CRITICAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME
OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES WORKING
IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS:
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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CRITICAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES WORKING IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS:

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The National Restaurant Association in their 2014 forecast state that the restaurants will employ 14.8 million people by 2024 compared to the current estimated employment of 13.5 million people. The report adds that the revenue generated by the restaurant industry in 2014 is estimated to be $683 billion - increase of $96 billion from 2010. The Bureau of Labor statistics (2012) forecsts the demand for labor in the restaurant industry will grow at an annual compound rate of 10%. This report also points out that 11.4% of the working age population or around 27 million individuals have some form of disabilities and only 1% is employed by the restaurants. The 2010 U.S. population census indicates a gradual decline in the traditional workforce and with the anticipated growth in the economy, the demand for traditional workers will surpass availability. Restaurant industry offers numerous career opportunities to individuals with different levels of skills and interests. This research examined the perspectives of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business and the Job Coach to identify the critical personal attributes for their successful employment outcome. The finding of this study and its implications on the stakeholders are also discussed.
DEDICATION

To my family who provided the much needed support and encouragement towards the completion of this challenging assignment.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to several individuals who supported and guided me towards the completion of this research paper. They are; my committee members Dr. Shernavaz Vakil, Dr. Francis Broadway, Dr. Harold Foster, Dr. Alfred Daviso III, and Dr. John Queener for their time, patience and valuable insights. Without the support and co-operation of the Management at the research site and the participants, this study would not have been possible. Finally, thank you Michelle Byrne, for going through the tedious process of editing the paper.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The National Restaurant Association in its 2014 annual forecast states that for the period ending December 2014, the restaurant industry will generate $683 billion in revenues or approximately 4% of the gross domestic product in the United States. During the same period, restaurants will employ 13 million workers – about 1 in 10 jobs or 10% of the U.S. workforce. The survey also states that for fifteenth consecutive year, the restaurant industry job growth will outpace the growth of the economy. According to their estimates, by the year 2024 additional 1.3 million jobs will be created or 14.8 million people will be employed by the restaurants, nationwide.

The Ohio Restaurant Association survey (2014) also reflects the national trend in restaurant sales and employment growth. Restaurant sales in Ohio are expected to reach $17.8 billion in 2014. The industry will employ around 534,300 people or 10% of the total work force in the state and by 2024, additional 32,200 workers would employed by the industry.

The 2010 U.S. population census indicates a gradual decline in the number of individuals in the traditional workforce. As the economy grows, the demand for traditional workers will surpass the availability. The question is where will the
The restaurant industry look for human resources to fill the void? The current and the expected economic impact of the restaurant industry on the U.S economy by 2024 are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Schematic presentation of the composition of the U.S. workforce and its representation in the restaurant industry (2014). Source: NRA annual survey-2014.

The Restaurant Industry

Restaurants are ubiquitous in our everyday life. The restaurant business is labor intensive and diverse in terms of concepts, types of menus offered, and skills requirements. The industry therefore offers career opportunities to individuals with variety of skill sets.
Susskind, Kacmar, and Borchgrevink (2007) state in their research that contrary to popular belief, the restaurant business is very competitive and the profit margins are low. Other things remaining constant, service plays an important role in the success or failure of a restaurant. Susskind (et al., 2007) examined data from 324 service employees and 271 guest responses across 25 restaurants over a period of 2 months to determine the impact of supervisor support on guest service. The study concluded that three factors are critical for service delivery: team work, service standards and guest orientation. In order to achieve the three elements for service delivery success, the service provider must have certain attributes such as self-assurance, enthusiasm and pleasant attitude (Hall, 2010).

Unlike most businesses, in the restaurant business customers take part in creating the product they are about to consume; that is, the customer orders what they want and how they want it. How the service is delivered determines the overall experience and every employee has the power to make or break the guest experience. The window of opportunity to create a favorable impression is very limited. On the other hand, individuals delivering the service have their own perceptions about the product and they must respond to diverse customer needs and constantly juggle mood swings. Many individuals are involved in creating the experience and the workers are under constant pressure to deliver the services.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) forecasts the food service industry will be the sixth fastest growing profession between the years 2010 and 2020. To get a general idea about the workforce and ratio of disabled workers in the restaurant
industry, refer to the data provided by the BLS in Table 1 for the period 2009 through 2011. The NRA does not provide similar data.

Table 1.1 shows that in 2009, out of the total population of 16 years or older (i.e. 235.8 million) 11.4% or 27 million were individuals with disabilities. This percentage remained more or less the same in 2011. During this period, only 12.9% were employed. It is interesting to note that in 2009, only 270,000 individuals with disabilities were employed in the restaurants and that number shrank to 265,000 in 2010. These numbers represent 2.9% and 2.8% of the employees in the restaurant industry during the period.

Table: 1.1
Population, workforce and individuals with disabilities workforce. Rounded to nearest zero.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tot. Pop 16 yrs. + Mil.</th>
<th>Disabled 16 yrs. + Mil. (%)</th>
<th>Tot. Employed 16 yrs. + Mil.</th>
<th>(c) % of (b)</th>
<th>Rest. Employed Mil. % of (e)</th>
<th>Disabled Workers in Rest. % of (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>235.8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>208,820</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>9,399</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>237.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>211,238</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9,376</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>239.6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>212,236</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>9,613</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</table>

Note: The table accounts for all individuals with disabilities.

A five year tracking study conducted by the Delaware Joint Vocational School found that 77 percent of students with special needs who were trained in various aspects of hospitality related jobs held on to their jobs (Tamasovich, 2002). When
compared with the general trends of employee turnover in the hospitality sector, which hovers around 90 percent, the retention rate of 77 percent is remarkable. Tamasovich (2002) adds, “Special needs students learn that they have the ability to make a difference in their own lives, as well as those of others” (p. 30).

Repeat customers are the foundation for business success. In the case of restaurant industry, Gupta, McLaughlin, and Gomez (2007) have identified four core areas to bring back and to create new customers: delicious food, appropriate prices, cheerful greetings, and attentive service. Another factor that is considered important is the appearance and grooming of the service staff. Because of the high interaction of the service personal with the customer, the service personnel are in fact in control of influencing customer decisions. Gupta (et al., 2007) do not identify personal attributes of servers that resonate positively with customers.

**Intellectual Disabilities**

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defines intellectual disability as characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. The disability originates before the age of 18.

In order to perform well, individuals have to be trained to learn skills to achieve the desired goals. Unfortunately, individuals with intellectual disabilities are faced with the dual challenges of being on the lower spectrum of cognition and the stereotypical perceptions of their abilities.
Grove, Secker, and Seebohm (2005) observe that there is widespread belief amongst various businesses that individuals with mental health issues add to workplace problems because they are unreliable, hard to manage and unproductive. The authors add that these assumptions are driven by the very society that is supposed to facilitate transition.

However, extensive research by Su, Lin, Wu, and Chen (2008) points out that individuals with mental retardation who have gainful employment have a better quality of life and community integration. They add that these individuals have also “demonstrated higher levels of self-perceived control, overall life satisfaction, social participation, adaptive skills, and self-perceived productivity” (Su; et al., 2008; p. 84).

According to Bigby, Fyffe, and Ozanne (2007), individuals with intellectual disabilities have the same aspiration as individuals without intellectual disabilities to socialize, succeed, have relationships, earn, learn and be counted in the society. However, for individuals with intellectual disabilities these needs develop at a slower rate, as do the skills required to negotiate and meet them.

Bigby (et al., 2007) observes that for adolescents in particular, friendship and social acceptance from a wider peer group is important. Bukowski (2001) supports the view and says that “such relationships provide the foundation for autonomy, self-confidence and independence from parents” (p. 208). The workplace provides one such opportunity.
Statement of the Problem

The passage and amendments to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990, 2008), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1990), and the subsequent reauthorization of IDEA under Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 1997, 2004) have emphasized that individuals with any form of disabilities are entitled to fair treatment in education, accommodation, job training, job placement and career development.

Yet, employers often make it difficult for special needs individuals to get hired. A study conducted by Gerber, Mulligan, and Lynda (2004) concluded that employers seldom made accommodation in the hiring process for individuals with special needs. On the other hand, co-workers and often management are insensitive to the needs and wants of individuals with disabilities. From the onset, the odds are stacked heavily against individuals with any form of disability seeking employment.

Often guests, too, have the tendency to stereotype individuals with disabilities and what is expected of them. In such circumstances, the individual with disabilities and managers may create their own list of attributes for employment success of Individuals with intellectual disabilities. Groschl (2005) points out that the management may include specific sets of job qualifications and a job description, and they may even seek input from individuals with disabilities in the process.

Community employment is one of the single most important factor influencing how most people define the quality of their life (Kraemer, McIntyre, & Blacher, 2003). First, money earned through employment empowers the individual to make
independent decision about purchases. Second, employment provides a channel to socialize. Third, employment gives a sense of personal independence regarding accommodation, use of free time and mobility. Fourth, employment facilitates a sense of positive identity in the community. Fifth, employment reduces dependence on federal and local resources. Finally, an employed individual is a community resource.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to learn about individual cases the lived experiences of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their views of critical personal attributes for employment success in the restaurant business. The study will also seek the opinion of Job Coaches regarding critical personal attributes for successful employment. This requires an understanding of the phenomenon that is fundamentally constructivist in nature. In order to understand the dynamics of the phenomenon, the researcher has to be mindful of the microsystems, mesosystems, and the macrosystems that concurrently impact the everyday environment of the stakeholders. Qualitative research will provide the best tools to understand the phenomena that only the participants can best describe (Merriam, 2009).

According to Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz, and Martin (2011) quality of work life derives satisfaction from four domains: environmental satisfaction (e.g. healthy conditions, salary etc.), job requirements (e.g. job demands, role assigned, team work etc.), supervision (e.g. support, feedback etc.) and, programs (e.g. schedules, general improvements etc.). These domains will be examined further in finding answers to the research questions.
Research Questions

There are three research questions for this study:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business?

2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?

3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach?

Assumptions

There are few assumptions that underlie the study: (a) the participants will be available as scheduled, (b) they will be forthright and honest in their response, (c) the site management will extend full cooperation for the research, and (d) the participants will be able to understand the questions asked in the survey and during the interviews.

Summary

Generally, the employers try to find out from their regular workforce about various factors that lead to better work performance, retention and successful employment outcome. This study will attempt to find out about the critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome for Individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant industry.
Understanding the perspectives of the key stakeholders – employees with intellectual disabilities and their employers, regarding critical personal attributes for successful employment outcomes, would be very useful in creating a positive and an enabling work environment. Individuals with intellectual disabilities are often dispirited to hear from various members of the community about their inability to work or about the low expectations the community has about them. If this vicious cycle of impossibility is replaced with a virtuous circle of possibility, a fundamental shift can take place in the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. This may happen if the dialogue between the stakeholders includes understanding each other’s perspective of critical personal attributes for success in the restaurant business.

Personal Statement

My passion for investigating the personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business stems from my 32 years of involvement in the hospitality industry – from operations to academia. Over the years, I have seen many individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business. This has often led me to ask the questions: what is it about the industry that attracts individual with intellectual disabilities to work for? Are there any commonalities of attributes for successful employment outcome of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business? What do the employers think are the personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business? Unfortunately, the literature review thus far has not revealed any specific study that answers these questions. This will be a pioneering work and the study will open new areas for research on important aspects of
training, developing, and understanding employment related issues of a very important segment of the population. Individuals with intellectual disabilities could be a good source of alternative labor pool – reducing social costs and generating income tax revenues.

Definition of Key Terms

This section provides definition and abbreviation of terms used in the study. The primary source of definition is the AAIDD 11th edition (2010) Intellectual Disability: Definition, Classification, and Systems of Support AAIDD, Washington, D.C. Other sources have been identified.

Intellectual Disabilities: Characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. The disability originates before age 18. The following five assumptions are essential to the application of this definition:

1. Limitations in present functioning must be considered within the context of community environments typical of the individual’s age peers and culture.
2. Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors.
3. Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths.
4. An important purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed supports.
5. With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disability generally will improve.

Disabilities: The expression of limitations in individual functioning within a social context that represents a substantial disadvantage to the individual.
**Intelligence:** Refers to a general mental capability. It involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience. It is represented by Intelligent Quotient (IQ) scores obtained from standardized tests that is administered by trained professionals. The test is not the perfect indicator of intelligence and must be supported by other relevant measures. Individuals with intellectual disabilities demonstrate to having an IQ of 69 maximum i.e., less than or equal to 2 standard deviations below the general population mean (Heward, 2009).

**Learning Disability:** A disorder that affects people’s ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. It may also be referred to as a learning disorder or a learning difference. (National Center for Learning Disabilities).

**Operational definition:** Defining a construct on the basis of how it is observed and measured. In reference to intellectual disability, three criteria are used to define intellectual disabilities: significant limitations in intellectual functioning, significant limitations in adaptive behavior, and age of onset before age 18.

**Social skills:** Adaptive skills that include interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, follows rules/obeys laws, avoid intellectual disabilities being victimized, and social problem solving.

**Systems of supports:** The planned and integrated use of individualized support strategies and resources that encompass the multiple aspects of human performance in multiple settings. A system of supports model provides a structure for the organization
and enhancement of human performance elements that are interdependent and cumulative.

*Systems perspective:* Integrating into one’s thinking and actions the four systems that impact human functioning: (a) microsystem that includes the immediate social setting including the person, family, friends, colleagues, and close support staff; (b) mesosystem that includes the neighborhood, community, or organizations providing services/supports; (c) macrosystem that is the overarching patterns of culture, society, larger population, country, or sociopolitical influences; and (d) chronosystem that reflects the interactions of the person and multiple systems over time.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter I identified the gap in scholarly research pertaining to the focus of the proposed study – “Critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome of individual’s with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business.” Chapter II will discuss various published studies and laws that are pertinent to the research in order to create the framework and lay the foundation to answer the following research questions:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business?
2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?
3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach?
Definition of Intellectual Disabilities

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), individuals with intellectual disabilities are characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. The disability originates before age 18. The AAIDD also emphasizes that the assessment of intellectual disabilities should take into account the socio-cultural environment of the individual. This ecological perspective “focuses on the interaction of the person with his or her environment and the recognition that the systematic application of individualized supports can enhance human functioning” (2010, p. xiii).

The AAIDD (2010) definition lays to rest the age old notion that intellectual disabilities is solely based on neurological underpinnings and emphasizes the role of communal environment in defining intellectual disabilities and the need to take into account the cultural and linguistic differences in assessing intellectual disabilities (Carlson, 2010).

Positive environments constitute settings that are age and socio-culturally appropriate. Such environments facilitate inclusion, interdependence and a sense of belonging. It is important to draw individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in socially meaningful and intellectually rewarding environments to enhance their capabilities. The workplace may or may not provide such an environment however; the ability to adapt to the environment by individuals with intellectual disabilities could be an important attribute that contributes to employment success.
Characteristics of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

According to AAIDD (Heward, 2009), individuals with intellectual disabilities have a number of characteristics. The key characteristics are: (a) the individual also demonstrates adaptive skills that are at or below the general population; as a result their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior are affected, (b) they have significant developmental delays during their preschool years and have trouble retaining information in short-term memory, (c) these individuals learn at a slower pace than their peers, (d) their adaptive behavior is generally influenced by their inability to sustain attention and maintain newly learned knowledge/skills, and (e) with appropriate sustained support over a period of time their life functioning skills will generally improve.

