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Attitude of gaming employees towards problem gambling: How it affects their learning at an awareness training

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ATTITUDE OF GAMING EMPLOYEES TOWARDS PROBLEM GAMBLING: HOW
IT AFFECTS THEIR LEARNING AT AN AWARENESS TRAINING

by

Lisa Michelle Bybee

Bachelor of Arts
University of New Mexico
1992

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Science
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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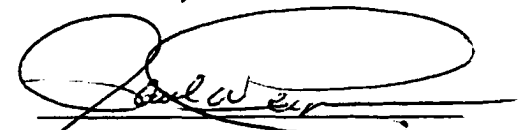
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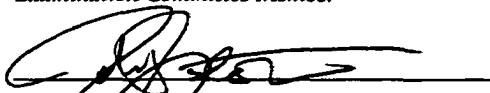
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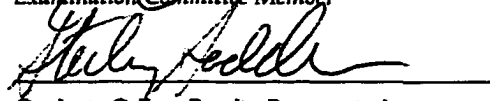
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ABSTRACT

Attitude of Gaming Employees Towards Problem Gambling: How it Affects Their Learning at an Awareness Training

by

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the efficacy of a problem gambling training class to train adult learners and to determine whether the attitude of this sample towards problem gambling affects their ability to learn about this issue. A survey instrument was designed by the author. The researcher used frequency distribution, crosstabulations, and linear regression to analyze the collected data. The survey sample consisted of adult gaming employees in Las Vegas who attended compulsory problem gambling awareness training.

What makes this topic, problem gambling, provocative is that people have difficulty accepting that the pursuit of the intangible product of gambling – entertainment – can have a deleterious effect on a person. The passage of a problem gambling regulation, whatever the motivation, and the existence of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling’s awareness training classes are positive signs that the gaming industry is committed to addressing this issue.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the efficacy of a problem gambling training program to train adult learners and to determine whether the attitude of this sample towards problem gambling affects their ability to learn about this issue. The survey sample consists of adult gaming employees in Las Vegas who attended a compulsory problem gambling awareness training class.

Importance of the Study

This study will first endeavor to discover whether the attitude of trainees towards problem gambling affected their ability to learn the objectives presented in the class and second evaluate the training program. The program offered by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling is the first of its kind in Las Vegas outside of a casino or hotel property. Thus, it is important to evaluate the program and to try and measure its efficacy in an effort to illustrate whether problem gambling awareness training is effective on Las Vegas gaming employees. In addition, the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling would like to have its program evaluated in order to improve and or change any part of the training that is not effective.

Problem gambling has been a controversial topic of debate among gaming proponents and opponents for at least 15 years and has become a more politicized issue in Nevada, and other states with legalized gambling, during the past few years. Indeed, it has been difficult for interested parties (clinicians, the gaming industry, the general public, and people with gambling problems) to come to an agreement on just what problem gambling is.

Hypotheses

1. Do women have a different attitude towards this training than men?
2. Will attendees with no prior exposure to problem gambling training retain more information than those attendees who have had prior problem gambling training?
3. Do people with positive attitudes retain more information than those with negative attitudes?

Delimitations

The study uses a convenience sample. The survey sample was restricted to gaming employees in Las Vegas who attended a compulsory, off-site problem gambling awareness training (“open enrollment” option) offered by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling. The Nevada Council offers this awareness training program in three ways: one, the Council trains hotel and casino properties’ employee trainers to teach the awareness program to their own employees; two, the Council trains employees of gaming

properties on-site; and three, the open enrollment option whereby the Council offers off-site training to gaming employees whose employers do not, or cannot, provide training for their own employees.

The open enrollment classes require a minimum of 10 attendees in order to be scheduled. Scheduled classes that do not have 10 attendees may be canceled by the Council. Since this training program is new – it began in late March 1999 – the number of classes offered each month varies from 2 to 4. The researcher surveyed the sample during October, November, and December thus limiting the sample size to between 60 and 120 respondents (under optimal attendance and response conditions). The researcher would be solely responsible for administering the survey to the sample.

Limitations

1. The researcher could not survey either of the other two training options offered by the Council as the gaming properties themselves would not allow it.
2. The sample surveyed could not be given a follow-up survey some months after their training since the Council did not agree to supply the names and other personal information of attendees and put at risk their entire training program.
3. The Council did not guarantee a specific number of attendees or classes during the three months that the researcher wanted to conduct the research.
4. The Council insisted that it be able to review and edit the questions on the survey in order to prevent any conflict from arising between the Council and gaming properties who utilized their training program.

5. Typically, open enrollment classes were the training option chosen by small gaming properties such as local bars and restaurants with slot machines.
6. Open enrollment classes were canceled if too few people are enrolled.
7. The Nevada Council on Problem Gambling's awareness training program was designed to satisfy the requirements of a gaming regulation and is available to gaming industry employers who do not provide similar training for their employees. Therefore, the content of the course is limited to the requirements of the regulation, and the length of the program is influenced by the amount of time an employer, and the employees, are willing to devote to the training.
8. The sample was not randomly chosen – the study utilizes a convenience sample.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are from various sources including the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling's informational brochure and training class handouts:

Problem gambling: General term used to describe a disorder whereby an individual is unable to stop gambling on their own. They cannot limit the amount of time or money spent gambling. They gamble to the exclusion of other activities and the end result is often financial bankruptcy, depression, and suicide. Same thing as pathological gambling, compulsive gambling, and gambling addiction. Differs from social gambling.

Social gambling: Gambling activity that is for entertainment purposes. The gambler limits the amount of time and money gambled and gambles for social distraction. How the majority of the general public gambles.

Compulsive gambling: Another term used by people who are in treatment for gambling addiction. The same thing as problem gambling.

Pathological gambling: The term used by the medical community for problem gambling. Also refers to gambling addiction. Typically used by lay people, i.e., the press and general public.

Gambling addiction: The term that “problem gamblers” use to describe their gambling problem. Typically used by those who are in treatment or post-treatment.

Gambler’s Anonymous: Also referred to as GA. This is a free treatment organization for problem gamblers. The phases of the program follow the “12 Step” method used by Alcoholic’s Anonymous.

Convenience sample: A population sample that is not randomly chosen.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into the following six parts: Background (problem gambling and an outline of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling's Awareness Training Program); Problem Gambling; Adult Learning; Attitude Measurement; Training Program Design; and, Training Evaluation.

Background

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the author's contention that Las Vegas gaming employees have had exposure to issues surrounding the passage of a problem gambling related regulation.

In 1931, Assembly Bill 98 was passed legalizing gambling in the state. During November 1998, a gaming regulation was passed requiring gaming establishments to address problem gambling. The debate over just what problem gambling, or compulsive gambling, or gambling addiction really is has raged among clinicians, the gaming industry, the general public, and people with gambling problems for years. While gambling as a recreational activity has been widely practiced and accepted, problem gambling has remained a difficult issue to define and address for all interested parties.

The journey to the regulation's passing and implementation was recorded by one of the city's newspapers – the Las Vegas Sun – and revealed much about the volatility of

the issue and the opinions of various groups inside Nevada. A June 1998 article discussed the 12th National Conference on Problem Gambling. Medical professionals, executives from the gaming industry, and anti-gambling representatives met in Las Vegas over three days to discuss problem gambling. It was noted that such a large and varied gathering would not have occurred a few years before. Dr. Howard Shaffer presented results from earlier research that studied underage gambling and gambling addiction among teens (Thompson, 1998).

By September of 1998, the gaming industry in Nevada was feeling the pressure of a study being conducted by a federal commission – the National Gambling Impact Study Commission – studying problem gambling nationwide. The general feeling of Nevada casino operators and gaming interests was that they needed to address problem gambling issues themselves before some other legislative body intervened (Wilen, 1998).

In November 1998, the Nevada Gaming Commission and the State Gaming Control Board passed a regulation that addressed problem gambling in 4 ways: 1.) all gaming properties, with restricted or unrestricted licenses, are subject to the regulation; 2.) the help-line number (1-800) has to be posted in gaming areas; 3.) employees who work in gaming areas are required to be educated about the issue and trained how to assist customers who request information; and, 4.) gaming properties must discontinue sending casino marketing information and issuing credit to customers who request it (Regulation 5.170, 1998). The Nevada Council on Problem Gambling is the recognized provider of problem gambling awareness training available to gaming properties.

The gaming industry revealed publicly that it acted to pass legislation quickly, the night before a scheduled visit in Las Vegas of the federal Commission, and eight months

before the results of their study were released (Wilens, 1999). By May, 1999, casino operators had begun to suggest that all of the controversy surrounding problem gambling and the need for recently passed legislation had been overstated. The high incidence of problem gambling in the local and general population and personal bankruptcies in Las Vegas were the result of growth, not gambling (Strow, 1999).

In June of 1999, the month that the federal report's results were to be made public, gaming interests, while applauding themselves for passing the regulation, went out of their way to point to several studies which suggested that the percentage of problem gamblers in the general population was very small (Wilens, 1999). The very next day Steve Wynn, casino magnate and influential gaming industry persona, commented that the results of the federal report would prove to be harmless to the gaming industry and, instead, would help to promote the industry as a financial powerhouse and economic savior of many communities and states in the country (German, 1999).

One week after Wynn's comments, on June 18, 1999, the National Gambling Impact Study Commission released the results of its research. Among the highlights of the Commission's recommendations under the problem and pathological gambling section: "contract with a state-recognized gambling treatment professional to train management and staff to develop strategies for recognizing and addressing customers whose gambling behavior may strongly suggest they may be experiencing serious to severe difficulties" and "...respectfully and confidentially provide the customer... with written information that includes a state-approved list of professional gambling treatment programs" (NGISC Report, 1999). Fortunately for Nevada's gaming interests, the

problem gambling regulation it operated under met all of the Commission's recommendations.

