Sociological theories of career choice: A study of workers in the special events industry

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SOCIIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CAREER CHOICE: A STUDY OF WORKERS IN
THE SPECIAL EVENTS INDUSTRY

by

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Bachelor of Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
1994

Master of Science
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Sociology
Department of Sociology
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Examination Committee Chair

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ABSTRACT

Sociological Theories of Career Choice: A Study of Workers in the Special Events Industry

by

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The purpose of this study was to develop a greater understanding of occupational/career choice of workers in the special events industry and explore which social science theory(ies) might best explain the entry of those in this particular occupation. In this study, the following dominant factor about workers in the special events industry emerged: occupation as a reflection of self.

Keywords: Planned Happenstance Theory, Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory, Career Challenges Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Career Pattern Theory.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We’re at twenty minutes people—twenty minutes!

Wheel those costumes to the stage right dressing room; get those anvil road cases out of the aisle; the upstage mike is still placed too close to the monitor, causing a high pitched feedback. Where is the sound tech? The last time I saw Nancy, the lead singer, she still had wet hair and no makeup on her face—give me an update on her progress.

We’re now at ten minutes people—ten minutes! What do you mean the dancer doesn’t want to wear the top hat for the opening number? And now, you’re telling me the gerbs won’t fire for the dream sequence. That sign! Isn’t it supposed to be up-lit with a #32 blue gel? Who approved changing it to magenta?

Places everyone—we’re at five minutes!

And, where the hell is Nancy?

Although the above scenario may appear to characterize the opening night of a Broadway show, it is in reality a representation of the final minutes prior to the doors opening of a special event—where every night is opening night of a show. This vignette also allows a small glimpse at the workers in this industry who are drawn to an ever changing and quick-paced career in the special events industry. Choosing an
occupation/career may be one of the most important decisions one has to make in a lifetime. Earning a living is vital to our survival. However, for most of us, and those in the special events industry are probably no exception, occupation is not merely a means of earning a living, it is also a role that influences many parts of our lives. A person’s occupational level has been found to be a highly useful indicator of the family’s social status in the community, as well as a predictor of lifestyle, life expectancy, level of quality of healthcare received, quality of life after retirement, and occupational/geographical mobility (Edin and Lein 1997; Garson 1988; Kanter 1977; Mortimer 1974; Parker 1994; Sennett 1998).

We also do not just fill occupational positions; depending on our class, we may even define our lives around our jobs. Occupations have an impact on self and self-esteem. While the work environment can enhance the self-conceptions of workers, a collision between ideals and practice in the workplace can compromise the identities of workers (Hochschild 1983; Kondo 1990; Leidner 1993; Schor 1991; Sennett and Cobb, 1972). Given the fact that occupational choice is of such great importance to our lives, it would be important to study why and how people choose certain occupations. As we will see, however, the theories about occupational choice are loosely stated, sometimes have only modest substantiation, and in some instances overlap in explanation.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to develop a greater understanding of occupational/career choice. This project will specifically examine workers in the special events industry and
explore which social science theory(ies) might best explain the entry of those in this particular occupation.

Significance of the Study

This study has theoretical significance in that it can gain insight as to which existing sociological and social psychological theories on career choice best explain the special events worker. This study also has practical significance in that if we can gain insight on why people choose a career in the special events industry, then we could inform new entrants as to what they might expect, and the profession might adapt itself to assist in occupational entry and transition.

Theoretical Significance

This project is potentially important to sociology because it examines various social and social psychology theories of occupational choice. Some of the existing sociological literature discusses occupational niches in the world of work, economic shifts, cultural changes, and demands that allow for more employment in this field. Structural factors such as education, work skills, and professionalization related to an occupation are examined. Other sociological literature focuses on work related cognitions, self, identity, and human agency; but all within a context of how social influences have an impact on our ultimate occupational decisions. The researcher found no study in sociology that attempts to bring this career entry literature together for systematic classification of explanation of career choice. On the basis of this rather wide-ranging and sometimes disparate sociological literature the researcher gleaned from theoretical explanations and then examined them related to the special events industry: Planned Happenstance

Practical Significance

This study is potentially important to the special events industry because it will give some insight into career entry and professionalization challenges involving technology, emotional labor, long work hours, stress, education, and professional development.

Occupations in the special events industry offer other entry challenges. The field of special events management is a subfield of the tourism industry, which is often referred to as the “invisible” industry. This lack of awareness contributes to some of the challenges that prevent direct entry into the occupation. Therefore, research that contributes to the professionalization of the industry may also increase the awareness and reputation of the industry as well as those who work in the industry.

The demand is increasing for degree-seeking education in the field of special events management. The timing of this research is important to the special events industry because it can be used to inform the growing need for curriculum development at colleges and universities that offer concentrations, minors, majors, degrees and/or academic certificates in events management.

An outline of each chapter follows: Chapter two will provide a brief introduction to the special events industry and cover the career entry literature. In chapter three, procedures used to gather research data, and methods used to analyze research data will be discussed. The results of the study will be examined in chapter four. And, implications of the study and recommendations to the industry will be discussed in chapter five.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

An Overview of the Special Events Industry

Special events are renderings of social practices. They are experiences which develop lives of their own through the planning and stylizing of the event. Each event draws on energies and patterns of expectations "brought to the occasion, not only because it embodies some life situation, but because it departs from the everyday to the degree that it is self-consciously and artfully imitated, replayed, performed" (Abrahams 1986).

The occupation/profession of special event management descended from the field of public relations. Fairs, festivals, and parades provide many opportunities to bring communities together to celebrate various cultures and interests through performances, arts, crafts and socializing. The economic impact of special events helps communities attract tourism dollars. Communities that do not have the facilities to attract larger events are turning to tourism events to attract visitors. According to the 1999 study by the Travel Industry Association of America, one fifth of adults visited a special event (fair, festival, other) while on vacation. According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), event management is one of the fastest-growing and most important trends in the public relations profession (Hoyle 2002). The industry offers a wide range of employment positions as well as internship opportunities for students; and the special events industry as a whole is striving to increase public awareness about the industry, as
it becomes a legitimate, recognized field—on its way to a profession—that is dedicated to creating industry standards. Special events management is experiencing tremendous growth. Even so, how do people find their way into this industry when job positions are cleverly concealed in organizations and departments seemingly unrelated to special events?

The special events industry contains both occupational workers and those who consider themselves to be professionals. Even if many special events workers are not technically considered professionals, as outlined by professionalization criteria (Caplow 1954; Wilensky 1964; and Abbott 1988) such as: a governmentally sponsored licensing legislation, professional schools separate from other professions, service to humanity, and national level journals; they may be seen as pseudo-professionals in that they meet other criteria deemed important by the esteemed experts above. This criterion includes factors such as: a great number of workers are rather highly educated and trained, are committed to their jobs, extensively socialized throughout their careers; and the special events industry holds a professional association along with a certification program and code of ethics. Therefore, please note, that in the context of this study the words professional and professionalization will actually denote quasi-professional and emerging profession.

Theories of Career Choice

Sociologists have contributed considerable information to the body of research knowledge regarding the sociology of work and the effects of work on today’s workers as well as today’s society (Bell 1976; Blauner 1964; Blau and Duncan 1967; Bluestone and Harrison 1972; Braverman 1974; Noble 1977; Burawoy 1979; Edwards 1979; Zimbalist
1979; Hochschild 1983; Garson 1988; Barnett and Cavanagh 1994; Parker 1994; Rifkin 1995; Edin and Lein 1997; Levine 1998; and Sennett 1998, etc.). For example, sociological studies of worker satisfaction (Lawler and Porter 1967); worker morale (Fiedler 1967); worker motivation (Herzberg 1966; Maslow 1970; McGregor 1960; and Likert 1961); and the centrality of work to our lives (Dubin 1956 Loscocco 1989; and Kelly 1992) have made a significant contribution to the field of human resources.

After reviewing the sociology of work literature, five explanations of career choice emerged: Planned Happenstance Theory, Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory, Career Challenge Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Career Pattern Theory.

Planned Happenstance Theory

Planned Happenstance Theory explains occupational entry from the perspective of skills required in society and simultaneously focuses on skill development decisions vis-à-vis these larger requirements. In short, the theory might pose the question: What does a society demand, and has the worker developed the social and practical skills to enable him/her to succeed? In planned happenstance theory, open-mindedness is emphasized. Bluestein (1997) suggests that people need to develop an “exploratory attitude” in order to approach the vast number of new situations and changes that individuals face. The words “planned happenstance” have been intentionally united as an oxymoron. People often claim that they “fell into” their position. Betsworth and Hansen (1996) found that two thirds of the participants in their study believed that their career paths were significantly influenced by chance events, but overlooked the skills learned and steps taken to get them in the position to seize the opportunities.
Planned happenstance theory includes two principles: a) exploration generates chance opportunities for employment; and b) skills enable people to seize employment opportunities.

Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory

Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory explains occupational entry by focusing on how role models influence (both positively and negatively) an individual’s ultimate decision to enter a career. In addition to family members, children are exposed to neighbors, teachers, and peers who may also expose them to occupational careers and choices as well as opportunities for development of skills and attributes which may influence career decisions as they mature. Individuals also come to develop expectations about the outcomes of their performance through repeated direct or vicarious learning experiences (Morrow, Gore, and Campbell 1996; Otto1991).

Career Challenges Theory

Career Challenges Theory explains career choice as involving consideration of the demands and stressors resulting from a rapidly changing work environment. This environment includes such changes as advanced technology, longer worker hours, outsourcing, downsizing, declining health insurance benefits, and uncertain retirement plans.

The United States, along with most other countries in the world is experiencing tremendous social change. According to Rubin (1996:4), this change is related to a systematic transformation in the basis of social relations and social institutions and “alters
the social contract that underpins society”. This shift in the social contract presents many career path challenges. The process of seeking employment as well as keeping small businesses afloat has become a ruthlessly competitive one.

Richard Sennett (1998), points out that while “career” originally meant a carriage road—and as applied to work, a clear path forward; we can no longer count on that today, when one is advised to anticipate 11 job changes during a typical working life. Thanks to the technological revolution that has taken place, social relationships and our ways of looking at the world (Bell 1976) have been transformed. Rifkin (1995) maintains that even workers who have survived the technological revolution have done so at a great price. Hence, the traditional straight and narrow path to a desired career is now complicated by roads which lead to other roads, which lead to more roads, creating too many detours, and tremendous stress surrounding our work environment. Millions of workers attempt to adapt to the rhythms of a “nanosecond culture” created by the following work stressors.