Smith and Tyler (2010) point out that the AAIDD (2002) have further delineated individuals with intellectual disabilities based on IQ scores as follows:

1. Mild intellectual disabilities individuals have IQ range of 50 to 69. They have learning difficulties but are able to work, can maintain good social relationships and can contribute to the society.

2. Moderate intellectual disabilities individuals have IQ range of 35 to 49. They exhibit marked developmental delays during childhood but they have some degree of independence in self-care. They demonstrate adequate communication and academic skills and require varying degrees of support to live and work in the community.
3. Severe intellectual disabilities individuals have IQ range of 20 to 34. The individual needs continuous support for daily activities.

4. Profound intellectual disabilities individual have IQ below 20. They have severe limitations in self-care, continence, communication, and mobility. They require continuous intensive supports.

Heward (2009) notes that individuals with intellectual disabilities develop learned helplessness, a condition in which a person expects failure of himself or herself, irrespective of individual efforts to overcome adversities. They seem to distrust their own responses to situations and rely on others for assistance and solutions. However, Heward (2009) also points out that individuals with intellectual disabilities display positive attributes such as “tenacity and curiosity in learning, getting along well with others, and being a positive influence on those around them” (p. 167). This study will focus on collecting the data from the individuals with mild intellectual disabilities.

Relevant Laws

In the United States, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the US Federal courts began to address the rights of children and adults with disabilities in schools and institutions. The legislative bodies relied on professional opinions and testimonies to define the concept of ‘least restrictive environment’ (LRE) as one of the rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities. In the landmark Wyatt v Stickney (1972) case, Judge Frank Johnson ruled that residents of Alabama’s Partlow institution had a constitutional right to the “least restrictive circumstances necessary to achieve the purpose of habitation” (Taylor as cited in Johnson & Traustadottir, 2005, p. 95).
Gradually the US congress incorporated the LRE continuum into P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA).

Over a period of time, landmark legislations like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990; 2008), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 1997, 2004) were passed. Under these Acts, individuals with any form of disability are entitled to reasonable accommodation, training, job placement, career development and transition services – irrespective of government funding.

Under IDEIA (2004), transition services has been defined to include a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is: (a) result oriented to facilitate movement from school to employment, (b) based on the individuals strengths, preferences and interests, and (c) is supportive in the development of daily living skills.

It has been found that post-school adjustment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities correlates directly with successful employment (McDonnell & Hardman, 2010).

Additionally, a broad range of federal legislations have been enacted over the last three decades to support the long-term and complex nature of the transition from school to adult life. The purpose of these programs and services is to support young adults with disabilities as they transition to postsecondary school, employment, or community living. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a time when parents, adolescents and the case mangers focus on practical issues such as leaving school, employment, furthering education and acquiring independent living skills. Friendships
and social acceptance from a wider peer group are particularly important at this time as sources of emotional support, self-worth and growth. These factors are in one way or another related to employment and its outcome (Flexer, Simmons, Luft & Baer, 2005).

Community employment is one of the single most important factors influencing how most people define the quality of their life (Kraemer, McIntyre & Blacher, 2003). First, money earned through employment empowers the individual to make independent decisions about purchases of choice. Second, employment provides a channel to socialize. Third, employment gives a sense of personal independence regarding accommodation, use of free time and mobility. Fourth, employment facilitates a sense of positive identity in the community. Fifth, employment reduces dependence on federal and local resources. Finally, an employed individual is a community resource.

Attribution Theory

Studies cited above and later provide strong evidence that individual attributes play important role in determining individual success in the work place. “Attribute” according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “an object closely associated with or belonging to a specific person.” It denotes characteristics of an individual indicating a cause (Retrieved on June 21, 2013 from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attribute). The Oxford English Dictionary defines attribute as “a quality or character ascribed to any person or thing, one which is in common estimation or usage assigned to him” (Retrieved on June 21, 2013 from http://www.oed.com/search).
Heider’s (1958) in his findings about attribution observes that generally people are interested in everyday events not only in what people can do, they also want to know whether what a person can do is primarily due to his own characteristic and his abilities and what role does environment play. “Such knowledge enables the person to profit from experience as well as to influence the outcome of actions involving other people.” (p.88).

The description of attribution as phenomena and causal effect is based on the perception of the stakeholders. Attribution is defined as phenomena when the nature of the contact between the person and the environment is direct and perceived accordingly. However, causal effect takes place when underlying conditions of the individual gives rise to perceptual experience that causes a response (Heider, 1958). Generally, a person reacts to what he or she perceives to be the perception of others.

Myers (2008) supports the above definition by emphasizing that people usually attribute others’ behaviors either to their internal dispositions or to their external situations. For example, managers when evaluating employees may attribute poor performance to personal factors such as lack of motivation. Employees doing poorly may see poor performance due to situational attribution such as poor working conditions or difficult co-workers.

According to Weary, Stanley and Harvey (1989) attributions whether internal and/or external, are important within the achievement context. DuBrin (2004) emphasizes that according to Attribution theory, people ascribe causes to the behavior they perceive. Individuals are “more likely to attribute a person’s actions or results to
personal characteristics than to outside forces” (p. 28). However, there is general tendency to attribute achievements to good inner qualities and failures to adverse environmental factors (DuBrin, 2004). Therefore, environmental factors are also linked to performance achievement.

Jereb, Rajkovic and Rajkovic (2005) have cited the works of Drucker, (1995); Milkovich and Boudreau, (1997); Armstrong and Baron, (1999) in support of their findings and state that for companies to succeed, it is vital to have motivated managers who “have the desire to do the best rather than just enough to get by...it means higher performance goals and broader vision” (Jereb et al., p 198). Accordingly, managers have to have clear identification of criteria (attributes) that distinguish successful from unsuccessful performance. The identification and selection criteria (attributes) should be consistent with the organization’s strategic direction and culture as suggested by the multi-attribute decision modeling.

The basic principle in multi-attribute modeling is “a decomposition of a decision problem into smaller and less complex sub-problems” (Jereb et al., p. 199). The model is organized hierarchically so that the attributes on higher levels of the hierarchy depend on attributes on lower level. Research by Schreurs, Druart, Proost and Witte (2009) on symbolic attributes and organizational attractiveness point out that individuals tend to gravitate towards organizations that are perceived as similar to the individual’s attributes.

It is therefore important to identify critical personal attributes for successful employment outcomes from the point of view of the primary stakeholders – employees
and employers. To understand the phenomenon, Saks and Ashforth (2002) have emphasized the need to match the attributes of the individual to the demands of the job – a good fit. Richards, (1984); Dreher and Bertz, (1991) support the views and state that “the importance of this cannot be overstated as fit perceptions established prior to entry can have long-term consequences for career success” (cited in Saks & Ashforth, 2002; p. 653).

Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and the Work Environment

It is has been observed by Wolfensberger (1983), Freeman (1996), Wright (1996), and Baum (2006) that the social constructs determine the perception of intellectual disabilities. In the 1980s and 1990s, many of the institutions closed, and the ideology of normalization and social role valorization (Wolfensberger, 1983) gained momentum. The basic notion of normalization and social role valorization is that the society generally disables people by the limited and devalued experiences it offers and that the way to overcome this is to increase people’s social status (Baum & Lynggaard, 2006). Therefore, the society must respect the rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities, offer community care and work with them to facilitate their transition into the community. Employment in general is one way to integrate these individuals.

Social constructionists propose that the development is a social phenomenon which cannot exist “without our beliefs about the world being social inventions having evolved in the context of verbal and nonverbal communication with others” (Baum and Lynggaard, 2006, p.84). Individual identities are therefore not stable and singular, but fluid and changeable according to context. Reality is seen to be constructed. It is the
communication between people about objects and events that gives them meaning, rather than the objects or events somehow inherently carrying that meaning themselves (Freeman and Combs 1996).

As a socially constructed term, an individual’s intellectual disabilities is based on how it is measured and perceived by the society and therefore, who is counted as having intellectual disabilities has varied over time (Wright & Bigby, 1996). It is also defined differently cross-nationally according to cultural, political, economic and ideological factors. Nonetheless, when people struggle with intellectual disabilities over a period of time, it can profoundly affect how they view themselves and can obscure resources and previous accomplishments (Wright & Bigby, 1996)). In their research, Johnson and Traustadottir (2005) observed that all of us find it difficult at times to articulate our desires. It must be especially difficult for some people with intellectual disabilities “to express preferences for a lifestyle they may not have experienced” (p.23).

Low productivity and lack of social skills are some of the factors that lead to job loss (Hanley & Maxwell, 1986; Chadsey, 1992; Banks, Johoda, Dagnan & Kemp, 2010). They also point out that the employers are concerned more about task-related interactions rather than social factors. Voluntary separations were often due to limited work hours and benefits trade off. However, Covey (2004) suggests that the stakeholders should be proactive “to begin to give expression to what we want to be and do in our lives” (p 129). Conley (1973) is of the opinion that services provided to the mentally retarded or intellectually disabled should seek to develop the intellectual,
physical, social and vocational skills so as to help them adjust to the problems they encounter in the day-to-day process of living and working, and to protect them from situations with which they would be unable to cope. They often require additional services and sometimes require them in modified form.

Today, there is greater realization about what individuals with intellectual disabilities can do instead of what they cannot. Bukowski (2005) points out that individual with intellectual disabilities are not devoid of normal social and emotional needs. Drake (2005) supports the view and states that individuals with disabilities, including individuals with intellectual disabilities, have the same life goals to participate in socially meaningful activities, education and vocation. They want to be productive, earn and participate in the community.

According to Watson and Keith (2002), young people with intellectual disabilities often have a strong desire for friendships but they may not have adequate social skills or the experiences required to negotiate such relationships. Wellbeing and mental health may be seriously compromised by lack of close friendships and positive peer relationships. They also point out that students with disabilities have significantly lower scores of satisfaction, wellbeing and social belonging than their peers without disabilities. Lowered feelings of wellbeing affect the ability to make friends which in turn reinforces poor self-image and feelings of depression, low self-esteem and workplace adjustments.

The stigma of intellectual disabilities is often shrouded in pessimism and exclusion. However, it is interesting to note that in a 2003 Harris survey, more than 85
percent of Americans supported laws preventing workplace discrimination and
encouraging public accommodation for individuals with disabilities (Pollack, 2007).
Dixon and Reddacliff (2001) observed that competitive employment of young adults
allows them to develop their worker identities, improve vocational skills, self-confidence, independence and social competence.

Another factor that emerges from Shea-Van Fossen’s (2010) study relates to
individuals’ quest to derive “life meaning from work...which is not an exclusive attribute
of any one orientation, but appears to create a positive reinforcement cycle that
strengthens an individual’s current work orientation” (p. 147). Flore (et al., 2011) have
cited empirical studies on the quality of life of individuals without intellectual
disabilities by Maslow (1954); Herzberg (1966); Hackman and Oldham (1980) and, Sirgy
(2001) which have suggested that satisfaction relates to the fulfillment of needs from
different life domain, especially from family, work, and personal accomplishment.
Likewise, many individuals with intellectual disabilities prefer to find gainful
employment and to have meaningful lives.

*Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Quality of Life*

Studies by Vakil, Welton and Ford (2010) have argued in favor of educating
individuals with cognitive disabilities in citizenship as a means of achieving optimal
quality of life. They point out that citizenship in its simplest form refers to an individual
as a responsible and active member of a democratic society who exercises positive self-determination in the greater interest of the society. Their study suggests that awareness
of self-determination in individuals with cognitive disabilities leads to enhanced quality of life, independence and better employment opportunities.

Conroy, Ferris, and Irvine (2010) in their study have also found a positive co-relationship between enhanced quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities and employment. The authors add that the notion of entrepreneurial spirit provided the individuals with the motivation to plan and to organize themselves. According to Sirgy (2001) as cited in Flores et al., (2011) quality of work life derives satisfaction from four domains - environmental satisfaction, job requirements, supervision and programs. These domains cover areas like healthy working conditions, salary, assigned roles, support, scheduling considerations etc.

Other studies by Lent and Brown (1986), Fitzgerald (1996), Glaser (1965) and cited in Glaser (2001) have found that positive self-esteem has a strong positive correlation with academic and vocational achievement and that lack of self-esteem is the basis of non-achievement. In fact, career development is impaired when non-achievement and low self-esteem manifest themselves; it makes it very hard for the individual to develop job-keeping skills.

Turnbull, Turnbull and Wehmeyer (2007) have cited various studies (Zigler, 2001; Switzky, 2001, 2004; Wehmeyer, 2003) regarding the motivational aspects of individuals with intellectual disabilities. These studies have found that because of their self-doubts, individuals with intellectual disabilities are externally oriented to derive motivation – they tend to wait for others to prompt them into action. In the work place it is
important for the managers and peers to support and to encourage self-advocacy for
Individuals with intellectual disabilities to adapt and be successful.

In order to perform well, individuals have to learn the skills and the availability of tools to train are vital to achieving the desired goals of training. Individuals with intellectual disabilities are faced with the dual challenges of being on the lower spectrum of cognition and the stereo-type perceptions of their abilities.

**Supported and Sheltered Employment Environment**

Supported employments are regular jobs with legal pay scale. Individuals are trained under close supervision of Job Coaches to meet the job requirements that match the job description. In sheltered workshops the learning environment is controlled to facilitate progressive learning and adaptation of skills and behavior for transition into a regular workplace.

Beyer, Brown, Akandi, and Rapley (2010) compared subjective and objective quality of life and quality of work environment for adults with intellectual disabilities with non-disabled workers in supported employment, enterprise employment or day services in enterprise employment. The authors concluded that supported employment is increasingly recognized as a successful model for individuals with intellectual disabilities for workplace inclusion. Similar research by Wehman and Kregal (1985); Beyer (1995) and cited in Beyer et al., (2010) found that individuals with intellectual disabilities in supported employment performed better than more traditional occupational alternatives in relation to a number of work or quality of life outcomes such as wages and social interactions.
It was also observed by Beyer et al., (2010) that supported employees scored higher than enterprise employees in quality of life, work environment and community involvement, and they had higher perception of job clarity. In spite of less autonomy and lower productivity, the importance of perception of individuals with intellectual disabilities stems from the fact that they were more satisfied with their lives as an outcome of employment.

Morgan (2011) points out that to be successful in supported employment, other factors like support from Job Coaches, employers, on-the-job training, rehabilitation counselors and other stake holders must be considered. The author also points out that for successful job outcomes, it is important to find the right matches between the skills of the individual, job preference and the requirement of the job.

Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz, and Martin (2011) examined the perception of the quality of working life and job satisfaction of 507 individuals with intellectual disabilities. The study looked into two variables – job demands and resources. The non-random selection of the population was from “sheltered” and “supported” employment centers. The author define quality of life as “a multidimensional construct composed by job satisfaction, satisfaction with the job system, satisfaction with salary, and general appraisal of quality of working life” (p. 134). The study concluded that: (a) employees in sheltered and supported employment perceived elevated psychological demands and, at the same time, elevated interpersonal and organizational support (b) workers perceived lesser physical demands and related stressors, and (c) enhanced support
systems are useful strategies to reduce imbalance between job requirements and individual capabilities.

Conclusions reached by Flores (et al., 2011) are similar to conclusions to earlier studies conducted by Winer (2000), Farris and Stancliffe (2001), and Forrester-Jones (et al., 2004) that employment has a positive impact on the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities and inclusive job settings have better outcomes in a number of areas like socializing, planning and scheduling etc. However, Flores (et al., 2011) cautions that “obtaining a job is not enough to guarantee job satisfaction” (p. 134). Jobs also create workplace stress which depends on the demands of the jobs and availability of resources – impacting individuals physically and psychologically. In this context, Grey and McClean (2007) looked at the role of training staff and their impact on their own ability to handle challenging behavior of individuals with intellectual disabilities. In the pre – and post – training outcome, it was observed that the staffs were able to modify desired behavioral traits by 30% by the end of the first quarter after training.

The researcher believes that the above studies will provide good guidelines to design data collection instruments for this research.

Organizational Support

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) in their meta-analysis of seventy works of literature concerning perceived organizational support found that employers value dedication and loyalty of their employees because employees who are emotionally committed to the organization show heightened performance, reduced absenteeism, and a lesser likelihood of quitting their job. The authors state that, “by contrast,
employees are generally more concerned with the organization’s commitment to them...both the employee and the employer apply the reciprocity norm to their relationship” (p. 698) and to seek better quality of life for both of them. In the context of the proposed study, it would be necessary to find out if the employers and the individuals with intellectual disabilities have common perceptions of the above mentioned attributes.

A recent study by Oren, Tziner, Sharoni, Amor and Alon (2012) concluded that organizations benefit when their employees are willing to contribute to the organization above and beyond the formal definition of their job requirements. They call this behavior Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) - discretionary behaviors which are not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system. Employees take initiatives and are motivated. Oren (et. al., 2012) also cites the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory developed by Graen (2003). The theory basically emphasizes a strong reciprocal relationship between an employee and supervisor that is based on trust, loyalty, respect and obligation.

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) emphasize the Positive Organizational Support (POS) theory that focuses on the values an organization places on its employees through rewards and by meeting socio-emotional needs for their wellbeing. Employees reciprocate with better performance, loyalty and productivity. Rhoades (ibid.) added “POS should strengthen employees’ belief that the organization recognizes and rewards increased performance...” that should “...have favorable outcomes both for employees and for the organization” (p 699). They observe that, like organizations, employees also
develop general views concerning the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being.

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found strong relationships between POS and employee recognition, pay, promotions, job security, autonomy, role stressors, and training. They concluded that the basis of antecedents of POS includes fair organizational procedures, supervisor support, and favorable rewards and job conditions. As a result of ongoing communication between the stakeholders, the work environment improves.

Employment adds to human capital and to the betterment of the society. Schomer (2001) in her Master’s Thesis elucidates the point that human capital includes skills, credentials and work experience that determine an individual’s job placement and other work related outcomes as well as its effect on the society. Citing works by Coleman (1988), Wholey (1990), Moncer (1974), and Hachen (1990) the author points out that the characteristics of human capital are acquired through education, family, on-the-job training and networking. In the past, multiple challenges faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities precluded them from opportunities to enhance their human capital. Today, with gradual understanding about intellectual disabilities and with legislative support, these individuals are making some headway, but more needs to be done. Understanding of critical personal attributes for employment success will be a step in that direction.
The Hospitality Industry and Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

The human resources department has an important role to play in providing guidance and tools for others in an organization to support inclusiveness. From interviews with Canadian hotel human resources managers, Gorschl (2005) observed in his study that there were a number of factors that impeded the process of inclusion. For example, due to lack of understanding about disabilities and legal issues, employees and managers without disabilities were uncomfortable or afraid of interacting wrongly with individuals with disabilities. On the other hand, employees with disabilities were often afraid of losing their jobs if they identified themselves as having a disability.

Often guests, too, have the tendency to stereotype individuals with disabilities. In such circumstances, the individual with disabilities and managers may create their own list of attributes for employment success of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Groschl (2005) point out that action on the part of the management may involve specific sets of job qualifications and job description and they may even seek input from individuals with disabilities in the process.

The perception of successful attributes for employment starts with the recruiting process. The employer has a Job Description that gives a recruit an idea of what the job entails. In order to be qualified for the job, the candidate must meet certain criteria listed as Job Specification or Qualifications for the Job. Through various stages of selection, the employer and the candidate try to find the right fit for the position. The alternative, voluntary or involuntary turnover is costly for the employer and the employee. For example, Hall (2010) states, “to recoup the cost of losing just one crew
Another factor to be mindful of is the varied requirements of productivity standards and quality standards. Productivity standards refer to quantifiable output in a given shift. Quality standards refer to the quality of output expected of the employee. These are the foundations for the success of the business. Since the restaurant business is very dependent on the quality of the employees, it is critical to identify the attributes of individuals that are a good match for the job the individual has to perform.

Cockerell (2008), Executive Vice President of Walt Disney Resort, points out that it is critical on the part of the recruiter to be clear regarding what they are looking for: “Exactly what qualities do you want in the person you hire? What sort of skills do you expect him or her to have?” (p. 86). Otherwise the business will end up with a bad fit. Cockerell adds, “the signs of a bad fit include not being able to complete one’s work, being constantly late with assignments...low ratings on customer satisfaction scales, complaints about attitude from co-workers” (p 108). He emphasizes that to be successful in the hospitality business one must be fair, respectful, cooperative, honest, courageous and caring.

Recruiting is a two way process; the recruiter looks for the right candidate to hire and the candidate looks for the right company to work for. Cho et al., (2006) in their study on the perception of hospitality management students’ of potential employers, have pointed out that students were primarily concerned about the image of the company and their personal experience with that company. In either case, in the
hospitality industry, the image and experience is projected and delivered by its employees. These employees whether non-disabled or disabled, have to meet certain attributes. What are they? Their study is silent.

In the sphere of service industry, Bowen and Lawler (1992) are strong advocates of empowering the employees to deliver better service experience. They cite the work of Zemke and Schaaf (The Service Edge: 101 Companies That Profit From Customer Care, 1991) wherein they note that empowerment is a common theme running through many, even most, of the excellent service businesses, such as Marriott International, American Express and Federal Express. Empowering basically means, turning the front line employees loose, encouraging and rewarding them to exercise initiative and imagination.

Hence, the second case to be investigated for this study is the Job Coaches representing the management of the restaurant site. Their views will provide additional information and insight to seek answers to the research questions and to triangulate the data.

Summary

Over the years numerous laws have been enacted in recognition of individuals with disabilities in general, and as the nature of disabilities are better understood, there is greater realization to accommodate this population into the mainstream. To accommodate changing population demographics and sustain economic growth, the need to train and to integrate individuals with intellectual disabilities into the workforce is being gradually realized. In the coming years, the restaurant industry is expected to
become a trillion dollar segment of the economy, offering additional employment opportunities to over a million new entrants. Researchers have been unanimous in their findings that employment generally enhances well-being of the individuals with intellectual disabilities and has a positive impact on the economy. The restaurant industry is often notoriously seen as providing hard and poor working conditions, yet many individuals have blossomed in this industry. The question is how individuals with intellectual disabilities and the stakeholders working in this industry perceive the critical attributes for successful employment outcomes. So far, the researcher has not yet come across a single study that answers the research questions.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design, methodology, and method that were used in this study. The chapter will discuss the purpose of the study, design of the study, the research questions, description of the setting, access to the site, process of selecting the informants and the participants, methods of data collection, data analysis and the limitations. The study sought to answer three research questions:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identified as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business?

2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?

3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach.
Purpose of the Study

A National Restaurant Association study (2014), estimates that in 2014, the restaurant industry will generate $683 billion in revenues and employ 13.5 million people. The study forecasts a need for additional 1.3 million workers by the year 2024 – an increase of 10%. The Department of Labor Statistics (DOL, 2012) estimates the demand for workers in the food service occupations will increase from 3.9 million in 2012 to 4.5 million in 2022 – an increase of 14.3%. The employment projections summary report for 2012-2022 from the Department of Labor Statistics (2012) point out that “the overall labor force participation rate is projected to decline from 63.7 percent in 2012 to 61.6 percent in 2022.”

Another study by researchers at Cornell University (Disabilities Report 2012) states that in 2011, out of a working age (i.e., ages 18-64) population base of 180.0 million, 10.5 percent had some form of disabilities. From the disabilities group, 4.3 percent or 7.7 million individuals had cognitive disabilities. According to Smith and Tyler (2010) cognitive disabilities and intellectual disabilities are inter-changeable terms to describe “the disability that results in impaired cognitive abilities and the need for assistance or supports to achieve independence and participation in the community” (p.264). Referring to the Cornell study (2012), it is important to note that out of 7.7 million individuals with cognitive disabilities, only 23 percent (i.e., 1.7 million) were employed. A staggering 77 percent of the cognitively disabled population remained unemployed compared with the national average of 9 percent unemployment (DOL, 2012).
Interpreting the preceding data, there will be a big gap between the emerging employment needs of the restaurant industry and the availability of the traditional workforce. The restaurant industry may have to look into hiring and training non-traditional workers, such as individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, to better understand and to serve the employment needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, the restaurant industry will have to understand various aspects and issues that affect the successful employment outcome of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

The literature review section of this study has provided ample evidence that individuals with intellectual disabilities have the potential to perform well if the job match is appropriate. To get a better idea about the nuances of job match, it is important to understand the attributes of successful employment outcome as identified by the stakeholders: individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach.

Design of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify from the perspective of the stakeholders, the critical personal attributes for employment success of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant industry. It was therefore important to consider various issues that would have had an impact on the choice of methodology. The study used a multi-case qualitative research (Gall et al., 2007; Merriam, 2009) to determine attributes that support successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the restaurant business.
Merriam (2009) states that multi-case studies “involves collecting and analyzing data from several cases and can be distinguished from single case study that may have subunits or subcases embedded within” (p.49). Multiple-case design can also help “the generalizability of constructs and themes across cases can be checked” to determine if a particular phenomenon “that were coded as manifestations of a construct in one case are similar to a similarly coded phenomena in other cases” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 470). However, to strengthen the precision, credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, it was necessary for the researcher to constantly review the data obtained through various sources until “satisfactory closure is achieved” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 469).

The restaurant business relies on heavy person-to-person interaction. Since people at large are different in fundamental ways, Keirsey and Bates (1984) observe in their essay on character and temperament types of people that people have “different motives, purposes, aims, values, needs, drives, impulses, urges...they believe differently, they think, cognize, conceptualize, perceive, understand, comprehend and cogitate differently” (p.2). Gall et al. (2007) hold the view that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations which are transitory and situational. Therefore, case studies according to Flick (2009) “can capture the process under study in a very detailed and exact way.” (p. 134).

To seek answers to the research questions, a qualitative research design – based on case study methodology, was considered appropriate because as Merriam (2009) points that qualitative research seeks to understand individual behaviors in the sociocultural contexts in which the participants operate. By applying the case study
research method, a holistic picture of personal perspective should emerge. By contrast, in quantitative research design the holistic picture is missing because the hypotheses are presented within very well defined parameters to find causal effect between specific stimuli (Merriam, 2009).

Individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations which are transitory and situational (Gall et al., 2007). The authors add that the focus of qualitative research is on understanding the meanings of individual actions and choices as observed in their natural settings. According to Merriam (2002), “Qualitative researchers are not interested in people’s surface opinions as in...experimental research; rather they want to know how people do things, and what meaning they give to their lives” (p.19). Qualitative research is a process of inquiry to explore and to understand social or human problems from the point of view of the participants (Creswell, 1998).

Gall et al. (2007) are of the opinion that unlike quantitative research, qualitative research provides the researcher with tools to interview, observe, transcribe, record, analyze, and verify with the participants the deeper meaning of their action, whether the participant is an individual case or multiple cases. The design also provides opportunities to focus on a particular phenomenon or class of phenomena of lived experience of the participants, providing an in-depth understanding of lived experiences and the reasons that govern the experiences. To capture the reasons for behavior, ongoing dialogue with the participants provides the researcher with informative data that can be interpretive and have thematic values (Gall et al., 2007)
A case study paradigm was chosen because the method provides tools for “intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon that may include individual, group, institution, or community. The case is a bounded, integrated system.” (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). A bounded system as defined by Smith (1978) and cited in Merriam (2009), represents a single entity of interest around which there are boundaries to preclude the researchers from deviating. It is the heart of the study and the boundary “defines the edge of the case: what will not be studied” (Merriam, 2009, p.41). This study was seeking to identify from various cases, critical personal attributes for employment success among those who have intellectual disabilities and working in the restaurant business. Typically, qualitative research produces large amount of data from the participants by applying various instruments. The end product is data rich and thick in content.

Based on the studies and rationale presented by Keirsey and Bates (1984); Creswell (1998); Merriam (2002, 2009); Gall et al., (2007); Flick (2009); the researcher designed a multifaceted case study, to seek answers to the research questions. Figure 3.1 captures the essence of the research design.
Three research questions guided this study:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome in the restaurant business?

2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome for individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?

3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach?
Theoretical Framework

Case study investigates phenomenon of interest which often cannot be explained in isolation because of their complexity. Merriam (2009) points out that the central characteristic of qualitative research is that “individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds…. constructionism thus underlies what I am calling a basic qualitative study” (p. 22). She adds that by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity an in-depth case study can be acceptable based on the triangulation of data. The key concern is to understand the phenomenon under investigation from the participant’s perspective, not the researcher’s.

Flick (2009) states, “if all empirical studies were exclusively designed according to the model of clear cause-effect relations, all complex objects would have to be excluded” (p.15). Therefore, Gall et al. (2007) point out that constructivism as a phenomenon is an “epistemological doctrine that asserts a reality that is socially constructed” (p. 635). Case study helps to produce “…detailed description of a phenomenon, to develop possible explanations of it, or to evaluate the phenomenon.” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 451)

Case study is based on a belief that knowledge about a phenomenon cannot be determined without understanding nature of the environment in which the participants in this study live in; the study applied the social constructivist theoretical framework. According to Creswell (2013) “in social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences…these meanings are varied and multiple” (p. 24). Flick (2009) adds that
world is socially constructed through different forms of complex knowledge and experience. Through social research, the constructivist nature of the world and its impact on individuals can be understood.

For this study the researcher had to identify patterns or themes that represent the complexity of participants’ views formed through interaction with others that lead the researcher to look for “complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). By using multiple sources for data collection and inductively analyzing the cases to identify meaningful thematic patterns, the researcher investigated the complexity of participants’ views to identify critical attributes for employment success.

