Event management education and the meeting and business event competency standards: The perspective from alumni

by

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Abstract

Throughout the last two decades, the meeting and events community has taken deliberate steps to establish itself as an ever-growing industry and economic powerhouse. To assist in these efforts, the Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Association spearheaded a collective effort among industry groups to create a list of competencies designed to facilitate professionals and educators becoming globally successful in various areas of the industry. The Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards (MBECS) were developed and consist of 12 overarching standards, 33 sub-categories, 134 specific competencies, and an in-depth curriculum for educators.

This exploratory research investigated the perspectives of event professionals who graduated between December 2016 and 2018 about their educational preparation, based on the MBECS competencies. The research also explored whether the number of event courses taken, the academic unit offering the event courses and mandatory work-based courses influenced the event professionals' preparation for their current positions. Since there is limited research on event management education, this research contributes to the literature on the subject. Respondents' perceptions of their formal event management education were compared with the MBECS and educational variables to determine skills that could benefit from enhancement in event management education.

Several analyses were conducted to address research questions:

1. How do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?

2. Is there any difference of the level of educational preparedness reported based on specifics of curriculum (academic unit offering event courses, number of taken event courses taken, and required work-based courses)?

First, a descriptive analysis approach was taken to summarize the population's demographic and educational features to address research question one concerning event professionals' self-perception of educational preparedness based on the 33 globally accepted MBECS skills. Second, a Principal Component Analysis was used to group the 33 MBECS into four components. Finally, all questions related to MBECS skill components and education were analyzed through one-way ANOVA to determine differences across education variables and event professionals' self-perception of educational preparedness based on the four MBECS components.

The findings provided a socio-demographic and educational profile of entry-level event professionals who completed a bachelor's degree with an emphasis in event management between 2016 and 2018. This research found communication, professionalism, and administrative were the skills for which the entry-level professionals perceived they were most prepared. Engaging speaker/performers, managing human resource plans, and technical production were the three competencies rated the lowest based on their formal event management education. This study's findings loaded 23 of the 33 MBECS sub-skills into four components; planning, coordinating, strategic management, and marketing. Five statically significant differences were identified among twelve items within the three educational variables of number of event courses taken, academic unit offering the event courses and mandatory work-based courses. Three of the five statistically significant different components found violated the

assumption of homogeneity. This study discussed these relationships, implications, and limitations, and presented suggestions for future research.

Keywords: event management, higher education, competency, trends, profession, curriculum, college

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Dedication

In loving memory of Roshod “Rocky” Roberts. Thank you for inspiring and encouraging me to always try my best. You have never left my side and continue to hold my hand through times scary moments. You will always hold a special place in my heart.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter consists of a brief introduction to the topic's history and literature that support the research study, justification of this study, the study's purpose, research questions, and the importance of the study to the industry.

Since the turn of the century, the meeting and events industry has taken deliberate steps to establish itself as an ever-growing economic powerhouse (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council [CTHRC], 2011; Event Industry Council, 2018; Jiang & Schmader, 2014; U.S. Travel Association, n.d.). The official recognition and development of the events industry was largely been due to the 2008 American recession. The recession created budgetary constraints for clients, such as corporations, associations, organizations, and attendees, which meant event professionals were putting their careers in jeopardy if they were unable to provide a return on investment (ROI) for clients (Lee & Goldbatt, 2012). Event professionals and associations were forced to come together, adapt, and justify meetings and events as activities that created a return on investment for clients (Meetings Mean Business, n.d.; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Event planning went from being part of an administrative assistant's job, that focused purely on logistics, to a full-time career requiring creative skills and strategic planning abilities to integrate events into the marketing plan and later to measure success in terms of return on investment (ROI) (Events Industry Council, n.d.; Soxlaw, 2006; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). With this transition, event professionals left behind their "party planner" identity to focus on business events such as corporate conferences, product launches, and trade shows that were heavily marketing-focused (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). The identification and separation of event management into its own independent industry has also helped the industry quantify its exact contributions, to include economic impacts of 5.8 million U.S. jobs, a projected 11%

occupational growth from 2016 to 2026, and $1.2 trillion U.S. dollars in generated sales in 2016 (Event Industry Council, 2018; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

In 2011, the industry also took the initiative to come together across market segments and develop a formal and recognized profession by creating a globally established body of knowledge called the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). This mutual endeavor became a globally agreed upon set of standards, as it incorporated the previously established competencies of several different market segments, such as the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) (2000, 2004, 2005), International Event Management Standard (IEMS) (2008), and Event Management International Competency Standards (EMICS) (2009). The MBECS consists of a body of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for success as an event management professional and used as a foundation for the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) exam (Successful Meetings, 2011).

As the industry continues to grow economically and occupationally, the demand for event management educational programs has also increased significantly around the world. This can be seen numerically within the United States. Only 13 programs were available in 1996, but the number has since grown to over 200 programs in 2011 (Cecil, Reed, & Reed, 2011; Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009; Goldblatt, 2004; Nelson & Silvers, 2009; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Although event management has been defined as a separate profession, it is also considered interdisciplinary, as it is often attached to existing colleges and programs such as hospitality, tourism, or business, as a focus area for specialized study (Getz 2000). While there is established student and industry interest for event management education, more seasoned event professionals have been questioning the value and return on investment of current event

management higher-education programs (Baum, Lockstone-Binney, & Robertson, 2013; Kashef, 2015; Ledger, 2013).

Problem Statement

Even though the industry has taken the lead in creating the educational groundwork in the form of industry competencies (i.e., meeting and business events competency standards) and a curriculum guide (MPI, 2012), previous studies have shown that event professionals found event management students lacking in fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to produce quantifiable and valuable events (Baum, Lockstone-Binney, & Robertson, 2013; Kashef, 2015; Ledger, 2013). Previous research has indicated a lack of event management education literature, a "fragmented approach" to event management curriculum, and a disconnect between industry-needed competencies vs. taught competencies (Beaven & Wright, 2006; Getz, 2002; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009; Park & Park, 2015).

Current research regarding event management often focused on managerial issues such as marketing, customer behavior, and economic development topics (Backman, 2018; Formica, 1998; Park & Park, 2015). However, event management education research is scarce and often conducted with current event management students and managerial or executive-level event professionals (Beaven & Wright, 2006; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009). Previous literature excluded entry-level event professionals, who could provide valuable insight into how higher education prepares graduating professionals with applicable KSA within the industry. Seasoned event professionals and employers reiterate that, typically, entry-level event professionals graduating with a bachelor's degree focused on event management often lack other key industry competencies (Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009). More specifically, event professionals have identified communication, problem-solving, leadership,

marketing, finance, contract management, and negotiating as skills entry-level event professionals lack. These same competencies were identified as decreasing professionals' chances of success within the industry (Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009; Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2009).

In addition to limited research concerning event management education making it difficult to establish a literature framework, previous research has indicated that event management curriculum is frequently taught in a "fragmented approach" (Getz, 2002). Due to the ever-growing and interdisciplinary nature of event management, the curriculum is implemented as a specialized area of focus within hosting (other) programs, academic units, or colleges without event management foundational courses (Cecil, Reed, & Reed, 2011; Getz, 2002; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Additionally, research has revealed that hosting academic units often offer an imbalanced number of courses focused on what event professionals will contract out (i.e., venues, lodging, food and beverage, and tourism) instead of core competencies of a strategic event professional (Kim & Kaewnuch, 2018; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). This fragmented approach creates "fundamental difference[s] between what should be delivered and what is actually delivered in current event management education" (Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2009, p. 69). In other words, previous literature shows a disconnect between what higher education is teaching students and what the event industry is expecting from entry-level employees (Beaven & Wright, 2006; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009).

Although experienced event professionals and employers question the value of event management education, research found respondents agreed that event management education is important to develop a strong set of business skills and core competencies for advanced event professionalism (Jiang & Schrmader, 2014). Given the importance and purpose of higher

education in developing students with KSAs for their future careers, event management programs could benefit from improving curriculums with the addition of fundamental industry competencies that prepare students to thrive within the dynamic industry (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011; Vanneste, 2007; Kerns, 2009).

As the importance of event management education continues to develop as a topic of interest within the event management industry, proper research remains critical, as it plays a role in the development of academic frameworks, standards, and curriculum (Burrill, Lappan, & Gonulates, 2015). Previous literature focused on perspectives from seasoned event professionals evaluating the performance and abilities of current event management students or their employees (Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009), but provides no clear evidence as to how to address the disconnect between an industry's desired competencies and the competencies being taught. No research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has examined the impact of event management curriculum on educational preparedness based on industry-recognized competencies (e.g., MBECS). In addition, no literature has studied perceived educational preparedness based on the perspective of event professionals' educational experience. Thus, having a better understanding of the current impact of event management education on educational preparedness from the perspective of entry-level event professionals creates an opportunity to expand research that includes fundamental academic frameworks for a higher-education curriculum.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of event professionals who graduated between December 2016 and 2018, about their educational preparations based on the MBECS competencies. Professionals were targeted within two years of graduation for multiple reasons:

this time period is sufficient for realization and reflection; further, it is close enough to graduation and transition to mix industry skills, knowledge, and abilities learned in higher education versus on-the-job training. This purpose was achieved by assessing graduates' self-perceptions of their formal event management education preparation based on the event industry's globally-established competencies, meeting and business events competency standards (MBECS). Elements examined in this exploratory study were the competencies themselves, graduates' perceptions of their educational preparedness, the number of event courses offered, the academic unit offering event management curriculum based on where the program they graduated from was administratively located within the university, and the number of work-based courses. Although research exists regarding the event management industry, limited research had previously been conducted on event management education topics or the MBECS. This, along with the lack of research from the perspective of entry-level event professionals, has led to this research interest. This study's results will provide insight into areas of improvement in event management curriculum that higher education can address to better prepare students for careers in the event management industry.

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1. How do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?
2. Is there any difference in the level of educational preparedness reported based on specifics of curriculum (academic unit offering event courses, number of event courses taken, and required work-based courses)?