Technology

The impact of technology plays an important role in the sociology of work and occupations. In today’s global economy, our lives, our politics, our work and our family cultures are forever changing. Barnet and Cavanagh (1994) believe that even if the “world is getting smaller” it is not coming together. Daniel Bell’s (1974) social forecasting work emphasized the growing importance of information versus inspiration. Our hi-tech, fast-paced work environment is chipping away at even the most artistic and passionate worker’s self (Levine1998; and Garson 1988). Rifkin (1995) likens these
technological advances in the workplace to “machines of the past that substituted for body and brawn” to the “thinking machines” of today being substituted for brains.

**Long Working Hours**

With global unemployment at its highest level since the great depression of the 1930’s (Rifkin 1995), and the continuation of such practices as corporate downsizing (Leana and Barry, 2000) and contingent employment (Parker 1994), those who are lucky enough to have a career are working harder and longer for less (Schor 1991; and Garson 1988).

Key incentive structures of capitalist economies contain biases toward long working hours. The development of capitalism led to the growth of “long hour jobs.” This rise of work hours is not confined to a few, selective groups. Hours have risen for men as well as women, for most working class positions as well as professional positions (Schor 1991). However, exceptions to this are involuntary part-time workers and seasonal workers who settle for part-time work and forced leisure.

**Emotional Labor**

Hochschild (1983) discusses how the emotional work necessary to carry out the job becomes “emotional labor.” Emotional and physical effects are validated through the rise of stress related diseases: heart disease, hypertension, gastric problems, depression, and exhaustion, to name a few. Sleep has become another casualty of modern life—sleep researchers maintain that Americans are currently getting between 60 and 90 minutes less sleep per night than they should for optimum health and performance (Schor 1991).
Disappearing Pensions

In addition to loss of jobs through outsourcing white-collar work overseas—from call centers to sophisticated design projects (Wessel 2004), workers today are experiencing other major changes in their work life, such as job erosion. Working conditions in what may otherwise be a good job are deteriorating (Sullivan, Warren, and Westbrook 2000). While difficult to assess the rate/degree of erosion, the process takes form in partial layoffs (less work hours) and, therefore, a reduction in benefits. One of the areas suffering erosion is retirement (Warren and Tyagi 2003). Bankrupt and under funded pension plans create a challenge for those who are looking for a way to secure the pensions of some 44 million Americans (Donlan 2004; Walsh 2003).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theorists maintain that career decisions are often related to one’s self and identity. While variously defined in this study, the concept of self derives from the symbolic interactionist perspective and is defined as seeing one’s self as an object among social objects. The self arises in social life and reflects our ability to act toward ourselves in every situation we enter (Mead 1934). For our purposes here, “identity” refers to where one is situated in relation to others (Stone 1962). Identity is the naming of self; the name we call ourselves (Charon 1998). As with all objects, identities are “socially bestowed, socially maintained, and socially transformed (Berger 1963: 98).”

Social Identity Theory suggests that people classify themselves into social categories based on various factors such as the job they hold and the organization for which they work (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Chatman (1991) suggests that people are attracted to
organizations they view as holding values and norms they deem important. Therefore, it
seems likely that people will seek out as well as accept job offers from firms that have
attributes that are rated positively (Turban, Campion, and Eyring 1995).

The link between career choice and self/identity is well established (Kanter 1983;
Rothschild-Witt 1979; Whyte 1956). Career counselors maintain that self-worth is the
foundation of career focus (Schneider, 1994). Honeycutt and Rosen (1997) believe that
identity should be explored as a predictor of preferences for specific job attributes. Judge
and Bretz (1992) found congruence between an individual's values and organizational
values was a better predictor of job choice than pay or promotion opportunities. Becker,
Geer, Hughes, and Strauss (1961) followed students from their first day in medical school
through graduation and found that students form a culture which is developed from the
day-to-day challenges they encounter in relation to their long term goals. No matter how
individualistic their motives, they ultimately form a “community of fate”, in which they
share goals, experiences and exposure to common challenges. Turner (1978) maintains
that “role-person merger” exists when the role is deeply merged with the person and
socialization in that role affects personality formation. Based on the above information,
an individual’s “occupational role type” is particularly relevant to this study.

Career Pattern Theory

Career Pattern Theory explains that occupational choices often follow a pattern as per
age, gender, marital status, parenthood, and changing life goals (note overlap here with
Social Identity Theory). Career pattern refers to the sequence of occupations in the life of
an individual or group of individuals. The term “career pattern” originated in the field of
sociology, in the study of social mobility by means of occupational mobility (Davidson & Anderson 1937, Form & Miller 1949, Miller & Form 1951; Sorokin 1927). Every professional has typical careers. And, according to Abbott (1988: 129), “there is usually one official pattern and a variety of unofficial ones.” This sequence may be analyzed in order to ascertain the major work periods which constitute a career. Career pattern closely parallels the psychological concept of “life stages” (Buehler 1933). Miller and Form (1951) developed a sociological classification of life stages, which is work centered. Super’s (1957) self-concept theory posits that career choices are implementations of attempts to actualize the skills talents, and interests reflective of one’s self-concept and are based on the completion of developmentally appropriate vocational tasks between the ages of 15 and 25 years of age. Super (1954) clarified Miller and Form’s four career patterns for men, reflecting the influence of self-concept and completion of appropriate exploratory tasks:

1. **Stable Career Pattern:** A career is chosen and entered both early and permanently. These are persons who have gone directly from school or college into a type of work which they have consistently followed: in other words, they have essentially skipped the trial work period.

2. **Conventional Career Pattern:** Involves experimentation with more than one choice before selecting a permanent one. The sequence of jobs follows the typical progression from initial through trial to stable employment.

3. **Unstable Career Pattern:** A series of trial career choices with no ideas of permanency. Here the sequence is trial, stable, trial. The worker does not
succeed in establishing himself permanently in what might have been a lifetime job or occupation, but instead gives up a potential career in one field and goes off into a different direction in which he may or may not establish himself.

4. **Multiple Trial Career Pattern:** Involves moving from one stable career path to another. It is a pattern of frequent change in employment, with no one dominate or prolonged type to call it being established in a career.

With a steadily increasing percentage of women in the work force, and larger numbers of married women continuing to work after marriage, or returning to work after their children are old enough for this to be possible, Super (1957) classified the following career paths of women:

1. **Stable Homemaking Career Pattern:** This category includes all women who marry while in or very shortly after leaving school or college, having expected to do so and having had no significant work experience.

2. **Conventional Career Pattern:** This pattern of work is followed by homemaking; the woman leaves school or college and goes to work for a period of several months or several years, in an occupation which is open to her without training beyond that which she obtained in her general education. These positions are generally viewed as stopgaps, but may first be thought of as life careers, with subsequent change of aspirations. Marrying after this brief work experience, the young woman becomes a full-time homemaker.
3. **Stable Working Career Pattern:** The woman enters the workforce upon leaving school, college or professional school and embarking upon a career which becomes the woman’s life work. She may perceive it as a life career from the start or she may first view her working career as a preliminary to marriage, or a working career to resume after a period of full-time homemaking.

4. **Double-Track Career Pattern:** In this pattern, the woman goes to work after completing her education, marries, and continues with a double career of working and homemaking. She may take occasional time out for child bearing. This pattern is most common near the upper and lower ends of the occupational scale—physicians and scientists and domestics.

5. **Interrupted Career Pattern:** The sequence is one of working, homemaking, and working while or instead of homemaking. The young woman usually works for sometime, marries, and then, when her children are old enough to leave them, or her family has financial needs, she returns to work.

6. **Unstable Career Pattern:** This type of career pattern consists of working, homemaking, working again, returning to full-time homemaking. It usually results from irregular economic pressures. This pattern is observed most often at the lower socioeconomic levels.

7. **Multiple-Trial Career Pattern:** This pattern is the same in women as the similarly named pattern for men. It consists of a succession of unrelated jobs with stability in none.
Demographic Variables: Education, Work Skills and Job Related Attributes

In addition to the above five theories found in the sociological literature, we will also examine education, skills, and attributes required for entry into the special events industry for possible explanation for career choice. Increasingly, education is playing a more significant role in the field of special events management. Future event professionals are becoming interested in degrees in special events management as well as certification designations, in order to have a competitive edge in the job market. In a 1996 study, Nelson and Goldblatt found that approximately 30-40 higher education institutions were offering courses that related to special events management. However, today, the number of higher education institutions offering event management courses has increased to over 200. In fact, postgraduate course work in event management is taught at many of the world’s leading universities (Polivka 2004).

A review of skill sets in general and skill sets necessary to the special events industry is explored. Skill sets are groupings of necessary characteristics one holds, allowing them to manage their job in a successful manner and perform adequately the tasks at hand (Anthony, Kacmar, and Perrewe 1999). Skills can further be defined as “behaviors that require some degree of facility in the performance of part or all of a complex act” (Tracey 1984). Examples of skills examined in this study include communication, technological ability, public speaking, organization, stress management, time management, and leadership. Robin Zevin’s 2003 study of sixteen special events management professionals examined skill sets and work related attributes required for members in the special events industry. This research revealed that industry professionals deemed the following skills/attributes important for success in the special
events industry today: organization, communication, flexibility, and people skills. Other attributes, such as curiosity and optimism, were borrowed from Planned Happenstance Theory.

Despite all the discussion of these sociological theories of career choice (Planned Happenstance Theory, Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory, Career Challenges Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Career Pattern Theory), many of these theories are overlapping. For example, self and identity are major components of both Social Identity Theory and Career Pattern Theory, while education, skills and attributes are explanations subsumed in Planned Happenstance Theory, Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory and Career Pattern Theory.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will discuss sample characteristics and sampling procedures, the methods used to gather data, and the methods used for data analysis. Existing literature on theories of career choice and education/skill requirements were used as a guide for designing the methods for collecting and interpreting the data.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Although qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study, the former become the primary basis for the research data. A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for this study since the emphasis is on how individuals interpret and give meaning to the events, situations, and actions related to the process of entering the field of special events management, and how this meaning leads to career choices (Maxwell, 1996). However, a quantitative approach is also useful in this study to gather demographic data about special event workers; discover sets of skills/attributes beneficial to those who enter into the field of special events; and categorize career patterns of those who are employed in the industry.
The researcher conducted eight individual interviews in person at a quarterly ISES Board of Governors meeting—a conclave of International Special Event Society (ISES) international leaders. Six individual interviews were conducted at The Special Event tradeshow and conference. Eight individual interviews were conducted over the telephone. Two focus group interview sessions were conducted: one aboard a cruise ship—the location of the ISES Western Regional Education Conference; and one with local, ISES Las Vegas members. In total, 37 special event workers were interviewed for the study. These informants included members of the International Special Events Society (ISES) membership, which comprises over 3,200 event professionals located in over 24 countries and 36 ISES chapters throughout the world. ISES classifies its members into 53 different disciplines that make up the special events industry. From event planners to virtual reality vendors, anyone involved in the events industry can be categorized into one of these disciplines. Although relatively small in number, the subjects selected for the study represented a wide range of occupational specialties and length of experience in the special events industry. The purposive sampling technique employed sought to gain some representativeness of workers in this industry.