Description of the Setting

Three potential research sites were identified based on: (a) legal entity of a restaurant, (b) offering simple menu, (c) casual dining concept, (d) employing individuals with intellectual disabilities, (e) day time operations, (f) convenient access for the researcher, (g) management’s willingness to support the study, and (h) willingness of the participants to take part in the study. Initial investigation by the researcher at two potential sites to seek their participation, was met with skepticism by the site managements. They were concerned about the response from the parents in giving consent – if necessary, and lack of interest from the participants. Management at the third site expressed their willingness to cooperate for the study.

The site (The Restaurant, pseudonym), is located in an office complex few minutes away from the downtown of a small metropolitan city in Northeast Ohio. This
city has an approximate population of 200,000 (U.S. Census 2010). The concept of *The Restaurant* is casual dining with limited menu serving, for example, sandwiches, burgers, muffins and beverages. *The Restaurant* is open for business on Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The seating capacity is for 30 guests and it also offers carry out. Boxed lunch are also provided to contract clients. The customer base of *The Restaurant* consists of mostly office workers from the office complex as well as neighboring offices.

The restaurant employs 5 workers. Out of which 4 have intellectual disabilities. There is also one office worker and the Job Coach/Manager.

**Gaining Entry and Access**

After the approval from the Institutional Review Board for Application Involving Human Subjects at the University of Akron (Appendices – A and B), the researcher discussed the purpose and the content of the study with the management of *The Restaurant*, to seek their approval and participation (Appendix – A). The researcher met with the Job Coach to also identify the participants and work out the logistics. A letter of invitation (Appendix – B) explaining to the potential participants the purpose of the study and the *modus operandi* of the study, were given to them by the Job Coach on behalf of the researcher. Initially, three informants and the Job Coach agreed to participate in the research. However, on the day of meeting, one informant decided not to participate. Finally, there were two individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach who participated in the research.
The researcher conducted an information session with the Job Coach and a joint information session with the two individuals with intellectual disabilities. The purpose of the information sessions were to discuss with the participants the purpose of the study, the method for data collection, data confidentiality arrangements, extent of their participation, schedule data collection and address any concerns they may have. The reason for meeting the two individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach separately was to provide the participants an opportunity, to express their views freely and to maintain confidentiality.

Participant Selection

To establish credibility and trustworthiness of a qualitative study, the participants have to be information rich. In qualitative research, participants are individuals from whom the researcher wants to learn about the issue or issues under investigation (Creswell, 2013). This means according to Creswell (2013) “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p.156). Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that “the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009. p. 77).

Unlike quantitative research that relies on probability or random sampling for investigator to generate results, the goal of qualitative research is to discover the meaning of participant’s actions from their point of view (Merriam, 2009). This is exactly what this research aims to accomplish. Patton (1990) supports the view and states:
The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 203)

Therefore, for this study, non-random, information-rich, and purposeful samples were used. Other factors that were considered for this study in selecting the participants were the access to the site, willingness of the participants as well as the cost and time associated with accessing the location, i.e., the convenience of the researcher and the participants were important in obtaining the data as suggested by Merriam, (2009).

Unlike quantitative sampling where a large population is required to deductively examine hypotheses under pre-determined conditions, qualitative research may seek to inductively interpret the data from just one participant. “Several writers point out; much can be learned from particular case” (Merriam, 2002, p. 179). Ciccantelli (2010) adds that “case study is an ample methodology in social sciences, and sustains when compared to other methods in social sciences” (p. 54).

For the purpose of this study there were two cases: (a) one case comprised of two individuals with intellectual disabilities, and (b) the second case consisted of one Job Coach, working at the research site. The focus of the study was to understand the perspective of the individuals with intellectual disabilities of what they considered to the key personal attributes for employment success. Individuals with intellectual disabilities were the primary source of information – they were the informants. To establish credibility of the findings, data obtained from the Job Coach were analyzed to further understand the phenomenon under investigation, by identifying similarities of
attributes between the informants and the Job Coach. Both the cases completed a survey, one-on-one interview and the two informants also participated in a focus group interview.

*Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities*

Keeping in mind the bounded system characteristics of case study and in selecting the participants for this multi-case study to generate meaningful data, it was important that the informants had mild intellectual disabilities – I.Q. in the range of 50 to 69 (Smith & Tyler, 2010). So that, the informants were able to communicate verbally and comprehend written instructions. For this study, the Job Coach identified the individuals with intellectual disabilities from the administrative and personal records of the individuals. For purposeful sampling selection, the informants also had to meet the regular physical requirements of the job as stipulated by *The Restaurant*. For example, the informants had no physical limitations and they were able to move around without any supportive aids.

To meet other criteria for the participants for purposeful sampling, the researcher had to make sure that the available informants were: (a) between 45 to 55 years old, (b) had similar years of work experience at the site, (c) their availability, and (d) their willingness to participate. These criteria were reviewed during the preliminary information and consent signing process. The informants agreed to participate in the study.
Job Coach

The Job Coach agreed to participate in the study after the researcher discussed with the Job Coach the purpose of the research, data collection methods and the time commitment. The Job Coach had been working at The Restaurant for 6 years. The Job Coach had a good idea about the working habits, strengths, weaknesses, and behavior patterns of the informants. Data from the Job Coach was vital to triangulate the data obtained from the individuals with intellectual disabilities about their ideas regarding critical personal attributes for employment success. An additional criterion for selecting the Job Coach was; the Job Coach must have been working with all the informants for at least one year.

Participants’ Profile

Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities/Informants

To ensure anonymity of the informants, pseudonyms have been used. Max is in his 50’s and he has worked for approximately 27 years at other restaurant in the capacity of dish washer and bus boy. The restaurant where he worked last, closed about 4 years back and since then he has been working at the current place – The Restaurant, for the past 4 years. Max works in various areas of food production and service. According to the Job Coach, Max rotates between various jobs. Max is scheduled Monday through Friday, between 8:15a.m to 2p.m.

Fred is also in his 50’s and he has been working at The Restaurant for about 5 years. Prior to working at The Restaurant, Fred has held different jobs in grocery stores for about 8 years – cleaning, shelving, bagging, and odd jobs as assigned. Fred had also
worked in a nursing home as a janitor. Fred works at *The Restaurant* in various areas of food production, service, and rotates between various jobs. Like Max, Fred is also scheduled Monday through Friday, between 8:15a.m to 2p.m.

**Job Coach**

Holly has been the Job Coach at *The Restaurant* for approximately 6 years. She has a B.S degree in Food Systems Management. Holly had worked in food service operations for over 14 years. Before joining *The Restaurant* Holly was Food Service Director at a National Park.

Upon joining *The Restaurant*, Holly had to undergo 30 hours of training in areas of understanding developmental disabilities, behavior support and vocational programming. Additionally, Holly has to undergo 8 to 10 hours of annual training in servicing individuals with disabilities. Holly’s role at *The Restaurant* involves recruiting, training, motivating, evaluating employee performance, and managing *The Restaurant*.

**Data Collection**

Creswell (2013) states that data collection is, “a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (p.146). The author points out that the importance of the unique data collection procedures in qualitative research is emphasized by eight characteristics: (a) data are collected in the participants natural setting, (b) researcher is the primary collector of data, (c) multiple data collection methods are used to support the findings, (d) inductive and deductive logical process is used in the data collection and analysis process, (e) participants viewpoints drive the process, (f) researcher has to critically reflect on their biases and
interest in the study, (g) data collection process is emergent, flexible, contextual and open to interpretation and, (h) “data collection is not bound by tight cause-and-effect relationship” (Gall, et al., p. 47) but it is holistic, rich and thick in substance.

A rich and thick description is the end product of the study. Thick, in this context, refers to “complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The researcher should capture a holistic, heuristic and contextual picture of the phenomenon from the point of view of the informants in their natural environment. Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, the chances of human biases in the data collection process remains ever-present. To overcome the bias and to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the data collection process, Merriam (2002) suggests that it is important to identify and monitor various biases’ that may creep in the collection and interpretation of data.

For this study, the researcher had to continuously critique his own data collection process by often reviewing the data and questioning whether he was capturing the information that was needed to be captured? Was he bias? What was he learning from the primary participants (informants) and the Job Coach? Has the data collection reached a saturation point? It also meant that the data collection process was logically linked and relevant to the research topic.

For this study two sources of data collection were used for both the cases: (a) survey questionnaire, and (b) one-on-one interview. For the individuals with intellectual disabilities (informants) a focus group interview was used also. The goal of using multiple sources for data collection was to learn from the cases their views about the
phenomenon under investigation (i.e., personal attributes for employment success), to identify thematic consistency of constructs and to triangulate the data analysis process that would be credible and trustworthy.

Gaining trust to create meaningful rapport between the participants and the researcher is pre-requisite to generating meaningful data. The researcher met with both the cases prior to the starting the data collection activities to explain the purpose of the study, the data collection process, ensure participants that the research process would not put any participant at any risks, the confidentiality of the data will be maintained, and to answer any questions and/or concerns they had. Pendlebury and Enslin (2001) aptly point out, “educational research is unethical when it misrepresents or misidentifies and so betrays its putative beneficiaries or the goods and values that they hold most dear” (p.361).

The cases were also informed before data collection that their involvement in the study was voluntary and they could choose at any time, to not participate in the study, even after the study was underway. Informed consent form was explained to the cases. The cases signed the informed consent forms (Appendices – A and B). All the documents to be used by the cases were cleared by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Akron. Pseudonyms were given to the cases to ensure confidentiality and anonymity and all data collected and related to the study are now secured in the researcher’s office.
Survey Questionnaire

According to Gall et al. (2007), survey is a method of data collection from the sample population regarding their beliefs, attitudes, interest or behavior. Generally, the information collected is based on self-report from the respondents. It is also important that the survey instrument is well designed, unambiguous and reflect the purpose of data collection (Gall et al., 2007). The intent of the survey questions should be consistent in its meaning and understanding between the researcher and the participant. The survey should make sense to the respondent (Fowler, 1995).

The survey questionnaire for this study included 16 non-intrusive, Likert-type specific questions that sought to determine what the informants and the Job Coach believe are important attributes for employment success (Appendix – C). The survey instrument was administered separately to each case individually and in the presence of the researcher. The content of the survey check-list was developed by the researcher from studies conducted by Watson & Keith (2002), Drake (2005); Jerab et al., (2005); Cockerell (2008); Myers (2008); Banks et al., (2010); Flores et al., (2011); Morgan (2011); and Oren et al., (2012). However, the basic format of the survey was derived from the one used by Conroy, Ferris & Irvine (2010) to determine qualities of the work life of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Conroy et al., (2010) had adapted the original check list instrument from Robert Wood Johnson Self-Determination Initiatives for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (1990).

The basic idea of using the five-point Likert-type scale was to avoid the Yes/No answers that are susceptible to the threat of acquiescence with individuals with
intellectual disabilities (Emerson et al. 2004). According to Alreck and Settle (1995) the actual items used for Likert-type scale assessment are not questions “but statements that represent particular opinions. Respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement to each, so responses are on a single dimension or continuum” (p. 117) that could be easier to interpret. Fowler (1995) adds that if the question is about feelings the rating scale on the survey should have variation of positive and negative. The purpose of the survey for this study was to find out from the cases their views about critical personal attributes for employment success. The researcher therefore used Likert-type scale on a continuum from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (Appendix – C).

The survey was the first data collection instrument. The survey was filled out individually at The Restaurant under the supervision of the researcher. This step ensured maximum participation and the researcher was present to clarify any ambiguity or concerns the cases may have had. Results of the survey were consolidated to find similarities in the responses between the cases – on the Likert-type continuum as Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The researcher coded each respondent’s data to preserve confidentiality, to follow up if necessary and to co-relate the survey response of the participant to other sources of data that were collected.

Interviews

Interview is a process of dialogue between the researcher and the respondent/s focusing on questions related to the research study. The goal of the interview questions is to “yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009; p.
Flick (2009) states that, “collecting verbal data is one of the major methodological approaches in qualitative research” (p. 211). When it is not possible to observe feelings or how participants interpret the world around them, interview is the ideal tool of choice to solicit information. It is also useful when the researcher wants to know what is in someone else’s mind (Flick, 2009). Interview is the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies comprised of a few selected individuals (Merriam, 2009). To understand the views of the informants in this study, one-on-one interview protocol and focus group supported the survey questionnaire data collection process and for credible triangulation.

Creswell (2013) has identified three types of interview that are likely to net the most useful information: (a) telephone interviews, (b) group interviews, and (c) one-on-one interviews. He suggests the telephone interview when the participant is not available. However, the drawback of the telephone interview is the lack of personal interaction, interpretation of body language and informal communication.

One-on-one interviews may facilitate personal rapport between the researcher and the participant; interviews are generally cost effective and ensure privacy. The drawback for this process is that the participant may be hesitant, shy or uncomfortable. To overcome the dilemma, group interview or focus group interview is suggested by Creswell (2013). Under the focus group interview protocol, the participants may be more willing to engage in conversation and rich source of data may emerge. However, the problem with group interview could be poor sampling if the profiles of the participants are not clearly established. Another problem could be domination by a
participant or peer pressure. With the combination of survey questionnaire, one-on-one interview and focus group and with the right participants (e.g., nonrandom purposeful sampling), the individual weaknesses of data collection procedures can be overcome.

The interview protocol may range from highly structured and questionnaire-driven interviews to unstructured, open ended conversational format (Merriam, 2009). Under structured interview protocol, specific close-ended questions and the order in which the questions are asked are pre-determined. This process is desirable when specific socio-demographic information is required from the participants. The questions are generally free of any bias. Information like who, what, where, which or when can only be obtained through a structured interview (Ninemeire & Kavanaugh, 2013).

The unstructured interview format assumes that individual respondents define the world around them in unique ways (Merriam, 2009). The questions are open-ended, flexible or exploratory. This format could be ideal to lay the framework for follow up interview questions. Merriam (2009) suggests a semi-structured interview protocol as a viable alternative in between the structured and the unstructured interview protocol. The semi-structured interview consists of a series of structured question, although most of the questions are open-ended and they evolve as the interview proceeds. The format gives the researcher flexibility to control the interview and at the same time engage the respondent in dialogue to solicit response and capture the data Merriam (2009).

*One-on-one Interview with Fred and Max*

After the survey questionnaires were completed, the researcher set up the time for one-on-one interview with Fred & Max. Interviews were conducted back to back so
as to minimize post-interview contact between the interviewees. This was necessary to avoid biases from any pre-interview discussion between the participants. A semi-structured interview protocol consisting of open-ended and close-ended questions was used (Appendix – D).

Emerson et al. (2004) points out that individuals with intellectual disabilities have shown to have high level of acquiescence to questions that require yes/no answers, especially if the response is considered socially acceptable. For example, ‘I like going to work’ would solicit a ‘Yes’ answer. On the other hand, Emerson et al. (2004) cites research by Sigelman et al. (1983) and observes that “yes/no questions about activities yielded higher responses than yes/no questions about subjective phenomena such as happiness” (p.122). Views about personal attributes for employment success are subjective. Therefore, the researcher had to used semi-structured interview protocol to better understand the phenomenon under study – what are the critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business.

