.

Several of these studies on mentoring in the hospitality industry mentioned TM either directly (Cismaru & Lunuis, 2020; Dashper, 2020; Eissner & Gannon, 2018; Gannon & Maher, 2012; Neupane, 2015) or indirectly (Ayres, 2006; Chew & Wong, 2008; Gannon, 2020; Sharples & Marcon-Clarke, 2019; Simmonds & Zammit-Lupi, 2010). As such, they appear often to be anticipating or responding to the range of issues which pre-empt TM in the industry, within organisational settings and across organisational boundaries, for example educational settings and employers. Other contributions connecting mentoring and TM (Merrick, 2017; Stokes & Merrick, 2008) highlight the flexibility of mentoring initiative provision when tackling TM issues specifically.

### **Mentoring Interventions as Innovations in Talent Management**

Previous sections have recognised the forms mentoring can take and its ongoing evolution as a practice for tackling many contemporary issues. Talent management can be presented as a contemporary dilemma facing organisations (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnisen, 2016; Strack, 2013;) which is specifically challenging for the international hospitality and tourism industry (Jooss, et al., 2019; Sheehan, et al., 2018). This dilemma of TM as a competitive challenge of identifying, recruiting, developing and managing talent flow through organisations and wider sectors of industry may be exacerbated in a post-Covid 19 context, considering the increased problems of being able to locate those with the skills, intellect and abilities, needed to rise to the trials and tribulations of the new bellicose landscape.

In their study of sponsorship mentoring, Stokes & Merrick (2008; Merrick, 2017) highlighted that a version of TM mentoring was apparent where career functions (sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, challenging assignments and managing politics) and emotional functions (counselling, professional friendship, acceptance and confirmation, and role-modelling) were the focus for mentoring – see Figure 1. The balance of this TM mentoring model between career functions and emotional functions, appears to resonate with the TM literature (Sheehan, et al., 2018). For example, building on the work of Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, (2016), Sheehan and colleagues (2018) argue that there are three important justifications for TM in the hospitality and tourism sectors specifically. Not only does TM facilitate employee engagement, which would link to the emotional functions in Stokes & Merrick's (2008) model. It also provides evidence of 'voice' and ethical duty owed to employees (Van Buren & Greenwood, 2008) as well as the more archetypal reason that 'effective TM can ensure that organizations successfully acquire and retain talent, which is essential in a customer-faced industry' (Sheehan, et al., 2018, p.29). These last two justifications can be

associated with the career function in the model around issues of exposure and visibility, protection, challenging assignments and managing politics.



Figure 1. Talent Management Mentoring (adapted from Merrick & Stokes, 2008)

Another controversy in the TM literature, which resonates with the field of mentoring, is the aspect of inclusivity or exclusivity. Several commentators highlight the importance of clarifying whether the TM approaches adopted are inclusive in nature (targeted at the whole workforce) or exclusive (directed at particular groups of people or roles) (Meyers & Woerkom, 2013; Meyers, et al., 2020). These philosophies offer different orientations towards TM strategies and practices. In a similar vein, Ibarra, Carter & Silva (2010, p.82) argue '...all mentoring is not created equal...' where formal mentoring initiatives are targeted at specific groups (exclusive) to remedy disadvantage arising from informal mentoring relationships and other mentoring programmes are offered to whole cohorts entering an organisation or all employees (inclusive) to support development. While mentoring appears to be prevalent in the hospitality and tourism sectors and associated with opportunities to identify, retain and engage talent we know little of the specific initiatives developed to support employees and organisations. By exploring these mentoring initiatives, we can begin to evaluate approaches and practices that support TM in the hospitality and tourism sectors. First, however we

outline key conceptual and theoretical arguments, which help frame mentoring initiatives, social capital and CofP

## **CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENTS UNDERPINNING MENTORING INITIATIVES AS TALENT MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS**

Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum (2010, p.318) argue that mentoring relationships can create ‘social capital’ or ‘glue’ to bond a ‘community of practice’, and we outline these theoretical ideas below and explain how they can inform our investigation of mentoring initiatives as TM innovations in the hospitality sectors.

### **Understanding Social Capital and Mentoring**

Social capital theory sets out to understand relational resources, and as such is a valuable lens for analysing mentoring relationships and the networks which arise from them (Feeney & Bozeman, 2008; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007) where it focuses on all the ‘...features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives...’ (Putnam, 1995, p.66). Portes (1998) argues that compared to other forms of capital, such as human capital, social capital is more ambiguous and less clear, moving beyond basic market exchanges into complicated, context-dependent activities with inexact scenarios of reciprocity and indefinite obligations across unspecified time frames. Adler and Kwon (2002) assess the impact of social capital and conclude that it shapes individual and organisational success directly, and/or indirectly. At the root of success derived from social capital are components identified by Portes (1998), based on Bourdieu’s (1985) work. Portes (1998) splits these components into those which are inherent based on norms and altruistic dispositions, and those which are learnt by individuals, around the value and importance of reciprocity and trust of those with shared characteristics.