Study Significance

There is insufficient research currently available regarding event management education topics or industry competencies (MBECS). In addition, there is a lack of research connecting industry competencies (MBECS) to event management education from the perspective of event professionals. This study is exploratory in nature and attempts to address this literature gap. Having a better understanding of the current impact of event management education and educational preparedness from the perspective of entry-level event professionals creates an opportunity to contribute to event management literature. This study can assist higher-education faculty and instructors to advance event curriculum and fundamental academic frameworks that address and better-develop industry competencies. Research should be conducted among event professionals who have recently graduated in order to provide insightful information from the student and professional standpoints.

Definitions

Abilities: Having the physical, emotional, intellectual, and psychological capability to perform the work (Clifford, 1994).

Associations: Voluntary association of events, event producers, event suppliers, and related professionals and organizations whose common purpose is the production and presentation of festivals, events, and civic and private celebrations (Events Industry Council, 2011)

Competencies: A group of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that influence job performance, can be measured against generally accepted standards, and can be improved through training and development, i.e., those activities and skills judged essential to perform the duties of a specific position (Parry, 1996; Tas, 1998)

Entry-level: Graduates who have held their current position for less than five years; tasks, duties, or performances selected as the basis for a job filled by one individual; entry-level implies minimum performance standards for a beginner in that job (Waple, 2006; Tesone & Ricci, 2012; Tsai, 2004).

Event: An organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala, and so on. An event is often composed of several different yet related functions (Events Industry Council, 2011; Fenich, 2015).

Event Professional: An individual who works within the events industry as a planner, salesperson, destination management employee, service contractor, entertainment/sporting venue salesperson, and services person (Events Industry Council, 2011; Fenich, 2015)

Knowledge: Concrete manifestation of abstract intelligence; result of an interaction between intelligence (capacity to learn) and situation (opportunity to learn) (Winterton, Delamare - Le Deist, & Stringfellow, 2005).

Meeting: An event where the primary activity of the participants is to attend educational sessions, participate in discussions or social functions, or attend other organized events (APEX, 2011; Fenich, 2015).

Skills: Goal-directed, well-organized behavior that is acquired through practice and performed with economy of effort (Winterton, Delamare - Le Deist, & Stringfellow, 2005).

Work-based courses: Application learning focused on workplace practices and problems, the needs of the business, working with others, complex interdependencies, participation, and engagement (Billett, 2002; Collis & Margaryan, 20014; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999).

Summary

This thesis includes five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusion. The introduction consists of an overview of interest in the topic. The literature review explores the existing academic and industry research concerning the events industry, competency standards, and history of event management education. The third chapter discusses the methodology and specific approaches used to examine the research questions explored in this study. Chapter four presents result and findings of this exploratory study. Chapter five discusses the implications of the investigation, study limitations, and implications, as well as identifying potential future research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This study investigated the perspective of recent graduates' educational preparedness in comparison with the industry-established meeting and event business competency standards (MBECS). The literature review describes the background of the events industry, competency standards, and history of event management education. Previous studies were reviewed to identify perspectives on requisite competencies for the event management industry.

Event Industry Background

Event Industry Segments

The meeting and events industry is emerging. In reviewing the literature, the concepts and terminology used in the past were found to be inconsistent. For example, 10 years ago the event industry was thought to include three distinct categories, i.e., meetings, business events, and social events (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Meetings were previously defined as creating moments of meaning and bringing new information into context for the participants. Meetings could be small or large, with the objective of bringing real value and return on investment (ROI) to an organization. Sperstad and Cecil (2011) described meetings as "an impactful delivery of a [organization's] brand" (p. 314). Meetings were previously separated from "business events," which have traditionally been viewed as critical to driving business to organizations, and included events such as pop-up shops, trade shows, and product launch events. Social events are those seen as non-business-related events and included weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, anniversary parties, birthday parties, etc. Sperstad and Cecil (2012) noted the overlap of informal sales events and events that were more social in nature.

Since 2010, the industry has been categorized into two areas: business events (all business-related events) and social events (all non-business-related events). As events continue

to be incorporated into year-long marketing and strategic plans at the executive level, the distinct classifications of meetings versus business events have been combined into one category. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on business-related events and professionals employed in this sector of the industry, rather than on social events or related professions.

Over the past decade, the business events' professional role has changed from focusing solely on event logistics to focusing on a strategic marketing approach, which includes designing experiences to deliver quantifiable business results [ROI] that advance the organization's mission (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). A meeting and event professional must now be able to create behavioral, planning, and financially-measurable objectives to determine the success of a meeting or event (Kerns, 2009). With this adjustment in event professionals' core competencies and job duties, the industry was driven to develop an industry-wide set of standards and regulations.

Brief History of the Meeting and Event Industry

Meetings and events have been transformative experiences throughout history. Historically, they focused on religious, political, agricultural, social, and educational purposes (Denton, 1950; Ford, 2008). Significant examples of meetings and events are the signing of the Magna Carta (1215) in England, the First Continental Congress meeting, the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776, the Geneva Convention in 1864, the 1901 Pan American Expo, and the Martin Luther King D.C. rally in 1963 (Meeting Professionals International [MPI], 2013). Other key examples of significant international events in history include the start of the modern Olympic games in 1896 and the winter Olympic games in 1924 (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, n.d.).

Although early meetings and events were considered historical moments, they had the purpose of educating, inspiring, and motivating a change in behavior in attendees (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). The development of large meetings and events within the United States was linked to the foundations of professional and trade associations and the accessibility of railroads. Professional associations were recorded as early as 1847, with the American Medical Association being one of the first. Additional pre-Civil War associations included the Writing Paper Manufacturers Association and the National Education Association (Ford, 2008; Malek, 2015). Railroads were also major players in the development of the early stages of the meeting and events industry because railroads allowed people to meet in cities along main rail routes to distribute products and share knowledge by attending trade shows and fairs (Ford, 2008; Rathmell, 1954). Although meetings and events have always been an important part of history, they were not recognized as an independent industry during the nineteenth century (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Since the turn of the century, however, the events industry and profession have rapidly changed.

Meeting and Events Economic Impact

Throughout the last two decades, the meeting and events industry has taken deliberate steps to establish itself as an independent industry that is an ever-growing economic powerhouse (Cecil, Fenich, Krugman, & Hashimoto, 2013). After the economic downturn in 2008, the United States Travel Association brought together a coalition of meeting and event professionals to create an initiative called “Meetings Mean Business” (Meetings Mean Business, n.d.). This initiative became the united voice of professional association executives and industry leaders that helped to formally articulate the $815 billion economic value of business events in 2016 (Meetings Mean Business, n.d.). Sperstad and Cecil (2011) described the event industry’s shift

from the pre-2008 recession to post-recession as a paradigm shift where "meetings and business events [were separated] from social events to stress that meetings and business events stimulate the economy and contribute to, not hinder, the economic recovery" (p. 317).

In 2016, the event industry generated $1.2 trillion in sales, which accounted for $466 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) and $104 billion in taxes (Events Industry Council, 2018). This represents a significant increase from 2009, when meetings and events accounted for only $263 billion in direct spending (Jimenez, 2015; Convention Industry Council, 2011). One reason for this seeming increase could be the specific designation of the event industry as a separate industry segment in 2010 (Cecil, Fenich, Krugman, & Hashimoto, 2013; Event Industry Council, 2018). In 2010, the U.S. Bureau of Labor added "event planner" as a recognized independent occupation. Therefore, post-2010 all monetary contributions and U.S. economic impacts of the events industry could be directly attributed to the change of occupational classification for analysis purposes.

Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor (2018) forecasted this segment to have an expected 11% growth from 2016 to 2026 (Event Industry Council, 2018). In 2018, there were 5.9 million jobs in this industry sector in the United States (Event Industry Council, 2018). Due to the economic and ROI impacts of events, the Meeting Professional International (2010) describes events as "potent weapons in the marketing arsenal in terms of accelerating customer relationships and overall return on investment" (p. 1).

Developing the Competency Standards

One of the guiding measures of an independent career industry is having defined competencies: a collection of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) (Ulrich, Brockbank, Yeung, & Lake, 1995). In the initial stages of defining event management KSAs, Harris and

Jago (1999) and Perry, Foley, and Rumpf (1996) identified the KSAs specific to Australia's event industry that were deemed essential. Perry, Foley, and Rumpf (1996) identified five core knowledge domains: (1) legal/financial, (2) management, (3) public relations/ marketing, (4) economic/analytical, and (5) ethical/contextual. These domains included 10 more specific knowledge areas: project management, budgeting, time management, media, business planning, human resource management, marketing, contingency management, sponsorships, and networking. Meanwhile, Harris and Jago (1999) found that project management, budgeting, time management, media, business planning, human resource management, contingency management, marketing sponsorship, and networking were considered to be the most important knowledge areas by event managers. Both studies were early research, which later helped identify knowledge areas and skills needed for then-emerging event education and training.

Silvers (2003) further emphasized the need for more formalized and established industry KSAs concerning the event management profession worldwide. This need was later developed across the different industry segments into a series of skill, knowledge, and ability standards to include the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) (2000, 2004, 2005), International Event Management Standard (IEMS) (2008), and Event Management International Competency Standards (EMICS) (2009). These efforts began the initial stages toward the development of industry KSAs that would become the first globally accepted set of standards, i.e., the MBECS (2012).

The EMBOK started as William O'Toole's thesis, the focus of which was to compare project management methodology to event and festival management (O'Toole, 2000). In 2003, Julia Silvers and O'Toole expanded and completed the EMBOK framework as a broad overview of core competencies for event management. After further refinement, the EMBOK model was

introduced in 2005 as a "framework of knowledge and processes used in event management that may be customized to meet the needs of various cultures, governments, education programs, and organizations" (International EMBOK, 2008, p. 2; Robinson, 2008, p. 21-22). The EMBOKs consisted of four major facets and included phases, processes, core values, and knowledge domains that were linked together and could not operate independently (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2006). Phases are described as necessary steps to research, plan, execute, and evaluate an event within a time-pressured and sequential environment/manner. Processes are guidelines for the phases and knowledge domains, while core values are necessary personal and business skills. The knowledge domain consists of administrative, design, marketing, operations, and risk areas of responsibilities for event planners (Robinson, 2008). The EMBOK model was a great start for creating a framework to "map, define, and align event management standards consistent with the needs of a global event management environment" (Silvers et al., 2006, p. 185). However, EMBOKs were found to be useful only for experienced event management professionals due to being centered on management issues and not on an ontological framework for the overall event industry (Robinson, 2008; Silvers et al., 2006). Therefore, novice event professionals and academic community did not find value with the EMBOK.