The major reasons to design and to adopt the semi-structured interview protocol are first, the open-ended questions may be ice breaker with the participants for laying the foundation for a comfortable trusting relationship. Second, open-ended questions will also provide opportunities to clarify contents of the questions or the response and to frame follow-up probing questions, and third, the closed-ended questions provided room for specific data collection. A familiar location for the interview is an important consideration to make the participants feel at ease. For this study, in consultation with
the Job Coach and the individuals with intellectual disabilities, an office in the building
where The Restaurant is located was used. The office was quiet and free of distractions.

With the permission of the participants, the interviews were audio recorded and
key points including non-verbal cues were jotted down by the researcher. These notes
included description of the participants’ expressions and body language that could not
be captured in audio recording. At the same time the researcher was able to focus on
the ongoing dialogue with individual cases. Notes compiled during the interview
provided the researcher important source to refer and to reflect on the one-on one
interview. Later, with the help of the notes and the recordings, the researcher was able
to reconstruct the interview and to code the contents of the interview so as to derive
deeper meaning and context to the interview. The interview with Fred lasted for 18
minutes and with Max for 10 minutes. The data were transcribed over a period of 4 days
after the interview.

One-on-one Interview with Holly

After interviewing Fred & Max, the researcher conducted the interview with
Holly. A separate interview protocol consisting of open-ended and close-ended
questions were used (Appendix – E). With Holly’s permission the interview was audio
taped and the researcher jotted down his observations during the interview. Holly was
interviewed in another office that was reserved for the purpose. Interview with Holly
lasted 30 minutes. The purpose of interviewing Holly was to triangulate the data to seek
answers to the second and the third research questions:
2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome for individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?

3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach.

Focus Group

Focus group was the last stage to collect data in which Fred & Max participated. The purpose of the focus group is to conduct “an interview with small group of people on a specific topic” Flick (2009, p. 195). The interview was conducted by the researcher. Participants were encouraged to talk to each other on a given topic, give their opinion, and share their views (Gall et al. 2007).

The focus group is like a dialogue – flexible and relaxed, and cost effective way to get a number of qualified subjects together. The group interaction and dialogue prompts the participants to expand and to deepen their thinking on topics which may not have been probed by the one-on-one interviews. The focus of what then becomes a tool for reconstructing and understanding individual opinions more deeply (Flick, 2009). Focus groups also enable the participants who may be uncomfortable in one-on-one interview to share their views with other participants. In addition participants have an opportunity to reflect on their earlier responses. For the researcher, focus group was another technique to deepen insights generated through one-on-one interview and survey and to triangulate the data.
It is important to keep in mind that “the focus group technique works best when all members are on an equal basis” (Gall et al. 2007, p.245). For this study, the selection of non-random and purposeful sampling ensured that the participants were on equal basis. However, the researcher still had to be careful not to let an individual dominate the conversation, to maintain collegial environment and to be unbiased.

The focus group interview protocol for this study consisted of open-ended unstructured questions (Appendix – F). The cue for the focus group questions were based from the data obtained from the survey questionnaire and one-on-one interview with Fred & Max. As the dialogue continued, follow-up questions were asked of the participants. Flick (2009) suggests, multiple forms of questioning formats should be used to keep the dialogue non-directional. The questions must be specific enough to cover the range of issues under discussion to provide “a maximum of self-revelatory comments” (Flick, 2009, p.151).

Prior to the focus group interview, the researcher once again explained the purpose of the study to the informants. They were also briefed about the modus operandi of the proceeding regarding audio recording and jotting down of key points by the researcher. The focus group interview lasted 37 minutes. Data obtained were transcribed within 2 days after the event. The location for focus group interview was a comfortable office, free of distractions in the office complex where The Restaurant is located.
Data Analysis

The goal of the data analysis process is to make credible sense of the information collected to answer the research questions through inductive analysis. Without a good data collection procedure in place, the analysis will be flawed. According to Merriam (2009), unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative research data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity that starts with the first set of data coming in. Qualitative data is voluminous and its collection is the most difficult part of the entire process. There are no hypotheses but rather hunches that the researcher follows as the information emerges and the conclusion is unknown. Merriam (2009) adds, “data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said” (p. 175).

Creswell (2013) has outlined three general approaches to qualitative data analysis. The first step is to prepare and to organize the data. The second step will be to condense the raw data by coding the information into structural and thematic patterns. Third step to represent the data in figures, tables and discussion of the findings. After the analysis has been completed, patterns will be identified and compared within and across data sources. Ultimately these patterns will result in insights that answer the research questions.

For this research, as each data set was collected, they were dated and time noted. The sources of the data set were code marked to identify each case and individual. To keep the data interpretation flowing, responses from the surveys were reviewed the same day they were received. Audio recorded data from one-on-one
The researcher had to re-read and to re-examine the data to be familiar with the contents and with the informant’s perspective and to develop deeper insights into the meaning of the informant’s comments. The goal of data analysis was to make sense of the data by identify recurring and congruent thematic patterns across cases (Merriam, 2009). And, as Kwortnik (2003) puts it, “...mine the data for concepts that will form categories and relationship” (p.125).

For a multi case study, according to Merriam (2009) there are two stages of analysis “the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis “(p. 204). For the within-case analysis, data from each participant in the case is first analyzed as a comprehensive case by itself. Once the analysis of each case is completed, cross-case analysis begins. In this multi-case research, data obtained from each case were analyzed exclusively and in-depth to identify thematic patterns as they unfolded – in relation to the research questions, refer to Figure 3.1. presented earlier.

For this study, there were five stages of analysis. First, data obtained from Fred & Max (informants) was analyzed to seek thematic patterns of similarities about their views and identification of personal attributes for employment success. Second, after patterns were identified within each data source, they were coded and developed into categories that addressed various aspects of the research questions. Third, data obtained from Holly were independently analyzed from the data obtained from Fred &
Max. Fourth, Holly’s data were reviewed and analyzed to seek thematic patterns for similarities between the views of Fred & Max and Holly. Finally, the results were narrated.

During the data interpretation phase, each individual category was compared across cases to create a new or revised coding list and categories. True to the characteristics of qualitative research, data obtained for this study were rich in information and thick in content. To extract relevant information from the data, the content of the data had to be reduced to meaningful chunks of information. A coding pattern was designed to identify key evolving thematic patterns into main categories and then into sub-categories by repeated readings – examining the notes and memos, critically evaluating and deconstructing the data.

Keeping in view the bounded nature of the qualitative study, the researcher had to find inductive meaning to the participants’ responses by inferring and discovering thematic patterns as they unfolded through the data collection instruments. To ensure credible and trustworthy triangulation, the researcher had to scrutinize every piece of information until a saturation point was reached for each source of data. Saturation, according to Gall et al. (2007) is reached “when no new data are emerging relevant to an established coding category, no additional categories appear to be necessary to account for the phenomenon of interest, and the relationship among categories appear to be well established” (p. 469).

The credibility and the rigor of the findings depended on the quality of the data obtained, the retrieval process, the identification and categorization of the theme and
the narration of the findings. A credible and convincing audit trail has been created with all supporting documents available for review by others interested in the study (Gall et al. 2007).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The purpose of this multi-case study was to find out from the perspective of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business, critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome. To strengthen the outcome of the study, the Job Coach who works with the sample population also participated. Multiple data collection instruments – survey questionnaire, one-on-one interview and focus group interview, were used to triangulate the results.

Merriam (2009) succinctly points out that “all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner “(p. 209). She further elaborates by pointing out that validity refers to whether a variable measures the ability or characteristic it purports to measure. Reliability refers to whether the outcome of a study can be replicated or generalized.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) observe that under conventional paradigm the data collection and analysis must meet the criteria of “internal validity,” “external validity,” “reliability,” and “objectivity” (p. 290) However, in the sphere of qualitative research, “credibility,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability,” are, then the naturalist’s equivalents for the conventional terms” (p.300).

Internal validity according to Merriam (2009) deals with the question of “how research findings match reality” (p. 213). Gall et al., (2007) define internal validity as
part of the experimental research design that controls extraneous variables to validate the outcome of the treatment variable. The basic problem in assessing the validity of qualitative research is how to specify the link between relations that are studied and their interpretations by the researcher (Flick, 2009).

However, Merriam (2002) is of the view that rigorous triangulation and crystallization of the data collection and interpretation method in qualitative study will determine the credibility of the data. In fact, Merriam (2002) believes that the strength of internal validity in the qualitative research depends on research design to match reality. In qualitative research human beings are the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Merrian (2009) adds:

> Interpretations of reality are accessed directly through their observations and interviews. We are thus closer to reality than if a data collection instrument had been interjected between us and the participants. Most agree that when rigor is viewed in this manner, internal validity is definite strength of qualitative research. (p. 214)

Creswell (2013) supports Merriam’s (2002, 2009) views and points out that in qualitative research the goal should be to achieve credibility in place of internal validity. The research design must involve strong triangulation of multiple data sources “to shed light on a theme or perspective” (p.251), supported by rich and thick descriptions of the phenomena under investigation.

This research design had used multiple data collection sources. Both the cases filled out the survey questionnaire and had one-on-one interview with the researcher. The informants also took part in the focus group interview with the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize that to establish credibility of the data collection process
“long-term and continuing interactions with the respondents” (p.296) and the researcher is necessary until theoretical saturation point is reached (Gall et. al., 2007). The researcher made five visits to meet with the cases. The visits included preliminary meeting, fill out survey questionnaire, one-on-one interview and focus group interview.

Prior to and after the meetings with the cases, the researcher had reflected on what was learned from previous encounters, modified the research instruments, questioned his own biases, reflected on the outcome and created a solid audit trail of documents and recordings. Another benefit of multiple visits was to build trust with the respondents as Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that such prolonged visits are necessary to build confidence and trust with the respondents that their anonymity will be honored, interest of the respondents will be paramount, the respondents would not be in any danger, and the researcher has no hidden agenda. However, prolonged engagement for the sake of engagement or “going native” according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) may jeopardize the data collection and analysis process because the professional judgment could be compromised due to familiarity. Second, once the researcher felt that data saturation was achieved, prolonged engagement would not serve any purpose.

External validity in conventional research looks at the generalizability of the results across “individuals and situations beyond those involved in the study” (Gall et al., 2007. P.640), the goal is to generalize the outcome from a large random sample to a population. On the contrary, Merriam (2009) states that in qualitative research the goal is to understand the phenomenon in depth by using “a single case or small, nonrandom,
purposeful sample” and “not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p.224).
generalizability as an appropriate term for qualitative research because qualitative
research is based on different processes and types of evidence.

epistemology” (p.477) applicability should be in the context of comparison of cases and
not the variables; so that the readers who are interested “in applying the findings can
determine how similar they [cases} are to the situation of interests to them” (p.478).
Multi-case design allows researchers to conduct cross-case analysis to determine
applicability across the cases under study. This multi-case study was designed to capture
rich data to produce thick description from non-random purposeful sample, involving
two cases.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) trustworthiness is “how can an inquirer
persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth
paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (p.290). Merriam (2009) notes that
“reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never
static...the more important question for qualitative research is whether the results are
consistent with the data collected” (p. 221). The lingering question is, can the results be
trusted? Flick (2009) suggests that the key to establishing reliability will be to keep
detailed record of the process, data collection, data interpretation and analysis. Creswell
(2013) points out that in qualitative research, data emerges over a period of time –
requiring corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. The triangulation of data provides evidence of validity to the findings.

To establish credibility or trustworthiness of the survey instrument for this study, the researcher had taken into account content validity and constructs validity. Content validity represents the characteristics they are intended to measure (Fink, 2009). For this survey the source of the content had been selected from earlier studies that have broadly identified key personal attributes for employment success by Zemke & Schaff (1991); Finlay et al., (2000); Tomblin & Harling (2000); Dixon & Reddacliff (2001); Watson & Keith (2002); Jahoda et al., (2004); Covey, (2004); Gorschl (2005); Bigby et al., (2007); Cockerell (2008); Fossen (2010); Morgan (2011); Patterson et al., (2012). Sixteen key attributes were arranged in Likert-type survey questionnaire – ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. These questionnaires were filled out by each respondent. The results provided the researcher with information to identify themes that were considered similar between the respondents. The result also gave the researcher the bases for creating the interview protocols.

Construct validity is “the extent to which a measure used in a case study correctly operationalizes the concepts being studied” (Gall et al., 2007. p.477). In this study, the participants were non-random, convenient, purposive, and information rich. From these participants the researcher was able to learn most about the phenomena. Another factor that was taken into account to ensure credibility and trustworthiness was that all the participants were using the same survey questionnaire. Otherwise, as Belson (1986) points out, the survey instrument would be inconsistent and open to
various interpretations. During the survey administration process the researcher was on-hand to clarify any questions that came up. The respondents also participated in one-on-one interview responding to semi-structured questions. The informants participated in focus group interview also.

The interview protocol was semi-structured. The focus was on learning from the interviewee than teaching them. Gubrium et. al., (2012) have noted that “less rigidly structured methods may score higher on validity, though this has to be traded off against the greater reliability of the more structured methods” (p. 21). To establish trustworthiness, the researcher chose to focus on validity as Fink (2009) points out “a valid survey is always a reliable one, but reliable one is not always valid” (p.41).

The combination of open-ended and close-ended questions for one-on-one interview protocol was designed to seek demographic information, career interest, attributes for career success, job fit and role of stake holders. The focus group provided the researcher and the participants the opportunity to have an informal chat to further explore the views of the informants about the key personal attributes for career success.

The major analytical challenge was establishing a coding list for categorizing the data to capture thematic patterns. As suggested by Merriam (2009) “assigning codes to pieces of data is the way you begin to construct categories” (p.179). Creswell (2013) says that:

Coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases being used in a study, and then assigning a label to code. (p. 184)
For this study, coding was done by repeatedly re-visiting the data and group the data that seem to fit together to establish open code categories (Merriam, 2009). As the categories were emerging, the researcher allocated number markers to specific pieces of data to help in the retrieval process and to identify consistencies in information from various data sources. The coding process was essential to triangulate and if the same themes emerge from multiple data sources, the researcher can then feel confident that he or she has identified pertinent factors (Merriam 2009), to seek answers to the research questions.

The researcher also sought clarifications of responses from each data source – individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach. The researcher discussed the survey questionnaire response after they were completed and played back the interview recording to each respondent in privacy. The researcher was also a self-critique by continuously asking whether he was capturing what the research is supposed to capture. Was the process ethical? Was it unbiased? What was I learning about the phenomenon from the participants? Was I imposing my own views?

By providing evidence of credible research design, methodology and audit trail the researcher has followed through with a rigorous triangulation process. The researcher is confident that the outcome of the study will meet the test of credibility and trustworthiness as demanded by the principles of qualitative research.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted at a restaurant (*The Restaurant*) in a small metropolitan city located in Northeast Ohio. *The Restaurant* has 5 employees, an office
worker and a Job Coach/Manager. There are four individuals with intellectual disabilities working at *The Restaurant* out of which two individuals took part in the study. The study therefore has few inherent limitations: (a) the population is mentored and trained by the Job Coach/Manager in a *sheltered environment*, which may not be the case at a typical restaurant, (b) the customers are mostly adult office workers, other places may have diverse clientele, (c) the restaurant is open from 8am to 2pm - Monday through Friday, other businesses may operate on different schedules, (d) the business does not sell any alcoholic beverages, this may not be the case with every restaurant business, and (e) the restaurant offers limited menu in a casual environment and seats 30 customers. Other restaurants may have different menus, service styles, seating capacities and clientele.