Beyond the social capital individuals can accrue through social relations, the leadership development literature identified organisational dimensions to social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015) which support knowledge sharing. Three dimensions, the structural, relational and cognitive, stand out here. The structural dimension of social capital where interaction or networks may be created within settings to nurture social ties and resources. The relational dimension focuses on the nature of personal relationships within settings and includes features such as trust obligations, respect and friendship. These features typically increase motivations to engage with others. Finally, the cognitive dimension comprises the shared interpretations and systems of meaning, which allow a collective language as the foundation of communication (Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015). Where

mentoring initiatives are instigated within organisational or industrial settings, these insights on social capital suggest that not only will personal relationships be developed, but networks of support may emerge and be nurtured through shared understandings of support and wider developmental needs.

Social capital is deciphered through the bonds (which reinforce internal connections) and the bridges (which connect across external boundaries) (Wong, 2018). Both bonding and bridging help mentors develop their mentoring knowledge in different ways (Wong, 2018), with bridging specifically supporting individuals' acquisition of new knowledge from sources outside of their existing social network and known close ties. Granovetter (1973, 1983) articulates the concept of the 'strength of weak ties' in relation to the new (tacit and explicit) knowledge exchange, and diversity of thought, opinion, and ideas which emerges where social capital is accrued through external ties. Such bridging also avoids groupthink and inauspicious actions and is linked with greater innovation and entrepreneurship (Spillane, Hopkins, & Sweet, 2015). As such, the social capital created through mentoring relationships can challenge barriers to accessing key networks (Sheerin & Hughes, 2018) for specific groups within the labour market and have multifaceted benefits for mentees, mentors, and organisational outcomes. This overview of the theoretical framework of social capital highlights how mentoring at the interpersonal level but also at the organisational and community or social level generates valuable social resources. Beyond creating social resources, however, mentoring is also understood as an opportunity for learning and knowledge transfer, hence our interest in understanding CofP as a theoretical concept.

### **Mentoring Initiatives as Communities of Practice**

Gibb's (1994; 1999) highlights that mentoring happens because people belong to the same community, share the same values and are keen to participate in social exchange because there are reciprocal benefits. In a similar vein, CofPs are knowledge-based social structures that develop over time (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The theoretical roots of CofPs are based upon situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and typically are formed for the purpose of dynamic and situated 'student'-led knowledge and learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which suggests a close alignment with mentoring initiatives. Communities empower individuals to be connected through their commonality and enable individuals to '...deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis...' (Wenger, et al., 2002, p.4). It is thus suggested that mentoring initiatives share similar characteristics as CofPs, and social capital resources can be generated through CofPs. Indeed, Wenger et al. (2002, p.108) established the mentorship of

community newcomers as a systematic and valuable means of learning and development. While mentoring research often adopts a dyadic perspective, with the focus on the mentor–mentee relationship, this approach does not always capture the wider networks built between mentors and mentees, or generations of mentoring partners in programmes (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). Mentoring initiatives create activities and events that encourage participants to interact beyond their immediate partnerships, which further reinforces signs that mentoring initiatives can be studied as CofPs (Gannon & Washington, 2019). This perspective reflects a more organic and nebulous use of communities, composed of mentoring scheme participants and stakeholders, conferring a sense of identity and belonging on individuals (Wenger, 1998). Further, the progression of ‘developmental mentoring’ over ‘sponsorship mentoring’ relies on the ‘mutuality of learning’, ‘helping mentees do things for themselves’, and ‘learners’ thinking’ (Clutterbuck, 2008, p.8) thus reinforcing the importance of CofPs as means of collaborative innovation (Marasco et al., 2018).

Knowledge transfer from soon-to- retire to new professionals is of particular importance with an aging workforce (Calo, 2008) to capture corporate memories. Through CofP and mentoring, knowledge transfer between generations can also be seen as a key talent management strategy (Calo, 2008). Further, evidence suggests mentoring initiatives can act as forms of exposure to career and development opportunities within an industry (Cismaru & Lunuis, 2020) and be leveraged as future pipelines of talent identification for those in the hospitality sector (D'Annunzio-Green & Teare, 2018).

Underpinning this paper is the argument that mentoring initiatives can be understood as TM innovations through engagement with two key theoretical areas; social capital and CofP. Social capital enables an understanding of how mentoring relationships generate social resources for individual participants and mentoring initiatives can construct networks, connections, and ways of communicating that support talent identification. This literature suggests individuals are able to form strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) that supports engagement with employers and wider industry, and organisations and other stakeholders (such as senior managers, educators and policy makers) are able to connect with dispersed talent as part of mentoring initiatives, thus creating new variants of professional networks. The social dimensions of mentoring initiatives are further evident through the lens of CofPs where such initiatives promote learning and knowledge exchange within, and beyond, mentoring relationships. The CofPs concept help us understand how a beleaguered industry which faces multiple challenges in relation to talent identification and management (Joos et al., 2019; Sheehan, et al., 2018) may be able to derive advantages from deploying mentoring initiatives

as TM innovations. To capture the conceptual and empirical ideas discussed the initial TM Mentoring Triangle figure has been revised (Figure 2) and this guides the data collection and subsequent analysis.