The national press commented on the events unfolding in the gaming industry as the result of the Commission's report. Overholser (1999) pointed out that, while important, the report seemed to take a soft approach to the spread of gambling nationwide due to the Commission's membership including an influential Las Vegas CEO. By the end of June 1999, the local press began to profile famous individuals who had suffered from gambling addiction – in order to put a familiar face on the issue (DiMeglio, 1999; Arnold, 1999). In early August, Strow (1999) wrote about an annual problem gambling event in Las Vegas. Once again, the low incidence of problem gambling sufferers was presented. He also reviewed community involvement in recovery programs in Clark County, discussed underage gambling, and how gaming companies' roles in treatment have increased.

It was in this atmosphere of mistrust – on the part of some in the gaming industry who believe that it was forced to regulate itself and gambling opponents who believe that the spread of gambling nationwide is responsible for the problem – that the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling began to offer its problem gambling awareness training to employees of Las Vegas gaming establishments.

Nevada Council on Problem Gambling's Training

The problem gambling training class offered by the Nevada Council is presented to class attendees in 75 minutes. An outline of the program's objectives, given to

attendees at the beginning of the class, is reproduced below:

- I. Introduction and Objectives
- II. Defining Social and Problem Gambling
- III. When the Fun Stops video presentation
- IV. Impact of Problem Gambling
- V. Solutions for Problem Gambling
- VI. Summary and Review
- VII. Quiz

(Source: NVCPG's When the Fun Stops participant handout. 1999).

Class attendees are told throughout the introduction that the training class is 75 minutes in length – something the Council states to trainees in order to reassure them that their time commitment is relatively short. The length of the video, 28 minutes, is also given to attendees at the beginning of the class. Finally, the quiz to be given at the end of the class is presented as an integral part of their attendance since its completion will allow the Council to give each participant a card signifying that an individual took the class.

The first objective of the training is to explore the definitions of problem gambling and social gambling – their differences and similarities. Next, the warning signs of problem gambling are covered. This section is designed to further separate social gambling's aspects from problem gambling's symptoms. The When the Fun Stops video is then shown. The video uses three recovering problem gamblers and their stories, along with a noted problem gambling therapist, Dr. Hunter, to present the issues of the training in a sensitive yet reality-based format. The phases of problem gambling are presented in

the video in order to give structure to the experiences of the three individuals profiled. Following the video presentation, the impact of problem gambling on the individual, family, friends, and co-workers is described.

Solutions to problem gambling, i.e., support groups available to the public, the hotline number, and professional resources, are then given. A review of the individuals in the video, how they resolved their gambling addiction, availability of treatment, and the importance of knowing the difference between problem and social gambling is presented. Finally, after more than an hour, the role of the gaming employee is reviewed. They are to know where brochures and information – especially the hotline number – are posted in the workplace; that there exist support groups for those who ask for help; and, not to approach customers about this issue. The hotline number is left displayed on the overhead with this final phrase from the trainer: “If you learn nothing else from this training today, remember this hotline number”.

Class attendees are then given time to complete the Council’s quiz. It reviews the basic objectives and information presented in class. The attendees are told not to view the quiz as a pass/fail test of their knowledge of problem gambling since the trainer will go over each question with the class and provide the correct answers.

Problem Gambling

Custer and Milt (1985) discuss problem gambling in the context of why people are drawn to gamble – to win. Custer, a physician credited with starting the first problem gambling treatment program in 1971, categorized gamblers into six groups: the

professional gambler; the antisocial-personality gambler; the casual social gambler; the serious social gambler; the relief escape gambler; and, the compulsive gambler. The descriptions of the casual social gambler and the compulsive gambler are the two that best describe the current movement to define and address problem gambling.

“Compulsive gambling is a disorder in which the individual is driven by an overpowering and uncontrollable impulse to gamble...ultimately, it undermines and often destroys everything that is meaningful” (Custer, et al., 1985, p.35). This description differs dramatically from that of the casual social gambler: “for the casual social gambler, gambling is distraction, entertainment, relaxation – a chance to get away for a little pleasure” (Custer, et al., 1985, p.25).

Howard Shaffer – a professor at Harvard, the director of Harvard Medical School’s Division on Addictions, and a leader in pathological gambling research – has studied gambling addiction extensively. Dr. Shaffer distinguishes between problem gambling and social gambling in his research because he realizes that the issue has divided people and public debate encourages misunderstanding of the two terms. Indeed, he even suggests that people are misdiagnosing their own gambling habits as problem gambling because there has been so much media attention on the issue during the past few years (Shaffer, 1999). Furthermore, Shaffer (1999) and others, Walker (1992) and Wedgeworth (1998), still argue the point – what is problem or pathological gambling and, when is it appropriate to diagnose someone with this disorder? “If pathological gambling represents a primary psychiatric disorder orthogonal both to its consequences and the laws of probability, then clinicians and scientists should be able to identify the disorder without knowing the winning or losing status of the player” (Shaffer, 1999, p. 6).

Methods used to treat problem or pathological gamblers were studied by Wedgeworth (1998). In his research, Wedgeworth made the unsettling observation that it was the people who could afford to be treated who were taken seriously by physicians; a patient's desire to pay for treatment for their gambling addiction indicated to physicians that the individual really wanted to be helped. A convenience sample of 12 subjects, who had been diagnosed as pathological gamblers, was used in this study. More than half of the sample had addictions related to alcohol and drugs.

The prevalence of problem gambling among casino workers and casino patrons has been studied using a variety of diagnostic survey materials. According to Shaffer, Vander Bilt, and Hall (1999) casino employees have a higher incidence of problem or pathological gambling, and a higher prevalence of smoking, alcohol abuse, and depression, than the general public. Data was collected from 3841 respondents at four gaming properties operated by one company. Using the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) as a model, two groups (Level 3 and Level 2) of problem gamblers were defined. Respondents who scored 5 or more on SOGS were labeled Level 3 (pathological gambling behavior) and respondents who scored between 1 – 4 on SOGS were labeled Level 2 (problematic gambling behavior). The results: 2.1% of the respondents satisfied Level 3 criteria compared to just 1.1% of the general population.

Jobs within a casino may attract individuals who are vulnerable to a level 3 gambling disorder. The results of this study revealed that age, race, and sex did not have a significant effect on rates of level 3 gambling among this sample of gaming industry employees (Shaffer, et al., 1999, p.374).

The conclusions reached by this study are all the more relevant because it is gaming employees who are participating in the Nevada Council's training.

Another study, on the prevalence of problem gambling among casino patrons, is interesting because it surveyed patrons inside casinos. Fisher (1996) in a study of casino patrons at 40 small casino operations in the U.K., found that out of 1105 survey respondents: 2% scored as severe problem gamblers; 5% scored as problem gamblers; and, 93% scored as social gamblers (refers to past year gambling habits). Respondents were approached in casinos and asked to answer a survey on a computer using the DSM-IV ten-item scale comprised of the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling. Significance tests were conducted using Chi-square and T tests for group means (Fisher, 1996)

As of January 1, 1999, restricted and non-restricted gaming establishments in Nevada have to comply with subsections 1 and 2 of the problem gambling regulation (other parts of the regulation went into effect on March 31, 1999). Certainly, this regulation has had an affect on employees of gaming establishments in the state; brochures disseminating information about problem gambling (the symptoms and help-line number) to the public can be seen at the airport and in all gaming areas of every casino in the city. Whether trained at work or participating in off-site training, most gaming employees in Las Vegas have heard about problem gambling. Hypothesis two – will attendees with no prior exposure to problem gambling training retain more information than those attendees who have had prior problem gambling training – was developed because of this recent proliferation of problem gambling awareness materials.

Because this paper evaluates an adult training program, it is important to review adult learning literature in order to have an understanding of how adults learn. This section will add to the discussion of whether or not the training program was designed to teach adults effectively and will provide a substantive basis from which to resolve hypotheses one (gender and attitude); two (prior training and retention); and, three (attitudes and retention) of this study.

Adult Learning

Malcolm Knowles (1980) is considered an authority on adult learning and adult teaching styles. Pedagogy – the theory of how children learn – is contrasted with Andragogy – the theory of how adults learn. Knowles considered the prior knowledge of the adult learner as an important factor to recognize. Knowles' theory of Andragogy is based upon the following four assumptions about the adult learner:

1. As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being;
 2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience which is a rich resource for learning;
 3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role; and
 4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature; from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application.
- Thus an adult is more problem centered than subject centered in learning (Knowles, 1980, pp. 44-45).

Knowles suggests that the climate of the adult classroom should make adults feel supported, accepted, and respected. There should be a joint effort made by the teacher and the adult students to learn together as one unit. The respect other educational researchers hold for Knowles has not made him impervious to criticism. For example, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) note that Knowles' Andragogy model, while enduring, does not solve the complex issues surrounding adult teaching and learning practices.

Indeed, theories abound on how adults learn (Granott, 1998; Pascual-Leone and Irwin, 1998) and the role of educators in the adult learning process. For example, Granott (1998) writes that the responsibility of the adult educator is to provide structural learning and to facilitate learning while giving the adult learner control to develop their learning experiences. Leone et al. (1998) concur and add that there are two distinct categories of adult learning: concrete/experiential and abstract/conceptual. Schommer (1998) writes about epistemological beliefs and how they regulate and control adult learning. She states that "beliefs in the speed of learning is likely to influence adults' anticipated time investment in studying and solving problems" (p. 134). Such beliefs influence how an adult approaches job related training.