Further standards were later developed to include the International Event Management Standard (IEMS) and Event Management International Competency Standards (EMICS) (Cecil, et al., 2013). IEMS were developed in 2008 by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) and six other countries using EMBOK as the foundation to identify occupational and curricular standards. In 2009 the IEMS was renamed "Event Management International Competency Standards" (EMICS), and revised to focus on special event management. *Become*

an Event Planner (n.d.) defines special events as events that "are outside of the host's normal business, program or activity…generally hospitality or entertainment-based and are, therefore, of a social rather than business nature"; therefore, special events align with the social category of events (James, n.d., p. 4). Although IEMS and EMICS furthered expansions and developments, the competencies and standards for event professionals still did not encompass all the foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to be applied to the event industry at large.

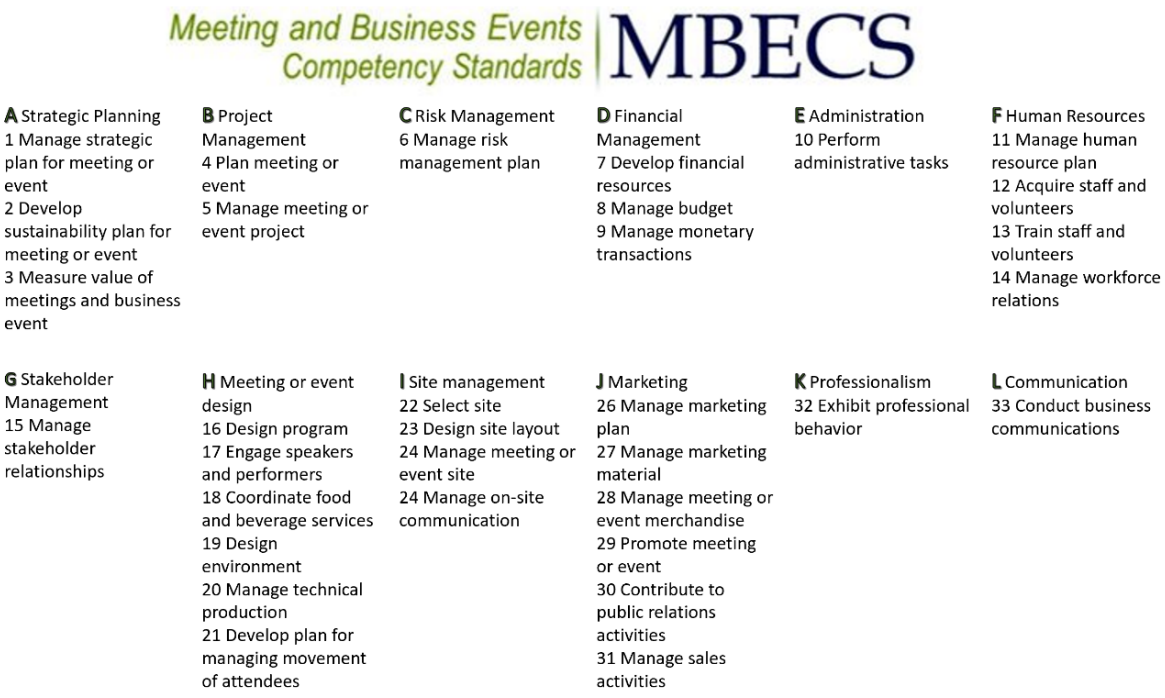
Previous standards were either not applicable for all levels of event professionals and the academic community (EMBOK), or focused KSAs only applicable for a sub-segment of the events industry (IEMS and EMICS). In 2011, an international board established the first globally accepted event management standards by representing all major event associations. Similar to the Meetings Means Business initiative, developing these standards brought event professionals with extensive experience together to articulate the KSAs necessary for proficiency and mastery in the business event and meeting profession (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). This set of comprehensive competencies was established as the Meeting and Business Event Competency Standards (MBECS). CTHRC and the Meeting Professional International Association led this initiative to further develop EMICS by deleting, adding, and revising the KSAs from EMICS to encompass all three defined categories: event industry, meeting industry, and business events. CTHRC described the MBECS as a "body of knowledge that allows current and prospective professionals to map a career path for personal development and growth and is used as a platform for best practice and benchmarking" (Spestad & Cecil, 2011, p. 320). The MBECS are not only the first and only globally-accepted standards within the events industry, but an embodiment of previous standards. MBECS were created for various meetings and events that encompass competencies for all levels of event professionals, as well as the academic

community. Thus, the MBECS are considered the leading competency standards within the events industry.

The MBECS consists of 12 standards, divided into 33 skills and 134 sub-skills. Figure 2.1 shows a breakdown of the core categories and skills within the MBECS. The MBECS are useful for all event management professionals, academia, and students due to their self-assessment nature and detailed framework (Cecil et al., 2013). The MBECS help individuals to successfully identify strengths and weaknesses and clearly promote and communicate their skills and marketability. The following year, MBECS were further developed to create the Meeting and Business Competency Standards Curriculum Guide by working with key event management educators from Canada, China, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Meeting Professional International [MPI], 2012). This guide was created to provide the "missing link" between the theoretical frameworks of the standards and their practical application to course development (MPI, 2012).

Figure 2.1

Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS)



Note. Adapted from 33 Skills Needed to Become a Successful Event Planner, by K. Sanders (2018). Retrieved from MPIweb. Copyright 2011 by Meeting Professionals International (MPI). Reprinted with permission.

The curriculum guide divides MBECS into a progressive, three-category workplace responsibility structure of coordinate, manage, and direct based on the role progression (Krugman, Cecil, & Fenich, 2014; MPI, 2012). The coordinate level serves as an introductory level of the general event industry. Expected KSAs for the coordinate level entail the abilities to assist with event coordination and logistical implementation under the supervision of a manager. The manage level includes the KSAs' expectations of strategic event planning and management based on the department event strategy. Direct-level responsibilities consist of overseeing a branch of the organization that connects event strategies to an organization's business strategy.

Although, MBECS's three-category structure is based on the role progression of event professionals, it can also reflect education levels. Coordinating and managing levels of the

curriculum structure include KSAs' expectations for students graduating with an event-management-focused bachelor's degree, minor, or certificate. While the direct level includes KSAs expected from a student or executive graduating with a master's degree, the purpose of the curriculum guide is to provide faculty in higher-education institutions the flexibility to create programs and courses that reflect globally-recognized industry standards. Overall, the events industry has taken the lead in providing professional competency standards within an academic framework to be used by academia and event professionals to solidify the credibility and maturity of the industry (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, 2011; MPI, 2012).

Industry Feedback from MBECS

Because of the wide distribution of MBECS competencies and the curriculum guide, to date, only one research study has evaluated the use of MBECS among a general population of event professionals. Jimenez (2015) investigated event professionals' ratings on the years to master, frequency of use, and importance of the 12 standards of the MBECS, and assessed the respondents' job satisfaction. Jimenez (2015) utilized the 12 standards of MBECS created by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (2011), which consist of strategic planning, project management, risk management, financial management, administration, human resources, stakeholder management, meeting or event design, site management, marketing, professionalism, and communication. The study included 117 respondents' self-rated perceptions of the MBECS's standard years to master, frequency of use, and importance of each of the 12 standards, utilizing 7-point Likert scales; further, 7-point Likert scales were utilized to assess respondents' perception of MBECS and 22 job satisfaction variables.

Years to master MBECS standards used a 7-point Likert scale of 1 = *less than one year* to 7 = *10 years or more.* The respondents' perceived administration (mean = 2.42), professionalism

(mean = 2.52), and communication (mean = 2.75) as the KSAs that required the shortest time to master, typically within a one to three-year timeframe. Strategic planning (mean = 3.83), project management (mean = 3.39), and financial management (mean = 3.36) KSAs were the competencies identified as taking the longest time to master, typically three to four years.

Usage frequency of the MBECS was assessed using a 7-point Likert scale of 1 = *never* to 7 = *daily*. Strategic planning, human resources, and risk management, with means from 3.45 to 3.85, were used more often on a per-project frequency. Bi-monthly to monthly competencies, with means between 4.15 and 5.02, were project management, financial management meeting or event design, marketing, and stakeholder management. Competencies performed more frequent (daily to weekly) consisted of communication (mean = 6.18) and administration (mean = 6.03). Event professionals rated strategic planning (mean = 6.14), meeting or event design (mean = 6.15), financial management (mean = 6.15), project management (mean = 6.46), professionalism (mean = 6.51), and communication (mean = 6.51) as important to extremely important competencies using a 7-point Likert scale of 1 = *extremely unimportant* and 7 = *extremely important*.

Event professionals also rated their perception of job satisfaction on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 7 being *strongly agree*. No significant correlation was found between event professionals' job satisfaction and their perceptions of MBECS categories concerning time, frequency, or importance (Jimenez, 2015). The study provided insight from event professionals regarding globally recognized standards for meeting and business events in terms of time, frequency, and importance (Jimenez, 2015).

Event Management in Academia

Donald Getz (2002), a leader of modern event management education, suggested that without an increase in event management studies research and the establishment event management curriculum or academic departments, event management education "cannot justify establishment as a recognizable field or discipline." This section outlines the literature that summarizes the current landscape of event management education. Specifically, academic- and industry-related research that discusses the number and types of event programs, curriculum structure, and event management education are presented.

Academic Programs

As the profession becomes more developed and recognized, the number of academic programs in higher education offering meeting planning or event management courses is exploding rapidly, as programs are quickly recognizing increases in student demand (Cecil, Reed, & Reed, 2011; Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). The growth of event programs as a serious field of study began in the 1990s, mainly focusing on special events (Jago & Shaw, 1998). However, event management education, programs, degrees, and certificate demand has only been documented in a limited number of studies throughout the last three decades, providing a meager base for predicting true growth of event management curricula (Nelson & Goldbatt, 1996; Nelson & Silvers, 2009; Nelson, Silvers, & Park, 2004).