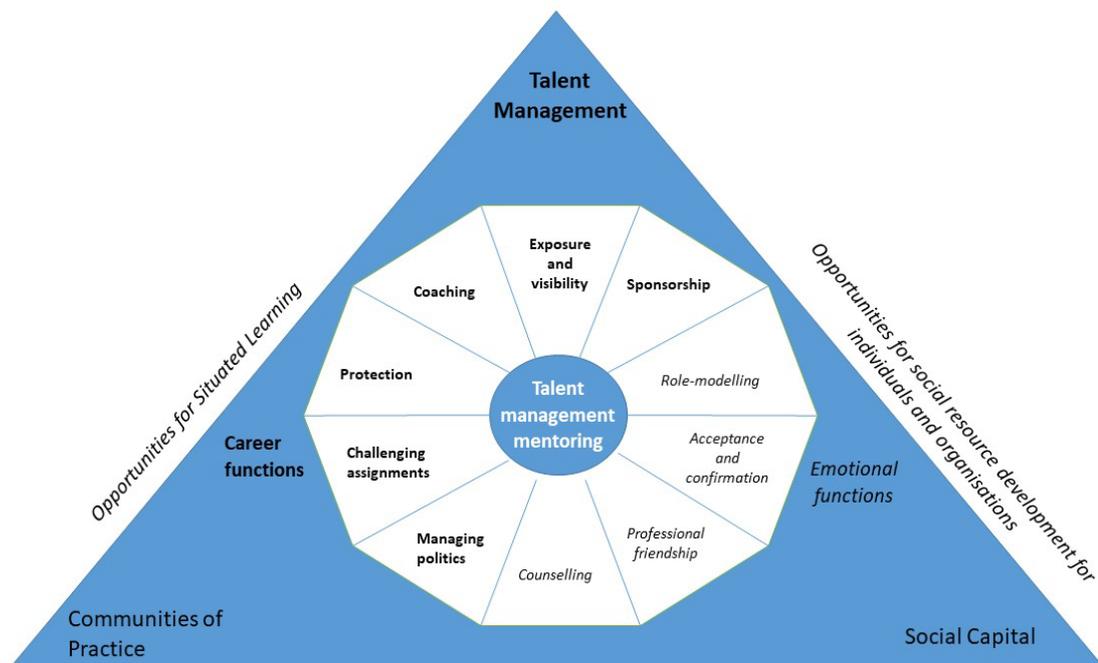


Figure 2. Talent Management Mentoring Triangle (adapted from Merrick & Stokes, 2008)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We adopt a pragmatic research paradigm to explore and understand the capacity for mentoring programmes in the hospitality sector to act as TM innovations. Pragmatic research is 'problem-focused' and oriented to 'real-world' practice (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), and thus suited to the investigation of mentoring initiatives across the hospitality sector. The underlying methodology of data collection and analysis is executed by examining current, accessible mentoring initiatives within the hospitality sector through a case study approach (Gray, 2019). The following sections explain the criteria used to identify mentoring initiatives and the secondary data collection and analysis methods deployed. A case study methodology was used to review the current provision of hospitality and tourism sector-related mentoring initiatives in order to gain an understanding of their focus, nature and capacity to be innovative TM activities (Gray, 2019). In particular, a case study methodology is of value when conducting preliminary stages of research, in advance of a larger empirical research study

(Flyvberg, 2011). We were guided by the following research questions and these questions framed the data collection and analysis:

1. What mentoring schemes exist in this sector?
2. What is the purpose of these mentoring initiatives and what forms do they take?
3. What features of these mentoring initiatives suggest they develop social resources and networks which act as CofP and contribute to TM?

### **Method of data collection**

Data was collected using online pre-existing textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These secondary sources are publicly available, organisation-generated details that outline various features of mentoring initiatives. The collation of these details allows us to identify and explore mentoring programmes, their stated purposes and practices, thus providing a greater understanding of the intended mentoring relationships. The researchers acknowledge the potential for bias, as the available data is generated by the organisations identified, and therefore most likely to be presented in a favourable and positive light. For example, no company led mentoring initiatives were identified as part of this search. While recognising this bias, this data collection method remains valuable as an initial phase of research that aims to establish how mentoring initiatives foster TM, by understanding the social capital generated and how these initiatives behave as CofPs.

Each mentoring initiative had to be detailed in the public domain to enable the data collection. We used a popular internet search engine deploying the search terms ‘mentoring’, ‘programmes’, ‘schemes’, ‘hospitality’, ‘tourism’. Each mentoring initiative identified was reviewed for applicability, and the results provided 14 relevant mentoring initiatives for further analysis. These are based in the UK, South Africa and Australia, and in addition, a single global mentoring programme. Their initial Table 1 outlines the key features analysed in the mentoring initiatives identifies.

