Organizational mentoring is regarded as one of the most significant workplace interactions facilitating development of organizational members (Kram, 1983). In this regard, organizations attempt to reap the benefits of mentoring by implementing a variety of formal mentoring programs. (Eby et al., 2013). However, Noe (1988) stated that the benefits of mentoring would not be easily obtained in a formal setting as the nature of mentoring is inherently informal. This implies that there is a lack of general understanding about the nature of mentoring among practitioners and thus, it is required for scholars to clarify the nature of organizational mentoring. The topic of mentoring has enjoyed a considerable amount of attention as an area of scientific inquiry across disciplines; however, the current state of workplace mentoring is relatively in its infancy in general (Allen, Eby, O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008, Ragins & Kram, 2007), and there is a dearth of mentoring studies in the business side of sport in particular (c.f., Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002; Young, 1990). In a similar vein, Ragins and Kram (2007) pointed out the lack of mentoring framework to be specifically applicable in an organizational context, which subsequently lead to the conceptual ambiguity and inconsistency in the use of mentoring construct. Such conceptual ambiguity embedded in the design of mentoring study diminishes scholastic endeavor to develop a strong organizational mentoring theory. Ragins and Kram (2007) reiterated that the organizational mentoring is a multifaceted phenomenon, and thus better understood when the level of analysis is specified in accordance with the organizational context and relational property. Accordingly, the purpose of the presentation is to propose a mentoring framework, named as a Compatible Mentoring Relationship Model (CMR) to be testable in an empirical setting within the domain of sport administration.

The CMR model is designed to advance the mentoring model developed by Weaver and Chelladurai (1999). Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) utilized Kram’s initial mentoring framework and proposed a mentoring model to be suitable in the context of sport specifically. In a groundbreaking study, Kram (1983) conceptualized the nature of workplace mentoring by classifying two distinct functions (i.e., career and psychosocial functions) in accordance with the mentoring lifespan. Kram’s initial conceptualization, in essence, posits the idea that successful mentoring would be spontaneously initiated as a function of mutual attraction between interactional partners (i.e., mentor-protégé). Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) also emphasized the relational properties of workplace mentoring and incorporated the concept of “compatibility” to delineate the process of quality mentoring. More specifically, the concept of compatibility refers to the extent of what mentors and protégés have in common in terms of career goals, work related attributes and life values, which influence the extent of mentoring behavior. In terms of a contextual factor, Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) recognized sport as a unique context in which hyper-masculine culture is pervasive. Such institutionalized culture of masculinity hampers women’s upward mobility within the domain of sport. They pointed out the exclusive nature of developmental networks established against women. The CMR model reiterated this proposition and expands the notion of barriers to be applicable for the socially marginalized groups in general. The initial filtering phase, in this regard, explicates how the exclusive network structure constructed in favor of White male majority deprives women and people of color of opportunities for mentoring relationships.

The CMR model further elaborated the concept of “mentoring compatibility” by classifying it into two seemingly distinct sources of overall relational compatibility; these are (1) instrumental compatibility and (2) expressive compatibility. The rationale behind the compatibility classification stems from the idea that the sources of relational compatibility would vary to a great extent based on the nature of relationships (Ickes, 1985). Stated more precisely, the CMR model reflects unique aspects of workplace interactions that occur in the achievement context. Instrumental compatibility, in this regard, is important in the formation of workplace interactions (mentoring in particular) as the work itself is a crucial part of one’s self-concept in the formation of a professional identity. This
indicates that individuals are more likely to be attracted with others who are congruent or agreeing upon work related attitudes, beliefs or values. Secondly, expressive compatibility is conceptualized to emphasize the nature of mentoring as a close relationship. The concept of expressive compatibility refers to the degree of emotional or affective congruence in determining relational closeness between mentoring partners. As it turns out, the concept of expressive compatibility subsequently serves to delineate the nature of workplace mentoring as it distinguishes from other workplace interactions that are initially bound to a formal setting (e.g., leader-follower or supervisor-subordinate relationships). This distinction is important as extant mentoring literature has generally ignored the relational process of the quality mentoring relationship (Eby et al., 2013). With respect to the outcome variables, mentoring functions (career and psychosocial) have been widely substantiated in empirical settings (Eby et al., 2013). Furthermore, the current model includes the perceived relationship quality (PRQ) as it evaluates the overall mentoring quality, which has been generally ignored.

Given that the compatibility is not established in a vacuum, it is reasonable to assume that the protégés with socially desirable traits are more likely to be engaged in a quality mentoring relationship (Ragins & Kram, 2007). This raises the question in terms of what factors play a role in the cultivation of relational compatibility between mentors and protégés. In line with this argument, the CMR model focuses on the impact of the organization based self-esteeem (OBSE) as a primary source in breeding interpersonal attraction for workplace mentoring to occur. While there are many individual traits considered to be important in the initiation of mutual interaction (e.g., personality, motivation, self-efficacy etc.) the OBSE was chosen because individuals tend to exhibit favoritism toward similar others as a function of self-esteem maintenance in the process of mutual interactions (Byrne, 1971). In an organizational context, the OBSE is defined as “the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organization member (Pierce & Gardner, 2004, p. 594).” This reflects the individuals’ perception on themselves in terms of competence, efficacy, and capacity within their employing organizations.

In sum, the CMR model is designed to delineate the nature of high-end quality mentoring relationships in the workplace within sport settings. Stated more precisely, the major tenet of the CMR model posits the idea that highly similar mentor-protégé traits facilitate the process of mutual attraction in breeding relational compatibility, which subsequently leads to the initiation and cultivation of the mentoring relationship. This presentation would shed some lights on the nature of workplace mentoring in sport settings as there is a dearth of mentoring research in the business side of sport. Additionally, the presentation will be valued for the sport administrators interested in the design and implementation of mentoring programs or those sport organizations concerned about the diversity management.