However, review of the literature clearly established the fact that very little if any research has been done that is specific to identifying critical personal attributes for employment success of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant industry. The researcher’s goal was to break new grounds and establish a base for further research in understanding individuals with intellectual disabilities and their inclusion in the restaurant business work force.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to learn from individual cases about critical personal attributes for employment success needed by individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business. The research method adopted a multi-case qualitative study. The research focused on two cases: (a) two individuals with intellectual disabilities, and (b) a Job Coach. Data obtained from individual participants were analyzed to answer the three research questions:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business?
2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?
3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach?

For this study, data was obtained by using multiple sources – survey questionnaire and one-on-one interview with the individuals with intellectual disabilities
and the Job Coach. Individuals with intellectual disabilities also took part in a focus group interview. The use of multiple data collection instrument to triangulate the analysis is *sine qua non* to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative research process.

The two individuals with intellectual disabilities were the informants. The purpose of soliciting data from them was to seek answer to the first research question: what do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business? The Job Coach provided data to answer the second research question: what does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business? Finally, to triangulate the data and to build credibility of the study, the response from the Job Coach was analyzed to find similarities in the responses from the informants and to seek answer to the third research question: what are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach?

According to Gall, et al., (2007) case studies have four characteristics: (a) it is an in-depth study of the case, (b) has the ability to investigate one or more instances of phenomena, (c) it has real life context and, (d) the participant’s perspective is ever-present in the data obtained. Through the process of analysis from several cases, a holistic picture of the phenomena should emerge (Merriam, 2009). This study applied the fundamental principles of multi-case qualitative research method. The core
elements of qualitative data analysis are to reduce the data into meaningful segments by coding the emerging thematic patterns and synthesizing the information to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity (Merriam, 2009). To ensure accuracy of the data the researcher started data analysis by first reviewing the survey questionnaire with the goal of “establishing basic descriptive categories early on for coding” (Merriam, 2009. p. 152) so that the relevant information are easily available to establish thematic patterns as they unfold and during the data interpretation stage. The researcher then listened to the audio recording and studied the one-on-one interview transcript multiple times to identify additional thematic information. The thematic pattern helped the researcher to create a broad coding list of references about key personal attributes for successful employment outcome – from the point of views of the informants and the Job Coach. Next, the researcher listened to the audio recording of the focus group conversation and reviewed the interview transcript between the researcher and the two informants. As the information crystalized, the researcher updated the coding list to reflect unfolding thematic patterns. This step was helpful to the researcher in further understanding the point of view of the informants about various personal attributes for employment success.

The process of data reduction and coding helped the researcher focus on analyzing the information to find within-case similarities of what the individuals with intellectual disabilities identified as critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome. Keeping in mind a characteristic of qualitative research as stated
by Gall et. al, (2007) “the researcher is likely to interact closely with research
participants….few of these procedures are standardized or can be specified in advance
of data collection” (p. 458), the researcher usually does not have any preconceived
notion about the outcome of the study and “where to look next unless data are
analyzed as they are being collected” (Merriam, 2009. p.169). After analyzing the data
from the informants, the researcher then analyzed the view of the Job Coach and
compared the views of the two cases, to seek out similarities in response to the
research questions.

The following pages will describe the findings from the data and identify the
similarity of themes in relation to the research questions.

Views of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Data analysis of the survey questionnaire in Table 4.1 reveals that the two
informants (Fred and Max) identified all of the attributes as either Agree to Strongly
Agree. There were five attributes that both the informants identified as Strongly Agree:
(a) always tries to improve performance, (b) is a team player, (c) takes responsibilities,
(d) takes initiatives, and (e) has high ethical standards. Fred and Max also identified five
attributes that they both marked as Agree: (a) takes pride in the job, (b) ready to learn,
(c) demonstrates self-control, (d) interacts positively with customers, and (e) is
conscientious. There were six attributes that Fred and Max identified either as Agree or
Strongly Agree but they were not unanimous in their views: (a) has a positive attitude,
(b) feels good about himself/herself, (c) always tries to be organized, (d) shows up for
work, (e) can get along with supervisor/manager/JC, and (f) personal hygiene is important.

The results of the survey questionnaire helped the researcher in developing the interview protocols for the two cases – one-on-one interview and focus group interview. Responses from the interviews and the survey questionnaire were triangulated to identify the views of the informants to seek answers the research questions. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4.2 on page 79.
**Table 4.1**

Survey Questionnaire Recapitulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Informants/IIDs</th>
<th>Manager/Holly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes pride in the job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a positive attitude</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels good about himself/herself</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates self-control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always tries to improve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always tries to be organized</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows up for work as scheduled</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can get along with supervisor/manager/JC</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a team player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts positively with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene is important</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has high ethical standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is conscientious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

M = Max; F = Fred
Results in Table 4.2 were obtained after inductive analysis by the researcher. Sixteen attributes as listed in the survey questionnaire were reduced to 10 attributes – some of the attributes were grouped. Table 4.2 shows the results of cross-case analysis within the first case i.e., informants and across cases. Five important personal attributes for employment success identified by Fred were: (1) always tries to improve performance, (2) is a team player, (3) ready to learn, (4) feels good about himself/herself, and (5) takes pride in the job. Max identified the following five attributes as most important: (1) is a team player, (2) always tries to improve performance, (3) ready to learn, (4) has a positive attitude, and (5) personal hygiene is important.

Comparing the responses of Fred and Max, the data shows that they agreed on the three attributes that they considered to be most important for employment success: (a) always tries to improve performance, (b) is a team player, and (c) ready to learn. The following section will discuss views of Fred and Max about the three most critical attributes for employment success.
Table 4.2
Ranking of Critical Personal Attributes for Employment Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Fred</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Holly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes Pride in the Job</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a Positive Attitude</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels Good About himself/herself</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to Learn*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates Self-Control</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Tries to Improve Performance*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Tries to be Organized</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows up for Work as Scheduled</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Get Along With Supervisor/Manager/Job Coach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a Team Player*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts Positively With Customers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes Responsibilities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes Initiatives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Hygiene is Important</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has High Ethical Standards</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Conscientious</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Attributes are based on the Survey Questionnaire. *Top three ranking based on the cross-case analysis.
Ready to Learn

The desire to learn was expressed by Fred during the first few minutes of the one-on-one interview. He was asked by the researcher, what he wanted to accomplish at work. Fred immediately responded by throwing his hand in the air and said, “My goal is, uh, I want to learn how to do uh, lunch, I also want to learn sss-soup. Then I also want to learn, uh, a, uh, uh cut carrots and celery” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). The researcher re-phrased the question and asked if he wanted to learn different tasks. Fred responded with emphasis “Yes” and added that he wants to be “good at what I am doing” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). It seems that for Fred, learning was ever present.

To Max learning was about doing new things every day and doing it better. He said, “Without learning, I would, would get bored and maybe quit.” After a momentary pause Max further elaborated that “uh, I learn, I learn how to be lot more, uh, more self, more self-control” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). Asked by the researcher what did he mean by having more self-control (one of the attributes in the survey questionnaire), Max again referred to the importance of learning and self-control and stated that he would:

Try to come in with a better attitude at the job, try to do the job little different. So I can learn the next day to, now, they are learning pizzas, learning how to make pizzas, so that’s really interesting. Someday I wanna be out working on-in community doing pizza. (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014)

During the focus group interview both Fred and Max elaborated about the importance of learning and to keep their jobs. Fred mentioned that he has a checklist of jobs that he performs every day:
Fred felt that without the list he would not know what he was supposed to do or what he was going to do. The list also helped him work with Holly to plan other activities. Max jumped in and stated that:

I guess I like learning uh, I like learning about how to do stuff every day, you never know what you’re gonna learn every day, cause they [Holly] always have different task for you to do. (focus group interview, March 10, 2014)

Both of them corroborated that Holly was always there to help them learn, which was important for them to feel a sense of doing something good at The Restaurant.

Always Tries to Improve Performance

Both Fred and Max agreed that it is important to always try to improve performance. Fred was of the opinion that is important to be “good at what I’m doing” (one-on-one interview, March 10, 2014). The researcher wanted to re-confirm the answer by asking whether without improving it would be difficult to be successful. Fred nodded his head and said “Yeah.” Max noted that to him improved performance meant “Try to do better than I did yesterday ....try to do the job a little different that is better” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). He added that the job should be done the way he was trained to do and it was important to “give best of my abilities....and try to make sure I go home and know I done a good job [smiled]” (March 5, 2014).

During the focus group interview the researcher rephrased the question and asked what they understood by the attribute “always tries to improve performance?”
Fred responded by saying, “Uh, I think I do a lot better” and Max stated, “I want to do better. I want to be better” (focus group interview, March 10, 2014). When asked by the researcher, if they did not show improvements in their performance, what would Holly do? Both of them responded stating that, Holly was good at showing them how to do a task but if they did not show any improvement, they would be fired. Max said:

You got to try to cont – you got to try to do your performance better no matter which way you’re going you’re gonna have to do something or your boss is going to get rid of you. (focus group interview, March 10, 2014)

Is a Team Player

Fred was asked if he liked working with others or by himself. He responded by saying, “No, I work with; I like to work with uh people in the kitchen” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). When asked why? He said that it was important to work together so they could work better and also help each other. To him, working together also meant creating a positive impression on others. Max gave some thought to the question about working with others or alone and sought clarification by asking, “I get along wh-wh-what do you mean by that?” and followed up by stating, “it, it’s not that difficult to work with others ....cause we all work as a team, getting the job done every day” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014).

During the focus group session, the researcher asked what Fred and Max thought about being a “team player” Fred responded that he thought it was important. Asked “why?” by the researcher. Fred stated “cause we all work as a team, getting the job done every day.” The researcher asked, “what would happen if you were not working as a team?” Fred added that there are always people coming to the site looking
for job, “yesterday we got new people coming in, uh, job interview, we’re hiring….give them [others] a job, or get to hire new people” (focus group interview, March 10, 2014). Max was nodding in agreement and Fred and Max both were in complete agreement that if they did not work as a team then the manager would have to hire new people.

**Summary of Informant’s Perspective**

Data analysis revealed that Fred and Max were in complete agreement that the three important attributes for successful employment outcome were (a) ready to learn, (b) always tries to improve performance, and (c) is a team player. In the survey questionnaire, Fred and Max had identified all the 16 attributes as either *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*. Their responses during the interviews highlight their fear of losing their job as signifying their failure at work. Max had stated:

> You got to try to cont – you got to try to do your performance better no matter which way you’re going you’re gonna have to do something or your boss is going to get rid of you. (focus group interview, March 10, 2014)

**Views of the Job Coach**

The Job Coach (Holly) considered individuals with developmental disabilities as synonymous to individuals with intellectual disabilities. When asked “why” by the researcher, Holly responded by saying “…developmental disabilities is a softer term than intellectual disabilities. Um, people would disagree with that…” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). She stated that “…the individuals that I serve, they would interpret that as dumb or stupid” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014).

In the survey questionnaire results (Table 4.1), Holly identified 6 attributes out of 16 as *Strongly Agree*: (a) takes pride in the job, (b) has a positive attitude, (c)
demonstrates self-control, (d) shows up for work as scheduled, (e) can get along with supervisor/manager/Job Coach, and (g) personal hygiene is important. The remaining 10 attributes were identified as Agree: (a) feels good about himself/herself, (b) ready to learn, (c) always tries to improve performance, (d) always tries to be organized, (e) is a team player, (f) interacts positively with customers, (g) takes responsibilities, (h) takes initiatives, (i) has high ethical standards, and (j) is conscientious. Compared to Fred’s response to the survey questionnaire, there were two attributes – has a positive attitude and shows up for work as scheduled, that Holly and Fred marked as Strongly Agree. There were two attributes that Holly and Max identified as Strongly Agree – can get along with supervisor/manager/JC and personal hygiene is important.

In Table 4.2, results of the one-on-one interview analysis with Holly and the researcher shows that Holly ranked five attributes that were considered most important. There were however, three attributes Holly identified for equal ranking: (1) always tries to improve performance, (2) has a positive attitude, (3a) ready to learn, (3b) demonstrates self-control, (3c) is a team player, (4) always tries to be organized, and (5) takes responsibilities. Amongst the five attributes Holly identified, three attributes are in common and ranked in the top three as identified by the informants also: (1) always tries to improve performance, (2) ready to learn, and (3) is a team player. Holly’s views about the top three attributes that are identical to that of the first case (i.e., Fred and Max) are discussed below.

Holly was asked by the researcher to describe successful job related outcome at The Restaurant. Holly responded by stating that in this:
Sheltered program, uh, success for them [individuals with intellectual disabilities] is to maintain high quality standards, practices and to be willing to open, you know, to, to, um try umm new things as the program evolves. (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014)

*Always Tries to Improve Performance*

To ensure *The Restaurant’s* standards and to keep in mind the *sheltered work* environment, Holly said that once an employee is hired the individual has to undergo cross-training under close supervision. There are job lists and bench marks that the hires have to meet. Holly stated:

> When you set a high standard to begin with, which we do, maintaining that is important….we always encourage people to, to push themselves to be better...and not to back, back pedal. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

To Holly, desire to improve performance meant that the workers should be willing to “try new things as the program evolves.” She is mindful of the costs involved in running the business; her focus is on training her workers to perform well. Holly emphasized:

> We are a training ground....I run this just like I would a restaurant, and I hold them to the same standards that I would anybody else. We are not here for, to, to seek pity, or, you know excuses. Um, we are here to make you productive food service employees. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

Responding to a question from the researcher about what she thought about mediocre performance. Holly was emphatic and waiving her hands in the air while stating that “we are not doing anybody any favors and coddling [laughed]” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). The researcher interpreted Holly’s answer as being very businesslike in performance expectations and at the same time accommodating to the needs of the individuals working at *The Restaurant*. 

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According to Holly since *The Restaurant* is actually a sheltered employment operation, the mission of the business model is to:

Provide job opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities....in this program we train a variety of, uh, skills to the individual starting from very basic and to ...get individuals ready for competitive employment. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

During the recruiting process, Holly said that they assess “their, uh, um, abilities to follow directions, um, their interest in food service” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). During interview Holly stresses the importance of cross-training the candidates and the “flexibility to be able to move from work station to work station” (March, 4, 2014). However, she pointed out that “we sometimes have to look at how people learn best. Um, you know, um, get-getting to know the person” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014).