However, since adults have experienced a world of events different from younger learners, the methods used to teach adults must recognize the prior life experiences brought to the classroom. Bonk and Kim (1998) focus on the social and cultural aspects that influence adult learning and illustrate how adult learners are bombarded daily with opportunities to learn. For example, middle-aged adults are exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences in their daily lives through computers, magazines, and work-related

training materials. As methods of obtaining information change, the impact and variety of educational opportunities for adults increase.

Long (1990) says that the challenge for adult educators is to uncover the element that will engage and maintain the interest of adult learners no matter what their individual motives for learning. The task of the adult educator is to review a complex set of variables used to understand the adult learner. Relevant to the current study, he goes on to explain that the learning process of adults is influenced by prior knowledge (see also Knowles, 1980; Merriam et al., 1999; Schommer, 1998; and others). Long (1990) writes "the complexity of the (learning) process is demonstrated by research that in some instances reveals a particular attitude may not influence learning whereas in other instances the reverse is true" (p.32).

Adult learning theories do not exist in a vacuum. They are forever linked with educational theories concerning children and young adults. Tucci and Hursh (1994) discuss the important role of primary and secondary education in creating a population of "competent learners" and that failing to do so costs business, industry, and higher education resources which must be put towards remedial education and training programs. They emphasize the importance of teacher training and the necessity of a teacher's ability to evaluate the needs and competency levels of the students.

The varying ages of adult learners also plays a role in curriculum design. Adult educators must consider how to best engage a classroom with students who range in age from 20 to 80. Schuller (1992) notes that the need for life-long training and continuing education programs means that older adults in the classroom will become the norm rather than the exception. As workers must continually upgrade their skills and retirement age is

extended, adult learners and their needs must be addressed by educators. Schaie (1996) in his Seattle Longitudinal Study, to date a 35 year-long study, studied the effect age and gender have on adult learning. He concludes that:

There are significant gender differences for all five abilities ($p < .01$), with women excelling on Verbal Meaning, Inductive Reasoning, and Work Fluency and men doing better than women on Spatial Orientation and Number. There are no statistically significant gender differences in the shapes of the age gradients. However, because of the level differences, cumulative decline over the entire adult age range is somewhat greater for women than for men on Verbal Meaning and Inductive Reasoning (p. 113).

In addition, Schaie (1996) has found that women scored higher overall in group dependency (a joiner; group adherence); interest in science; inflexibility (lack of tolerance for disruption of routines); and political concern (attitudes towards other countries).

De Corte (1992) emphasizes the need for “basic education” and knowledge transference such as writing, reading, and math skills in adult education. He states that “there is substantial evidence that many students in the formal school system do not sufficiently master those categories of knowledge and skills that are required to approach new tasks and problems (in adulthood)” (p.92). He surmises that the adult learner classroom should be supportive and stimulate learning. Courtney (1992) analyzes educational surveys and theories about why adults participate in, and are motivated by, adult vocational programs. He notes: more women participate than men; older adults

(55+) are participating in greater numbers; young adults have always participated to improve job opportunities; and, participation and motivation are uniformly driven by employment factors.

Finally, Van der Kamp (1992) lists 12 factors that enhance adult learning. For the purposes of the current study, only five are given: 1.) All adults have an ability to learn; 2.) adults want to learn and learn effectively when they have a strong inner motivation; 3.) adults resist learning when they are told they must learn something; 4.) adults tend to learn effectively if they consider the material relevant to their needs and interests; and, 5.) adults have a desire to know the outcomes of their learning efforts; they require positive reinforcement and performance feedback (pp. 191-192).

The mind-set with which adults approach adult learning needs to be considered. Two of this study's hypotheses ask that attitude be measured in order to determine how attitude factors into the learning outcome of the sample. The next section of this literature review will generally address attitude measurement and its influence on adult learning.

Attitude Measurement

"It is difficult to define 'attitudes,' and although attempts to measure attitudes have been more successful than have attempts to define them, it does not follow that attitudes are measured easily" (Dawes, 1972, p. 2). Lemon (1973) and others agree that the existence of attitudes – and that they can affect behavior – is obvious, however, naming attitudes and determining if specific attitudes cause particular behavior is another matter entirely.

Anderson (1993) and Schuessler (1993) both use the term “social life feelings” to describe attitudinal attributes. Schuessler (1993) describes these feelings as “situation-specific” and they include social attitudes and values but exclude mental abilities, personality traits, and special aptitudes. Seeman (1993) elaborates on this theme when he discusses that “behavior is a function of the situation in which it occurs” (p.5). But is not the term “social life feelings” just a euphemism for attitudes? And, how can attitudes be measured consistently when they are not consistently defined?

Schuessler (1993) Dawes (1972) and Lemon (1973) all list a variety of statistical methods used to measure attitudes. These include Spearman, Thomson, Likert, Thurstone, and Guttman. Schuessler (1993) concludes his evaluation of these methods by saying that there are few, if any, standard scales of measurement since the same questionnaire is routinely used whenever the measurement of a given construct is called for. Likert’s model, which utilizes a range of answers for each question, and Thurstone’s model, which utilizes a comparative judgment scale similar to Likert, are considered generally effective by Dawes (1972). Lemon (1973) says that scaling models should assess the “relationship between people’s responses and underlying psychological factors and (researcher’s should) select scale items on this basis” (p. 157).

Saris (1993) admits that defining attitudes has been difficult and he suggests that attitude measurement itself may not be an accurate way to evaluate attitudes because the ways in which a person expresses themselves may not be possible given the answer choices. Esser (1993) distinguishes between habits and rational choice. Habits represent an automatic response to stimulus rather than the more complex process involved in rational choice. The self-editing of respondents must also be considered (consequences of

answering a certain way). Lemon (1973) also discusses the affect of “intense” attitudes and the ego and how they influence a subject’s responses. Courtney (1992) and Schommer (1998) elaborate on these theories in their analyses of motivation, participation, and the educational belief systems that influence adult learning.

Finally, does it matter how attitudinal data is collected? Is it better to interview subjects, use self-administered questionnaires, or to observe subjects and their reactions to stimuli? Lemon (1973) Dawes (1972) and others discuss these issues and determine that some methods are better utilized than others and that the particular aim of the research and the conditions help determine the approach.

Most researchers agree that age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, employment conditions, and numerous other factors influence people’s attitudes and their responses to stimuli, such as interviews and self-administered questionnaires, that ask them to state their preferences. While there is consensus among researchers that attitude can be measured and that it has an affect on behavior, there continues to be discussion and argument about how these affects can be defined.

Training program design requires the training provider to evaluate who is to be trained and how best to train them. There are specific criteria used to determine what elements are needed to create an effective training program. Hypothesis two – will attendees with no prior exposure to problem gambling training retain more information than those attendees who have had prior problem gambling training – is generally addressed below.

Training Program Design

All types of companies, large and small, from manufacturing to hospitality, use training to enhance employees' knowledge of existing machinery, new technology, and societal issues such as workplace diversity and sexual harassment (Ferman, Hoyman, Cutcher-Gershenfeld & Savoie, 1990) as well as safety issues, labor education, basic skills, and union labor related topics (Gray and Kornbluh, 1990). The utility of on the job training and off-site training has evolved during the past twenty-five years, and the task of designing effective training has also grown more complex. As knowledge about how adults learn increases and time constraints on the trainer become more narrow – to maximize efficiency and minimize cost – the trainer is faced with designing training that teaches objectives in as little time as possible.

When designing a training course, whether it consists of one, one hour session or many hours spread out over a period of days or weeks, the objectives of the training and the people who are to be trained must be clearly understood. The caveat “teach them only what they need to know” applies here. According to Lawler and Handley (1996) and Milano and Ullius (1998), designing a training course is a logical, sequential process that begins with stating the training objectives and ends with those objectives being met. Mangum, Mangum, and Hansen (1990) write that, while the amount of training across the U.S. has increased dramatically, very little is known about how well (or how often) training objectives are met.

The foundation of any good training course, by all accounts, is built upon a solid comprehension of the subject matter being taught and the setting of objectives. Leigh (1991) writes that training objectives need to be realistic, relevant, positively reinforced,

definite, and justifiable. In other words, know what you are teaching, why, and how you can best teach this information to trainees. As stated earlier, adult learners bring to an educational setting their life experience and a wealth of prior knowledge. Milano et al., (1998) suggest that “training, in contrast (to education) focuses more on building the specific areas of knowledge, skills, or attitudes that directly influence a person’s ability to perform a job, execute a task, or solve a problem” (p.4). Levitan and Gallo (1990) add, colorfully, that “the poor cannot eat training” (p.252) an in-eloquent way of stating that training must have an objective and be useful to the trainee.

Leigh (1991) gives three types of information that make-up any training session. He distinguishes among “could know” or incidental information, “should know” or topically related information, and “must know” the information that is essential to understanding and learning the course objectives. The learning styles of adult learners and the trainer, as well as needs assessment, are essential to designing a training program that provides useful, applicable information (Milano et al., 1998). Needs assessment refers to the process through which the trainer determines where the skills-gap, or need for training, exists. This is the “why” of training – the reason that trainees need the training and the objectives that the trainer must teach.

As for attitude and motivation towards training, Gurin (1970) reported on participants of a government sponsored training program from 1964-1966. His analysis showed that participating men were less committed to the training than women; women who completed the training, overall, saw wage increases while men did not; and, men’s lack of commitment to the training may have been driven by their greater job alternatives compared to women (they depended less on the training to improve their employment

opportunities). An entrance questionnaire and an exit survey (mailed to participants) were used in this study of almost 6,000 participants and 314 training classes.

The repetition and memorization aspect of training also plays a role in subject (course objective) retention (Goad, 1982). The opportunity for trainees to practice and iterate their understanding of the topic area, and feedback from the trainer, is necessary to help reinforce learning. While this phraseology seems hackneyed, Milano et al. (1998), Leigh (1991), and Lawler et al. (1996) all make similar statements.