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RUNNING HEADER: MENTORING INITIATIVES AS TALENT MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS (GANNON, CLAYTON, & KLENERT, 2020)

Table 1. Overview of Mentoring initiatives in Hospitality and Tourism sectors

Mentor Programme	MentorMe	Bacchus Mentoring	GEMS	Hospitality Super Heroes	Fast Forward 15	Plan b Mentoring Scheme	The Growth Works Hospitality Mentorship	Women in Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure WiHTL	Master Innholders	Aware Pilot	Global Buddies	WOHO - Women in Hospitality	TIME Mentoring Programme	Leadership Mentoring Programme in Hospitality
Mentor Organisation	Institute of Hospitality	Oxford Brookes University	Springboard and Savoy Education Trust	Umbrella Training	Founder Fay Sharpe	Plan b – origins in Athena mentoring scheme	The Growth Works Network	WiHTL Founder: Tea Colaiani	Master Innholders	Aware.aero	Tomorrow's Travel Leaders – Travel Trade Gazette	Founder: Julia Campbell	TIME – not for profit organisation	Graduate School of Business – University of Cape Town
Focus	Career growth & development	Education to industry career moves	Education to industry career moves	Supporting and retaining apprentices	Career planning and support for women	Career support for women	Early career hoteliers. Marketers and revenue managers	Women and ethnic minority career support	Mentoring support for St Julian scholars	Mentoring early career pilots	Support those developing careers in travel	Females developing careers in hospitality sector	Aspiring leaders in travel tourism, hospitality & aviation	Young leaders career support in South Africa
URL links	<a href="https://www.instituteofhospitality.org/professional-development/mentoring/">https://www.instituteofhospitality.org/professional-development/mentoring/</a>	<a href="https://www.brookes.ac.uk/hospitality/student-life/the-bacchus-mentoring-programme/">https://www.brookes.ac.uk/hospitality/student-life/the-bacchus-mentoring-programme/</a>	<a href="https://springboard.uk.net/programme/gems/">https://springboard.uk.net/programme/gems/</a>	<a href="https://www.umbrellatraining.co.uk/superheroes">https://www.umbrellatraining.co.uk/superheroes</a>	<a href="https://fastforward15.co.uk/about/">https://fastforward15.co.uk/about/</a>	<a href="https://planbmentoring.com/#">https://planbmentoring.com/#</a>	<a href="https://thegrowthworks.com/mentorship/">https://thegrowthworks.com/mentorship/</a>	<a href="https://www.wihtl.com/home">https://www.wihtl.com/home</a>	<a href="https://masterinnholders.co.uk/become-a-mentor/">https://masterinnholders.co.uk/become-a-mentor/</a>	<a href="https://www.aware.aero/pilot-mentoring">https://www.aware.aero/pilot-mentoring</a>	<a href="https://www.globaltravelgroup.com/why-choose-us/">https://www.globaltravelgroup.com/why-choose-us/</a>	<a href="https://womeninhospitality.org/mentorship/">https://womeninhospitality.org/mentorship/</a>	<a href="https://www.travelindustrymentor.com.au/what-we-do/">https://www.travelindustrymentor.com.au/what-we-do/</a>	<a href="https://www.gsb.uct.ac.za/hospitality">https://www.gsb.uct.ac.za/hospitality</a>
Founded and base	Pilot conducted in 2014 UK	2008 UK	2010 UK	2019 UK	2014 UK	2018 UK	2020 UK and Europe	2019 UK	2005/6 UK	no date UK	2015 Global	2016 Australia	2009 Australia and New Zealand	no date South Africa

RUNNING HEADER: MENTORING INITIATIVES AS TALENT MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS (GANNON, CLAYTON, & KLENERT, 2020)

Mentor Programme	MentorMe	Bacchus Mentoring	GEMS	Hospitality Super Heroes	Fast Forward 15	Plan b Mentoring Scheme	The Growth Works Hospitality Mentorship	Women in Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure WiHTL	Master Innholders	Aware Pilot	Global Buddies	WOHO - Women in Hospitality	TIME Mentoring Programme	Leadership Mentoring Programme in Hospitality
Approach	1:1 meetings monthly for a six month period	1:1 and small group mentoring. Matching event and networking events on professional career development topics	1:1 mentor networking a matching day event, connects with universities. Mentees must be eligible to work in the UK	High profile senior industry professionals working with apprentices. Uses TED style talks and events	2 group workshops and monthly 1:1 mentoring sessions. Plus events	Series of speed networking and matching events. Aims to achieve scalability across the industry	Regular mentorship and accountability sessions and video conferences	1:1 mentoring sessions to sharing industry experiences and skills. Reverse as well as traditional mentoring	1:1 support of St Julian Scholars by Master Innholders members and events. Links to local initiatives and school children	Pilot one day mentor course, mentoring matching and mentoring sessions	Remote mentoring across the consortium. Led by Travel Trade Gazette. Mentors from industry and academia	1:1 mentoring and networking events for women – access to male and female	1:1 mentoring formal induction, over 6 months with graduation event	Mentoring as part of a developing managers programme offered at UCT
Award Nominations /Recognition	Sees talent attraction and retention as key industry challenge. Facilitates development of members	2016 Finalist Worldwide Hospitality Awards; Best Educational innovation	Focused on retaining talent in the hospitality sector – began as Savoy Society Mentoring scheme	Apprentices training company led scheme. Retention of apprentices	Fay Sharpe – Mentor of the Year & People First Shine awards 2017. Links to Women's Business Council	Recognised via Peach Special Award 2020	Linked to Vatel, Glion and Les Roches hotel schools	Evolved into series of webinars and wider diversity and equality issues beyond women in HTL sectors	Strong community orientation – mentors and mentees link with local schools and colleges too	Developing pilots beyond the cockpit	Origins in a leadership development initiative which identified value of mentoring	Originated from Julia Campbell's involvement in Women Chefs and Restaurateurs in NY	Small fee payable by mentee. Operated by small not-for-profit organisation	Draws on academics, practitioners and South African policy makers

### **Data collection and analysis process**

The execution of the data collection process involved three stages. The initial stage involved identifying the key characteristics of the mentoring initiatives to determine similarities and differences in aims, approach, focus and stakeholder links. This was done by reviewing pre-existing, online documentary evidence available within the public information domain for each of the mentoring initiatives. This included programme websites, any videos, reports, newspaper or press coverage and academic articles. In the collection of the data, it was critical to have consistent boundaries in the search for appropriate mentoring initiatives.