Nelson and Goldbatt (1996) surveyed International Council on Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRIE) members concerning the degrees, majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and courses they offered in meetings, conventions, and event management. Only 15 higher-education institutions in the United States (U.S.) and the United Kingdom (U.K.) offered courses, majors, minors, and/or certificates related to event

management. The U.K. was the only international member that offered a curriculum in event management in Nelson and Goldbatt's study (1996). Several years later, Nelson, Silvers, and Park (2004) expanded upon Nelson and Goldbatt's 1996 study. This study resulted in the content analysis of 231 higher-education institution websites that offered meeting, event, and convention management programs and courses. The institutions were identified as four-year, U.S.-based educational institutions that consisted of U.S.-based ICHRIE institutional members (Nelson et al., 2004). The data showed a significant increase from 13 U.S.-based programs to 112 U.S.-based institutions that offered meeting, event, and convention management courses (Nelson et al., 2004; Nelson & Silvers, 2009). This data showed, over eight years, an increase of99 universities offering some form of event-specific curriculum. This count was inclusive of any university offering one or more courses and did not discern by program type or overall curriculum (Nelson & Silvers, 2004).

Nelson and colleagues focused only on U.S.-based institutions that offered meeting, event, and convention management courses, majors, and/or certificates, while Goldblatt (2006) focused on 195 international institutions (including the U.S.) that offered event management curriculums. Similar to previous studies, Goldbatt conducted an international Internet search to examine the level of program, type of courses provided, and programs such as majors, minors, and/or certificates of 195 institutions. Of the 195 programs, 128 provided usable information that indicated rapid growth of educational programs on the international level. His study revealed that 42% of the courses in meeting and event management were being taught in North America, 27% in Europe, 19% in Australia, 6% in South America, 5% in Asia, and 1% in Africa. Goldbatt's study provided a snapshot of the global distribution of event management course and program offerings available at that point in time (Nelson & Silvers, 2009). Later, Cecil, Reed,

and Reed (2011) conducted another study focusing on North America and identified over 200 programs offering one or more event management courses. The event management educational offering landscape is constantly evolving and fluctuating. Currently, there is not an all-encompassing international study on the landscape of event management programs. Table 2.1 summarizes the findings regarding the event management academic landscape of courses, majors, minors, concentrations, or certificates. However, the combined studies regarding the landscape of event management programs, help to provide evidence of the event management growth within higher education.

Table 2.1

Courses, Majors, Minors, Concentrations, or Certificates

Study	Year	US Programs	Int'l Programs	Data Base
Nelson & Goldblatt	1996	13	2	ICHRIE Directory
Nelson & Silvers	2004	112	Not Studied	ICHRIE Directory and www.hotel.study.com
Goldblatt	2006	69	132	Int'l. Internet search of colleges & universities w/ programs in meetings, conferences, exhibitions, & event programs in higher education
Cecil, Reed, & Reed	2011	454	129	Existing list of faculty members: PCMA, MPI, ICHRIE, and unpublished list provided by Dr. Joe Goldblatt; list of academic programs: PCMA text; faculty positions postings on public forums

Note. International is abbreviated by Int'l. International Council on Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Education is abbreviated by ICHRIE. Professional Convention Management Association is abbreviated by PCMA.

Current Event Management Curriculum

Getz (2002) described event management education as "interdisciplinary," drawing from many other fields of study. He points out that event management courses and programs are attached to various colleges primarily as specialized courses (e.g., types of events, venue settings, program development, and target markets), without actually providing an event management core curriculum. A core event management curriculum includes topics such as the history of events, forces, trends, nature of events, cultural meaning, customer motives, and

policies. The curriculum should also include fundamental management principles, such as strategic planning, marketing, sales, human resource management, finances, budgeting, scheduling, and project management, many of which may or may not be included in a college curriculum.

Currently, an event management curriculum is often "attached" to business, hospitality, tourism, sport, arts, or other disciplines within higher education (Getz, 2002). Although event management education has increased over the years, not all higher-education institutions offer the same number of event management courses. As highlighted in Nelson and Silvers' (2004) study on the event management education landscape, the 112 U.S. programs each offered at least one event management course. Results indicated that 66% of higher-education institutions offered only one course specific to meetings and events, 20% offered two courses, and 14% of the U.S. programs offered more than two specific event management courses (Nelson & Silvers, 2004). This can be seen as a "fragmented approach," with programs adding one or two classes to create a concentration affixed to another program instead of creating event management holistically from its core competencies. Due to the growing number of students and the redefining of the industry as its own segment, institutions might be expected to create comprehensive event management programs to include fundamental courses that encompass industry core competencies instead of offering a fragmented curriculum (Cecil, Reed, & Reed, 2011; Getz, 2002; Nelson & Silvers, 2009).

The interdisciplinary nature of event management not only creates variations in the number of event management courses offered, but can also create elements of identity issues in the form of housing diversity. Housing diversity describes the variety of hosting academic units or colleges that are inconsistent when looking at the overall landscape of event management

education. Various knowledge domains include business, marketing, communication, media, theater, organizational theory and development, psychology, sociology, adult learning, and social anthropology. Nelson and Silvers (2009) identified where the event management courses were housed in their study that included 112 U.S.-based event management curriculums. The authors focused on colleges where event courses were offered and found that courses were housed in the following academic units: 32 colleges/schools of business; 25 college of education and human sciences; 19 colleges that contain the words hospitality, tourism, or travel in their name; and 14 other colleges to include agriculture, applied sciences, human ecology/human environmental science, family and consumer services, professional studies/services, public services, science and humanities, etc. The remaining 22 event management curriculums did not specify a college and/or school offering an event management curriculum. Cecil, Reed, and Reed (2011) identified over 200 of 454 higher-education institutions in North America offering one or more event management courses and reviewed which academic units (program/college) these courses offered. Courses were most frequently taught in business, hospitality, tourism, recreation, communication, or education.

Breiter described event management programs' housing diversity as an identity issue because "We're all over the place, and that is something that hurts us as a profession" (Kolaveski, 2011, p. 8). For example, institutions that offer event management courses and programs in hospitality and/or tourism colleges often have "…the challenge [of] separating meeting creation and service…[however] hospitality tends to not focus on the purpose of meetings; it focuses on a limited subset of what events buy" (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011, p. 320). Indicating programs often offer an unbalanced number of core courses consisting largely of food and beverage (e.g., catering), lodging (e.g., operations and convention sales), and tourism (e.g.,

attractions and destination marketing), instead of the strategic planning side of the business. Curriculum imbalance suggests academic programs run the risk of graduating students who do not possess the competencies that match the market's needs (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Furthermore, these imbalanced core courses can potentially lead to an in-depth understanding of limited sub-sector activities (i.e., what an event professional contracts out) without comprehension of core industry competencies (i.e. management fundamentals) of a strategic planner.

Getz (2000, 2002) suggested a conceptual framework for an event management curriculum. Such a framework would start with foundational courses, focused event studies, and fundamental management skills that provide a broad understanding of historical significance of events in society, what event management is, and basic necessary KSAs for the profession. This would then build upon foundational event courses to apply within specific areas of the event industry by offering courses of specialization. This provides a coherent and substantive conceptual framework of foundational event and management studies that addresses industry competency imbalances in curriculum. Sperstad and Cecil (2011) concluded that event professionals require diverse knowledge and technical skills beyond logistical management to meet market, client, and attendee needs in their qualitative exploration of the industry's paradigm shift. Additionally, recognition and use of industry- suggested essential competencies (i.e., MBECS) within the academic community can ensure that students can critically think through incongruent pieces of information to identify, analyze, and manage current industry trends to execute successful events and further their careers (Kim & Kaewnuch, 2018; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011).

Academic Research

Although there has been increasing interest in event management education, there is limited event management literature. Previous event management studies are focused largely on topics of economic impact, marketing, and customer behavior within the event industry (Backman, 2018; Formica, 1998; Getz, 2002, 2010; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009; Kim & Kaewnuch, 2018; Mair & Whiford, 2013; Park & Park, 2015; Yoo & Weber, 2005).

Park and Park (2015) used a thematic analysis coding instrument to analyze a total of 698 articles from five top-tier hospitality and tourism journals and four event management research journals from 1998 to 2013, thus revealing marketing (28.5%), destination (21%), and management (20%) as the top-three research topics. Technology (4.44%), human resources (HR) (3.72%), and education (2.58%) were the bottom-three research topics (Park & Park, 2015). Of the 698 articles, only 18 provided research regarding event management education. This contrasts with the 199 marketing articles, 147 destination pieces, and 140 on management.

Over a decade later, this need for event management education research was again acknowledged (Park & Park, 2015). Park and Park's study (2015) noted a lack of event management education research. Although the majority of event management courses (or concentrations) are offered within non-event-specific disciplines such as hospitality and tourism, all 18 articles pertaining to event management education research were published only in the four event management journals and none in hospitality and tourism journals. The lack of event management education research published in hosting disciplines presents interesting implications for event-management-specific researchers and educators. Educators may not be exposed to event management education literature that could assist with the development of curriculums backed by research within hosting disciplines' academic journals, such as hospitality and

tourism. This is due largely to the limited literature on event management and event management education literature that is recognized by hosting disciplines' academic journals.

In a descriptive meta-analysis of 302 articles in event and festival management literature from 2003 to 2012, Kim and Kaewnuch (2018) identified gaps in past research, thus revealing that two out of the five identified research gaps were related to event management; these two articles researched the role of festival and event management in higher education and theoretical frameworks within event and festival management studies (Kim & Kaewmuch, 2018). The authors' findings also associate with Getz's (2002) and Sperstad and Cecil's (2011) results, that suggest the importance of research in the development of event management education. Research is important, as it plays a role in the development of academic frameworks, standards, and curriculum (Burrill, Lappan, & Gonulates, 2015). Furthermore, research is a linking factor in the educational development and preparedness of students who will later become event professionals. However, as the limited amount of research studies indicates, there is a need for further event management educational literature to provide further insight into theoretical and practical applications that can be utilized for the development and establishment of the academic field of study (Getz, 2002; Park & Park, 2015).

Education and Industry Working Together

Although there have been various research studies from industry professionals' and employers' perspectives regarding skills needed for the general event industry, far less research has combined academic and employers' perspectives (Beaven & Wright, 2006; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009).