The number of participants is crucial to the planning and design of the training. Orienting training too much towards group or individual activity and then not being prepared for too small or too large a class will consume the already precious minutes that have been set aside to conduct the training. The training and development of employees is an expensive, time consuming process and the need for timely, efficient training cannot be overstated. Mangum et al. (1990) emphasize this notion when they discuss the increase in incomes among government and non-government employees who have participated in comprehensive training programs. Thus, the cost to companies is really at both ends of the training equation.

Choosing the right type of visual aides is another critical component of training design. Leigh (1991) Milano et al. (1998) argue that that materials chosen to facilitate learning must focus the trainees' attention, reinforce key subject matter points, stimulate thinking, and provide a "common" frame of reference for adult learners. Obviously, inappropriate or poorly chosen materials have the opposite affect and distract, bore, and/or confuse the trainees.

Finally, with adult learners, the trainer must be prepared to face the variety of personalities that are brought to the classroom. What the employer wants the employee to learn at the training session may not relate to what the trainee wants to, or can, learn. Leigh (1991) says that it is up to the trainer to maintain control over the material and the training session while not alienating those trainees who must disrupt the class with their own likes, dislikes, or other personality driven behaviors.

Designing effective training means choosing the objectives of the training, planning how to teach the objectives to a specific audience, choosing the appropriate materials to facilitate the training, and finally, allowing the trainees to illustrate that they have comprehended the objectives and can apply them readily and appropriately.

Training Evaluation

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a training program that was designed to increase the problem gambling awareness level of gaming employees is doing so effectively and whether their attitude towards the subject affects their ability to learn about problem gambling issues. Evaluation of training programs is important to the organization that provides the training (are program objectives being taught) and to the employers who utilize the training (are the employees learning what they need to learn).

According to Moore and Seidner (1998) "evaluation involves definition of success criteria and the collection and analysis of information to judge training success, followed by recommendations for improvement" (p. 19). In general, the successful training program will teach its objectives to trainees and this transfer of knowledge

and/or skills should be measurable. In-house (on-the-job) training has the advantage over off-site training in terms of evaluation; changes in employee behavior, skills, and attitudes are readily associated with training that occurs locally (Moore et al., 1998). This practical approach to evaluation is what Kirkpatrick (1998) calls "reaction, learning, behavior, results" (p. 99).

Measuring improved job performance and changes in attitudes and skill ability following training uses a methodological paradigm similar to training design. The objectives of the evaluation and the goals of the organization (training expectations) should be known before evaluation can begin (Basarab and Root, 1992). Training evaluation is time sensitive as well. Pawson and Tilley (1997) elaborate on this notion of timely evaluation when they distinguish between the evaluators process as ongoing and the trainer's and organization's evaluation ending with suggestions for improvement and specifying which components work.

Rossi and Freeman (1989) and Basarab et al. (1992) are quick to point out that in addition to the learning component, training effectiveness must also be measured according to its cost/benefit analysis. Clearly, there is no training program more costly for a company and its employees than one that does not work. Moore et al. (1998) state that "for the strategic value of training to be realized, individual performance objectives must be explicitly linked to business performance goals" (p.28). In other words, training should be relevant and related to what employers need their employees to know to do their jobs.

Feedback from trainees after completing training is essential to the evaluator who wants to obtain an "insider's view" of the training's effectiveness. Basarab et al. (1992)

include course significance, participant scholarship, course strategy, and instructor (quality) on trainee evaluation forms. Further, the importance of good question design (question formatting – easy, non threatening questions first; free space on the paper – to encourage participation; open response questions – to encourage personal responses) is emphasized. Again, Kirkpatrick's (1998) "reaction" phase is important for the trainer who wants to know what trainees think about the training program. He cautions, however, that in-house training programs may not achieve honest results from trainees since they must attend the training whether they want to or not.

According to Basarab et al. (1992) the type of evaluation appropriate for the current study would be Level 1. This is the data collection instrument that they term "reaction" and is given at the time of the training. The process should be organized as follows:

1. completed data collection instrument.
2. completed analysis model,
3. analyze, and
4. answers to evaluation questions (p. 192).

For Level 1 evaluations, they suggest administering the questionnaire at the end of the training; give participants enough time to complete the questions; and, to encourage participation, distribute and collect questionnaires using a sealed envelope.

Evaluation research, like all research, needs to be well thought out and undertaken with zeal, however, time and money constraints always play a factor in design and implementation options. Rossi et al. (1989) add that all too often in evaluation research,

the best research methods cannot be considered due to factors beyond the researcher's control – factors such as inability to randomly select participants and the cost of large studies. They also include a reference to the fact that differences in subject's emotional state or the abstract nature of the research topic can affect measurement reliability.

Basarab et al. (1992) suggest that Level 1 questionnaires have a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. Calculated means for all responses and a frequency distribution should be used to begin data analysis. A histogram will illustrate the distribution for each response being measured. These statistics are useful to follow the trainees' thoughts about certain aspects of the training over time. For example, larger changes in a frequency distribution could indicate a change in participant reaction to the training. When interpreting the data Basarab et al. (1992) suggest that the researcher be aware that practical thoughts about the research may not be supported statistically; there could be conflicting evidence, and, strengthen the interpretation through a search of existing, similar studies.

Along with reliability, validity is an issue which concerns the researcher (Rossi et al., 1989). Internal consistency – multiple data items that measure the same idea should produce the same results – and choosing outcome measurements are also important. In addition, "participants' ratings of satisfaction with a program or with services are interesting and important in their own right" (p. 372). While neither Rossi et al. (1989) or Basarab et al. (1992) recommend a convenience sample, they agree that some assessment or evaluation is better than none and such data may encourage a more in-depth research analysis of the particular program.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collected for this study was from a primary source. The author designed a survey instrument after evaluating 558 quizzes given by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling at the end of the training class. These quizzes are used as a “test” of the facts that participants learned in the class. The quiz itself is done in class and all of the correct answers are provided by the trainer. Pertinent to this study is the final question which allows class participants to tell the Council what they thought about the training – an open ended question. The author evaluated these short answer responses in order to have an idea what participants think and feel about the class in their own words (see Appendix I for the results). The findings were reviewed and the first draft of survey questions was organized.

From the beginning, the author and Council staff agreed that a shorter survey would be better than a longer one (less than 15 questions) in order to obtain the largest response rate possible from the sample since the participants and the employers desired a short training session. The author felt that it would be important to gauge the attitude and knowledge of the participants before the class began and at the end of the training (and before they took the Council’s required quiz). Thus, the survey was designed as a two-part survey with a total of 13 questions.

The author met with staff members of the Council and it was decided that the questions needed to be edited in order to maintain a non-threatening voice in the survey. Council staff stated that the first three most frequently appearing comments from the quizzes were the most important – the points that they wanted to get across in the training program. With this information, a second draft of the survey was written. The second draft of the survey reflected the Council's interest in the first three points of the quiz review:

1. Learned about the different phases of gambling
(question 9 on the survey in Appendix II)
2. Learned about the existence of support groups
(question 8 on the survey)
3. Problem gambling is a more serious problem than I thought
(questions 6 and 12 on the survey)

Survey Question Design

This section will review the survey design process. See Appendix II for a sample of the survey instrument. Certain questions on the survey used in this study are referred to as the "attitude" questions, others are demographic (gender, age), and the rest are related to adult learning. Since the purpose of the study is to determine the positive or negative aspects of the attitude of class attendees, a multiple choice, Likert type scale was utilized. Typically, the attitude questions, designated in the survey as questions 5, 6, 7, 10, and 12 (although these last two are also related to adult learning) gave respondents several answer choices.

Survey questions 1, 2, 3, 3+, and 4 are the demographically oriented questions designed to measure the make-up of the class, their general knowledge of problem gambling issues, and what type of problem gambling training, if any, they may have experienced. Finally, questions 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 were designed to measure whether attendees learned (thought they learned) the objectives taught in class.

Questions 3+, 4, and 8 are all open-ended questions; after reviewing the results of the 558 open-ended responses on Council quizzes it was thought that open-ended questions would encourage more revealing responses than closed questions.

Population

The study used a convenience sample. The survey sample was restricted to gaming employees in Las Vegas who attended a compulsory, off-site problem gambling awareness training offered by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling. The survey population consisted of employees of gaming establishments in Las Vegas, 21 or older, and their attendance at the training was compulsory. They attended this class in order to obtain a card issued by the Nevada Council which certified that they have attended the training. The purpose of the Council's quiz is to illustrate to the Gaming Control Board, and any authority who may inquire, that the class covered – and the participant hopefully learned – specific information related to problem gambling.

The trainer was asked to stay somewhat separate from the proceedings in order to reinforce the notion that the Council was not conducting the survey, rather, that a graduate student from UNLV was conducting the survey. The class was given an informed consent form, which they could keep, that stated the name of the researcher;

affiliation with UNLV; participation is voluntary; the purpose of the research (in general terms); that no personal information is required to answer the survey; that it will be given in two parts; and, how to contact someone at UNLV should they have any further questions.

How Analyzed

This research is designed to discover how well the training teaches its objectives; what participants think about problem gambling before and after the training class (attitude towards the issue); and, what participants learned (retained) from the class. The researcher will use frequency distribution, crosstabulations, and linear regression to analyze the collected data.

Hypothesis 1: Do women have a different attitude towards this training than men? Analysis using survey question 2 (gender) as the dependent variable and questions 5,6,7,10, and 12 as independent variables.

Hypothesis 2: Will attendees with no prior exposure to problem gambling training retain more information than those attendees who have had prior problem gambling training? Analysis using survey question 3 (previous training) as the dependent variable and questions 6, 8, 10, and 12 as independent variables.