In the second stage we collated the mentoring initiatives' key facets and constructed comparative tables across initiatives. Our understanding of the mentoring, social capital, CofPs and TM literature helped to identify facets. For example, we were attuned to:

- The espoused purpose and objectives/ desired outcomes of mentoring initiatives
- Approaches used: structured, ad hoc, 1:1, peer, reverse, group, virtual, speed, face to face
- Mentoring groups: student to student; industry professional to student, alumni past and present, senior and junior professionals,
- Stakeholders: students, alumni, experienced industry professionals, professional bodies and key influencers
- Activities and knowledge transfer opportunities – short-term work experience, visiting workplace, professional insights
- Support for mentoring relationships – for dyads and wider mentoring scheme communities – events held, training, briefing and additional resources
- Duration and evaluation of mentoring programmes
- Good practice guidelines benchmark/standards or any endorsement/awards

In the final stage, data analysis, involved identification of key themes using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). We attempted to build depictions of each initiative and then analyse across our initial case study findings; clustering, categorising and coding phenomena that included, mentoring purpose, representation and activities. In the subsequent sections of this chapter we outline our findings, discuss their implications for understanding mentoring initiatives as TM innovations through the lenses of social capital and CofP. In our final section, we provide conclusions and implications for practitioners, educators and researchers based upon our analyses.

## **FINDINGS: MENTORING INNOVATIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTORS**

In this section, we analyse the nature of, key participants and features and other notable aspects of these mentoring innovations to inspect their capacity to be TM innovations. Three major themes emerged from our secondary data collection with sub-themes expressed within these higher-level categories:

1. Focus (sectors, location, origins and duration, purpose and targeted groups);
2. Stakeholders (lead organisations, funders, mentors and mentees) and
3. Structures and Process (nature of mentoring, dyadic and collective activities, support and direction).

### **The Focus of Mentoring Initiatives**

Our fourteen identified initiatives stretch across the hospitality, and related sectors. Most have broader industry appeal and exceptionally some initiatives are focused on very specific sectors, such as aviation (Aware Pilot), travel and tourism (Global Buddies) and hotels (Master Innholders). Two educational institution schemes were also identified; the Bacchus Mentoring scheme (which we have been involved with ourselves) and another as part of a leadership development programme at the University of Cape Town. No company generated schemes emerged in our search despite evidence of such schemes existing (Cismaru & Lunuis, 2020; Gannon, 2020). It may be that further refinement of our search terms would generate corporate examples in the future. However, this limitation also highlights the cooperative nature of an industry where third sector organisations create opportunities for mentoring, which embrace the many SMEs that dominate the industry, and stretch across corporate boundaries too.

Of the fourteen initiatives identified the earliest was set up in 2005 (Master Innholders scheme) and the most recently inaugurated mentoring initiative (The Growth Works) emerged in 2020. For two initiatives (Leadership Mentoring Programme and Aware Pilot) no record of their first appearance was available. It is notable that the majority of schemes were developed in the last decade, since 2010. Only three schemes offered exceptions to this, the Bacchus Mentoring, the Master Innholders and the Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) mentoring programmes. This emergence of mentoring initiatives as TM innovations coincides with the TM literature where 93% of papers were published after 2008 (McDonnell et al., 2017). Several initiatives had emerged out of previous mentoring endeavours, for example Springboard GEMS, or GEMS, was previously known as the Savoy Educational

Trust mentoring scheme and the Plan B mentoring initiative was derived from the Athena mentoring scheme based in the licensed retail sector. Most of the mentoring initiatives identified were founded in the United Kingdom (UK), with only three of the 14 programmes originating from elsewhere; New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and one programme, Global Buddies asserted its global credentials. However, these origins are somewhat deceptive for some initiatives when mentors and mentees appeared to be located beyond the programmes' suggested national boundaries. For example, mentees and mentors on the programmes at Oxford Brookes University and the University of Cape Town could be located outside of the UK and South Africa respectively, and Growth Works scheme emphasises its links with key Swiss hotel schools despite its UK roots.

The size, in terms of number of mentees and mentors on initiatives varied widely, where this information was available, ranging from 20 to 30 mentoring pairs to 500 participants. Several programmes made claims for scalability (MentorMe, Women in Hospitality, Travel and Leisure or WiHTL, Plan B, and Bacchus) in the hope of having a broader impact within the industry or specific sector. Most programmes also mentioned early pilot versions of their initiatives which were all of limited size with growth managed diligently in line with resources reflecting the challenges of developing and sustaining mentoring schemes (Gannon & Washington, 2019).