A second type of qualitative research was conducted. CSEP portfolios include designation exam essays (average length 880 words) where the examination candidate is asked to describe why he or she chose a career in the special events industry and his or her future career goals. The researcher conducted a content analysis of 67 essays covering a period of 7 years (1998-2004) (see table D.1 in Appendix). These essays had been retained by the examination administrator (i.e., the researcher) and had been given prior permission for use by the examination candidate. Of the essays used in the content
analysis, forty-seven (71.2%) exams were written by females and nineteen (28.8%) were written by males. This distribution is quite representative of the general Certified Special Events Professional designees in the industry (73.8% females and 26.2% males). Exam candidates resided in thirteen states, as well as Canada and Australia. Most of the exam candidates resided in Texas (21.2%). Exam candidates represented every ISES region with the exception of the EurAfrica region.

Regarding the quantitative part of the study, a survey questionnaire was administered via the ISES on-line membership database. ISES was chosen because of its dedication to education in the special events industry, as well as its broad membership base, and the accessibility to the members. The ISES Executive Director, Kevin Hacke, granted the researcher permission to use the database at no cost, provided the researcher agreed to share the results of the study with the ISES membership.

Survey questionnaires were e-mailed to 2498 International Special Events Society (ISES) members. Due to the turnover rate of the industry, 198 e-mails were returned because members were no longer working for the company they listed in the ISES 2003 Membership Directory. Downey Research Associates received 325 completed surveys within the first three weeks. At the end of three weeks, e-mail reminders were sent to the 2300 current e-mail addresses, and 202 additional completed surveys were received. Downey Research Associates received a total of 527 completed survey questionnaires, for a response rate of 23 percent. This response rate is much higher than predicted by Downey Research Associates (10 – 15%). Males who completed the survey accounted for 31.5% of the respondents, with 68.5% being female. The average age of survey respondents was 41 years, ranging from 22 to 78 years old. Sixty-three percent of the
respondents were between 31 – 50 years of age (See Figure 3.1 below). The gender breakdown of survey respondents is very close to the ISES membership (30.1 % males and 69.9% females). However, ISES does not have any information pertaining to the age of its members.

![Figure 3.1 Age and Gender](image)

**Figure 3.1 Age and Gender**

**Data Collection Methods**

The ultimate purpose of this study was to gain insight as to which theories best explain career choice in the special events industry. Research data were collected via the previously discussed focus group and individual interviews, content analysis of examination essays, and on-line surveys primarily used to gather work skills and demographic information.
Individual and Focus Group Interviews

Individual and focus group interviews with members of the special events industry were conducted. The information secured by these methods has the advantage of providing more depth and insight in that interviews allow for probing of information and respondent spontaneity. In both types of interviews, the researcher focused on topics to be covered, or what Miller refers to as “focused interviewing” (Miller 1991).

Focus groups are particularly useful for gaining access to selected respondents, controlling the interview environment, and even for clarifying responses (Morgan 1997). These focus group interviews were tape recorded, and backed up with Gregg shorthand notes, with the permission of the informants.

In planning the focus groups, the researcher followed the recommendations of Morgan (1997) who suggests: a) a relatively structured interview with high moderator involvement; b) using 6 – 10 participants per focus group; however, the researcher deviated from his suggestion of using strangers as participants because most of the ISES participants at the leadership meetings were more than likely know each other. In each session the researcher sought focus group participants who represented various work tasks and experiences. Interview sessions were kept to a 45-minute time span.

Creative interviewing techniques were used when conducting personal interviews. According to Douglas (1985), the researcher must be strongly committed to mutual disclosure. The interviewer accomplishes this exchange through the use of active listening techniques, the revealing of personal sentiments, and an open display of concern for the other person. Both the interviewer and respondent negotiate and work together to
accomplish the interview, the resulting effort being as much a product of their collaborative efforts as the experience under consideration (Fontana 2001).

A pre-test of the personal and focus group interview questions was conducted with six ISES members as well as two other researchers.

**Essay Content Analysis**

Content analysis of the CSEP exam essays were utilized for gathering and analyzing the content of text (Neuman 2000). This technique has been used in many fields such as literature, history, journalism, political science, education, and psychology. The text is anything written, spoken, or visual that serves as a medium of communication. One of the greatest strengths of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and non-reactive (Marshall and Rossman 1999). It can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. Another strength of content analysis is that it can reveal messages in a text that are difficult to see with casual observation (Neuman 2000). The researcher determines where the greatest emphasis lies after the data have already been collected.

A pre-test of the content analysis was also conducted. Six essays were read and coded by the researcher. The same six essays were given to two other researchers for reading and coding in order to ensure high inter-coder reliability (See Table 3.1).

**On-Line Survey**

Quantitative research methods of data collection were also used via an on-line survey instrument in order to primarily collect demographic information. The survey questionnaire was hosted on the Downey Research Associates website (www.downeyresearch.com). Downey Research Associates are social and marketing research specialists. The survey instrument included twenty-nine questions and was
accompanied by an on-line cover letter (See Appendix A) to ISES members with an invitation to participate in the study. Interested participants were instructed to “click” on the web link in the body of the letter. Once this link was activated participants were taken directly to the survey instrument hosted on the website. An incentive was offered to participants who completed and submitted the survey. Interested participants were entered into a drawing for an ISES Conference for Professional Development education package—a value of $599.

### Table 3.1 Content Analysis Pre-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Candidate</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Planned Happenstance Theory</th>
<th>Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory</th>
<th>Career Challenges Theory</th>
<th>Social Identity Theory</th>
<th>Career Pattern Theory (Super’s Classification)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feb-00</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Open to Learning; Built a Reputation— Heavily Recruited</td>
<td>Mother, Father as role models</td>
<td>Opportunity for creative expression through dance.</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Technology Challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dec-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Open to Learning; Driven</td>
<td>Sibling, Mother, Parental Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>Chose career that reflected personal values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jan-00</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Double-Track (Homemaker/Career)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Same Skill Set; Networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Double-Track (Homemaker/Career)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey design utilized a combination of question styles such as open ended, semantic differential and nominal/ordinal type questions. The demographic type questions were placed primarily at the end of the survey. A colorful, alternate, shading pattern was chosen for the on-line survey instrument for ease of reading and visual enhancement. The only open-ended survey question was question 24, which asked, “Do you have any additional comments or suggestions to assist with our research?”

A pre-test of the on-line survey, was hosted for one week on the Downey Research and Associates’ website. It was e-mailed to 44 ISES Las Vegas Chapter members. Fifteen members responded with complete surveys. These members were offered an opportunity to participate in the drawing for the Conference for Professional Development education package. Their e-mail addresses were removed from the list of informants for the actual on-line survey. A written version of the survey was also pre-tested with 6 prospective ISES members who attended a local ISES chapter meeting as well as 61 students enrolled in special events management classes at the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The above discussion has explained the data collection methods used in this study. The following overarching questions were used in the interviews and on-line survey to explore the theories of career choice. While they were not the only questions, they were the initial questions that then allowed for further probing and further explanation (See Table 3.2).
Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis of qualitative data from individual and focus group interviews were coded immediately following the interviews. Inductively developed codes (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), based on the theories described in the study, were utilized that emerged from the data. Transcribed focus group interview and researcher notes were searched for domains; cover terms (the name of a domain/category); included terms or concepts, “conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 61); properties of the domain (attributes or characteristics); and the semantic relationship between the cover term and the included terms.

Constructs in the content analysis were operationalized with a coding system. This coding system, according to Neuman (2000: 294), is a “set of instructions or rules on how to systematically observe and record content from text.” Manifest and latent coding procedures were used in the content analysis. Manifest coding is highly reliable because the phrase or word either is or is not present. The validity of latent coding exceeds that of manifest coding because people communicate meaning in many implicit ways that depend on context, not just in specific words. Intercoder reliability was measured in both the focus group and personal interviews by using two additional industry professionals to check for consistency across coders. The coders were both employed in the special events industry (35 years and 10 years), had obtained the CSEP designation, were ISES leaders (locally, regionally, and internationally) and were adjunct professors of special events management courses.
### Table 3.2 Interview Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Planned Happenstance Theory     | Was it pure chance or luck that got you into this career or was there an explainable logic that you can trace to your present career?  
If you think it was pretty logical and predictable, explain your career history and trajectory.  
If luck, then trace for us that key event, person, media presentation or whatever might have lead to your present career? |
| Cumulative Childhood Experiences| Did somebody, such as a parent, friend, or teacher, have an impact on you choosing this career? In what way and to what extent?  
Were there mentors who guided you down this career road?  
Did your loved ones (parents, spouse, friends) support your decision to choose this career? |
| Career Challenges Theory        | We understand that there is probably not a “typical” work day in the special events industry. But we are interested in what makes a workday good or bad for you. Will you describe what makes the day at work a good one for you?  
Conversely, will you describe what makes the day at work a bad one? |
| Social Identity Theory          | Is how you define your values, beliefs and goals, somehow related to the values, in this career? Explain this similarity of values. |
| Career Pattern Theory (with emphasis on Super’s Self Concept Theory) | We are extremely interested in career patterns. Was your career pattern similar to one of the following scenarios? And if not, how did it differ?  
1. I changed employment frequently, without being established in a career, before deciding on a career in the special events industry.  
2. I gave up a potential lifetime career in a field unrelated to the special events industry before deciding on a career in the special events industry.  
3. I started working part-time/summers around my school schedule; progressing to numerous entry-level positions in various fields, before deciding on a career in the special events industry.  
4. I went directly from school into a career in the special events industry. |
CSEP exam candidate essays were also coded according to the methods developed in Spradley (1979) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). The first step involves open coding, “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 61). Then, domains were identified, and categories were developed. Silverman (1993) suggests these forms of validation are particularly suited to qualitative research, in order to see whether they corroborate one another, together with different sources of data to help establish the credibility of the evidence.

On-line survey questionnaires were primarily analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics. Demographic information gleaned from the on-line questionnaires was analyzed through frequency distribution and measures of central tendency. Factor analysis (See Appendix C.2 – C.5) was also used as a method of reducing data to discover predominant patterns when analyzing the skill sets necessary for a career in special events management, as well as the decision making factors that influenced the decision to choose a career in the special events industry.

The primary limitation of the study is a possible response bias based on the self-reported aspect of the information gathered via individual and focus group interviews as well as on-line survey methods of data collection. This information relied heavily on recollection by the research informants. Another delimitation of this research is that the survey instrument was web-based, so in order to take the survey, participants needed to not only have access to a computer, but needed to have a browser sophisticated enough to allow them to complete the on-line survey.