Because *The Restaurant* has a small workforce, Holly emphasized that through assessment she can “see where their [workers] strengths are and we do try to capitalize on that” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). Along with developing prior skills of the individuals, she focuses on cross-training of the employees in various areas of the operation:

We do cross-training, yes. Individuals that have, um, money skills, we will, um, uh, be working with them on register. Um, cash register. They will be doing food preparation, assembly, um, and again, always keeping in mind that food safety and sanitation piece. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

The researcher inquired what happens to individuals who do not show much interest in learning. Holly paused for a while and said:
I think is, uh, if you have good attitude, and, I think that-that is [pause], that’s more important than just ready to learn. That you have a positive attitude, you will, um, that [learning] will come. You know. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

Is a Team Player

*The Restaurant* is a small business with very slim profit margin. Holly often emphasized the importance of teamwork for the success of the business and for the individuals working there. In fact, one of key attribute’s she looks for in the employees is their ability to get along with each other. She stated that the employees must;

Work well with co-workers. This is a team effort, um, the way we, um, put our prep-list together is much like a puzzle. Everybody has a piece and it all has to come together....we have had individuals who, um, uh, learn best or like to work more by themselves. So we look at what tasks we can do so that he’s still a team player. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

Holly made references to how she is constantly trying to create a real world work environment for *The Restaurant*, where workers have to work as team to make the business successful. Holly added, “we are putting a puzzle together um every day with prep sheets and, and capitalizing on everyone’s strength” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). She keeps on training and reminding her workers to work as team therefore, “we do cross-training, yes. It is very important with a team this small [at *The Restaurant*]” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014).

The researcher asked what else Holly would consider as evidence of being a team player. Holly explained that being a team player also meant that workers should show up on time “if someone is not here on time that does throw our routine...throw off the rhythm for the whole team” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). Holly commented:
I think that’s important [being a team player]. We have, um, it’s very important because I said, we’re a puzzle piece...so we look at what tasks we can do that he’s [workers] still a team player and having to be right there rubbing elbows [laughs]. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

Summary of Job Coach’s Perspective

From the analysis of Holly’s data, the researcher discovered that Holly’s views of top 3 of the 16 critical personal attributes for employment success are identical to that of the informants – (a) ready to learn, (b) is a team player, and (c) always tries to improve performance. However, from Holly’s point of view being a team player is central to making The Restaurant a success. The Restaurant employs five workers out of which four workers have intellectual disabilities, one office worker and a Job Coach/Manager. The Restaurant is a sheltered work environment. Therefore, the emphasis of the business is on training the non-traditional workers for a competitive work environment. Holly needs to provide numerous opportunities through cross-training for the workers to demonstrate their areas of strength. She pointed out being:

In a training mode, and you are not going to have everything perfect. That’s fine. You [the worker] do need to acknowledge that’s okay, yes, it was, it was me [worker]. And that’s okay to do. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

At different points in the interview, Holly was unambiguous is stating that if someone does not work as a team; she has to take other factors like interest of the worker in the job, duration of training, performance, and discipline into account before terminating the individual.
Cross-Case Analysis

The purpose of cross-case analysis is to look for thematic patterns across the cases (Creswell, 2013). The third research question for the study was: what are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach? Typically the cross-case analysis:

Format is to provide first a ….description of each case and themes within a case, called within-case analysis, followed by thematic analysis across the cases called a cross-case analysis. (Creswell, 2013, p.101)

Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire shown in Table 4.1 (page 92) lists sixteen critical personal attributes for employment success. Participants had to identify the attributes that they considered either as – Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. Fred and Max identified all the attributes between Agree and Strongly Agree. However, they agreed on five common attributes as Strongly Agree, without ranking them: (a) always tries to improve performance, (b) is a team player, (c) takes responsibilities, (d) takes initiatives, and (e) has high ethical standards.

Holly identified six attributes as Strongly Agree: (a) takes pride in the job, (b) has a positive attitude, (c) demonstrates self-control, (d) shows up for work as scheduled, (e) can get along with supervisor/manager/Job Coach, and (f) personal hygiene is important. The other 10 attributes were identified as Agree. There was no unanimity between the cases in identifying any of the 16 attributes as Strongly Agree.
The cross-case analysis of survey questionnaire reveals that both the cases – Fred and Max and Holly, were in agreement in identifying all the attributes as either as Agree or Strongly Agree. There were three attributes that the cases unanimously identified either as Agree: (a) ready to learn, (b) interacts positively with customers, and (c) is conscientious. However, there were two attributes that Fred and Holly identified as Strongly Agree, (a) has a positive attitude, and (b) shows up for work as scheduled. Max and Holly also identified two attributes as Strongly Agree, (a) can get along with supervisor/manager/JC, and (b) personal hygiene is important. To establish credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher wanted to gather additional evidence to find similarities between the cases about their views regarding critical personal attributes for employment success. During the one-on-one interview and the focus group interview the researcher was able to capture common themes that helped identify three critical personal attributes for employment success: (a) ready to learn, (b) is a team player, and (c) always tries to improve performance.

Through the process of thematic coding across cases, the researcher was able to reduce the number of attributes from 16 attributes into a group of 10 attributes. The results reveal clear shifts in responses towards greater unanimity between the cases. In the survey instrument, Fred and Holly identified two attributes as Strongly Agree, (a) has a positive attitude, and (b) shows up for work as scheduled. Max and Holly identified two attributes as Strongly Agree, (a) can get along with supervisor/manager/JC, and (b) personal hygiene is important. With the use of additional data collection instruments – one-on-one interview and focus group interview, the researcher was able to inductively
analyze and conclude that both the cases identified three critical attributes for successful employment outcome as: (a) ready to learn, (b) is a team player, and (c) always tries to improve performance.

One-on-one Interviews

During the one-on-one interview between the cases and the focus group interview with the informants, the researcher was able to capture common themes between the cases. Fred’s interpretation of ready to learn was he wanted to be “good at what I am doing” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014) and Max stated that:

I guess I like learning uh, I like learning about how to do stuff every day, you never know what you’re gonna learn every day, cause they [Holly] always have different task for you to do. (focus group interview, March 10, 2014)

Regarding ready to learn, Holly’s expressed her views by stating:

Provide job opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities....in this program we train a variety of, uh, skills to the individual starting from very basic and to ...get individuals ready for competitive employment. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

The second common attribute between the cases was is a team player. When the researcher asked Fred if he would like to work by himself or with others, Fred responded by saying, “No, I work with; I like to work with uh people in the kitchen (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). During focus group interview, Fred added that “cause we all work as a team, getting the job done every day” (March 10, 2014). Max gave some thought to the question about working with others or alone and sought clarification by asking, “I get along wh-wh-what do you mean by that?” and followed up by stating, “It, it’s not that difficult to work with others” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014).
Holly too felt that team work is important for success because everyone here has to:

Work well with co-workers. This is a team effort, um, the way we, um, put our prep-list together is much like a puzzle. Everybody has a piece and it all has to come together....we have had individuals who, um, uh, learn best or like to work more by themselves. So we look at what tasks we can do so that he’s still a team player. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

The third important attribute was, *always tries to improve performance*. Fred was of the opinion that:

You got to try to cont – you got to try to do your performance better no matter which way you’re going you’re gonna have to do something or your boss is going to get rid of you. (focus group interview, March 10, 2014)

Max noted that to him improved performance meant “Try to do better than I did yesterday ....try to do the job a little different that is better” (one-on-one interview, March 5, 2014). He added that the job should be done the way he was trained to do and it was important to “give best of my abilities....and try to make sure I go home and know I done a good job [smiled]” (March 5, 2014).

Holly’s view echoed the views of Fred and Max when she stated that:

When you set a high standard to begin with, which we do, maintaining that is important....we always encourage people to, to push themselves to be better...and not to back, back pedal. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

During the interviews the researcher noted that Fred and Max were concerned that poor performance could get them fired. Holly was more concerned about understanding the workers and to develop them.
Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal deeper meanings embedded in various thematic patterns. By using multiple data collection instruments the researcher was able to triangulate the results from two cases and identify three attributes that both the cases considered to be important for employment success: (a) is a team player, (b) ready to learn, and (c) always tries to improve performance shift in the views of the two cases about the phenomena. Cross-case analysis also helped the researcher to obtain rich data so as to better understand and interpret the information about the critical personal attributes for employment success in the restaurant business. The next chapter will summarize the outcome of the study and its implications.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on learning from individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant industry about their views of key personal attributes for employment success. The study also sought the views of a Job Coach who has been working with the same population sample. This study was guided by three research questions:

1. What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant business?

2. What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business?

3. What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach?

This chapter consists of six major sections: (a) summary of the study, (b) synthesis of the study, (c) answers to the research questions (d) conclusions of the study (e) implications of the study, and (f) recommendations for future research.
Summary of the Study

Problem

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990, 2008), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1990), and the subsequent reauthorization of IDEA under Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 1997, 2004) have emphasized that individuals with any form of disabilities are entitled to fair treatment in education, accommodation, job training, job placement and career development. Yet, employers often make it difficult for individuals with special needs to get hired. A study conducted by Gerber, Mulligan, and Lynda (2007) concluded that employers seldom made accommodation in the hiring process for individuals with special needs. The study noted that often co-workers and management are insensitive to the needs and wants of individuals with disabilities. From the onset, the odds of getting gainfully employed are stacked heavily against individuals with any form of disability.

The National Restaurant Association in its 2014 annual forecast states that for the period ending December 2014, the restaurant industry will generate $683 billion in revenues or approximately 4% of the gross domestic product in the United States. During the same period, restaurants will employ 13.5 million workers – about 1 in 10 jobs or 10% of the U.S. workforce. The survey also states that for fifteenth consecutive year, the restaurant industry job growth will outpace the growth of the economy. According to the National Restaurant Association study, by the year 2024 additional 1.3 million jobs will be created or 14.8 million people will be employed by the restaurants, nationwide.
The Department of Labor Statistics (DOL, 2012) estimates the demand for workers in the food service occupations will increase from 3.9 million in 2012 to 4.5 million in 2022 – an increase of 14.3%. The employment projections summary report for 2012-2022 from the Department of Labor Statistics (2012) point out that “the overall labor force participation rate is projected to decline from 63.7 percent in 2012 to 61.6 percent in 2022.” The Bureau of Labor (2012) also points out that 11.4% of the working age population or around 27 million individuals have some form of disabilities and only 1% is employed by the restaurants.

Interpreting the preceding data, there will be a big gap between the emerging employment needs of the restaurant industry and the availability of the traditional workforce. The restaurant industry may have to look into hiring and training non-traditional workers, such as individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, to better understand and to serve the employment needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, the restaurant industry will have to understand various aspects and issues that affect the successful employment outcome of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to learn from individual with mild intellectual disabilities who are working in the restaurant business about their views of personal attributes for successful employment outcome in the restaurant industry. The participants in this study had mild intellectual disabilities i.e., I.Q. range of 50 to 69 (Smith & Tyler, 2010). To triangulate the data with the views of the individuals with
intellectual disabilities, the researcher also solicited views of a Job Coach at the same location.

Methods

To seek answers to the research questions and to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the research, a multi-case qualitative research design was used. The study was conducted at a commercially operated restaurant in a mid-sized city in Northeast Ohio. *The Restaurant* offers sheltered work environment to the workers. In a sheltered workplace, the learning environment of individuals is controlled to facilitate progressive learning and adaptation of skills and behavior for transition into a regular workplace. There are five employees working at the site and four of them have mild intellectual disabilities. There is also one office worker and the Job Coach/Manager. Two individuals with intellectual disabilities (informants) and the Job Coach took part in the study. Both the informants were in their early 50s and they have been working at this site for 4 to 5 years. The Job Coach has been working at this site for a little over 6 years.

To obtain rich and credible data, the researcher used nonrandom purposeful sampling representing two cases – two individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach. Three data collection instruments were used: (a) survey questionnaire – using Likert-type scale, (b) one-on-one interview, and (c) focus group interview were also used for obtaining data from the individuals with intellectual disabilities. To maintain integrity of the qualitative research design, the data analysis commenced as soon as the data were collected and the researcher had to continuously analyze the data from each case – looking for emerging similarities and contrasts, with the objective
of developing a thematic pattern related to the phenomenon under investigation (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Thematic patterns were identified by reducing the data into meaningful chunks through the process of sorting and coding the data which involved repeated reading and synthesizing the information by the researcher (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Synthesis of the Study

Two individuals with intellectual disabilities taking part in the study were the informants because the researcher wanted to learn from the informants about their views of key personal attributes for employment success. To strengthen credibility and triangulation of the study, the researcher also sought the views of the Job Coach. First set of data were obtained by using a Likert-type survey questionnaire. The survey listed sixteen attributes for employment success – presented as short statements. Both the informants identified all the attributes as either Agree or Strongly Agree. However, there were five attributes the informants identified as Strongly Agree: (a) always tries to improve performance, (b) is a team player, (c) takes responsibilities, (d) takes initiatives, and (e) has high ethical standards. The Job Coach also used the same survey and identified six attributes out of 16 as Strongly Agree: (a) takes pride in the job, (b) has a positive attitude, (c) demonstrates self-control, (d) shows up for work as scheduled, (e) can get along with supervisor/manager/Job Coach, and (f) personal hygiene is important.

The design for one-on-one interview and focus group protocols were based on the responses to the survey questionnaire. The analysis of data from the informants’
response to the survey questionnaire and the interviews identified three attributes that both the informants considered most important for employment success: (a) ready to learn, (b) always tries to improve performance, and (c) is a team player. Analysis of data from the Job Coach obtained through the one-on-one interview and the survey questionnaire revealed that both the cases had identified the same three attributes as most important for employment success: (a) ready to learn, (b) always tries to improve performance, and (c) is a team player.

Answers to the Research Questions

The first research question this study sought to answer was: What do individuals with intellectual disabilities identify as critical personal attributes for successful employment in the restaurant industry? Inter-case analysis revealed that Fred and Max identified three attributes that they considered important for employment success: (a) always tries to improve performance, (b) is a team player, and (c) ready to learn.

The second research question was: What does a Job Coach consider critical personal attributes for successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant industry?

Holly ranked five attributes that were considered most important. There were however, three attributes Holly identified for equal ranking: (1) always tries to improve performance, (2) has a positive attitude, (3a) ready to learn, (3b) demonstrates self-control, (3c) is a team player, (4) always tries to be organized, and (5) takes responsibilities.
The third research question was: What are the similarities that emerge in the perception of critical personal attributes identified by individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach? The outcome of the cross-case analysis revealed that amongst the five attributes Holly identified, three attributes are in common and ranked in the top three as identified by the informants – Fred and Max also: (1) always tries to improve performance, (2) ready to learn, and (3) is a team player.

Conclusions of the Study

The outcome of this study is consistent with earlier studies conducted by other researchers regarding various attributes for employment success, in general. Cockerell (2008) remarked that it was important for the recruiter to be clear regarding “exactly what qualities do you want in the person you hire” (p.86). Throughout one-on-one interview, Holly emphasized that the workers she hires goes through the same interview process like at any other restaurant. In a candidate, Holly looks for “abilities to follow directions…personal hygiene….interest in food service…ability to get along” (March 4, 2014).

Drake (2005) mentioned in his research that individuals with intellectual disabilities have the same life goals like others without disabilities, to participate in socially meaningful activities, to be productive, earn and participate in the community. Flores et al., (2011) share the same views and observed that there is a co-relationship between the quality of work life, job requirements and supervision. In this study, during one-on-one interview Max mentioned that “I mean I feel good about coming in every morning cause, you know, you feel like you got something to look forward to” (March 5,
2014). Later in the focus group interview Max mentioned it was important to him how “my co-workers, try to think about how they feel about me and all that….when I go home I know I did a good job” (March 10, 2014). Fred pointed out that at “this place, Uh, make, uh, make friends. People. Talk to em” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014).