The focus of the mentoring initiatives identified was overwhelmingly industry career development, however, this concern manifest at several different levels, from early-stage apprenticeships (Hospitality Super Heroes, GEMS) to senior manager development (Master Innholders) with numerous examples in between. For example, transitioning into industry from education (Bacchus Mentoring and GEMS) and returning to the workplace (WiHTL). While few of these initiatives directly mentioned TM, the exceptions were MentorMe and GEMS, they acknowledge many of the concerns, specifically identifying and retaining talent, expressed in the TM challenges (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018; Sheehan, et al., 2018).

Four of the 14 initiatives identified specifically focus on mentoring for women (Plan B, Fast Forward, WiHTL, and Women in Hospitality, or 'WOHO') and other minority groups (a development of WiHTL) in the industry. Gender and ethnic segregation are both significant issues in the industry where women and ethnic minorities often find themselves with limited access to career development opportunities (Dashper, 2020; Mooney et al., 2017). A broader argument underlying the multiple groups targeted; from students transitioning into industry, young professionals developing their careers, women and wider Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, and apprentices, is just how difficult it is to

spot talent, or be spotted as talent, in dispersed organisations. Among these mentoring initiatives there is an emphasis on identifying and retaining talent by enhancing networks and creating bonds between participants as well as creating connections or bridges across organisational (or even departmental) boundaries to be able to enhance commitment to the industry and career prospects.

### **Stakeholders in Mentoring Initiatives**

The theme of stakeholders was evident from analysis of the different groups involved in instigating, participating and sustaining the fourteen mentoring initiatives identified. The organisations involved in running these mentoring initiatives consists of those with mentoring as the primary purpose (Fast Forward 15, Plan B, WOHO and TIME mentoring) and the majority with mentoring as a secondary purpose (MentorMe, Bacchus Mentoring, GEMS, Hospitality SuperHeroes, The Growth Works, WiHTL, Master Innholders, Aware Pilot, Global Buddies and Leadership Mentoring). This differentiation highlights how mentoring may be used by organisations to build networks and nurture closer connections between members, and even attract new members to remain relevant across generations. These findings reflect the development of social capital through mentoring, and through the use of CofPs, as identified earlier.

Another way of categorising these organisations operating mentoring initiatives is to differentiate between those that articulate their schemes from a position of supply that is they have access to existing expertise in the form of mentors, and those that are responding to a demand for development opportunities in the guise of mentoring. For example, the MentorMe scheme from the Institute of Hospitality clearly articulates their existing membership who are keen to act as mentors and help others develop their careers in the industry. Whereas the Global Buddies programme, identifies that the mentoring initiative grew out of demand from their Tomorrow's Travel Leaders programme. These two orientations sort the initiatives identified into supply-led (MentorMe, GEMS, Hospitality Super Heroes, Growth Works, Master Innholders, Aware Pilot, and TIME mentoring) and demand-led (Bacchus Mentoring, Fast Forward 15, Plan B, WiHTL, Global Buddies, WOHO and Leadership Mentoring). These demand and supply-led orientations offer interesting insights into the ways networks operate within the industry where existing networks are deployed to support mentoring or new networks are created for the purposes of mentoring. Both suggest that existing experienced managers across diverse organisations and sectors of the industry are keen to behave altruistically in support of others.

There is diversity in the nature of the organisations supporting mentoring initiatives. They include: professional and trade associations, such as the Institute of Hospitality (IOH), Global Travel Group/Travel Trade Gazette and the Master Innholders; academic institutions, such as Oxford Brookes University and the University of Cape Town; training and consultancy organisations; Umbrella training, Aware Pilot and The Growth Works; charity organisations, such as Springboard UK and the Savoy Education Trust; and not for profit organisations, such as Fast Forward 15, WiHTL and TIME mentoring). The remaining organisations appear to be networks set up to support their mentoring endeavours. This is the case in relation to Plan B and WOHO. Some of these third sector organisations, which have origins as state supported training bodies, as well as professional bodies, clearly voice in their websites commitment to developing knowledge and skills, career opportunities and enhancing the reputation of the industry and make appeals to professionalism. For example, commonly there are claims about bringing experienced professionals and younger professionals together to create networks and aid career development.

Predominantly, those who are identified as mentors across the fourteen initiatives are senior, experienced professionals in their sectors. Some were high profile, for example in the case of the Master Innholders and Hospitality Super Heroes schemes. In the videos and biographies which depict mentors, the senior professionals identify their passion for supporting other's career development and aspirations, the value they accrue from their own mentoring experiences and a commitment to the future of the industry. Mentors also mention their own personal learning and the benefits of meeting other professionals who are outside of their own organisation or existing networks (Sharples & Marcon-Clarke, 2019). Being open and someone to talk to, developing trusting relationships with mentees and setting an example are other features which appear regularly in these snapshots of mentors' experiences. There is also one example of reverse mentoring from WiHTL where younger professionals act as reverse mentors to senior leaders.