Various attempts such as indexing and coding schemas, interview protocol, focus group member selection, and pre-testing, were made by the researcher to utilize
appropriate data collection methods to lessen threats to validity and increase the reliability of her findings. The following chapter will include an in depth discussion of the findings of the study.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter will examine in combination results of the focus group and individual interview sessions as well as the content analysis of essays as related to the career entry theories. It will also discuss demographic information, skill sets, and career choice decision making factors gathered from the on-line survey questionnaire. (Please note: Passages taken directly from CSEP essay content analysis are denoted below using an Arial type font; whereas personal and focus group interview dialogue are indicated in a Times New Roman italics type font.)

Planned Happenstance Theory

Overwhelmingly, respondents of focus group, individual interviews, and CSEP exam candidates referenced serendipity or luck as the initial introduction to the special events industry. A peek at the following CSEP exam excerpt written by a prominent Vice-President of Marketing for an internationally known entertainment/events production company reveals an executive who credits her climb to the top as a “twist of fate”:

PM: In my teens, my father, an old country European, informed me there was not enough money for both my brother and I to go to college. He suggested that I just go out and get some sort of job, since I would most likely end up getting married and having a family. This twist of fate led me to the most exciting and fulfilling career that anyone could hope for. I went out and got that job, a billing clerk for a trucking company, and put every dime I could toward continuing my
dance training. A little over two years later, I auditioned for, and got, my first
dance job as a Radio City Music Hall Rockette. Until that audition, it never
occurred to me that I could possibly make a living as a dancer.

This passage not only shows the feeling of providence, but also uncovers a model of
how personal adversity is overcome, and viewed as an important piece of the puzzle that
eventually led to a fulfilling career for many event professionals.

Feelings of luck, difficult concepts to quantify, drive decisions and in many cases are
seminal reasons for taking the financial risk to start a special events business for the
entrepreneurs in the group. Respondents appear to feel lucky about their entrance into the
industry without even crediting the time they invested in education and professional
development or considering the skills or creative talents they possess. One telephone
interviewee said, “I was afraid to charge for my services at first because I didn’t feel I
knew what I was doing. However, my clients gave me such positive feedback that I
began to feel comfortable with charging for my skills.”

Workers in the special events industry also appear to take their risk taking abilities for
granted. Two of the most respected event professionals in the industry, each with over
thirty years of special events experience to his credit, discuss the decision to take the risk
and open an event company. The first interviewee, an award winning event designer,
who got his start delivering flowers, and is considered to be at the top of his craft in terms
of his creative use of space, energetically describes his entrée as an entrepreneur:

JD: I really feel like I lucked into my career. I have been blessed. It’s been 38
years and I still love it. I also feel it was logical that I ended up in this business
because of the way I grew up. (His mother was an interior decorator.) On the luck
side, my timing was good. I opened my own business in the 70’s, when it wasn’t
even considered an industry. People thought I was nuts. I started out with 400
square feet of space, behind a parking garage; and within four years, the business
exploded. I had taken over the entire building and hired a full-time staff.
In contrast, the second interviewee, also an industry award recipient, known for his innovative use of lighting design, and former Broadway theatre stage hand, with an intimidating demeanor and physique to match, portrays his decision to move from a very secure union job to the world of self-employment:

SR: I made a specific decision to take a risk. The primary reason was talent. I have a talent, I have a skill and I learned that people wanted to buy it. I took all that cumulative knowledge and experience and all of my training and all of my talent and carved out a career for myself in the special events industry.

The most frequent career pattern of respondents who participated in this study was a venture into related aspects of the events business; serving food at an awards dinner, chairing a committee for a festival fundraiser, or crewing an installation of event related equipment. These moments extrapolated into more frequent and longer duration until an avocation began to transform into a possible career choice. However, a look at the following career pattern divulges a path not quite as linear as those mentioned above:

Upon arrival at any International Special Events Society Conference for Professional Development, one cannot help but notice a successful Texan, replete with expensive snakeskin cowboy boots, jeans, western shirt, and a black ten-gallon hat, amongst the flamboyant male decorators and effeminate heterosexuals in the room. In this crowd, he actually stands out more than the ISES current president who always dresses in Versache tailored suits, accompanied by a complimentary boa with matching fuzzy bedroom slippers.

DH: I did not plan to be in the special events industry. My plan was to graduate with an engineering degree and work at my profession. In fact, I graduated with two engineering degrees: A BS and a MS in Electrical Engineering from Texas A & M. I worked as an engineer for 10 years. During my engineering career, I was involved in many projects. I decided to open a commercial equipment rental store for contractors. Then, in 1985, the building economy of Austin dropped to half of what it had been for the past 5 years. I had a young lady working for me who said, "My mother was a caterer and she used to rent items. Why don't we
try that?” That was my business plan. We have been through bad and good times, but it has always been challenging and fun!

No matter how much this Texan stands apart from other special events workers in the crowd, he shares many qualities with his peers, such as a chance introduction to the special events industry and resilience and openness to new ideas. These entrepreneurial traits were much in the forefront of most respondents in this study. Again, no “plan” was in force. Even in the real world business arena, post career entry, event professionals tend to relay stories about continuing to make business decisions on a visceral level.

Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory

All personal interview and focus group respondents recounted childhood experiences related to career choice. Most credited childhood role models and mentors as ultimately influencing their decision to choose an occupation in the special events industry. Many CSEP exam candidates give an account of at least one family member as offering support and encouragement: an uncle who was a restaurant owner, a father in the carnival business, or a mother who was an artist mentored interests that turned into goals. Many event management careers started in the family living room or back yard. CSEP candidates and interview respondents, retrace their career routes back to childhood.

A young event planner in his mid twenties, employed by the St. Louis Boys and Girls Club, details his start at planning events:

WF: I guess you could say I've been planning “events” most of my life. Perhaps the very first of these “events” were planned when I was five years old and decided to enact an entire Catholic mass liturgy in my living room. I convinced my parents to buy the cloths, from which I cut a whole in the top and designed impromptu vestment, and all the accessories (grape juice for wine, water, crackers for hosts, etc.). At age seven, my two friends and I drafted a movie script titled “The Fearsome Five,” featuring our own cast of super heroes. We also formed our own fantasy backyard, “fuzz-ball” baseball teams, complete with
real and imagined players and its own rule book, which included detailed instructions such as what would happen if a ball got stuck in a shrub near second base in the backyard (ground rule double). We would conduct our own games and create our own schedules. Well, I didn't become a priest, movie director, or baseball manager/player, but—now that I look at it—I guess the desire to organize and create has existed in me since I was born.

A former Radio City Music Hall Rockette’s eyes well up with tears as she reads an excerpt from her exam portfolio aloud to fellow members of a CSEP exam preparatory class in Las Vegas when reminiscing about where her love for music began:

PM: Music was already a large part of my life by the time I was four. My mom and I would listen to her favorite big band artists, the beat of the music would eventually overcome us, and we would find ourselves “cutting a rug” as we danced the jitterbug together for hours on end. I remember watching my dad in awe as he played my favorite piece, “Sharpshooters”, on the accordion, and the great sense of pride and accomplishment I felt the day that I too played that piece.

In response to this reading, one of the members of the class and also a former dancer, thirty years younger than the retired Rockette above, relates to this connection with family and career and relays a similar experience, “If you go all the way back to the beginning of my career in special events, it would be when I was about five years old. My older sister and I would put together plays and we would gather my parents and their friends and make them sit on the stairs while we put on a show in the foyer.”

This common thread of parental influences and family support as a creative outlet from an early age crosses economic lines as witnessed below with accounts from a “carnie” child as well as an upper-east-side New Yorker:

GB: I grew up in the carnival industry and, therefore, I was literally born into doing amusements and traveling and it has always been in my blood. My father was my mentor.

JD: My mother happened to be an interior decorator, always ripping a room apart and re-doing it. I learned how to hang wallpaper when I was nine years
old. Also, I always loved to entertain. It was very much in our family culture to entertain people.

Respondents overwhelmingly choose professionals in the field and parents as role models/mentors (See Table D.1 in Appendix). Event workers over sixty years old rarely credited any role model or mentor. The age group most likely to give credit to a role model or mentor was 31 – 40 years old. Also, the shorter the length of time in the industry, the more likely someone was to credit a role model/mentor. Males (74%) were more likely than females (64%) to acknowledge role models/mentors.

Career Challenges Theory

Information about Career Challenges Theory was gleaned through individual and focus group interviews. Although respondents discussed challenges such as technology, wearing too many hats (especially entrepreneurs and event workers employed by small businesses) and working too many hours, the principal recurring challenges mentioned by respondents had to do with dealing with clients—in particular, clients who did not value quality products or creativity, and worst of all dealt in unethical practices. One respondent commented, “People no longer want to pay for creativity because people don’t want to pay for quality.” Another respondent who had been Robert Goulet’s personal assistant for many years, and was hired to authentically re-create Venice gondoliers for the Venetian Hotel and Casino expressed his disenchantment with a very powerful client:

RG: I am easily disappointed about the business side of show business. After working so hard on the gondolier project, the casino stole it away from us, using an inferior product. Sheldon Adelson said to us, “I don’t ever want to hear the word ‘quality’ again.”
Another respondent, an energetic event planner for a catering company in her mid-thirties, with a master’s degree in Hospitality (Concentration in Event Management), and 10 years experience as a personal assistant and road manager for David Cassidy and Michael Crawford voiced similar disillusionment about her dealings with clients:

RH: One of my greatest challenges is working with clients who don’t understand the industry—a lot of back and forth over many details. It’s not just about pricing and selling, it is the fact that they don’t value your expertise. They won’t listen to you.

Most respondents acknowledged similar situations and considered these client issues to be one some of the most frustrating challenges they face in their career. However, this is an extremely resilient group of people who appear to see no downside to adversity. Rather, hardships are viewed as challenges to be overcome or a glitch to be corrected, but never a reason to give up. When asked, “What personal qualities might keep you from coping with a bad day?” none went down the negative path. All situations were described as challenges met and negotiated or corrected through mediation techniques. The “show must go on” spirit was described by many respondents as a necessary component of what they referred to as “controlled chaos.” In fact, one of the respondents in a focus group interview session used the show business metaphor to describe the work culture of the industry:

BF: Our business is like show business. Every rule of show business holds true for the events business:
You are only as good as your last show.
Be on time.
Be a professional
Never let them see you lose your cool.
And, above all, the show must go on!

Although workers in the special events arena, like most workers everywhere, suffer from many of the elements contained in Career Challenges Theory, such as stressors
brought on by long working hours, rapid advances in technology, and reduction in employee benefits, these appeared to be only minor considerations regarding career entry and continuance for those who participated in the study. Also, challenges that play such a key part of so many occupations today such as downsizing and reorganization did not present major obstacles to workers in this industry.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was examined through information gleaned from the focus group and interview question: Is how you define your values, beliefs and goals somehow related to the values in this career? Job acceptance decisions or entrepreneurial business start-ups as a special event career pattern showed commonalities in most respondents. Respondents were searching for challenging and interesting work that enabled use of creative and organizational skills as well as working relationships with like-minded people, who value teamwork. As one event designer noted, “My job is to share my vision with people who are part of my team, including my client. People need to feel they are working with me, not for me.”