Hypothesis 3: Do people with positive attitudes retain more information than those with negative attitudes? Analysis using survey questions 5, 6, and 7 (attitude towards class/subject) as the dependent variables and questions 10 and 12 as independent variables.

Regression analysis: What matters more: Attitude, gender, age, or prior training?

Using questions 10 and 12 as dependent variables and the following equations:

$$\#10 = \textit{constant} + \textit{age} + \textit{gender} + \textit{previous training} (\#3) + \textit{attitude} (\#5; \#6; \#7)$$

$$\#12 = \textit{constant} + \textit{age} + \textit{gender} + \textit{previous training} (\#3) + \textit{attitude} (\#5; \#6; \#7)$$

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The pre-test occurred at the beginning of October. Ten completed surveys were obtained. Because the responses were acceptable – no questions seemed to pose any problems – no part of the survey was changed. As a result, these 10 surveys were added to the 45 that had been collected by December. Thus, a total of 55 useable surveys were obtained with a response rate of 100%.

The survey population were all employees of gaming establishments in Las Vegas, 21 or older, and their attendance at the training was compulsory. They attended this class in order to obtain a card issued by the Nevada Council which certified that they have taken the training. Typically, attendees did not come from management i.e., they were employed as waitresses, bartenders, security and they have direct contact with patrons who are gambling. Attendees were given a two part, self-administered survey with a total of 13 questions in a pretest/posttest format. The first part contained questions 1 through 7 and was given before the training class began. Part two of the survey, questions 8 through 13, was given after the training was completed and before the administration of the Council's quiz.

Data Highlights

Of the 55 respondents, 38.2% were female and 50.9% were male with 6 respondents, 10.9%, not answering this question. More attendees were aged 21-34 years, 34.5%, than 35 – 45, 27.8%; attendees aged 46-55 years made up 23.6%; and, 12.7% of this sample were aged 56 and older. Just one respondent left this question unanswered.

A majority of respondents, 72.7%, answered “no” to question 3 “any previous exposure to problem gambling training”. One quarter of the respondents, 25.5%, answered “yes”. Of the 13 respondents who answered “yes”, 53.8% had received problem gambling training on the job and 30.8% had exposure to problem gambling issues through personal experience.

Questions 6 and 12 asked In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue? Question 6 was given before the training and question 12 was given after the training was completed. Table 1 shows responses for question 6. Almost half of the sample surveyed, 47.3%, answered “very serious” and just a few respondents chose “not serious” and “not serious at all”.

Table 1

In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue?

		Frequency	%	Valid %*	Cumulative %**
Valid	very serious	26	47.3	49.1	49.1
	serious	10	18.2	18.9	67.9
	somewhat serious	13	23.6	24.5	92.5
	not serious	3	5.5	5.7	98.1
	not serious at all	1	1.8	1.9	100.00
	Total	53	96.4	100.00	
Missing	blank	2	3.6		
Total		55	100.00		

* excludes *missing* responses
 ** sum of the valid percentages of rows

Question 12 was designed to measure whether a change had occurred among respondents based on the way they answered question 6 and as a direct result of the content of the training class. The responses, given in Table 2, changed dramatically in question 12 for the “somewhat serious” and “serious” categories. Compared to question 6, 36.4% answered “serious” – an increase by a factor of 2. This suggests that respondents had a more negative attitude towards the training, and as a result, the subject matter, so they chose less positive answers at the beginning of the training; and, the training actually taught them enough about the issue for attitudes towards the seriousness of problem gambling to be affected positively. It is noted that no one chose “not serious at all”.

Table 2

In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue (2)?

		Frequency	%	Valid %*	Cumulative %**
Valid	very serious	23	41.8	44.2	44.2
	serious	20	36.4	38.5	82.7
	somewhat serious	8	14.5	15.4	98.1
	not serious	1	1.8	1.9	100.00
	Total	52	94.5	100.00	
Missing	blank	3	5.5		
Total		55	100.00		

* excludes *missing* responses

** sum of the valid percentages of rows

Respondents were asked to answer how interested they were in taking this class (question 7). Most respondents, 58.1%, responded “interested” and “somewhat interested”. However, 29.1% responded “neither interested nor uninterested” and “not interested at all”. Only 6 respondents, 10.9%, answered “very interested”. This suggests that the compulsory nature of the class influenced how interested attendees were in taking the training.

Question 8 was an open-ended question designed to allow respondents to list what they learned from the class in relation to their responsibilities as gaming employees. A total of 50 respondents answered this question. Almost half, 43.6%, answered that they need to know how to obtain information and 25.5% responded that their responsibility is to know the 1-800 number.

A total of 53 out of 55 respondents answered question 10 – did they learn something new. Most respondents, 36.4% and 32.7% respectively, answered “learned something new” and “learned little that was new”. There was a clear division between those who answered “learned a lot of new things” at 18.2% versus 9.1% who answered “did not learn anything new”.

The majority of respondents who answered question 5 – can a person lose the ability to control their gambling – responded “yes” (87.3%). Less than 10% responded “no” or “I don’t know”. Only two respondents left this question unanswered.

Questions 4 (define problem gambling), 9 (check all that apply to problem gambling), 11, and 13 were not responded to in the numbers expected or the responses were viewed by the author to be biased. Especially questions 11 and 13, which were worded in such a way as to encourage positive responses and questions 4 and 9 which required, perhaps, too much effort on the part of respondents to answer.

Indeed, respondents seemed confused by question 9 which asked them to choose among a group of 5, the phrases that applied to problem gambling. Most respondents checked all of the answers (incorrect), checked just one (incorrect), or left the question blank – all indications that they did not understand the question. In addition, question 4, an open question which asked respondents to define problem gambling, may have been placed too soon on the survey for respondents to want to answer. In their haste to get the class started, respondents answered the easy to understand, multiple choice questions without hesitation.

Crosstabulations

Hypothesis 1: Do women have a different attitude towards this training than men?

Analysis using survey question 2 (gender) as the dependent variable and questions 5,6,7,10, and 12 as independent variables is discussed below.

Most respondents, 89.6% of both females and males, answered “yes” to question 5, indicating that both genders have a positive attitude on this aspect of the issue, i.e., they believe that a person can lose the ability to control their gambling. This is the “it’s not their fault” approach – a more positive way to see the problem.

Table 3 shows gender responses to question 6. More than half, 61.9%, of female respondents answered “very serious” to the question “is problem gambling a serious issue” and 23.8% answered “serious”. Just 34.6% of males answered “very serious” and a significant number of males, 50%, answered “somewhat serious” and “not serious” – more negative responses. This division suggests that females have a more positive view towards the issue of problem gambling than do males. It is noted that no respondents chose “not serious at all” for this question.

Table 3

Gender & In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue?

		Very serious	Serious	Somewhat serious	Not serious	Total
Gender	<u>Female</u>	13	5	3	0	21
	Expected count*	9.8	4.0	5.8	1.3	21.0
	% within gender	61.9%	23.8%	14.3%	.0%	100.0%
	<u>Male</u>	9	4	10	3	26
	Expected count	12.2	5.0	7.2	1.7	26.0
	% within gender	34.6%	15.4%	38.5%	11.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	22	9	13	3	47
	Expected Count	22.0	9.0	13.0	3.0	47.0
	% within gender	46.8%	19.1%	27.7%	6.4%	100.0%

* the number of cases expected if the null hypothesis is true, i.e., females and males should answer similarly

In reference to question 7, "how interested are you in this class", more than 50% of females responded positively to this question by answering "very interested" and "interested" while 36% of males responded similarly. However, the more negative response choices "not interested at all" and "neither interested nor uninterested" represented 27.2% of the responses of both genders.

Table 4 illustrates responses by gender group for question 10. The responses of males were more dispersed among the answer choices and more than 60% answered "learned something new" and "learned little that was new". Overall, more than half of both gender groups chose "learned something new" and "learned little that was new".

Table 4

Gender & Did you learn something new at this training session?

		learned a lot of new things	learned some- thing new	learned little that was new	did not learn anything new	Total
Gender	<u>Female</u>	4	8	8	1	21
	Expected count*	4.4	7.9	6.6	2.2	21.0
	% within gender	19.0%	38.1%	38.1%	4.8%	100.0%
	<u>Male</u>	6	10	7	4	27
	Expected count	5.6	10.1	8.4	2.8	27.0
	% within gender	22.2%	37.0%	25.9%	14.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	10	18	15	5	48
	Expected Count	10.0	18	15.0	5.0	48.0
	% within gender	20.8%	37.5%	31.3%	10.4%	100.0%

* the number of cases expected if the null hypothesis is true, i.e., females and males should answer similarly

There was an increase of 10% in the “serious” category among female respondents and a substantial 30%+ increase (from 15.4% to 46.2%) among males for question 12 – is problem gambling a serious issue. Interestingly, fewer males responded “very serious” after taking the training class. Also, females chose “somewhat serious” in fewer numbers here, down to 4.8% from 14.3%, while maintaining a majority 61.9% in the “very serious” category. These changes in response suggest that the views of males on this issue were affected by the training while females seemed to change very little.

As expected, women were more interested in taking the training class than were men and they responded positively to the seriousness of the issue from the beginning.

The change in response for males in question 12, from those measured in question 6, indicates that they had a more negative attitude towards the issue at the beginning and that the training had an affect on male attitudes towards the question of how serious an issue is problem gambling. The results are indicative of what Gurin (1970) found – that women may be more committed to the training because they have fewer occupational choices than males (even today). And, as Schaie (1996) found, women may have a more positive attitude towards the training because it occurs in a group setting.

Women may also have a more positive attitude towards the training because, traditionally, they have had more personal contact with gambling patrons through their jobs at gaming establishments as cocktail waitresses. The fact that half of the women answered “very interested” and “interested” to question 7 indicates what Knowles (1980) noted about an adult’s readiness to learn being associated with social roles.