Myers noted that people usually attribute behavior either to their internal dispositions or to their external situations. During the course of the focus group interview, Fred pointed out that if he is occasionally late “it’s because sometimes taxi can get me late at work to the service, okay” (March 10, 2014). Jereb et al., (2005) have stated that motivated managers “have the desire to do the best rather than just enough to get by” (p.198). This quality was often re-enforced by Holly:

Every individual goes through an interview process just like a typical employee would….success is to maintain high quality standards….try new things ….meet the benchmarks….we are not here for, to seek pity. (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014)

Banks et al., (2010) found in their research on social skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities and the work environment that employers were more concerned about task-related interactions than social factors. During one-on-one interview, Holly was emphatic in stating that socializing was important but the worker “need to accept responsibilities….our paychecks depend on being able to sell food and make money…job comes first” (March 4, 2014).

Morgan (2011) was of the view that to be successful in supported employment the role of Job Coaches and on-going training were important for successful job outcome. During focus group interview, Max acknowledged that “I like to learning about how to do stuff everyday….cause they always have a different task for you to do”
Fred added that if he did not know what to do, Holly is always there to teach “I’d ask, hi, what is my task. And, uh, she [Holly] told me to get, uh, ten, ten bananas, no, ten bread or potatoes” (March 10, 2014). Holly emphasized the need to train “when they come in we will, as I said, do variety of cross-training and we will assess the strength of each individual to each position” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014).

Oren et al., (2012) concluded that good working relationship between employers and employees produces mutual benefits. At The Restaurant Holly pointed out that “there are some individuals in the program that [The Restaurant], is their career goal. And they may spend their entire, uh career with me” (one-on-one interview, March 4, 2014). As noted earlier, Fred and Max have expressed their satisfaction at working in The Restaurant for the last 5 years. In an industry that is known for high labor turn over, this low turn-over of workers is good achievement.

The final cross-case analysis of the data in Table 4.2 (page 94) shows that there were three attributes for employment success in the restaurant business that both the cases ranked in the top three: (a) always tries to improve performance, (b) ready to learn, and (c) is a team player. However, there were few other attributes that the cases did not agree unanimously.

The above mentioned attributes for successful employment outcome as identified by the individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Job Coach supports the views of Bukowski (2005), who points out that individual with intellectual disabilities are not devoid of normal social and emotional needs.
Dixon and Reddacliff (2001) observed that competitive employment of young adults allows them to develop their worker identities, improve vocational skills, self-confidence, independence and social competence. Shea-Van Fossen’s (2010) is of the opinion that quest to derive meaningful work experiences “create a positive reinforcement cycle that strengthens an individual’s current work orientation” (p. 147). There seem to be more similarities in the personal attributes for successful employment outcome between individuals with intellectual disabilities and without intellectual disabilities. This could be a topic for further research.

Implications of the Study

Today, there is greater realization about what individuals with intellectual disabilities can do instead of what they cannot do. This study clearly shows that the attributes for employment success as identified by the informants resonates with the views of Bigby et al., (2007) who have noted that individuals with intellectual disabilities have the same aspirations as others in the community to socialize, have relationships, earn, learn, succeed and be counted. The study has identified and ranked various personal attributes for employment success of individuals with intellectual disabilities working in the restaurant business. The researcher believes that the findings of this study does provide some insights for broader understanding and implications, about the views of personal attributes for successful employment outcome in the restaurant business for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach.
Implications for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

The National Restaurant Association (2014) has forecasted continued growth of the restaurant industry and anticipates rising demand for labor. The U.S. census bureau has pointed out the demographic shifts towards shrinking pool of regular labor force (2010). As a result, the restaurants will have to look for alternative sources of labor. This study clearly shows that individuals with intellectual disabilities are aware of the critical personal attributes needed for employment success. What they may not be aware of is that their views may not be similar in importance to that of the Job Coach. For example, the Job Coach viewed “has a positive attitude” as # 2 in importance compared to # 4 (Max) and # 6 (Fred) as viewed by the informants. In the opinion of the Job Coach, “always tries to be organized” was # 4; the informants viewed this attribute as # 6 (Fred) and # 7 (Max) in importance.

To be gainfully employed, individuals with intellectual disabilities will have to be more cognizant to the requirements of their Job Coach and/or manager. The steps could involve better understanding of the recruiting process, job qualifications, job descriptions, task break down, on-going communication and performance evaluation. This process has to be driven primarily by the managers in collaboration with the workers with intellectual disabilities.

Implications for the Job Coach

Study by Rhoades and Eisenberger, (2002); Graen, (2003); Oren et al., (2012) concluded that organizational support is reciprocal to motivating employees to be productive and that employers must value the employees by training, rewarding,
respecting and accommodating their reasonable needs. Workers in return should respond by showing loyalty, interest and commitment. In this research, the Job Coach represented the management. They are there to ensure productivity and quality standards on behalf of the business. Cross-case analysis of this research shows that the participants were in agreement about various attributes for employment success but the cases had different views in terms of importance of the attributes.

In this study, one of the critical functions of a Job Coach was to work closely with the individuals with intellectual disabilities to motivate the employees and to train them to become productive. A good transition from sheltered work environment to the traditional workforce contributes to the well-being of the individuals and the society.

*Implications for the Restaurant Business*

The participants in this study were in a sheltered work environment and this researcher believes that employers should seek to further understand the motivational drivers of workers with intellectual disabilities and to find creative and meaningful ways to reward performance. A good transition from sheltered work environment to the traditional workforce contributes to the well-being of the individuals and the society. In this study, one of the critical functions of a Job Coach was to work closely with the individuals with intellectual disabilities to motivate the employees and to train them to become productive. Therefore, owners and operators of other traditional restaurants should consider the merits of hiring and/or training supervisors to emulate the role and the position of the Job Coach at *The Restaurant*. 
However, Kalargyrou (2014) observes that the idea that people with disabilities can only work in sheltered environment is becoming obsolete because, more employers are providing opportunities “to prove that workers with disabilities are as productive as their counterparts.” (p. 139). Kalargyrou (2014) adds that when it comes to placing people with disabilities in direct customer contact positions, stigma and stereotyping of individuals with disabilities influences the decision. According to the Wall Street Journal (March 19, 2014), starting from the week of March 24, 2014 “U.S. regulations going into effect .... require for the first time that federal contractors....ask their employees if they have a disability.” (p. B1). This rule will apply to companies that employ 50 or more employees or have $50,000 in government contracts annually. Companies that “don’t employ minimum of 7% disabled workers or cannot prove that they are taking steps to achieve the goal could face penalties and, in most extreme cases, the loss of their contracts” (Wall Street Journal, March 19, 2014, p B2).

The impact of the new rules is yet to be seen. Advocacy groups will push aggressively for greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and at the same time ensure that the rules do not violate various Acts of the Congress that seek to protect and safeguard the rights of individuals with disabilities. The National Restaurant Association realizes the impact of changing demographics on the restaurant industry and continues to take steps to support diverse workforce. Individual restaurant operators will have to be educated about the merits of being proactive in hiring and training individuals with intellectual disabilities and to better understand the meaning of
key critical attributes for employment success as perceived by individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Although the study was conducted at one restaurant and involved two cases, the researcher was able to document thick and rich description about the lived experiences of the participants. The study presents to the readers the views of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach about critical personal attributes for successful employment outcome. The implication of the outcome of this study does provide the readers an insight about the steps stakeholders – workers and management, can take to integrate individuals with intellectual disabilities and have a positive outcome.

Recommendations for Future Research

The goal of this multi-case qualitative research was to learn from individuals with intellectual disabilities and their Job Coach, what they thought were key personal attributes for successful employment outcome in the restaurant business. Based on the evidence provided in this study, the researcher found that there were three attributes that the participants thought were critical for individuals with intellectual disabilities to succeed: (a) individual should be a team player, (b) individual should always try to improve performance, and (c) the individual is ready to learn. The researcher also noted the synergies of better understanding the perspectives of the worker and the manager to create productive and inclusive work environment, for the greater good of the society.
The researcher was interested to learn about the phenomena because of his long involvement in the hospitality industry and he witnessed firsthand the negative impact of stereo-typing individuals with disabilities. Yet, many individuals with disabilities have proven to be very productive workers but much needed to be learned about them – especially what are the key personal attributes for successful employment outcome. This study suggests that individuals with intellectual disabilities share similar views of attributes for employment success with that of the traditional workers. Further research is needed to identify support that can be incorporated in the work environment and training of individuals with intellectual disabilities so that they can be given the opportunities to progress in their careers.

To date the author is not aware of any study that has addressed the research topic and believes that this study will break new grounds and lay the foundations to enhance the understanding of critical personal attributes for employment success of individuals with intellectual disabilities. For example, what is the role of the family in supporting employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities? What is the perception of peers in the workplace towards individuals with intellectual disabilities? What is the perception of customers towards service providers with intellectual disabilities? How can restaurants demonstrate their commitment to the community by supporting employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities?

The researcher believes that the research design and analysis have been rigorous to withstand the test of credibility and trustworthiness. However, due to the bounded nature of the case study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009) and the inherent limitations of
the site, additional study is needed to further explore the similarities and contrasts in
the views and perception of the stakeholders regarding key personal attributes for
employment success.
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Merriam-Webster online dictionary: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary


Oxford Dictionaries online: www.oxforddictionaries.com


APPENDIX A

CONSENT LETTER FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Dear

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Akron's College of Education. The Chair of my Committee is Dr. Shernavaz Vakil at the College of Education.

To meet the requirements for Ph.D. degree, I am working on my final research. I would like to know your views about, what do you consider to be important skills for employment success in the restaurant business. Your input will be valuable for the research. The research is not expected to involve any risks of harm to any participant. However, your participation will be voluntary and you may opt out at any time without any fear of penalty.

I respect your confidentiality and privacy and your participation won't have any impact on your current employment. Any information you provide, will be kept completely confidential. Anything that we will discuss will not be revealed to anyone in any way that would identify you in any publication or to other participants. The documents will be kept in a secured place under my control. However, the only people who will have the knowledge of your participation (not your individual views) will be the Job Coaches, other participants, your parent/guardian, and my advisors.

The data collection will involve a short survey questionnaire, 10 to 15 minutes of individual interview and finally a 25 to 30 minutes of group interview/discussion. The time, date and location will be agreed in advance. I hope that the above explanation is clear about the purpose of the research. However, if you have any questions or concerns you may contact me or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Akron. The contact details are listed below.

Jamal Feerasta (Researcher); 330-972-6601;
jamal@uakron.edu IRB; 330-972-7666.

If you would like to participate in this research, please sign the attached Consent Form and give it to your Job Coach by.......

Thank you and I look forward to working with you on this exciting project.

Jamal Feerasta
APPENDIX B

CONSENT LETTER FOR THE JOB COACH

Dear

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Akron's College of Education. The Chair of my Committee is Dr. Shernavaz Vakil at the College of Education.

To meet the requirements for Ph.D. degree, I am working on my dissertation. I would like to know your views about, what do you consider to be important personal characteristics or attributes for employment success of individuals with moderate learning disabilities in the restaurant business.

Since you are a Job Coach and working with the individuals/consumers/clients, your views will be important in understanding the nuances dealing with the research topic. The research is not expected to involve any risks of harm to any participant.

I respect your confidentiality and privacy. Any information you provide, will be kept completely confidential. Anything that we will discuss will not be revealed to anyone in any way that would identify you in any publication or to other participants. The documents will be kept in a secured place under my control. However, the only people who will have the knowledge of your participation (not your individual views) will be other participants, your management, and my advisors.

The data collection will involve a short survey questionnaire, 15 to 20 minutes of individual interview and finally a 30 to 40 minutes of group interview/discussion. The time, date and location will be agreed in advance. I hope that the above explanation is clear about the purpose of the research. However, if you have any questions or concerns you may contact me or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Akron. The contact details are listed below.

I hope that the above explanation is clear. However, if you have any questions or concerns you may contact me or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Akron. The contact details are listed below.

Jamal Feerasta (Researcher); 330-972-6601;
jamal@uakron.edu IRB; 330-972-7666

If you would like to participate in this research, please sign the attached Consent Form. Thank you and I look forward to working with you on this exciting project.

Jamal Feerasta
## APPENDIX C

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

<table>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
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<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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**Please select your choice from the above table**

**Please respond to the questions below by scoring what you perceive to be the critical personal attributes for employment success**

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<tr>
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<th>Personal Attributes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes pride in the job</td>
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<td>Has a positive attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feels good about himself/herself</td>
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<td>Ready to learn</td>
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<td>Demonstrates self-control</td>
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<td>Always tries to improve performance</td>
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<td>Always tries to be organized</td>
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<td>Shows up for work as scheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can get along with supervisor/manager/Job Coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a team player</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interacts positively with customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes responsibilities</td>
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<td>Takes initiatives</td>
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<td>Personal hygiene is important</td>
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<td>Has high ethical standards</td>
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<td>Is conscientious</td>
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APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

1. Please tell me about yourself?
   • Approximate age
   • Education

2. Since how long have you been working here?

3. Is this your first place of employment?

4. If “no”, where did you work before coming here?

5. For how long?

6. Why did you leave?

7. Do you have a job title?

8. What is your work schedule/How many days of the week do you come for work/Time?

9. What your typical day is like/what do you generally do?

10. What aspects of your job do you like?

11. What aspects of your job you do not like?

12. What are your career goals?

13. What do you understand by the word “Success”?

14. Can you describe for me a recent work related incidence, when your supervisor appreciated your action?

15. What do you think are important personal attributes to be successful in your job?
16. Can you think of some examples that would relate to your understanding of success?

17. Do you have any questions for me?
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR JOB COACH

1. Please tell me about yourself?
2. Since how long have you been working here?
3. What is your current job title?
4. What do you look for when hiring Individuals with intellectual disabilities?
5. How do you go about matching the job with job placement of Individuals with intellectual disabilities?
6. What is the average length of work duration/tenure at this place for Individuals with intellectual disabilities?
7. In your opinion, what are the key personal attributes for employment success for Individuals with intellectual disabilities? Please elaborate.
8. How would you describe successful job related outcome for Individuals with intellectual disabilities? Please elaborate.
9. Is there anything else you would like to share?
10. Do you have any questions for me?
APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

I would like to thank you for coming here to take part in this very important study. Before we start the discussion, I will introduce myself and explain to you the purpose of this activity and how this focus group will work.

1. Do you have any questions for me before we start the discussion?

2. Few days back, you had completed a questionnaire that asked for your opinion of key personal attributes for successful employment outcome; can you please share views on the topic?

3. You had also taken part in one-on-one interview in which amongst other issues, you had expressed your views about key personal attributes for successful employment outcome; can you please share your views on the topic?

The researcher will facilitate the discussion and develop probing questions as the discussion proceeds.