Workers in the special events industry find it important to work with interesting people, feeling the need to partner with workers who share a set of common goals in the production of events. An extremely soft spoken, Asian-American whose work has almost entirely been focused on community and artistic events brings to light the importance of growing relationships with people in the industry:

WA: I found that working with a variety of people helps you see things from a different set of eyes. It's more than just the event itself, it is working with the people. It is developing good, trusting relationships with people that I find exciting.
The desire to work with interesting people also extends to working for interesting people who value working together as a team. Nowhere was this more evident than in one of the focus group discussions. The first example is from a participant in the focus group who once worked for a large casino resort property before realizing that the corporate environment was not a satisfying one for her, mainly because, no matter how often this large corporation referred to its members as “cast members” rather than employees, the culture lacked any genuine feeling of camaraderie.

RH: I always seem to be attracted to working for small, entrepreneurial companies that were started out of somebody’s garage or kitchen. My values seem to be a better fit there than in the corporate environment. It’s teamwork. That’s where the passion starts—being part of a team. It’s like it was choreographed. If Bill is too busy to do a task, I will step in—just to see that the work gets done. People will help me out in the same way. I have been fortunate to work in companies where there is a belief in people.

In contrast, another member of the focus group session who has spent the past 12 years working for large tradeshows views the teamwork of a large corporation very much a part of his job. He does, however, note that not all executives at his level share his work values:

BF: You need to work as a team. When I was at GES, I worked for a major movie studio with a multi-million dollar tradeshows booth for the Video Software Dealers Convention. The booth was a very intricate set design, with multi levels of set pieces. When the crew, who looked like a bag of pirates—with more tattoos than teeth—was finished building the set, I said to them, ‘You must be so proud of the beautiful work you created.’ They said that no-one had ever considered them part of the creative process, because they were just laborers, not designers. What a shame, because they are such an important part of the team.

This desire to work as a team, with like-minded people seemed to be centered on personal core values and a reflection of self. Workers believe that the team work creates a synergistic culture which ultimately benefits the client by providing a superior product.
AW: The most gratifying aspect about this industry, and my profession, is its freshness. I consider it to be very much a tailor-made and customized service so that you can never really predict what your next event will be, or at least how it will actually look. This diversity is partially a direct result of the diversity of the industries represented by our clients. These can range from engineering, boating, defense, gift and house wares, agriculture, mining, building, to name just a few.

Respondents repeatedly noted ethical practices in all phases of sales, marketing, and delivery of the intended products as important values when choosing a career. This set of shared values, combined with a strong work ethic, supported them in a comfort level across the spectrum of work. Commonality of belief and purpose link to pride of quality execution of an event scenario, to the degree where an employee or volunteer not stepping up to the level of a perceived correct attitude and behavior set, would be terminated, or asked to leave the event by those who are business owners. The “your word is your bond” philosophy exists in this industry, even in today’s litigious society and is made obvious by two interviewees with very different backgrounds. Both are extremely gregarious men who are well-liked and respected by their colleagues. The first a very successful interior designer/event decorator:

JD: Trust is a big deal to me. You need to be trusting and trustful in this business. If you say you’re going to do something, you do it. It is far more valuable to shake someone’s hand, rather than sign a contract.

The second respondent, very much an every man’s man, retired from the military where he met his future wife who is still serving in the air force:

GB: I planned certain events within my squadron while in the military. I decided that this is what I really wanted to do. So, I started buying my own equipment and eventually started my own company. I started laying the groundwork about three years before getting out of the military. I try to be very honest, ethical, and creative in my work. Those are the key three things. They are played out in my work life and my home life.
The respondents of this study reveal a very self-actualized group. Rather than being security conscious, special events industry workers who participated in the study demonstrated a strong desire for fulfillment: to be “all that they can be.” They are searching for positions they find interesting, with opportunities for self expression. For example, one respondent remarked, “The career gave me the freedom to do what I wanted to do—to be the person I was intended to be.”

The personal quality rising to the forefront in all interviews was a desire by the respondent to create a positive event experience clients will remember. One respondent commented in her personal essay, “The unifying goal is always to satisfy the needs of the client and to produce the best event ever within the client’s criteria and budget, and most importantly, to be imaginative and innovative in its execution.”

All described an almost euphoric rush of positive energy when the long negotiated logistics, food, games, music, decorations, and myriad elements of the event worked on the expected level. To observe these attendees enjoying the overall event scenario seemed more important than the monetary remuneration, thus giving them the possibility of achieving a very high feeling of satisfaction and a “rush” when all of the elements of an event come together at just the right moment. According to Julia Rutherford Silvers (2004), “creating and producing events is an exhilarating and sometimes exhausting occupation, but it is always rewarding—emotionally and spiritually.”

This rush is still encountered by workers who appear to maintain a real love for their occupation, even after 38 years in the business.

*JD:* *I love the idea that everything is always changing and the pace at which it moves. I love the urgency. When you get into the production end of the event, that last hour—right before the doors open—is what I live for. I am literally on a high. It is a high that I can’t compare to anything else.*
The participants in this study voiced a strong connection about their experiences in this occupation leading to a sense of helping others by making a difference in people's lives. An event manager who is employed at the Harley Davidson Café views her work in this corporate environment as one that provides many opportunities to “give back” to the community:

KM: Being in this industry allows me to be a volunteer for a lot of organizations like Make a Wish Foundation, Angel Flight, City of Hope and Nathan Adelson Hospice. I think that if I was not in the industry, I would not have had those opportunities. Because of the contacts I have made in this industry, I am able to help do good things.

Workers in the special events industry feel a strong connection with “making dreams come true.” This appears to be very much linked with a reflection of self. Discussions about passion for the industry seemed to be at the heart of this area of self-fulfillment. As one respondent in a focus group interview stated very emotionally, “We have the eye for which to make magic happen. We make magic for people who don’t know how to do it. You have to be passionate about building a dream for somebody. If you don’t have passion for the industry, go out and sell shoes or something!” This “making dreams come true” feeling about the job is exhibited below by two CSEP exam candidates in their personal essays. The first passage was written by an event coordinator from Cincinnati, Ohio:

GN: My desire to make a difference in my chosen field turned my career to private events, both social and corporate. Groups of people where getting together for either a family celebration such as a wedding or for an awards program for a corporation. My experience allowed me to work with clients to plan these special events., Looking over an event as it happened gave me a sense of satisfaction know that my efforts and organization helped to make this event a success for my clients.
The other future CSEP writes in her personal essay: “An event takes the visions and dreams of a group of people, and under the appropriate ambiance, makes those dreams and visions come true. It’s like a creative dream that came right out of Touched By An Angel.”

It is evident from these examples that this “making dreams come true” feature which leads to producing a quality product is a vital component to a reflection of self shared by so many in this occupation. Julia Rutherford Silvers (2004) reminds us that, “an event is all about people—people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience . . . We must always remember that although not every event is a milestone for us, it is for the client or guest. . . . Every event is special. . . . We, as special event professionals, make dreams come true.”

As one respondent, employed by the movie industry in Hollywood, so eloquently wrote in her CSEP exam personal essay about her dedication to quality, “Aristotle said, ‘We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.’ I’d like to acquire that habit myself.” With another focus group interviewee noting, “After you’ve spent two or three months with a client putting together a program and then seeing how successful it is, there’s nothing like it. They walk in the room and think that it is just the greatest place to be. . . . just being able to put on such a spectacular event and making people happy makes this such a wonderful industry.”

This study reveals that workers in this industry are not primarily motivated by income, retirement benefits or prestige/status (See Tables D.2 and D.3 in Appendix). As one event manager noted, “I will work for less money in order to be in a creative environment. I look forward to going to work every day. We are idea sellers.”
Many respondents placed a high level of importance in finding a career that was congruent with who they were, to the extent that numerous experienced a “eureka moment” and related a feeling of belonging, as in “Here is something I can do!”

EW: When I began working events, it was on a local community level, wearing a wide variety of hats. As I realized how happy I was, and how I had such a sense of accomplishment, I knew what I wanted to be when I finally grew up, even though I was then 45 years old!

Predominant decision-making factors used when choosing a career in the special events overwhelmingly supports Social Identity Theory. The highest rated factors included interesting work, opportunity for self-expression, and freedom of action. Therefore, the tie between occupation and identity (personal values) would seem to be apparent among special event workers, and supports Turner’s view of a role-person merger where the role is deeply merged with the person and socialization in that role affects personality formation (1978).

Career Pattern Theory

The study revealed that career patterns, especially seen in the decision making process, may be specific to gender. In general, female survey respondents rated career decision factors slightly higher than men. However, the survey data reveal that men placed a higher importance on experience or jumping right in, meaning more hands on, and were not as likely to further their education. Men followed a more impulsive, but traditional career pattern by working in the industry part time and going directly from school to a career. According to one interview respondent, “I started as a delivery boy in a flower shop while in college and decided to quit school to design my own flowers. I
was excited about the industry and didn’t want to wait. I wanted to get busy learning about designing florals for events."

Another respondent, after selling his business in the Midwest, moved to Las Vegas to pursue a career in special events. This extremely overweight gentleman had a most difficult time securing employment in a town and industry which can be so marketing and perception driven. Once again, perseverance and resilience won out:

BF: I went to GES on a one day call through a temp agency, at 38 years old—to drive a truck—and stayed for 7 ½ years. I worked my way up the ranks, cleaning extension cords, maintaining drapes, but I was learning the business. Then, I was promoted to account executive and finally to events manager.

While women were willing to change occupations more frequently than men, they were more methodical in their decision making process. They determined steps needed, found educational programs and spoke with professionals in the industry more often than their male counterparts.

Super’s Self-Concept Theory (1957), which is a refinement of Miller and Form’s Career Pattern Theory (1951) was used to classify career entry patterns of respondents. The content analysis revealed that 49.2% of the personal essays conveyed a conventional pattern (See Table C.1 in Appendix). Overall, survey respondents placed importance on choosing careers that suited their interest and abilities.

Career Pattern Theory proved to be a useful tool for tracking entry patterns as well as examining elements that entered into the decision making process when choosing a career in the special events industry. It also adds support in many cases to the logical aspect of Planned Happenstance Theory. Those respondents who sought out educational programs, talked with industry professionals, and determined steps needed to enter their career in the industry were preparing for the luck they encountered down the road.
Education, Work Skills and Job Related Attributes

Respondents who have earned a four-year undergraduate degree were represented by 44.6%, with another 15.2% completing some post graduate work. Respondents who had earned their Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP) designation totaled 85 (16.1%), which is higher than the percentage of ISES members who have earned this designation (5.1%). Thus, 52.5% of CSEPs chose to complete the on-line survey. Of these 85 CSEPs who responded to the survey, twelve (14.1%) have also earned their Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation, two (2.3%) have earned their Certified Equipment Rental Professional (CERP) designation, and two (2.3%) have earned their Professional Bridal Consultant (PBC) designation.