Hypothesis two asks. Will attendees with no prior exposure to problem gambling training retain more information than those attendees who have had prior problem gambling training? Analysis using “previous training” as the dependent variable and questions 6, 8, 10, and 12 as the independent variables is given below.

Table 5 illustrates how respondents answered question 6. Most who had no experience with problem gambling training responded “very serious” and “serious” however, more than one quarter of this group chose the less positive “somewhat serious” and “not serious”. In addition, while almost half of those who had exposure to problem gambling training answered “very serious”, a sizable portion, 38.5%, answered “somewhat serious” and “not serious” – more negative responses. It is noted that no respondents answered “not serious at all”.

Table 5

Have you any previous exposure to problem gambling training? & In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue?

		Very serious	Serious	Somewhat serious	Not serious	Total
Previous Training	<u>Yes</u>	6	2	4	1	13
	Expected count*	6.5	2.5	3.3	.8	13.0
	% within previous training	46.2%	15.4%	30.8%	7.7%	100.0%
	<u>No</u>	20	8	9	2	39
	Expected count	19.5	7.5	9.8	2.3	39.0
	% within previous training	51.3%	20.5%	23.1%	5.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	26	10	13	3	52
	Expected Count	26.0	10.0	13.0	3.0	52.0
	% within previous training	50.0%	19.2%	25.0%	5.8%	100.0%

* the number of cases expected if the null hypothesis is true

Did prior exposure to problem gambling training affect what respondents learned about their responsibilities as a gaming employee (question 8)? Those respondents who had not received prior training answered “how to get information” 51% and “know the 800#” 28.6%. The distribution of answers among respondents who had prior training was similar, however, two respondents did recognize “brochures” as a source of information.

Table 6 shows responses to question 10. Those who did not have previous training answered positively to “learned a lot of new things” 23.1% and “learned something new” 41%. However, there were 10 respondents (25.6%) who answered “learned little that was new”. Slightly more than half of those who had prior training,

57.1%, responded “learned little that was new”. On a positive note, 28.6% of those with prior training answered “learned something new”.

Table 6

Previous Training & Did you learn something new at this training session?

		learned a lot of new things	learned some- thing new	learned little that was new	did not learn anything new	Total
Previous Training	<u>Yes</u>	1	4	8	1	14
	Expected count*	2.6	5.3	4.8	1.3	14.0
	% within previous training	7.1%	28.6%	57.1%	7.1%	100.0%
	<u>No</u>	9	16	10	4	39
	Expected count	7.4	14.7	13.2	3.7	39.0
	% within previous training	23.1%	41.0%	25.6%	10.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	10	20	18	5	53
	Expected Count	10.0	20.0	18.0	5.0	53.0
	% within previous training	18.9%	37.7%	34.0%	9.4%	100.0%

* the number of cases expected if the null hypothesis is true

Was there a difference between how those without previous training answered questions 6 and 12? Before, 51.3% answered “very serious” and 20.5% answered “serious”. After the training, 48.7% chose “very serious” – a slight decrease – while more than 40% chose “serious”. Clearly, those who did not have prior training were more affected by the Council’s training. Those who had prior training answered “very serious”.

“serious”, and “somewhat serious” 46.2%, 15.4%, and 30.8% respectively on question 6. This group’s responses increased slightly in the “somewhat serious” category in question 12 – to 38.5% and evened out to 30.8% for the first two answer choices.

The results in this section concerning hypothesis two indicate what Esser (1993) wrote about habits and rational choice. Habits are an automatic response to stimulus and those who have had previous training were more likely to have responded that they had learned little that was new from the training. Respondents may have thought they knew all they needed to know about problem gambling due to their prior job training or personal experience and the training may not have provided them with new information.

The way in which respondents with or without previous training responded to questions about what they learned at the training, as noted in the high response rates for “learned little that was new” and “did not learn anything new”, reflects what Seeman (1993) noted about behavior being a function of the situation in which it occurs. In other words, the presence of more negative answers for question 10, on the part of both types of respondents, could be an expected outcome because the training is compulsory.

In addition, the structure of the training does not allow for group interaction or performance feedback, and it could be that respondents really do not know if they learned anything new about problem gambling from the training since they do not know the outcome of their efforts. The Council’s quiz given at the end of the class is not meant to test attendees’ newly acquired knowledge about problem gambling so much as it is to have some evidence of their attendance. Knowles (1980) Van der Kamp (1992) Goad (1992) Long (1990) and others all comment on the need for adult learners to be

participants in their learning, the necessity of feedback from the instructor, and for instructors to take into account prior experience when designing curriculum.

Hypothesis three: Do people with positive attitudes retain more information than those with negative attitudes? Dependent variables are questions 5, 6, and 7; independent variables are questions 10 and 12.

A crosstabulation using questions 5 and 10 shows that, of those who answered “yes” to “can a person lose the ability to control their gambling”, 39.6% said they “learned something new” and 37.5% chose “learned little that was new”. Just 2 respondents answered “no” to question 5 and 3 answered “I don’t know”. Overall, 30 responses out of 53 were positive and 23 responses were negative – “learned little that was new” and “did not learn anything new”.

The second crosstabulation uses questions 5 and 12. The results: 85%+ of those who answered “yes” to question 5 believe that problem gambling is a “very serious” or “serious” issue. The other 14.9% chose “somewhat serious”. The two respondents who said “no” to question 5 were divided between “very serious” and “somewhat serious” while the three who answered “I don’t know” chose “very serious”, “serious”, and “not serious”.

The majority of respondents, 71%+, chose “learned something new” and “learned little that was new” in the crosstabulation for questions 6 and 10. Of the 26 respondents who answered “very serious” to question 6, 20 chose “learned something new” and “learned little that was new”; 7 out of 10 respondents who answered “serious” to question 6 chose “learned something new” and “learned little that was new”; and 9 out of 13 respondents who answered “somewhat serious” chose the same two responses. What this

says is that the majority of respondents who chose positive answers concerning the seriousness of the issue of problem gambling took the middle-of-the-road answers when it came to deciding how much, if anything, they learned in the class. This suggests that although problem gambling is perceived to be a serious issue, respondents did not feel that the training gave them new information. Again, a possible outcome of this group's previous exposure to the issue through job training or personal experience.

The crosstabulation for questions 6 and 12 shows, that 43 of 52 respondents chose "very serious" and "serious". Further, 21 out of 26 respondents who chose "very serious" in question 6 still chose "very serious" on question 12 and 7 out of 10 respondents chose "serious" on both questions. However, just 4 respondents chose "somewhat serious" twice, while 9 changed their responses from "somewhat serious" to "serious" for question 12.

The results of the crosstabulation for questions 7 and 10 are shown in Table 7. This data illustrates how interest in taking the class is related to "did you learn something new". The majority of respondents answered "interested" and "somewhat interested", 32 out of 53 respondents, and the analysis shows, once again, that they chose "learned something new" and "learned little that was new". There is a correlation between those who answered "very interested" before the training and their response "learned a lot of new things" after the training. Another strong correlation appears among those who chose "neither interested nor uninterested" and "not interested at all" with the more negative "learned little that was new" and "did not learn anything new".

Table 7

How interested are you in taking this class & Did you learn something new?

		learned a lot of new things	learned some- thing new	learned little that was new	did not learn anything new	Total
Interest	<u>Very Int.</u> Count	4	2	0	0	6
	Expected count*	1.1	2.3	2.0	.6	6.0
	% within interest	66.7%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	<u>Interested</u> Count	4	9	5	1	19
	Expected count	3.6	7.2	6.5	1.8	19.0
	% within interest	21.1%	47.4%	26.3%	5.3%	100.0%
	<u>Somewhat</u> Count	0	8	4	1	13
	Expected count	2.5	4.9	4.4	1.2	13.0
	% within interest	.0%	61.5%	30.8%	7.7%	100.0%
	<u>Neither</u> Count	2	0	6	2	10
	Expected count	1.9	3.8	3.4	.9	10.0
	% within interest	20.0%	.0%	60.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	<u>Not interest</u> Count	0	1	3	1	5
	Expected count	.9	1.9	1.7	.5	5.0
	% within interest	.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	10	20	18	5	53
	Expected Count	10.0	20.0	18.0	5.0	53.0
	% within interest	18.9%	37.7%	34.0%	9.4%	100.0%

* the number of cases expected if the null hypothesis is true

The crosstabulation for questions 7 and 12 reveals similar outcomes as those given in Table 7. Most respondents, 4 out of 6, who chose "very interested" also

answered “very serious” to question 12. In addition, 11 out of 19 who answered “interested” selected “very serious” as their response to “is problem gambling a serious issue” after the training. Among the 14 who responded “neither interested nor uninterested” and “not interested at all”, just 1 chose “not serious” and 5 chose “somewhat serious”. It is again noted that no respondents answered “not serious at all”.

The results for hypothesis three indicate what Long (1990) wrote about the challenging aspect of teaching adults is finding the right way to engage the learner no matter what their motivation for learning. While it is known that respondents attended this training because they were required to, the individual motivation of each of these adults to learn is not obvious. Just because someone is made to attend this training does not mean that they will want to learn or have a positive attitude towards the subject. However, those respondents who were “very interested” and “interested” in the training at the beginning, had more positive answers for questions 10 and 12 suggesting that they gained more from the training than those who responded more negatively.

As Courtney (1992) noted, participation in adult education like this training class is driven by several factors including employment status. This suggests that respondents were at this training for one of two reasons: one, they already had a job and their employer required them to attend; two, they were unemployed but looking for work and were told they needed to have this training before anyone would hire them. Therefore, whether or not respondents were interested or learned anything new in this training class might be irrelevant to this sample because they will still receive a card from the Council that certifies their participation – and that is all they really need to prove to their employers.