Prior to MBECs, Florida's Festival and Events Association (FFEA) assessed competencies of entry-level event planners' event skills the organization deemed to be important

(Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009). These 91 skills were divided into three categories: personal, social, and general knowledge. Personal competencies were defined as work ethics, such as communication, creativity, self-initiation, attention to detail, etc. Social competencies were defined as social interaction skills that included being a team player, community involvement, work politics, supervision, etc. General knowledge competencies included business, technology, financial, marketing, legal, etc. The authors found that the personal competencies category was generally rated as most important, while social and general knowledge competencies followed in importance (Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009). More specifically, communication; attention to detail; ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously; ability to work with vendors, volunteers, city/county officials; and time management were the five leading entry-level skills identified by these event professionals.

When exploring event professionals' views on formalized event management education, Jiang and Schmader (2014) surveyed key executives to identify how event education can effectively contribute to future development of the professionalism of event management. Event education consists of institutional academic preparation and professional training/certification programs offered by the industry. The results showed that all the respondents agreed that event management education could play a significant role in the development of event management professionalism. There was a clear emphasis on the role of event management education in providing a foundation, a solid set of business skills, and core competencies (Jiang & Schmader, 2014).

One research study combined two different data sets to analyze student and event industry employers of students' (i.e., internship) perspectives of event management's requisite skills and abilities side by side (June, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009). The authors found that student

perceptions were focused on employable event management skills and abilities, while event professionals' assessed students' skills based on co-operative education performances. The students were tasked with ranking seven skills in order of importance: management, communication, time management, problem-solving, team working, commitment, and ability to handle stress. The results indicated that communication received the highest percentage of most important skills, with management and time management immediately following.

Seventy-one event employers' student appraisals were collected to show employers' perspectives on how well students performed in these and other skill-based areas. The appraisals were based on 12 categories, including communication, client service, grooming and presentation, professionalism, accountability, productivity, planning, technical knowledge, analytical skills, and problem-solving. It is interesting to note that, from the employers' perspective, students' strengths were grooming and presentation, accountability, and cooperation in comparison with communication, problem-solving, and leadership, which were indicated as areas that need improvement (Junek et al., 2009). Employers generally found that students lacked confidence and proactivity (Junek et al., 2009). The results indicated a gap between what students identify as important skills and their performance.

In another study analyzing international curriculums, Lee, Lee, and Kim (2009) compared student and industry professionals' perceptions of Korea's event management curriculum offerings. Korea was found to offer 43 different event management courses across its institutions, which could be categorized into four major study areas: event concepts and management, event operations and practices, major event areas, and supporting areas. Event concepts and management are courses related to business, finances, and strategic event management. Event operations and practices consist of event logistics, event design, and on-

premise venues and vendors courses. Major events can be further described as courses specific to types of events, such as sporting, festival, corporate, and online meetings and events. Supporting areas consist of research, general hospitality, technology, economics, and law courses. The results indicated that students and industry agreed that event concepts and management were the most important areas of study, and specific event areas were the least important.

One of the most interesting things to note from Lee et al.'s study (2009), when comparing the groups' themes is the difference in perceptions of important courses, by student and industry professionals Industry professionals viewed business-related courses such as marketing, finance, corporate events, contracts, and negotiating as the most valuable courses. In contrast, students viewed general hospitality and work-based courses as the most valuable. This study showed a significant gap in industry and student perceptions of what is most valuable in the curriculum due to "fundamental difference[s] between what should be delivered and what is actually delivered in current event management education" (Lee et al., 2009).

Through this literature review, the current landscape of event management education and research is summarized. The literature also provides evidence of the need for event management research related to the theoretical and practical application development within the discipline, specifically the importance of addressing the disconnect between KSAs taught in academic programs and KSAs needed most by industry. Although previous research highlights the KSA disconnect and perceived educational preparedness of entry-level event professionals from the perception of seasoned event professionals and employers, there is no research from the perspective of entry-level professionals. In addition, no available research was found to examined if event management curriculum impacts perception of educational preparedness based

on industry-recognized competencies (i.e., MBECS). Therefore, this study aims to explore the perspectives of entry-level event professionals about their educational preparedness based on the MBECS and to address the following research questions:

(Q1): How do event professionals assess their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?

(Q2): Is there any difference in the level of educational preparedness reported based on specific of curriculum (number of event courses taken, required work-based courses, and academic unit offering event courses)?

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of event professionals who graduated in 2016–2018 about their perceptions of their own formal event management education preparation, based on the event industry's globally established competencies, i.e., the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). Specifically, the assessment of curriculum influence aspects on graduates' perception of their educational preparedness.

Specific research questions of this study included:

(Q1): How do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?

(Q2): Is there any difference in the level of educational preparedness reported based on specific of curriculum (number of event courses taken, required work-based courses, and academic unit offering event courses)?

Population and Sample

The primary population for this study was full-time, entry-level event management professionals who graduated from a U.S.-based undergraduate program incorporating event management between 2016 and 2018 and who are currently employed full-time. Professionals were targeted within two years of earning a bachelor's degree for multiple reasons. Professionals would have obtained the minimum education to fulfill tasks and duties for an entry-level (less than five years) position within the industry (Tesone & Ricci, 2012; Tsai, 2004; Waple, 2006). Professionals would have had time to fully realize and evaluate the necessary competencies in their position and reflect upon how their higher education had prepared them for these competencies. This time period is sufficient for realization and reflection, as it is close

enough to graduation and transition yet not far enough away to mix industry skills, knowledge, and abilities learned in higher education versus on-the-job training. In addition, young professionals are expected to more easily recall their formal education compared with previous research that focused on more seasoned event professionals and employers (Jiang & Schmader, 2014; June, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009; Lee et al., 2009). This aspect makes this study unique because there is limited research examining educational competencies among industry professionals.

Event professionals are considered a difficult group to contact, due to the lack of a target population profile for identification and the difficulty of finding a direct source of communication to solicit survey consent to such a targeted sample (Sudman & Kalton,1986). This study's sample was drawn from multiple sources: (1) Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) members, (2) respondents' personal networks, and (3) Amazon M-Turk. PCMA is one of the largest associations representing event professionals and is one of the best primary avenues to access event professionals. A secondary avenue utilized to reach full-time entry-level event management professionals who have graduated from a U.S.-based undergraduate program incorporating event management between 2016 and 2018 was the Amazon M-Turk platform. Amazon M-Turk was utilized due to the low response rate from PCMA members. Participants who provided their contact information were included in a random drawing for two $50 Amazon gift cards as an incentive to encourage participation from PCMA members. M-Turk participants received $.50 for each qualified and completed survey. A total of 229 usable surveys were collected during February, March, and April 2019.

Data Collection Procedures

This research was designed to gather feedback from entry-level event management professionals regarding their educational preparedness, using self-reported surveys. The survey was available to all event management professionals who are Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) members and their personal network or to qualified Amazon M-Turk workers.

Event professionals who were within two years' post-graduation and working full-time in the event management industry were identified through the following screening questions:

1. Did you graduate with a bachelor's degree in a field related to event management?
2. Did you receive your bachelor's degree within the last two years (in or since December 2016)?
3. Are you currently employed an average of 30 hours per week as a business event management professional? (Internal Revenue Service Federal Agency, 2018).

The survey was written and distributed in English to PCMA members through email, utilizing the PCMA's membership database with approval from a member on the PCMA board. Surveys were distributed through email to all PCMA members. A total of six follow-ups were distributed through email to encourage members to complete the survey within February or March 2019. Emails also included information about the importance of the survey and information regarding consent, survey directions, and an opportunity to win one of two $50 Amazon gift cards, an incentive used to encourage participation. In order to reach a larger population of event professionals not associated with PCMA, a convenient "snowball sampling" method was utilized by encouraging PCMA members to also share the survey link to other event professionals within their personal network. This methodology consisted of PCMA members as

the first wave of respondents, including an additional wave of respondents that may have been more difficult to reach (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Erickson, 1979; Heckathorn, 2011).

A total of 145 completed surveys were returned through the PCMA database; however, more completed responses were needed to have sufficient power to conduct the appropriate statistical analysis (Cohen, 1992). Therefore, the survey was then sent through the Amazon M-Turk platform to qualified event professionals in the United States who met the same criteria listed above. An identical survey was sent through the Amazon M-Turk platform indicating the importance of respondents with a U.S.-based bachelor's degree, brief description of survey importance, consent information, survey, and fifty cents payment directions. Screener questions and survey information were utilized to decrease nonqualified attempts. A total of 84 usable surveys were collected from Amazon M-Turk. Overall, 229 usable surveys from PCMA and M-Turk were used for data analysis.

Survey Instrument

The online survey included three screening questions. The first was to ensure that the event professional had completed event management coursework in his or her higher-education degree, the second was to ensure that respondents had graduated within the past two years, and the third was to ensure the event professional currently was working full-time in the industry. The online survey contained three main sections: the MBECS, educational information, and demographics. The first section consisted of the 33 skill areas in the MBECS and asked participants to identify their perceptions of their competency levels in these areas regarding formal educational preparedness. The MBECS included 12 functional areas, 33 skill areas, and 134 sub-skills associated with the broad range of knowledge and abilities required of professionals in the meeting and event industry. To help reduce fatigue for respondents while

still obtaining useful data, the online survey used the 33 skills instead of the 134 individual item competencies. The 33 skills were measured on a five-point scale from 1 = *not knowledgeable at all* to 5 = *extremely knowledgeable*. To decrease bias, the 33 sub skills were separated from the 12 core categories of the MBECS onto three randomized sections in the survey. Combining the 33 sub skills into three sections also decreased discouragement of participation based on the survey appearing too long or time-consuming. These 33 MBECs categories (Figure 2.1) were split across three separate pages/sections with 12 skills in the first section, 10 skills in the second section, and 11 skills in the third section.

The second section obtained data on the educational preparation of the respondents. This section included name of university, name of degree earned, number of specific event management courses taken, and if any internship or work experiences were required. Information about the bachelor's degree obtained and the university was used by the researcher to further cross-check and identify the academic unit, i.e., the department/school/college that teaches event management courses because many undergraduate students may not know the specific college providing the event management curriculum for their degree. It was believed this additional step would eliminate confusion and incorrect responses of self-identified academic unit/college. The third section consisted of socio-demographics such as age, gender, annual compensation, and ethnicity (Robinson, 2011; Shea & Roberts, 2008). Specific questions of interest include job title and the length of full-time employment within the industry.