Education and professional development were deemed important by many of the respondents, not just education/professional development through courses and seminars, but a genuine thirst for knowledge and life-long learning.

BG: One of the things I love the most about this business is that I learn something new everyday. Hell, not something, many things. Being exposed to the people I work with, combined with the travel opportunities, and created continual learning experiences.

Many respondents also viewed education as a way to give something back to the industry they love.

BL: I have a goal to further develop and strengthen my event management systems, making them seamless and better documented. I also plan to increase my involvement with ISES and the CSEP program. Contributing to the body of knowledge and development of the industry are both important to me. I would like to teach event management courses. I want to be a part of developing the future of our industry.

Forty-three percent of the respondents were self employed; and 56.1% of the respondents work in organizations with 11 – 50 employees. Employment status was a
factor in the elements used to base career entry decision. Respondents who were self-employed were less likely to make decisions to enter the career of special events management based on prestige/status, employment security, or health care benefits.

Overall, women rated skills higher than men. Women also appeared to be more aware of the advantages of possessing both right brain and left brain type skills: “Planning events has always been a rewarding experience for me. It appeals to me because it requires a combination of creativity, organizational skills, strategic and analytic ability and attention to detail.” Additionally, women rated skills such as stress management, multi-tasking, and time management much higher than men. Women also were more likely to discuss skills in their personal essays for the CSEP exam. The example below is quite representative of many of the essays written by women:

BW: I took a vocational test assessing my interests alongside my skills, and results summarized that planning and organizing were my greatest strengths. This simply solidified what my background had already demonstrated—that ever since I was in high school, I have loved to plan, organize, and coordinate school, church and community events.

Most interview and focus group respondents, regardless of gender, stressed communication as being one of the most important skills to possess in the special events industry. In addition to being creative, this business requires tremendous attention to detail and an important need to communicate these ever changing details in a project management style:

EW: Communication is the only word that equals success in this profession. Without communication, my excellent vendors, my perfect venue, my staff or dedicated workers and my skilled warehousemen would founder and so would my event. If everyone is on the same page and everyone knows exactly what is expected of him or her, and I know what is expected of me with him or her, success is possible. That means that every detail is important, every change is critical, every person is a VIP. With today’s technology, instant communication via e-mail is a necessary and convenient “must-do”, but regular face-to-face
meetings are still necessary. Building a strong working relationship with vendors is worth more than silver and gold that pays big dividends in future events.

A passive style of communication does not work for those employed in the special events industry. Too many things are thrown at workers which require a quick adjustment, not only logistically, but also attitudinally. Workers need to be thick skinned, not taking the bluntness as a personal criticism.

JD: I don’t deal with pettiness well. I am a direct communicator. I tell it like it is. I believe in open and honest communication. People who cannot deal with openness and honesty leave my business pretty quickly.

Summary of Findings

As demonstrated above, respondents of the study reveal a rather highly educated and trained group who value education and professional development and on-the-job learning opportunities. They enjoy working for themselves or for small companies where they can use both creative and analytical talents, placing a high value on their ability to communicate. The findings of the study also bring to light that workers in the special events industry feel extremely lucky to be able to work at something everyday that they love. They credit professionals in the industry, as well as family and friends, for serving as role models and mentors. The primary challenges in the industry appear to stem from the client/provider relationship. Event professionals share a strong sense of helping others, a passion for the industry, take tremendous pride in their work, and value education and professional development. These elements are categorized into sociological and social psychological theories (See Table 4.1) in order to organize data for analysis.
Career tracking, using Super’s Self-Concept Theory, a component of Career Pattern Theory, reveals most special event workers, who participated in this study, experienced stable/conventional career patterns (See Table 4.2 Below).

Table 4.2 Super’s Self-Concept Theory Career Patterns

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<th>Multiple Trial</th>
<th>Double Track</th>
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<td>215</td>
<td>91</td>
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Further discussion of the above findings will be presented in the next chapter. Conclusions will be made and recommendations for further studies will be suggested.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

No matter how many times I work on events, it never fails to make me stop and proudly think, "I did it! I really did it!" The thrill of seeing an event from inception to birth is undeniably an unforgettable feeling.

A butterfly from a caterpillar has nothing over a perfect event!

(Certified Special Events Professional exam candidate, 2001.)

Summary

The research in this study seeks to develop a greater understanding of the occupational/career choice of workers in the special events industry, and explore which sociological and social psychological theories best explain the entry of those in this particular occupation. The study explored the loosely connected and sometimes disparate sociological literature on work and career entry and extracted five theories that help explain and predict career choice. These theories were then examined in regard to one’s career choice into the special events industry. The study found that some theories served to better explain occupational entry than others for workers in this particular industry. Existing literature as pertaining to career choice and practical application to the special events industry was furthered through this study.
The following dominant themes about workers in the special events industry emerged: a passion for the industry, a search for excellence, a thirst for knowledge, and occupation as a reflection of self. In other words, the study strongly supported Social Identity Theory.

Although Social Identity Theory emerged as the most dominate theory, Planned Happenstance Theory was the next strongest theory supported by the study. Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory was ultimately subsumed under both of these theories. Career Challenges Theory did little to explain career entry in this industry, other than the fact that challenges presented are not viewed as such by special events workers. In fact, they were almost welcomed—seen as opportunities for personal growth and learning. Much of the passion exhibited toward the industry seems to stem from the combination of the fact that the job is different every day, and when things do go awry, they are presented with the chance to overcome the obstacles. They adopt a “show-must-go-on” positive attitude when in the throws of production. And, finally, Career Pattern Theory primarily served as a tracking tool for career patterns.

It is interesting to note that while Social Identity Theory and Planned Happenstance Theory were strong enough to stand on their own, some elements of various theories worked well together. Such as, the role-model and family influence aspects of Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory, along with reflection of self through the personal values feature of Social Identity Theory, and the life stages components of Career Pattern Theory served to complement each other. The interweaving of these theories was most readily seen when analyzing the CSEP essay exams where candidates reflected on childhood role models/mentors, primarily family members, who played a
large role in contributing to the development of their personal value system.

Consequently, this provided a foundation for many of the exam candidates which resulted in a stable career pattern.

Qualities such as a strong work ethic, dedication to the industry, and search for excellence could be traced back to a reflection of self (Social Identity Theory). This theme was woven throughout most conversations and observations. These people see the events they produce as a reflection of who they are. As one focus group respondent so eloquently stated, “Like an artist painting a picture, we’re just using a bigger palette. We’re using a venue as our palette.” Note that an element in Career Pattern Theory (attempt to actualize skills and interests reflective of one’s self concept) also supported Social Identity Theory.

Taking pride in the job was evident in all respondents, even when describing volunteer work. “In other words, if people are on a committee I am chairing, I try to create value in what they are doing on that committee, and this creates a passion. And, suddenly you know everything escalates to the highest level because it’s not just me and a couple of other people working around the clock to make this go. It’s everybody’s search for excellence through their passion.”

Respondents reported that premeditated motivation is often not the guiding factor for those who chose occupations in the field of special events. Rather, serendipity and happenstance played a significant role. Many times when people discovered there was a path to event professionalism, it instantly materialized as the occupational answer, and continued for a lifetime of work. Respondents seemed to believe that they were truly blessed by “lucking into” their careers. Although they were not ready to credit the
planning component in Planned Happenstance Theory, it was there and teased out by the triangulation of research methods utilized in this study. Some respondents realized they had been preparing for their career all along but were unaware that the cumulative result of their acquired skills and experiences would be a special events career. According to one of the respondents, an artist who entered the special events industry late in life, "I would have customers come up to my table at a flea market, look at my product and ask me how long it took me to make it. I would respond: my entire life." This viewpoint also applies to Planned Happenstance Theory. Workers are training throughout their lives in order to "fall into" their careers.

Cumulative Childhood Experiences Theory was woven throughout many stories of when, how and where interests were developed that eventually lead to a career in special events. Most often, passions of future event workers were sparked in living rooms, patios and backyards. In fact, Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory helped support Social Identity Theory and Planned Happenstance Theory. Most respondents recounted wonderful childhood memories with supportive family members as role models, crediting these people and these special moments as the beginning of their careers.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Both human agency and structure are operative in describing career choice. Social influences such as family, education, and career pattern have an impact on career choice for workers in the special events industry. Workers appear to experience a work environment that supports individual innovation, creativity, and autonomy, which ultimately leads to a career that is a reflection. Theories best explaining entry into this
particular industry have not yet been fully explored, however, based on this study, it is recommended that Social Identity Theory serve as a starting point for future research. The strong connection of self and occupation for workers in the special events industry, begs for additional studies of workers in the industry who are members of allied associations such as International Festivals and Events Association, American Bridal Consultants, and National Association of Catering Executives. The mere fact that there is a special events department located at the White House, as well as Spanish Harlem's largest social service organization demonstrates the pervasive nature of this emerging industry. Within the sociology of special events are contained the tools to rectify the lacking or insufficient research in career pattern factors, and will be the source for research that stimulates further investigation in the future. Such studies might also go beyond allied organizations to compare and contrast similar occupations in other areas of hospitality such as food and beverage and operations, as well as business occupations such as marketing and accounting.

Studies of workers in the artistic labor market would be interesting as they relate to social theories used in this study. Respondents in this study of special events workers were not alienated from their work. Rather, they appeared to possess artistic talents that permitted them to be a part of projects from inception to fruition. This finding is possibly due to the artistic nature of those employed in the industry. Thoughts, feelings, and motivations freely associated with artists and musicians were repeated in research conducted in support of this study. According to Menger's artistic labor market study (1999), artists rely on skills as well as opportunities to take on even more challenging assignments that bring them greater knowledge and more rewards. They exhibit less
loyalty to particular organizations than they do to their professional community. They are much like small firms, working with a network of equally small units partnering with suppliers, and often competitors, from one project to another.

Conversely, although *Career Challenges Theory* was not well supported in this study, it may prove to be a more significant tool when studying occupations where workers are not as self-actualized as special event workers and suffer from stressors of the work environment to the extent of experiencing emotional labor and ultimately deindividuation. For example, front-line service industry workers in the field of hospitality such as front desk agents with exceedingly repetitive jobs and high customer contact, may place greater importance on various elements of *Career Challenges Theory*, such as long work hours and technology restraints, than special events industry workers who experience more freedom in their jobs, due to working for smaller organizations and the low repetition task aspect of their work environment.