Aside from this example of reverse mentoring in the fourteen initiatives identified, mentees are predominantly younger professionals at key career thresholds or those who are likely to face more specific career challenges. This is evident in students or trainees about to transition from education or formal training into industry (Bacchus Mentoring, GEMS, Hospitality Superheroes, and Aware Pilot). Whereas those who are facing career challenges at the middle management level can be further sub-divided into mentoring initiatives aimed at mid-career stages (Master Innholders, MentorMe, Global Buddies, TIME and Leadership Mentoring) and those who have specific characteristics (Fast Forward

15, Plan B, WiHTL and WOHO). Personal accounts from mentees highlight their resolve to pursue their aspirations and the deeper industry understanding they have achieved through mentoring, as well as their raised confidence and the long-term value they see in their relationships with senior industry figures. There are some fundamental messages from analysis of the stakeholders involved in these mentoring initiatives. It appears that particular stages in industry careers where talent might be lost to other sectors or commitment to the industry may wane are targeted in sector and industry wide mentoring initiatives.

### **The Structure and Processes of Mentoring Initiatives**

This final main theme from the analysis of the mentoring initiatives focuses on the how they are delivered, the duration of relationships, the balance between dyadic and collective activities, the nature of support offered and how they present their mentoring initiatives.

The majority of the programmes run one-to-one mentoring that can be virtual or face-to-face, all had implemented virtual mentoring due to Covid-19 when we revisited the initiative websites. The exceptions to the use of one-to-one were Hospitality Super Heroes and Plan B as they used group mentoring and speed networking respectively. Several initiatives adopted more than one mentoring approach with WiHTL offering traditional. Reverse and bite-sized (speed mentoring). All of the initiatives mentioned events which ran alongside the main mentoring relationships. These could be introduction events, matching events (where formal dyads were decided or speed mentoring helped guide final dyad allocations), as well as training, networking and celebration events. These collective events highlight the very social nature of these industry mentoring initiatives and the importance of building networks and communities of learning. In the Covid-19 phase of data collection these events shifted into online networking events and themed webinars covering a range of topics to support all participants. Other activities mentioned involve mentoring initiatives stimulating placement opportunities, trial shifts, access to other senior specialists and topical webinars. In comparison to other mentoring programmes these initiatives in hospitality and tourism are conspicuous due to the provision of community events beyond initial mentoring relationships (Gannon & Washington, 2019) further reinforcing the highly social nature of these endeavours.

The duration of one-to-one mentoring relationships ranged from six months to three years, though six months to a year was the most typical period. Several of the websites summarise mentoring experiences from paired and unpaired mentors and mentees, and most of these highlight that dyads remain in touch after the formal relationship has ended. Other features of websites include features

on founders, blogs, accounts and photographs of networking events, as well as outlines of mentor and mentee participation criteria, details of what to expect from the initiative and explanations of how to register interest in the scheme. Some of these websites provide details of briefing or training sessions for mentors and mentees or explanations of how the mentoring relationships will be evaluated. For example, the Aware Pilot mentoring scheme clearly details what is anticipated in terms of the mentor training day and programme evaluation. From these initial insights there is an impression that the opportunity to relate and learn as mentoring pairs are anticipated as easily achieved, and that the 'natural' sociability of those involved in an industry often termed as a 'people industry' enables networking to happen easily.

### **Mentoring Initiatives as Talent Management Innovations in the International Hospitality Industry**

It is evident from the findings that these mentoring initiatives act as purposeful social networks in support of mentees, in particular. They appear to be developed due to recognition of the challenges of realising career aspirations in the industry and do this by enhancing younger professionals' ability to relate to and draw upon the expertise of senior professionals. These relationships and wider networks help them understand some of the ways they might leverage this knowledge and connections to develop their careers within the industry. The mentoring initiatives are evidence of the structural dimensions of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015), which connect professionals from different career stages, and those with different backgrounds. The relational dimension (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015) was apparent through the personal relationships developed in these mentoring initiatives, however our secondary data means the details of trust, friendship and respect appear as part of the impressions managed on the initiatives' websites or press coverage.

The organisations which have developed mentoring initiatives articulate shared visions of the industry, and the challenges of career progression. They also allude to mentoring creating opportunities to enhance and further their own networks by bridging with other organisations and cultivating intergenerational connections (Cismaru & Iunuis, 2020; Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). Mentoring initiatives are novel conceptualisations where mentoring bridges boundaries and creates bonds beyond mentors and mentees' own employers, across the wider industry (Wong, 2018). There is also evidence of social bonds being facilitated between mentors and mentees reinforcing the value members accrue from associating with these organisations and facilitating new, future members too. However, we also recognise that while personal social resources are seen to be enhanced, these are

only depictions in the selected mentors and mentees biographies presented by the mentoring initiatives. It is important to recognise that the true quality of these relationships cannot be taken for granted without primary research being undertaken.

There are suggestions that the cognitive dimension (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015) of organisational social capital is evident where these mentoring initiatives depict examples of better communication through participation in mentoring, engagement in associated events and steady growth in participation enquiries. There appears to be a shared sense of the challenges younger professionals or other particular career stages face, and some consistency about how mentoring is a suitable support. There is also a strong sense that there are social obligations amongst senior professionals to share their knowledge and success. To this extent we can see these mentoring schemes offering innovation by creating a shared system of meaning and value around their mentoring activities, while looking across these initiatives we can see this shared system evident across the industry. This may go some way to explaining the continuous innovation of mentoring initiatives across the industry when TM and talent retention has proved to be so challenging in recent years. It is also useful to reflect how these networks have intensified following Covid-19 to facilitate knowledge sharing and develop industry focused solutions to remobilise following lockdown e.g. in the UK (IOH, WiHTL, Growth Works).