Pilot Study

Prior to launching the survey, a pilot survey was conducted for clarity of wording, respondent completion rates, and completion times and results of the proposed analysis plan. A convenience sample of PCMA Heartland Chapter members was used. The PCMA Heartland

Chapter serves members from Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. An expected sample size of 15 to 20 qualifying participants was based on an active membership of 150 within the Heartland chapter (McClain, 2018; Raosoft, n.d). The pilot survey was sent to the PCMA Heartland Chapter members through the chapter's weekly newsletter from February 4 – 18, 2019.

The online pilot test included the same three sections listed above: self-perception of formal education based on MBECS, educational information, and socio-demographics. Additional questions were added to the pilot study soliciting feedback and need for clarification of survey questions. Feedback questions focused on if the purpose of study, instructions, and formatting of questions were clear, understandable, and easy to follow. Respondents were offered the opportunity to provide suggestions for survey improvement. A total of 18 out of 56 collected responses met the population criteria of being a full-time entry-level event management professional who graduated from a domestic undergraduate program incorporating event management between the years 2016 to 2018. Based on pilot participants' feedback, minor revisions were made to increase the clarification of instructions and survey flow. Revisions included the addition of examples of bachelor's degrees related to event management to the first screener question: "Did you graduate with a bachelor's degree in a field that is related to event management?" Socio-demographic survey questions were reordered to improve the flow of the section. A progress bar and estimated time to complete a section were added to further increase the number of completed surveys.

Data Analysis

This study analyzed validity measurements in-depth because this is an emerging research area. The measures' reliability, construct of interest, and possible correlations were analyzed to

produce a valid measurement. SPSS 22 was utilized for data analysis. Because this is the first research to statistically analyze the MBECS' 33 sub-skill items relative to self-perception of educational preparedness, no assumptions were made based on industry grouping classifications. First, a t-test was conducted to analyze statistically significant differences between the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) and Amazon M-Turk samples. No significant differences were found. The two samples were both normally distributed with all means for PCMA and M-Turk respondents within two standard deviations from each other. This indicates that both samples come from the same normal population and can therefore be combined for further testing (Romeu & Dudley, 2004; Weir & Cockerham, 1984). Second, a descriptive analysis approach was taken to summarize the population's demographic and self-perception of educational preparedness based on the 33 globally accepted MBECS skills to address research question one: How do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?

A component analysis was used for grouping purposes. These components were extracted using principal components analysis, and the eigenvalues were analyzed. Only components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and extraction loadings of .40 and above were retained (Costello & Osborne, 2005). If a component loaded equal to or greater than .40 on two or more components, it was eliminated from the analysis. All 33 MBECS skills were analyzed in the component analysis. Cronbach's alpha values for the components then were determined to measure scale reliability (.70 and above).

All questions related to MBECS skill components and education (e.g., bachelor's degree, number of event management courses, and work-based [internship] hours) were analyzed utilizing ANOVA. Research question two asks: Is there any difference in the level of

educational preparedness reported based on specifics of curriculum (number of event courses taken, required work-based courses, and academic unit offering event courses)? A one-way ANOVA was utilized to determine any differences across educational variables (independent) and event professionals' self-perceptions of educational preparedness based on the four MBECS components (dependent variables).

Chapter 4 - Results

This study concerned how full-time entry-level event professionals who graduated between 2016 and 2018 perceived formal event management education as measured by the event industry's globally-established competencies, the MBECS. The specific objectives were to examine graduates' perceptions of their educational preparedness and to assess the impact of the number of event courses taken, the academic unit offering the event courses, and mandatory work-based courses on graduate's self-perception of educational preparedness. The goal of this study was to assess the formalized educational preparedness of event management professionals.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure event professionals' self-defined competency level for the 33 MBECS skills. The data for this study were collected via an online survey tool, Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT)[1], as an electronic link sent via various methods. The first collection was through the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Catalyst weekly e-newsletter; a survey link was embedded into the weekly February e-newsletters sent to registered members (Appendix E). The secondary collection method was through the Amazon M-Turk (AMT) platform (Appendix F). Individuals were asked for electronic consent to continue with the questionnaire.

A total of 440 surveys were completed using both PCMA and AMT data collections methods. From this group, 229 (52%) indicated they had graduated with a bachelor's degree in an event management related field between 2016 to 2018 and were currently working full-time (an average of 30 hours per week) as event professionals. A total of 125 completed surveys were collected from PCMA and 84 from AMT. The remaining 211 (48%) of survey respondents did

[1] The data analysis for this study was generated using Qualtrics software, Version 2019 of Qualtrics. Copyright © 2019 Qualtrics. Qualtrics and all other Qualtrics product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of Qualtrics, Provo, UT, USA. https://www.qualtrics.com

not meet the criteria of the screening questions. Unqualified respondents were routed to the end of the survey and thanked for their interest in participating. The data from those who did not meet the criteria were not used in analyses.

The Profiles of the Respondents

Table 4.1 displays the demographic information for the 229 respondents. The majority (50.2%) of survey respondents were age 18- to 24-years old and 37.6% were age 25- to 35-years, with 87.8% of respondents < 35 years. The ages of the participants indicate that they were the age of traditional college students when they graduated (Table 4.1). The majority of respondents self-reported as female (76.4%) and Caucasian (62.4%). The other participants were African American (14.4%), Asian (7.9%), Other (7.4%), American/Alaska Native (3.1%), Hispanic (2.6%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (2.2%).

Job titles were categorized using the MBECS (2012) job title categories of coordinator, manager, or director career path. The largest proportion of respondents were employed within a private-for-profit industry sector (71.2%) in coordinator (47.2%) or manager (44.1%) roles. The respondents were employed by private-not-for-profit organizations (15.3%), local government (4.4%), and self-employed – incorporated (4.4%). Only 20 sample respondents (Table 4.1) held job titles within the director category (8.7%). Ranges were used to collect participants' annual incomes to protect the privacy of these sensitive data, results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile

Items	Respondents n	%	Items	Respondents n	%
Age			***Industry Sector***		
18-24 years old	115	50.2	Private for profit	163	71.2
25-34 years old	86	37.6	Private not for profit	35	15.3
35-44 years old	18	7.9	Local Government	10	4.4
45-54 years old	6	2.6	Self Employed - Incorporated	10	4.4
Prefer not to answer	4	1.7	Self Employed - Not Incorporated	6	2.6
			State Government	4	1.7
Gender			Federal Government	1	0.4
Female	175	76.4			
Male	52	22.7	***Job Category***		
Gender Variant	1	0.4	Coordinator	108	47.2
Prefer not to answer	1	0.4	Manager	101	44.1
			Director	20	8.7
Ethnicity					
Caucasian	143	62.4	***Annual Income***		
African American	33	14.4	Under $29,999	17	7.4
Asian	18	7.9	$30,000 - $39,999	34	14.8
Other	17	7.4	$40,000 - $49,999	63	27.5
Native American/Alaska	7	3.1	$50,000 - $59,999	46	20.1
Hispanic	6	2.6	$60,000 - $69,999	18	7.9
Pacific Islander	5	2.2	$80,000 - $89,999	15	6.6
			$70,000 - $79,999	14	6.1
			Above $90,000	12	5.2
			Prefer not to answer	10	4.4

Most respondents received formal event management education and degrees from a hospitality, hotel, or tourism academic units (Table 4.2). The next most frequent types of degrees these participants received were in business, marketing, and management. Other degrees earned included event, sports, and entertainment academic units. The majority of respondents had completed 1 to 5 courses directly related to event management. Approximately 72% of the

respondents indicated they were required to complete 1 to 500 work-based (internship) hours or 30.57% of respondents completed 501 to 1,000 hours. While 19.21% were not required to complete a work-based (internship) hours their degree (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Respondents' Education Profile

Education Variables	Respondents	
	n	%
Bachelor's Degree		
Hospitality/Hotel/Tourism	90	39.3
Business/Marketing/Management	67	29.3
Event/Sports/Entertainment	32	14.0
Advertising/Public Relations/Communications	28	12.2
Music/Art/Human Environment	7	3.1
Business Hospitality	5	2.2
Event Mgt. Courses		
1-5	120	52.4
6-10	67	29.3
10+	25	10.9
0	17	7.4
Work-Based (Int.) Hrs.		
1-500 hours total	96	41.9
501-1,000 hours total	70	30.6
No, no internships or work experience was required as part of my curriculum	44	19.2
> 1,000 hours total	19	8.3

Note. Bachelor's degree is used to assess the academic unit/college offering event management courses. Management is abbreviated by Mgt. Internship is abbreviated by Int. Hours is abbreviated by Hrs.

Research Questions

Research Question One

The first research question was: how do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies? The mean value was calculated for each of the 33 MBECS skills. Entry-level professionals who graduated between 2016 and 2018 self-reported their formal event management education preparedness within each of the 33-competency skills. The researcher used a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (*Not knowledgeable*) to 5 (*Extremely knowledgeable*). Table 4.3 presents the mean and standard deviation for each competency. Results demonstrated that respondents were moderately knowledgeable of each competency skill (within the 3 – 4 range) in terms of their event management education preparedness. The three competency skills respondents perceived themselves as being the most knowledgeable were exhibit professional behavior (M =4.19), conduct business communications (M = 3.77), and perform administrative tasks (M =3.75). The three competency skills respondents perceived themselves as least knowledgeable were: engage speakers/performers (M =3.13), manage human resources plan (M =3.12), and manage technical production (M =2.75).