A critical incident study, using *Planned Happenstance Theory*, to determine career pattern trigger points that contributed to or detracted from career patterns would be very interesting. Critical incidents could be examined for both serendipitous and logical incidents. For example, did changing a major in college from engineering to marketing prove to be critical to a career path? Did a part-time job as a bus person at a local country club expose a future event professional to the industry, and therefore proved critical for their ultimate career choice?

Findings of the study that made obvious differences in gender lead to a review of the literature on *Preference Theory* which attempts to explain women’s employment choices today and tomorrow. Preference Theory may be added to future studies in other
disciplines. Preference theorists believe that more multidisciplinary and multi-method research is needed to draw the separate strands together in triangulated research designs (Hakim, 2000). Hakim warns social science researchers: “The segmentation of social science disciplines produces knowledge that is narrow, partial, and fragmented in the perspective that it offers on the world. . . . What social science fails to notice may be just as important as what it does notice.”

This project revealed relationships between established sociological tenants and a passion for fulfilling, useful work. The genuine caring and pride of accomplishment was referenced repeatedly by respondents in the interviews and CSEP exam essays. The link between social science theories that might explain how social influences have an affect on occupational decisions cannot be ignored. The special events industry is ripe for future sociological research. In addition to work in occupations, it promises rich research ideas in the areas of leisure, family, gender, emotional labor, and symbolic interactionism, to name a few.

Conclusion

The level of professionalization continues to move forward in the special events industry. According to Goldblatt (2004), event workers in the first wave were event planners primarily concerned with process through mastery of tactics. In the second wave, event managers were primarily concerned with outcomes through the careful monitoring and evaluation of measurable and meaningful outcomes. In the emerging third wave, event leaders will be even more concerned with sustainable engagement as they endeavor to strategically design events that will have sustainable outcomes and
continue to engage the participation of their guests beyond the official ending of the event. While striving to become a “legitimate” profession, the need for academic credentials is increasing. Perhaps one day in the not too distant future, eventology (Goldblatt 2004) will join the established sciences of psychology, sociology, and anthropology as more and more human beings understand that life is a series of human events and the methods, outcomes, and sustained engagement used to create and orchestrate these events must be carefully studied to continually improve the human condition.

This study, like most studies, presented more questions than answers to why and how people find their way along the path that may ultimately become their career. It may prove to only be a seed that helps us grow our knowledge about how to prepare students who appear to have an interest in this field. However, for now, the best counsel comes from the systematic study of those who have been in the trenches. One of the special event industry’s most talented, passionate workers, and a participant in the study, offers advice, which again reflects the importance of social identity theory, to those who are considering entering any career: “Employ the best direction of your cumulative skill level as a way to go forward. Take your experience, analyze it and decide what is going to make the best use of your talents and experiences. But, most importantly, choose a career that stimulates you every day.”
APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. Which, if any, role models/mentors influenced (directly or indirectly) your decision to choose an occupation/career in the special events industry?

0 - None
1 - Parent/Step Parent
2 - Sibling
3 - Other Family Member
4 - Teacher
5 - Friend
6 - Co-Worker
7 - Supervisor
8 - Professional in the Field
9 - Film/TV Characters
10 - Other (Please Specify): ________________________________

2. How important were each of the following factors in your decision to enter this industry? Please rate each of the factors below on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not important at all, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Important, and 5 = Very Important.

_____ Prestige/Status Achieved
_____ Potential Income
_____ Employment Security
_____ Healthcare Benefits
_____ Power Over Decision Making
_____ Freedom of Action
_____ Flexible Work Hours
____ Interesting Work
____ Opportunity for Self Expression
____ Working with Interesting People
____ Sense of Helping Others
____ Retirement Fund (Added to Survey After Pre-Test)
____ Other/Specify: ___________________________________

3. What skills have proven to be the most important to your occupation/career? (Select all that apply and rate each where 1 = Not Important At All and 5 = Very Important.)

____ Oral Communication
____ Written Communication
____ Listening
____ Computer
____ Organizational
____ Interpersonal
____ Detail-Oriented
____ Leadership
____ Decision-Making
____ Problem-Solving
____ Stress-Management
____ Multi-Tasking
____ Public Speaking
____ Teaching
____ Networking (Pre-test only - Deleted from main survey)
____ Sales
____ Marketing
____ Negotiating (Pre-test only - Deleted from main survey)
____ Accounting
____ Time Management
____ Financial Management (Pre-test only - Deleted from main survey)
____ Personnel Management
Thinking of how you chose your career, how much do you agree or disagree with the following decision making steps: (Select all that apply and rate each where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree).

4. _____ I decided what I valued most in an occupation.

5. _____ I figured out what I was and was not ready to sacrifice to achieve my career goals.

6. _____ I was willing to change occupations if I was not satisfied with a career in the special events industry.

7. _____ I identified employers, firms, institutions relevant to my career possibilities.

8. _____ I resisted attempts of parents or friends to influence my decision of choosing a career outside of the special events industry.

9. _____ I chose a career that would fit my interests.

10. _____ I spoke with a person or persons already employed in the special events industry.

11. _____ I chose a career that suited my abilities.

12. _____ I found out information about educational programs in special events management.

13. _____ I determined the steps needed to enter a career in the special events industry.

14. _____ I changed employment frequently, without being established in a career, before deciding on a career in the special events industry.

15. _____ I gave up a potential lifetime career in a field unrelated to the special events industry before deciding on a career in the special events industry.
16. I started working part-time/summers around my school schedule; progressing to numerous entry-level positions in various fields, before deciding on a career in the special events industry.

17. I went directly from school into a career in the special events industry.

In order to gain a better understanding of the type of persons within the special events industry, could you please tell me a little bit about yourself? This information will be confidential and used for statistical/comparative purposes only.

18. What is your gender: Male Female

19. What was your age on your last birthday? ______________

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   1 – High school graduate
   2 – Some college or trade school
   3 – Two-year college degree >>>>>>>>>>>>>>What field?
      _____ Hospitality
      _____ Business
      _____ Communications/PR/Journalism
      _____ Fine Arts
      _____ Liberal Arts
      _____ Other
   4 – Four-year college degree >>>>>>>>>>>>>>What field?
      _____ Hospitality
      _____ Business
      _____ Communications/PR/Journalism
      _____ Fine Arts
      _____ Liberal Arts
      _____ Other
   5 – Post graduate work >>>>>>>>>>>>>>What field?
      _____ Hospitality
      _____ Business
      _____ Communications/PR/Journalism
      _____ Fine Arts
      _____ Liberal Arts
      _____ Other

21. How many years have you been working in the Special Events Industry? ______

22. Are you employed by an organization or self-employed?
   1 - An Organization
   2 - Self-Employed

23. How many full-time employees work in your organization? ____________
24. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions to assist with our research?


25. What certifications have you earned? (Select all that apply)
   
   — None
   — CSEP (Certified Special Events Professional)
   — CMP (Certified Meeting Professional)
   — CPCE (Certified Professional Catering Executive)
   — CERP (Certified Event Rental Professional)
   — CFE (Certified Festival and Event Executive)
   — CAE (Certified Association Executive)
   — CEM (Certified in Exhibition Management)
   — PBC (Professional Bridal Consultant)
   — Other (Please Specify): ___________________________

26. Association Memberships other than ISES: (Select all that apply)
   
   — None
   — MPI (Meeting Professionals International)
   — NACE (National Association of Catering Executives)
   — IAEM (International Association for Exposition Management)
   — PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association)
   — ABC (Association of Bridal Consultants)
   — ARA (American Rental Association)
   — ASAE (American Society of Association Executives)
   — IFEA (International Festivals and Events Association)
   — HSMAI (Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International)
   — Other/Specify: ___________________________

27. Professional Development: (Select all that apply)
   
   — None
   — Attendance at ISES Conference for Professional Development
   — Attendance at ISES Regional Education Conferences
   — Attendance at The Special Event
   — Attendance at Event Solutions
   — Attendance at Other Industry Related Conferences/Seminars/Tradeshows
   — Attendance at Other Non-Industry Related Conferences/Seminars/Tradeshows
28. Why did you join ISES? (Please rank in order of most to least important, with 1 = most important)
   _____ Networking
   _____ Education
   _____ Certification
   _____ Code of Ethics
   _____ Sense of Belonging
   _____ Other (Please Specify) _______________________________

29. What benefits have proven to be the most important from your membership in ISES? (Please rank in order of most to least important, with 1 = most important.)
   _____ Networking
   _____ Education
   _____ Certification
   _____ Code of Ethics
   _____ Sense of Belonging
   _____ Other (Please Specify) ______________________________

Those are all of our questions. Thank you so much for your time.

In order to be eligible for the drawing for the Conference for Professional Development, please include your first name and contact information so that we may contact you if you win. Please be assured that this information will be used only for the drawing and no one will contact you for any other purpose.

First name: ___________

Email address: __________________________

Telephone number (optional): __________________________

END - SEND SURVEY
Dear Fellow ISES Member:

While many of you may know me as a fellow ISES member, I am also a student in the Sociology Department at the University of Nevada - Las Vegas, working on my Ph.D. For my dissertation I am conducting a survey of ISES members in order to analyze career paths of those who chose special events management as an occupation. The purpose of this study is to identify experiences that lead to choosing a career in special events management and I would greatly appreciate your assistance.

Your participation in this study will be very valuable to help educators design curriculum for courses and degrees in special events management. By sharing your opinions, you will also be contributing to the career planning and development of future special events professionals. So, please take a few moments to reflect upon your career and complete the on-line survey by visiting this link:

www.downeyresearch.com/ISESsurvey.

There are no “right or wrong” answers, only your much needed opinions. Be assured that all responses will be treated confidentially. In addition, respondents who complete this survey will have the option of entering a drawing to win a complimentary registration package to attend the ISES Event World 2004 Conference for Professional Development, held in Chicago on August 13-15th which is worth $600.00.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance and I wish you much continued success in all your creative endeavors!