Regression Analysis

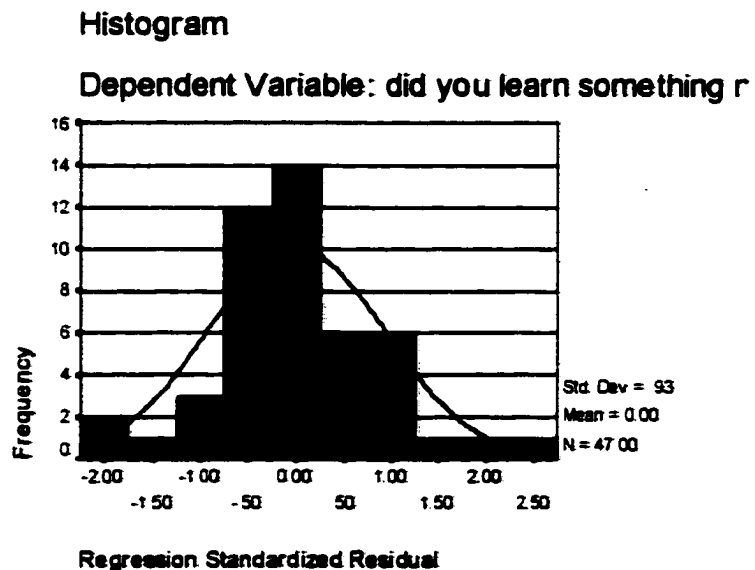
The purpose of the regression analysis is to see which independent variables are related to the dependent variable. The first regression equation is as follows:

$$\#10 = \text{constant} + \text{age} + \text{gender} + \text{previous training (\#3)} + \text{attitude (\#5, \#6, \#7)}$$

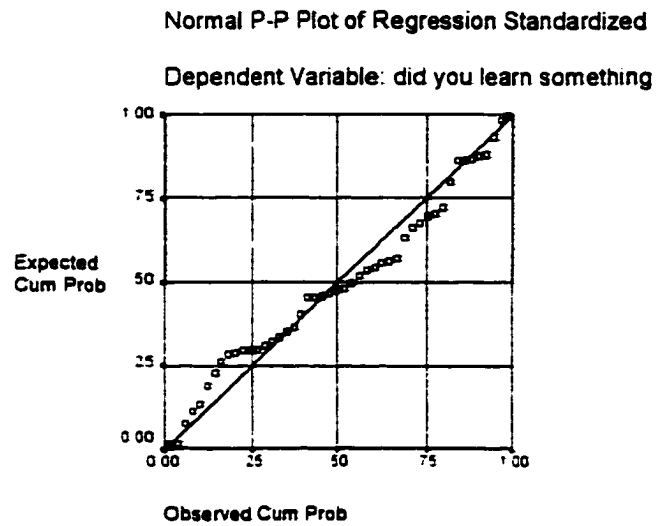
How would these independent variables affect the outcome of question 10 (did you learn something new at this training session)?

The normal distribution for this model has a minimum predicted value of 1.44 and a maximum predicted value of 3.48. The mean for the model is 2.30 and the standard deviation is .52. The data was first screened for normality and linearity. The histogram and normal P – P Plot (Graphs 1 and 2 respectively) are shown below. Both indicate that the data is normally distributed and there is a linear relationship among variables.

Graph 1



Graph 2



The F value for this model is 3.039 and the Significance ($p < .05$) is .015 indicating that this model is significant at the 95% level. The Adjusted R Square is .210. The VIF statistic (test for multicollinearity) shows that all variables have a value < 5.0 thus multicollinearity is not a factor.

Table 8 shows the results of the regression equation for question 10.

Table 8

Summary of regression analysis for variables predicting “did you learn something new at this training session” (N = 47)

Variable	B	Sig.
(Constant)	.834	.379
Age	.113	.360
Gender	-5.541E-02	.836
Can a person lose ability to control gambling	2.534E-02	.922
Is problem gambling a serious issue	-7.194E-02	.609
How interested are you in this class	.479	.000*
Previous training	6.162E-02	.841

Note: R2 = .313; adjusted R2 = .210.
(p < .05); *significant (at 95% level) p < .05

As noted in Table 8, “how interested are you in this class” is the only independent variable that is significant at $p < .05$. This is expected since, as illustrated earlier in the crosstabulation section of this chapter, a respondent’s interest in the class is positively related to their response to “did you learn something new”. It is somewhat of a surprise that gender is not significant in this model as it played a role in the crosstabulation differences between gender responses for hypothesis I.

The second regression equation is as follows:

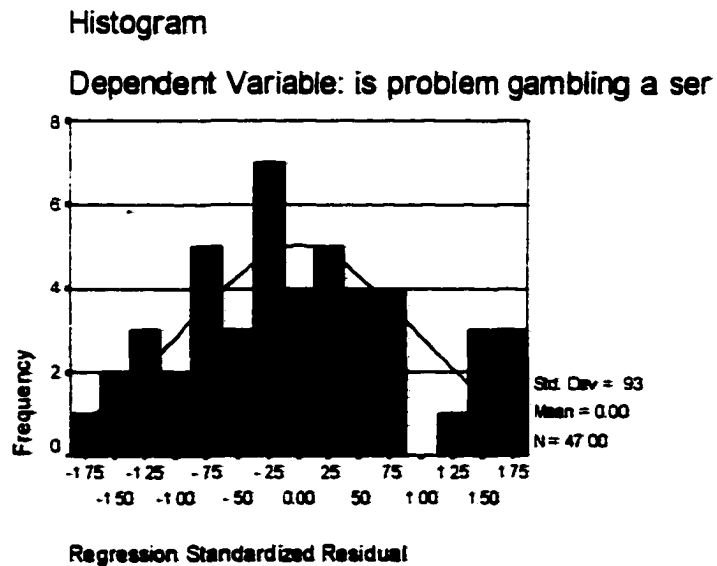
$$\#12 = \text{constant} + \text{age} + \text{gender} + \text{previous training} (\#3) + \text{attitude} (\#5, \#6, \#7)$$

How would these independent variables affect the outcome of question 12 (is problem gambling a serious issue 2)?

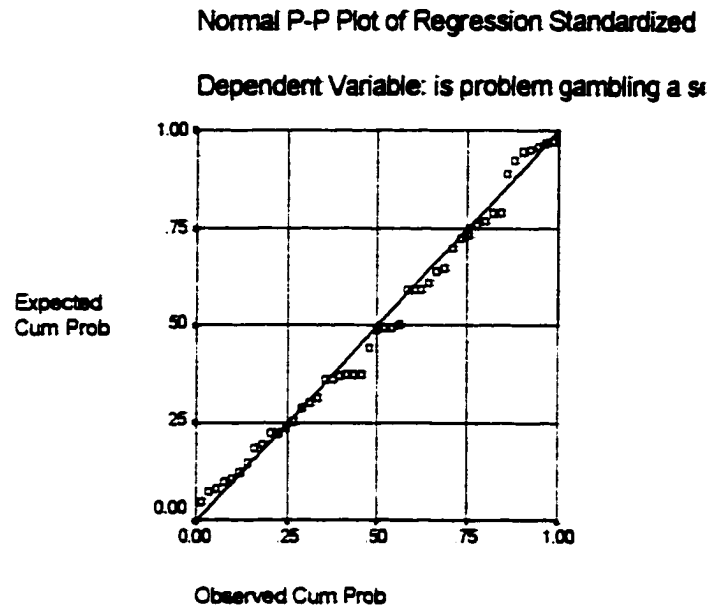
The normal distribution for this model has a minimum predicted value of .78 and a maximum predicted value of 3.35. The mean for the model is 1.77 and the standard deviation is .69.

The data was first screened for normality and linearity. The histogram and normal P – P Plot (Graphs 3 and 4 respectively) are shown below. Both indicate that the data is normally distributed and there is a linear relationship among variables.

Graph 3



Graph 4



The F value for this model is 21.182 and the Significance ($p < .05$) is .000 indicating that this model is significant at the 95% level. The Adjusted R Square is .725. The VIF statistic (test for multicollinearity) shows that all variables have a value < 5.0 thus multicollinearity is not a factor.

Table 9 shows the results of the regression equation for question 12. Note that “is problem gambling a serious issue” (question 6) and “how interested are you in this class” are the only independent variables that are significant at $p < .05$.

..

Table 9

Summary of regression analysis for variables predicting "is problem gambling a serious issue 2" (N =47)

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
(Constant)	7.003E-02	.882
Age	.101	.107
Gender	.108	.419
Can a person lose ability to control gambling	.153	.237
Is problem gambling a serious issue	.561	.000*
How interested are you in this class	.121	.058*
Previous training	-.165	.282

Note: R2 = .761; adjusted R2 = .725.
 (p < .05); *significant (at 95% level) p < .05;
 *significant (weak at 90% level) p < .05

In both regression models "how interested are you in this class" is a significant independent variable. This was expected since the results in Table 7 show a positive correlation between interest in the class and "did you learn something new" (question 10). The regression model for question 12 also shows question 6 "is problem gambling a serious issue" is a significant variable. This outcome was also expected based on the results of the crosstabulation for these two variables.

What matters more: Age, gender, previous training, or attitude? The regression analysis shows that attitude – measured in the “interest” and “opinion” questions – is the variable that is the most significant for this sample.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Women were more interested in taking the training class than men and they responded positively to the seriousness of the issue from the beginning. The results for hypothesis one indicate that women may be more positive towards the training because they view the training as an opportunity to learn about a social issue.

Women may have a more positive attitude towards the training because, traditionally, they have had more personal contact with gambling patrons through their jobs at gaming establishments. In addition, the fact that half of the women answered "very interested" and "interested" suggests that their interest to learn about problem gambling is associated with their perceived social roles in the workplace.