Table 4.3

Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards Descriptive Statistics

	Respondents ratings of skills	
Competency standards	*M*	*SD*
Exhibit Professional Behavior	4.19	0.96
Conduct Business Communications	3.77	0.99
Perform Administrative Tasks	3.75	1.07
Manage Marketing Plan	3.69	1.00
Plan Event	3.67	0.93
Manage Workforce Relations	3.67	1.05
Design Environment	3.67	1.05
Coordinate Food and Beverage Services	3.61	1.13
Manage Event	3.58	1.02
Mange On-Site Communication	3.56	1.14
Manage Marketing Material	3.55	1.00
Promote Event	3.54	1.05
Manage Strategic Plan for Event	3.53	0.91
Manage Event Site	3.45	1.16
Manage Budget	3.44	1.04
Design Site Layout	3.38	1.22
Train Staff/Volunteers	3.38	1.22
Contribute to Public Relations Activities	3.38	1.09
Manage Sales Activities	3.37	1.17
Design Program	3.32	1.13
Measure Return on Investment	3.31	1.05
Acquire Staff/Volunteers	3.29	1.21
Manage Risk Management Plan	3.27	1.11
Select Site	3.24	1.17
Manage Monetary Transaction	3.24	1.20
Develop Attendee Movement Plan	3.22	1.20
Develop Financial Resources	3.18	1.12
Manage Stakeholder Relationships	3.17	1.19
Develop Sustainability Plan	3.17	1.22
Manage Event Merchandise	3.14	1.18
Engage Speakers/Performers	3.13	1.22
Manage Human Resources Plan	3.12	1.20
Manage Technical Production	2.75	1.30

Note. 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not knowledgeable, 5 = Extremely knowledgeable)

Research Question Two

Research question two was: Do specifics of curriculum (number of event courses taken, required work-based courses, and academic unit offering event courses) impact the level of educational preparedness reported? The intent of the question was to identify elements of curriculum the respondents perceived as better preparation for industry standard skills upon graduating and entering the workforce. To analyze the data, the researcher used SPSS 22 (2019). First, a principal component analysis approach was used to reduce data and simplify it into dimensions. Cronbach's alpha values for the scales were determined to measure scale reliability (.70 and above).

Principal Component Analysis

A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to measure respondents' perceived event management education preparedness based on the 33 industry competencies (MBECS). The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.4. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .932, with individual KMO measures all greater than .7, classifications of 'middling' to 'meritorious' according to Kaiser (1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .0005$), indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

Five significant components were found using principal component dimension reduction in SPSS 22 with an explained variance of 60.8%. However, only one MBECS skill was extracted on the fifth component, thus the fifth component was excluded and competency skills were forced on to four components for dimension reduction purposes. The four components had eigenvalues greater than one and explained 41.4%, 7.4%, 5.6%, and 5.2% of the total variance, respectively. In addition, a four-component loading met the interpretability criterion and

therefore was retained. The four-component loading explained 59.5% of the total variance. A Varimax orthogonal rotation was utilized to assist interpretability into a 'simple structure' table (Thursone, 1927).

The interpretation of the data consisted of 23 of the 33 items being loaded into four components; planning, coordinating, strategic management, and marketing, based on their extraction loadings. Seven skills were removed due to low component loading (.40) cutoff (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The researcher removed three of the seven skill item loadings, conduct business communications, manage stakeholder relationships, and perform administrative tasks, due to the difficulties of interpreting their cross-loadings. Table 4.4 presents component loadings and commonalities of the Varimax orthogonal rotation. The component loadings are the correlation coefficients between the variables (rows) and components (columns). Loadings above .7 are considered *high*, between .4 and .7 are *normal*, and those below .4 are *low* for exploratory research (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012; Hair, Anderson, Black, & Tatham, 2004). High component loadings are associated with a strong item to component relationship.

Table 4.4

Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards Dimensions

	Dimensions of core competencies			
Standards	Planning	Coordinate	Strategic Mgt.	Marketing
Design Site Layout	.79			
Design Environment	.75			
Select Site	.69			
Manage Site	.67			
Manage Event	.66			
Plan Event	.64			
Design Program	.60			
Manage On-Site Communication	.60			
Coordinate Food and Beverage Services	.58			
Train Staff/Volunteers		.77		
Acquire Staff/Volunteers		.67		
Manage Monetary Transaction		.66		
Manage Human Resource Plan		.61		
Develop Financial Resources		.56		
Manage Workforce Relations		.56		
Measure Return on Investment			.70	
Manage Risk Management Plan			.63	
Promote Event			.61	
Exhibit Professional Behavior			.56	
Manage Budget			.40	
Manage Marketing Plan				.81
Manage Marketing Material				.71
Manage Sales Activities				.69
Initial Eigen Values	9.51	1.71	1.29	1.19

Note. Planning is also referred to as component one; Coordinate is an abbreviation for coordinating and is also referred to as component two in the text; Strategic management is referred to in text as component three; Marketing is also component four. Mgt. is an abbreviation for management. Loadings >.70 indicate *high* values, .40 to .70 are normal, and component loading values <.40 are *low*. Components < .35 were suppressed.

Component one, planning, includes nine competency skills: design site layout (.79), design environment (.75), select site (.69), manage site (.67), manage event (.66), plan event (.64), design program (.61), manage on-site communication (.60), and coordinate food and beverage services (.58). Six of the nine competency skills can be found within several of the 12 MBECS standards are consistent with pre-event responsibilities found within the planning stage, thus retained the planning (Sanders, 2018). The rotation method used was varimax with Kaiser normalization. The rotated matrix shows that the planning component loading values are in the *high* range for two items and normal range for the seven other items. Because these nine items extracted on the same component, there is justification for combining these items in a component. The planning component was significant based on an eigenvalue of 9.51, indicating that planning explains a large amount of variance, and all loadings are above the cutoff criteria (.35) (Table 4.4).

Component two, coordinating, is composed of six competency skills: train staff/volunteers (.77), acquire staff/volunteers (.67), manage monetary transactions (.66), manage human resource plan (.61), develop financial resources (.56), and manage workforce relations (.56). Four of the six competencies are found within the human resource standard of the MBECS and the remaining two are responsibilities are found within financial management standard (Sanders, 2018). All items are associated with coordinating responsibilities due to bringing different elements into together for harmony and efficiency within the two MBECS standards, thus retaining the component name coordinating. The coordinating component had a significant eigenvalue of 1.71 and item loadings above .4. One component loading was in the *high* category and five were in the *normal* loadings. All six items were sorted into the coordinating component and retained.

Component three, i.e., strategic management, includes: manage return on investment (.71), manage risk management plan (.62), promote events (.61), exhibit professional behavior (.56), and manage budget (.40) (Table 4.4) Each competency skilled loaded is a subskill of five individual MBECS standards; strategic planning, risk management, financial management, marketing, and professionalism. Due to the complexity of component three and responsibility of event professionals strategically managing various aspects of an event, component three retained the name strategic management (Fenich, 2014, 2015; Sanders, 2018; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Table 4.4 displays the rotated matrix loadings above .4 and an eigenvalue of 1.29 for strategic management. The first item was considered a high value for loading because it is above .7 and the remaining two items were normal level loadings. Because these five items sort on the same component, there is justification for combining these items as one component.

Component four, marketing, is composed of manage marketing plan (.81), manage marketing material (.71), and manage sales activities (.69). All three items were found under the marketing MBECS standard, thus retained the component name marketing (Sanders, 2018). The total significant eigenvalue was 1.19 with all three extracted loadings above .4. Two of the three marketing items were above .7 and considered *high* values of loading.

All four MBECS component had strong levels of internal consistency, as determined by Cronbach's *alpha* values above 0.70 - planning (0.90), coordinating (0.85), strategic management (0.77), and marketing (0.78) – thus validating the existing established 5-point Likert scale for reliability among the sets of MBECS items (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011).

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Mean composite scores from educational variables were analyzed using a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to answer the second research question: Is there any difference

of the level of educational preparedness reported based on specifics of curriculum (academic unit offering event courses, number of event courses taken, and required work-based courses)? ANOVA was conducted to assess mean between the four MBECS components – planning, coordinating, strategic management, and marketing – within education variables – bachelor's degree, number of event management courses, and number of work-based course hours – based on event professionals' self-perception of their educational preparedness. Significant differences are summarized in Table 4.5. Significant differences were found for two MBECS components based on bachelor's degree, two MBECS components based on number of event management courses taken, and one MBECS component based on number of work-based hours.

Post hoc ANOVA procedures were conducted to determine homogeneity of variance (Levene's test for homogeneity of variance) and differences between groups (Games-Howell) based on the MBECS components. In those instances when ANOVAs resulted in statistically significant differences, post hoc tests were conducted utilizing Games-Howell. This test was used, as it is recommended for situations of unequal sample sizes and unequal or unknown variances (De Muth, 2014; Toothaker, 1991). A Games-Howell post hoc test was utilized for components that upheld normality and homogeneity of variance; post hoc results were used to determine significant differences between the groups.

Table 4.5

Education Variables by MBECS Components (ANOVA)

	SS	*df*	MS	F	*p*
Bachelor's Degree					
Planning	10.75	5	2.15	2.21	.06
Coordinating	26.74	5	5.35	5.93	.000***
Strategic Mgt.	2.36	5	0.47	0.47	.80
Marketing	23.13	5	4.63	5.04	.000***
Event Mgt. Courses					
Planning	55.35	3	18.45	24.04	.000***
Coordinating	9.28	3	3.09	3.18	.025*
Strategic Management	0.59	3	0.20	0.20	.90
Marketing	1.12	3	0.37	0.37	.77
Work-Based (Int.) Hrs.					
Planning	13.37	3	4.46	4.67	.003**
Coordinating	5.02	3	1.67	1.69	.17
Strategic Management	2.39	3	0.80	0.80	.50
Marketing	6.89	3	2.30	2.34	.07

Note. Management is abbreviated by Mgt. Internship is abbreviated by Int. Hours is abbreviated by Hrs. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***$p < .001$

Primary significant differences in educational variables with the type of bachelor's degree respondents earned were: 'coordinating' $F(5,233) = 5.927$, $p < .001$ and 'marketing' $F(5,233) = 5.035$, $p < .001$. Post hoc ANOVA procedures were conducted to determine homogeneity of variance and differences between MBECS component groups based on bachelor's degree. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance indicates that 'coordinating' ($p = .005$) violates the homogeneity assumption. Statistically significant differences were found within two groups, coordinating, Welch's $F(5, 25.108) = 4.346$, $p = .005$, and marketing, Welch's $F(5, 25.914) = 4.856$, $p = .003$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increased from advertising/public relations/communication (APC) degrees to

business/marketing/management (BMM) degrees (1.12, 95% CI [.29, 1.93]) was statistically significant (p =.003). Additionally, mean increase from hospitality/hotel/tourism (HHT) to BMM degrees (1.42, 95% CI [.02, .82], p = .034) was found. Event professionals who earned their degree in BBM degrees are associated with having higher perceived educational preparedness with coordinating competencies in comparison to APC and HHT graduates. Furthermore, event/sport/entertainment (ESE) degrees had two decreases in mean: ESE degrees to APC degrees (-83, 95% CI [.16, 1.50], p = .007) and BMM degrees (-.83, 95% CI [.25, 1.41], p = .001) within the marketing group-based bachelor's degree. Therefore, event professionals with ESE bachelor's degrees also were perceived as having lower educational preparedness than APC or BMM degrees, regarding marketing competencies.