Our analyses from the secondary data collected suggest that mentoring initiatives perform the role of social capital or 'glue' building and bonding these initiatives as forms of CofPs (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). This evidence of bonding is apparent in accounts of mentoring relationships being built and lasting beyond the lifetime of the formal mentoring relationship, as well as accounts of mentees going on to mentor others in the same or different initiatives. The widespread use of community events as part of these mentoring initiatives also suggests evidence of social bonding not only between mentors and mentees but between mentors and mentors, and mentees and mentees. These community events are about sharing experiences, dilemmas and learning and therefore directly appeal to the CofP literature (Wenger et al., 2002).

All those groups targeted in mentoring schemes, from women and BAME communities to those transitioning between specific career stages, highlight implicitly the issues of talent retention and concerns over loss of 'talent' to other sectors. The mentoring initiatives can be seen as innovative opportunities to deepen participants' knowledge of their own industry and retain their talent through deploying those who have secured successful careers within it. In the case of initiatives dedicated to

mentoring women, BAME and other minority groups can be seen to enhance shared knowledge, between mentors and mentees, that can inform recruitment and retention strategies for the industry that are inclusive and efficacious. Granting young professionals' access to senior people, who are not typically accessible offers this opportunity for knowledge exchange and shared learning is seen as valuable for all concerned (Cismaru & Iunuis, 2020; Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). Some of the mentor's accounts of their learning from mentoring are particularly poignant here, as they recognise the imperfect knowledge about career opportunities and the connections to those with career aspirations. Such relational connections could be beneficial to cultivating TM approaches that are more informed, authentic and sustainable.

The shared learning aspect of mentoring initiatives understood through CofPs is also evident in the commitment most had to sustaining collective events through the Covid-19 pandemic. Supporting the shift to virtual mentoring and online events to sustain the communities they have created when the industry faced one of its toughest challenges highlights how this sense of community was valued as mentors, mentees and their communities learnt to cope with this crisis. Such evidence aligns with Gibb's (1999) arguments that mentoring initiatives are communitarian in nature and not solely about social exchange. However, we do need to recognise that without accounts from mentors and mentees it may be difficult to understand the true nature of social exchange within these initiatives.

In relation to our adapted model of TM mentoring, our analysis suggests that capitalising on the highly social nature of the hospitality sector by creating mentoring initiatives beyond specific business boundaries appears to one way of revivifying TM. Tackling TM issues through sector-wide practices, such as mentoring initiatives offers the opportunity to build on the 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973; 1983) and promote talent identification and development (Jones, 2010). Mentoring initiatives can be seen as TM innovations, which synthesise the talent challenges in this diverse and fragmented industry addressing them through community responses.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our exploration of mentoring initiatives as a means of addressing some of the TM challenges facing the hospitality industry highlights the communities which already exist, and the work they do to create social bonds for industry participants and bridges between different organisations. These social capital features offer innovative opportunities to retain and manage talent, primarily beyond the confines of existing employers but within specific sectors and the industry itself. Industry diversity, in terms of diversity in training and educational transitions, levels of mobility, specific occupations and

disadvantaged groups who often face limited career opportunities, means identifying and coordinating TM practices is fraught. In addition, the challenges managers face in identifying and managing talent suggests participating in mentoring beyond your own employer offers a valuable way of passing on knowledge and insights for the wider benefit of the sector. The learning associated with mentoring, however is not solely focused around mentees, where mentors and the networks and organisations which coordinate schemes, are able to better articulate the needs of the industry and what opportunities are available for meaningful careers. Importantly we also see a revived agenda for tackling issues of equality and inclusivity where mentoring initiatives are envisioned as TM innovations (Dashper, 2020; Gannon & Washington, 2019).

Analysing mentoring schemes against the framework of CofPs reinforces evidence of how mentoring initiatives act as learning communities facilitating improved awareness of TM challenges and helping different participants identify what development and skills are needed, and where those skills and people may be found (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010; Wenger, et al., 2002). In the post-Covid-19 landscape, with hospitality businesses disproportionately affected by these events it is significant to see these mentoring initiatives reacting positively, offering leadership, guidance and ongoing learning to participants. These responses reinforce the evidence that mentoring initiatives function as CofPs and are sustained by social capital from the bonds and bridges forged.

We are aware of the limitations of our investigation of mentoring initiatives where we have relied upon secondary research sources to gather our data. To better understand mentoring initiatives as TM innovations, as industry level responses to TM and assess the value of our adapted TM mentoring model, it will be important to undertake primary research. In-depth, multiple case studies deploying multi-level access with mentoring scheme commissioners and managers, as well as participants themselves, offers a viable research agenda. In this way, we will be able to understand more about the ways social capital works in mentoring relationships and initiatives to support TM. In addition, such primary research will help understand how to sustain mentoring initiatives as CofPs and TM practices outside of normal employer organisational boundaries, for the benefit of the wider industry. Further research will also help us engage with the understanding corporate TM and human resource specialists have of these industry mentoring initiatives in relation to TM. Opportunities to capitalise on the social nature of the industry, with its examples of altruistic behaviours, may not be seen as positive where they divert attention away from and undermine existing corporate TM interventions.

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