The results for hypothesis two indicate an automatic response to survey questions in that those who had previous training were more likely to have responded that they had "learned little that was new" from the training. These respondents may have thought they knew all they needed to know about problem gambling due to their prior job training or personal experience. This suggests that their attitude towards the training and confidence in their knowledge prevented them from learning something new.

In addition, the way in which respondents with or without previous training responded to questions about what they learned at the training, as noted in the high

response rates for “learned little that was new” and “did not learn anything new”, could mean that respondents really do not know if they learned anything new about problem gambling from the training since they do not know the outcome of their efforts. The necessity of performance feedback from the instructor, and for instructors to take into account prior experience when designing curriculum, are vital parts of the adult learning process. The presence of more negative answers for “did you learn something new” on the part of both types of respondents, may reflect the attitude of this sample towards the training’s compulsory nature.

The results for hypothesis three indicate the sample’s attitude towards learning about problem gambling. Those respondents who were “very interested” and “interested” in the training at the beginning, had more positive answers for “did you learn something new” and “is problem gambling a serious issue” suggesting their positive approach to the training influenced what they learned.

Participation in adult education is driven by several factors including employment status. In other words, respondents were at this training because of their employers (or potential employers) not because they wanted to become more knowledgeable about problem gambling. Whether or not respondents were interested or learned anything new in this training class might be irrelevant to this sample because they will still receive a card from the Council that certifies their participation – and that is all they really need to prove to their employers.

In both regression models “how interested are you in this class” is a significant independent variable. This was expected since the crosstabulation results showed a positive correlation between interest in the class and “did you learn something new”.

What matters more: Age, gender, previous training, or attitude? The regression analysis shows that attitude – responses to “interest” and “opinion” questions – is the variable that is the most significant for this sample. It is interesting that gender did not play a role in influencing the outcome of “did you learn something new” since there were differences noted in the crosstabulations for this variable.

Conclusion

The author’s experiences at the Council’s training sessions suggest that the approach to the training by the Council illustrates its desire to get its message across to participants in the shortest time possible in order to minimize the frustration (negative attitudes?) that attendees may have towards attending the training. The length of the video, 28 minutes, is also given to attendees at the beginning of the class – possibly for the same reasons. The desire to train attendees in the shortest amount of time is cost-effective but are the content and organization of the class sacrificed in the process?

The attendees are told not to view the Council’s quiz as a test of their knowledge of problem gambling since the trainer will provide the correct answers. As a result, the author observed that most attendees either did not complete the quiz and waited for the trainer to give them the answers while some answered the questions and then corrected their incorrect responses.

While the presentation of objectives follows a paradigmatic training format one major element to teaching adults successfully is left out completely: active participation of class attendees. Although the Council would argue that this element is not possible to

include due to time constraints, participation is an essential aspect of adult learning methodology. Furthermore, the use of a quiz that does little to test the newly acquired knowledge of participants might very well neutralize any actual retention of information because the trainer provides the answers for the adults and still gives a reward for their efforts (the card). The review of literature shows that this goes against the tenets of adult learning theories and training design. Adults must have a stake in their learning and must be able to show themselves and others what they have learned in order to feel successful.

The purpose of the Nevada Council's training is to increase gaming employees' awareness of problem gambling issues in compliance with a recently passed gaming regulation. Is the training (all three training options) successful using this as a criteria? According to the Council's own data for 1998 and 1999, the total number of calls to the problem gambling 800 # more than doubled from 897 to 1870. The person calling was calling in reference to a personal problem 82% of the time and 50% of all callers obtained information about the 800 # from casinos. It is interesting to note that more than 50% of callers have had a gambling problem for less than two years indicating that recent legislation, the proliferation of awareness materials, and, to some extent the Council's training, has impacted this group early in their gambling addiction.

In terms of adult learning methods, however, the training falls short as suggested by the lack of trainee participation and the testing of acquired skills. The training is a success when training design is considered since the objectives of the training are stated clearly at the beginning of the class and the class format is structured around the stated plan. However, the end of the class deteriorates into a last minute attempt to have attendees remember just one thing – the problem gambling telephone number. This

suggests to attendees that the earlier part of the training (the phases of problem gambling, the personal devastation it causes) was not as valuable or important for them to know as a telephone number.

What makes this topic, problem gambling, provocative is that people have difficulty accepting that the pursuit of the intangible product of gambling – entertainment – can have a deleterious effect on a person. The passage of a problem gambling regulation, whatever the motivation, and the existence of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling’s awareness training classes are positive signs that the gaming industry is committed to addressing this issue.

Recommendations

Further research should be conducted to determine, through a larger sample, just how much attitude affects the learning curve of attendees of this training. I suggest that a study of all three types of training classes offered by the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling – gaming property, on-site train the trainers; gaming property, on-site training of employees; and, off-site “open enrollment” – be surveyed to determine the influence of attitudes on adult learning. In this way, a clearer picture of the motivation of attendees to learn and the affect of the content and presentation of the class could be analyzed.

Without a comprehensive analysis of all varieties of settings in which this class is offered it will remain unclear just how much the attitude of these adult learners towards problem gambling influences learning.

A similar study using this survey instrument of undergraduate hotel college students who take this training is also recommended. It would be interesting to know how students, who may or may not be employed by the gaming industry but who have some exposure to the industry through their studies, view this training. In addition to the attitude of the sample towards this subject, such a study may reveal how well the training teaches its objectives to industry novices.

Finally, a survey study of a group of attendees some months after their initial attendance at the training, to determine what they really learned about problem gambling as presented in this class, is recommended. For the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling to learn how well it is doing its job teaching problem gambling awareness a study spread out over several months using a small group of attendees is needed.

APPENDIX I

NEVADA COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING'S QUIZ RESULTS

Based upon the 558 people who commented on quizzes given by the NV Council at the end of their training classes, the following attendee comments, in order of prevalence, have been tallied below:

1.) Learned about the different phases of problem gambling (includes major reference to SUICIDE, general signs of problem, and depression)	102
2.) Learned about the existence of support groups (major reference to HOTLINE, GA, general help)	88
3.) Problem gambling is a more serious problem than I thought (also includes responses about ANYONE can be affected and overall impact)	79
4.) Percentage of problem gamblers small (some think SMALL, some think not an accurate number, some think more than number states)	38
5.) Learned little or nothing new (includes references to previous exposure to issue)	31
6.) Class was a waste of time	29
7.) Employees should be able to tell people where to get help not diagnose	28
8.) Problem gambling is addiction similar to alcohol/drugs	27
9.) Problem gambling is an addiction NOT a choice (includes references that it is a disease)	19
10.) Learned the difference between social and problem gambling (includes understand terms better, more aware)	17
11.) Responsibilities of employees (purpose of regulation is to make people aware)	15
12.) Problem gambling can devastate families	15
13.) Important to have information available	14
14.) Person with problem is the only one who can ask for help	12

15.) Problem gambling is treatable (includes problem that needs treatment)	10
16.) Recognized problem gambler in family, among friends	10
17.) Learned not to gamble	7
18.) Nevada Council is not against the gambling industry	<u>5</u>
	546
(12 whose comments did not relate to others tallied)	<u>12</u>
total	558

APPENDIX II

STUDY SAMPLE SURVEY

PART ONE (please indicate your answers clearly)**1.) WHAT IS YOUR AGE?****A.) 21 - 34**
(1)**B.) 35 - 45**
(2)**C.) 46 - 55**
(3)**D.) 56 and older**
(4)**2.) WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?****A.) Female**
(1)**B.) Male**
(2)**3.) HAVE YOU ANY PREVIOUS EXPOSURE TO PROBLEM GAMBLING INFORMATION/TRAINING?****A.) yes**
(1)**B.) no**
(2)

(2a)

(2b)

(2c)

IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN (EXAMPLE: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, TRAINING AT YOUR JOB, OTHER).**4.) HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE PROBLEM GAMBLING?****5.) IN YOUR OPINION, CAN A PERSON LOSE THE ABILITY TO CONTROL THEIR GAMBLING?****A.) yes**
(1)**B.) no**
(2)**C.) I don't know**
(3)**6.) IN YOUR OPINION, IS PROBLEM GAMBLING A SERIOUS ISSUE?****A.) very serious**
(1)**B.) serious**
(2)**C.) somewhat serious**
(3)**D.) not serious**
(4)**E.) not serious at all**
(5)**7.) HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN ATTENDING THIS CLASS?****A.) very interested**
(1)**B.) interested**
(2)**C.) somewhat interested**
(3)**D.) neither interested nor
uninterested**
(4)**E.) not interested at all**
(5)

PART TWO (please indicate your answers clearly)

8.) **Based on the information given in today's class, what is your responsibility as a gaming employee?**

9.) **Next to each phrase given below, indicate if it can be a warning sign of problem gambling. (Mark with an 'X').**

_____ limits the amount of time and money spent gambling
(1)

_____ gambles to escape worry or trouble
(2)

_____ gambles more money than
(3) intended

_____ gambles until the last dollar is gone
(4)

_____ gambles with friends
(5) and family

10.) **Did you learn something new at this training session?**

A.) learned a lot of new things
anything new
(1)

B.) learned something new
(2)

C.) learned little that
was new
(3)

D.) did not learn
(4)

11.) **Would you recommend this class to someone you know who wanted to learn about problem gambling?**

A.) yes
(1)

B.) no
(2)

12.) **In your opinion, is problem gambling a serious issue?**

A.) very serious
(1)

B.) serious
(2)

C.) somewhat
serious
(3)

D.) not serious
(4)

E.) not serious at all
(5)

13.) **Based on the information given in today's class, can a person lose the ability to control their gambling?**

A.) yes
(1)

B.) no
(2)

C.) I don't know
(3)

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