Sincerely,

Kathy Nelson, CSEP, CMP
Email: profhotel@aol.com
(702) 895-3931
APPENDIX B

CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA SHEET

Table B.1 Content Analysis Data Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Candidate</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Planned Happenstance Theory</th>
<th>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</th>
<th>Career Challenges Theory</th>
<th>Social Identity Theory</th>
<th>Career Pattern Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feb-00</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Open to Learning; Built a Reputation—Heavily Recruited</td>
<td>Mother, Father as role models</td>
<td>Opportunity for creative expression through dance</td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dec-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Open to Learning; Driven</td>
<td>Sibling, Mother, Parental Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chose career that reflected personal values.</td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jan-00</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression; Same Skill Set; Networking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal values were enhanced by career.</td>
<td></td>
<td>DTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jan-00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Apr-99</td>
<td>Parents served as personal and professional mentors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Candidate</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Planned Happenstance Theory</th>
<th>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</th>
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<th>Social Identity Theory</th>
<th>Career Pattern Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jun-00</td>
<td>Extremely creative as a child; mother and sister were role models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jan-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jan-99</td>
<td>Yoga Instructor to Yoga sessions for meetings and then yoga sessions for events; to Event Planner</td>
<td>Very supportive parents. Encouraged creativity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Aug-00</td>
<td>Volunteer work while being a homemaker; Community work brought on the passion for events; to event planner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helping Others</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Aug-00</td>
<td>Photographer to Event - Photographer to Event Planner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jan-02</td>
<td>Logical Progression from bartender to food server to banquets to catering to events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to make a difference in my chosen field.</td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Career Pattern Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aug-01</td>
<td>Family Band to Beauty Pageants where she won $30,000 in scholarships, to school, to working for a DMC (Sales, planning, administration, coordination). Opened an event company.</td>
<td>Sibling, Mother, Parental Support; Strong tie in emotionally to family music and band.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression: From Volunteering on Community Service Projects to Event Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Aug-00</td>
<td>Architect to event design. She answered an ad recruiting for an architect with CAD experience. From event design to an event producer.</td>
<td>Mother and Aunt were in the industry.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
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Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 20-03</td>
<td>Family business was 5 minutes away from daughter's day care. She started working 3 hours a day, 3 days a week as a receptionist while her daughter was in day care. That quickly escalated to a full-time job as a receptionist/secretary; then she took the position of controller when that became open, then general manager, then owner of the business after her mother retired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 21-03</td>
<td>Music Degree to Professional Musician to Club Date Performer to Event Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Feb</td>
<td>Mar-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Mar</td>
<td>Music Talent and Business Acumen from an Young Age Conventional Self-Expression and Recognition STA MLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Aug</td>
<td>Musical Talent and Business Acumen to Event Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Mar</td>
<td>Dancer, Cocktail Server, Hotel Operations, Travel Agent, Casino Marketing, Casino Entertainment, Casino Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 May</td>
<td>Exam Date Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Jun</td>
<td>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Jul</td>
<td>Career Challenges Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Aug</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Sep</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Oct</td>
<td>Exam Date Planned</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Family Values can be achieved through a family business. DTH
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Career Challenges Theory</th>
<th>Social Identity Theory</th>
<th>Career Pattern Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Bach. Degree in Speech Communication s. Masters in Corporate Communication s/ Public Relations</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Mar-01</td>
<td>Family Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Values; Recognition thru Awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mar-01</td>
<td>Planned, organized, and coordinated school events as well as church and community events</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td></td>
<td>Helping Others: Fundraiser/Not for Profit Events</td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td>Mother, Stepfather</td>
<td></td>
<td>Value - Learning, Strive for excellence, higher education</td>
<td>INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Jun-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Logical Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education, Age</td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Planned Happenstance Theory</td>
<td>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Cold Prep Chef to Busboy, to Waiter, to Bartender, to Banquet Manager, to Event Coordinator, to Owner</td>
<td>Working with girlfriend's mother in her catering company; this woman is a tremendous mentor; she ends up being his mother-in-law; refers to her as a genius at developing systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mar-01</td>
<td>Business Degree, Restaurant Business to Entertainment Business, to Event Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not-for-Profit; Sense of Helping Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>UNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Planned events in high school and college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Apr-02</td>
<td>Amateur sports photographer, Wedding photographer, event photographer, event planner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not-for Profit; Sense of helping others</td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Planned Happenstance Theory</td>
<td>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>Food Service, Florist, Wedding Planner, Event Planner</td>
<td>Age 14: Starting working at Chuck E Cheese where he helped plan their events; then at 16 she started working for a florist.</td>
<td>Not for profit: sense of helping others</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>Youth Group Events, Beauty Pageants, Event Planner</td>
<td>Recognition and Expression of Self</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Aug-02</td>
<td>Meeting Planner, Chef, Event Planner</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>STA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mar-01</td>
<td>Radio, AV Tech (worked product introduction event); Décor Company, Event Company</td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Mar-02</td>
<td>Dishwasher, Busboy, Waiter, Bartender, Banquet Mgr., Catering Director, Night Club Mgr., Tent Rental; Event Planner</td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Aug-01</td>
<td>Baptist Church (Planned annual dinner and concerts) to Fundraising to Event Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Jun-01</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteering; Recognition &amp; Awards, Helping Others</td>
<td>DTH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Planned Happenstance Theory</td>
<td>Cumulative Childhood Experience Theory</td>
<td>Career Challenges Theory</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Aug-03</td>
<td>Catering; Serving; Bartender; Event Coordination to Event Planning</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Jan-02</td>
<td>Sense of Helping Others</td>
<td>STA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Aug-98</td>
<td>Traveled on the Road with Uncle's Band during the summers</td>
<td>STA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Aug-99</td>
<td>Welcome Challenges</td>
<td>CON</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Mar-99</td>
<td>Catering to Event Planning</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td>Baked Wedding Cakes for additional part-time career to Event Planner</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td>Not for profit: sense of helping others</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Career Challenges Theory</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Nov-03</td>
<td>Independent Restaurant to Full Service Restaurant in Hotel, Off-Premise Catering Sales, to Event Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td></td>
<td>High School and College Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Degree to Historic Plantation (Planned Events as part of her job); Then a not-for-profit job doing fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td></td>
<td>High School Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Jan-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Nov-02</td>
<td>Nov-02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Jan-00</td>
<td>Parental Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Jan-99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Airport Promotions, Small Events, DMC, Event Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Waiter, Helped plan employee Christmas party, started catering business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Career Challenges Theory</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Summer job while in college, sparked an intense interest, after college went straight into industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of Helping Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technology Challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Hotel Industry to Hotel Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Candidate</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Career Challenges Theory</td>
<td>Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>Career Pattern Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Law Enforcement to Side Business in Limo Transportation to Association Mgt. Company to Event Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MLT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table B.2 Conversations on a Cruise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>ISES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/07/03</td>
<td>Dr. Joe Goldblatt</td>
<td>Started out as a performance artist. Then, he opened his own special event business in Washington, D.C. Founding President of ISES. Founded Event Management Program at George Washington University.</td>
<td>Undergrad degree in Theatre, M.S. in Marketing, Ph.D. at George Washington University.</td>
<td>Passion for the industry. Thirst for knowledge.</td>
<td>Expectations of others are sometimes too high.</td>
<td>“ISES isn’t really about the education or the networking for business, it is about the family of ISES. After 9/11, attendance at the local Washington D.C. ISES chapter meetings increased, not because of mining for new business, but as a comfort to one another. When I lost my job as Dean @ Johnson &amp; Wales University, I was compelled to attend a local ISES meeting to be with people who understood me and cared for me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/7/03 8:30 PM (Dinner)</td>
<td>Ron Gueneri</td>
<td>12 Years as a travel agent; managed a dance school; managed a flower shop; personal assistant to Robert Goulet; toured for 5 years with Broadway Musicals; Farrington productions—developed the gondoliers at the Venetian Hotel and Casino.</td>
<td>Culinary Arts Management Degree</td>
<td>The industry is good fit for my entertainment and project management background.</td>
<td>Easily disappointed about the business side of show business. After working so hard on the gondolier project, the casino stole it away from us, using an inferior product. Sheldon Addelson said to us, “I don’t ever want to hear the word ‘quality’ again.</td>
<td>New to ISES. Join because of the networking and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>11/08/03</td>
<td>Gary Boardman</td>
<td>Air Force, grew up in the carnival business. Strong interest in games; went into a partnership and started my own business. The idea was good. The partner wasn't. I grew from a 10,000 sq. foot warehouse to a 50,000 square warehouse.</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>The theme is business. People no longer want to pay for creativity because people don't want to pay for quality.</td>
<td>Gary has a high interest in risk management issues because of the liability issues surrounding some of his games like <em>Sumo Wrestler</em>.</td>
<td>Networking, networking, networking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Experience Education

Gary Boardman - Air Force, grew up in the carnival business. Strong interest in games; went into a partnership and started my own business. The idea was good. The partner wasn't. I grew from a 10,000 sq. foot warehouse to a 50,000 square warehouse.

High School

Strengths: The theme is business. People no longer want to pay for creativity because people don't want to pay for quality.

Weaknesses: Gary has a high interest in risk management issues because of the liability issues surrounding some of his games like *Sumo Wrestler*.

ISES: Networking, networking, networking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
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<th>Education</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>11/09/03 3:30 PM (After Education Session)</td>
<td>Steve Kemble</td>
<td>Always knew he wanted to be in the special events industry. After college he went to work for the campaign of a candidate for congress from Dallas. When the campaign was over, he took a position with the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, to promote the city of Dallas. Then, he started his own company with 7 - 8 employees. He has had this company for 21 years.</td>
<td>Bach. Degree in Public Relations. This was the only educational track at the time.</td>
<td>Passion: You have to love what you are doing. Goal Oriented: You have to define what you want to do. Honesty: You have to be honest with the role you are playing in the relationship between you and your client.</td>
<td>Administrative Skills.</td>
<td>International President Credits ISES with building his extremely successful business. ISES Education Networking</td>
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## Table C.1 Influential Role Models/Mentors

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<th>Role Model/Mentor</th>
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*Percent does not add up to 100% due to multiple selections by some respondents.*
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Table C.3. Decision to Enter the Industry (Factor Analysis)

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Table C.4 Skills Pre-Test (Factor Analysis)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Nelson, Kathleen & Goldblatt, Joe. 1996. *Study of Special Event Programs in Higher Education.* CHRIE SIG.


Wessell, David. 2004. “Yes, Jobs are Disappearing; There’ll Be New Ones; Here’s the Secret to Finding Out Where.” Chicago, IL: Chicago Sun Times (April 8, 2004).


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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Kathleen Beard Nelson

Home Address:
7623 Cozyloft Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89123

Degrees:
Bachelor of Science, Hotel Administration, 1994
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Master of Science, Hotel Administration, 1996
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Special Honors and Awards:

Recipient of the ISES Western Regional Excellence Award – Legacy Award for Educational Contribution to the Special Events Industry. 2003.

Recipient of the Sam and Mary Boyd Distinguished Service Award, William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. 2002.

Recipient of the ISES Western Regional Excellence Award – Best ISES Team Event Production for an event produced by students, under my direction, in the TCA 490 Capstone class. 2002.

Recipient of the ISES International Esprit Award for Best ISES Team Effort. 2002.

Recipient of the ISES Las Vegas Founders Award. 2002.

Recipient of the ISES Las Vegas President’s Award. 2002.


Publications:


Dissertation Title: Sociological Theories of Career Choice: A Study of Workers in the Special Events Industry
Dissertation Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Donald E. Carns, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Andrea Fontana, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. John A. Schibrowsky, Ph.D.