Significant values were found within the other two education groups; the number of event management courses and work-based hours. The number of event management courses' significant values were found within the planning component, $F(3,225) = 24.041$, $p < .001$ and the coordinating component, $F(3,225) = 3.182$, $p = .025$. Homogeneity of variance for the planning was violated, as assessed by Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance (p= .001). Statistically significant difference was found for the number of event management courses completed group Welch's $F(3, 49.68) = 14.23$, $p < .0005$. Although the coordinating component was found to have significant difference when running ANOVA, post hoc tests did not indicate a significant difference, Welch's $F(3, 49.49) = 1.519$, $p = .22$. Statistically significant differences were revealed by increased planning group means, as assessed by the Games-Howell post hoc analysis. Statistically significant differences were found within the planning component for number of courses above zero: 0 courses to 1 – 5 courses (1.64, (95% CI [.71, 2.58], p< .0005, 6 – 10 courses (-2.01, (95% CI [1.09, 2.94], p < .0005), and 10+ (1.70, (95% CI [.70, 2.70], p <

.0005). The findings indicate that any increase in the number of event management courses positively influences event professionals' perceived educational preparedness with planning competencies, which would align with general expectations. Additionally, a positive influence due to an increased number of event management-specific courses taken is evident in the statistical difference from 6 – 10 to 1 – 5 courses (.37, (95% CI [.08, .67], p = .006). However, the data does not indicate that changes beyond 1 – 5 courses to 6 – 10 courses differ statistically, which could mean that positive or negative influences of perceived educational preparedness for other competencies are limited.

Additionally, the number of work-based (internship) hours' significant values were found within the planning component, $F(3,225) = 4.674$, $p = .003$ The planning component within the work-based courses also violated Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance ($p = .006$). Statistically significant differences for planning component was found Welch's $F(3, 67.96) = 3.646$, $p = .02$. Games-Howell post hoc analysis exposed a statistically significant difference between event professionals who had no required work-based (internship) hours as compared to 1 – 500 required total hours. Means were increased between the groups with an increased number of required work-based hours (.65, 95% CI [.06, 1.24], p = .02). The finding is interesting, as it is the only significant difference within the group and does not follow as closely as positive influence changes, such as the number of event management courses taken. This could mean event professionals found their most significant educational preparation for planning competencies were within the first 500 hours of their internship and the result is not due to chance.

Chapter 5 - Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The purpose of this study was to assess the formalized educational preparedness of event management professionals. This study explored the perspectives of 229 recently graduated event professionals about their perceptions of their own formal event management education preparation using the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). The secondary objective was to statically examine effects of the number of event courses taken, the academic unit offering the event courses (bachelor's degree) and mandatory work-based courses. This final chapter includes a discussion of research questions and present the major findings from the study. Also included is a discussion of major findings as related to the literature on event management education and the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). Recommendations are provided for both academia and industry. Study limitations and recommendations for future research complete the chapter.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

(R1): How do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies?

(R2): Is there any difference of the level of educational preparedness reported based on specifics of curriculum (academic unit offering event courses, number of taken event courses taken, and required work-based courses)?

Summary of Findings

Findings provided a profile of entry-level event professionals who graduated with an event management focused bachelor's degree between 2016 and 2018. The profile summarized socio-demographic, education, and respondents' self-perception of educational preparedness

based on the 33 globally accepted Meeting Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS) skills. The main reported socio- demographics identified majority of respondents as Caucasian and female, who are between the ages of 18 and 24 years working for private-for-profit organizations in either a coordinator or manager role. More than half of respondents earned their bachelor's degree and event management formal education within an academic unit of Hospitality/Hotel/Tourism or Business/Marketing/Management.

Furthermore, findings identified that entry-level event professionals reported they were moderately knowledge able about 31 of the 33 MBECS skills. The two competency skills that professionals were not moderately knowledgeable were exhibiting professional behavior (very knowledgeable) and technical production (slightly knowledgeable). The MBECS skills were further simplified into four competency components; planning, coordinating, strategic management, and marketing. Additionally, three of the four competency (MBECS) components were found to be statistically significant different within educational variables: (a) academic unit offering event management courses, (number of taken event management specific courses, and (c) total number of work-based or internship hours. Some of the MBECS components related to one or two educational variables. Influences of educational variables based on MBECS components identified provide insight to help to contribute to a better understanding of event management curriculum role in industry competency development.

Discussion of Major Findings

Perceived Educational Preparedness

The perceived level of educational preparedness was the first variable of interest in this study to answer: how do event professionals self-evaluate their level of educational preparedness using the globally accepted MBECS competencies? These 33 MBECS skills' mean values were

calculated based on entry-level event professionals who graduated in 2016–2018 and their self-reported level of knowledge of each competency skill concerning their formal event management education preparedness.

However, additional insights are gained from an examination of this data set in an isolated state due to nearly all perceived levels of educational preparedness had a mean of 3 or 4. Indicating that respondents were moderately knowledgeable about each competency skill.

It is surprising to find that 32 out of the 33 competency skills clustered around a common mean value, given that the previous literature highlighted event management students lacked industry important competencies to the point that seasoned event professionals and employers questioned the value of the current academic event management programs (Baum, Lockstone, & Robertson, 2013; Kashef, 2015; Ledger, 2013). Perhaps the findings do not align because of differing expectations and perspectives among event professionals. The previous literature is limited to the perspectives of entry-level industry professionals within the Florida Festival and Events Association (Fletcher, Dunn, & Prince, 2009), industrywide event executives (Jiang & Schmader, 2014), or a combination of event management students and employers (Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2009; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair , 2009). In contrast, this study surveyed 2016 to 2018 graduates of event management education within the Professional Convention Management Association and M-Turk.

This study's purpose and bases of measurement differ from research conducted by Jimenez (2015) and Fletcher, Dunn, and Prince (2009), but similar themes were identified as important competencies. The MBECS were used as the bases for measurements similar to the data collected by Jimenez (2015). However, the current study used 33 MBECS skills, whereas Jimenez used only 12 MBECS. This current study also used the MBECS to assess educational

preparedness, while Jimenez (2015) used the MBECS to assess frequency of use, importance, and years to master the competencies. Researchers Fletcher, Dunn, and Prince (2009) used the 91 Event Skills Assessment Survey generated by the Florida Festival and Events Association to identify important competencies when hiring entry-level event professionals.

This current study's top three competencies skills were exhibit professional behavior, conduct business communications, and perform administrative tasks. The top there competency skills are similar and align with the competency themes found in previous research (Fletcher et al., 2009; Jimenez, 2015). Jimenez (2015) identified the following competencies as important to the event professional respondents: professionalism, communication, and project management. Fletcher et al. (2009) identified communication as the most important competency and social skill type. It is possible that the respondents in this study felt their formal education best prepared their communication skill due to the requirement that the students interact and communicate with faculty and other students online both inside and outside of class in the form of presentations. This aligns with Živković's (2014) findings that oral presentations and collaborating with colleagues helped students develop communication skills essential to career development. The nature of human interactions with others via various means of communication, and therefore is an important competency among those identified by event professionals.

Interestingly, the current study's least knowledgeable competency themes, i.e., financial, merchandising, technical production, and stakeholder relationships contrast with Fletecher et al.'s (2009) findings that highlighted these as very important or important competencies. These findings support the idea that competencies that are important to the industry are underdeveloped within academia (Beaven & Wright, 2006; Junek, Lockstone, & Mair, 2009; Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2009).

The lack of event management education research aligns with the notion that there are "fundamental differences between what should be delivered and what is actually delivered in current event management" curriculum (Lee et al., 2009). A possible explanation is the many active changes over the last two decades within the industry, and these changes and developments were happening much quicker than event management education.

Differences of Educational Variables Based on MBECS Components

Additional analysis was conducted to identify elements in the curriculum that the event professionals perceived as better preparation for industry standard skills upon graduating and entering the workforce. A principal component analysis was used to group 23 of 33 MBECS into four components to simplify the one-way ANOVA analysis. This analysis found significant factors among four dimensions: planning, coordinating, strategic management, and marketing. Five significant differences across education variables (independent) and event professionals' self-perception of their educational preparedness based on the four MBECS component components (dependent variables) were found within the one-way ANOVA analysis. Findings from the current study indicate that aspects of curriculum, i.e., the academic unit offering event courses, number of event courses taken, and required work-based courses, do influence event professionals' perceived level of their educational preparedness regarding key industry competencies. While event professionals' bachelor's degree, curriculum, and perspectives of their event management education preparedness may differ from one respondent to another, Cronbach *alphas* indicated reliability for the four MBECS components prominent in this study.

Academic Units Offering an Event Management Curriculum

Coordinating and marketing components within the bachelor's degree variable were found with significant differences indicating that these competencies were influenced beyond

statistical chance. In particular, event professionals with event management-focused bachelor's Degrees earned from colleges or programs of business were associated with higher perceived educational preparedness with coordinating competencies in comparison to similar degrees from public relations or hospitality colleges or programs. This result is different than expected based on previous literature identifying the event management curriculum often provided in hospitality colleges or programs (Getz, 2002). However, this result slightly aligns with researchers Sperstad and Cecil (2011) who suggested that hospitality tends to provide an imbalance of core event management courses that focus on what events buy, i.e. venues, entertainment, décor, food, and beverage, instead of the purpose of meetings.

Sporting event management degrees were associated with lower perceived levels of educational preparedness compared to public relations and business colleges or programs regarding marketing competencies. As expected, public relations and business colleges or programs have higher levels of marketing competencies due to marketing being a foundational aspect of both colleges.

Event Management Courses

The number of event management courses had significant differences in terms of planning competencies. The majority of statistical differences for planning were positive influences from any number of courses greater than zero. The findings indicate that any increases in the number of event management courses positively influences event professionals perceived educational preparedness with planning competencies, which would align with general expectations. However, the evidence of a positive influence due to an increased number of event management specific courses taken is evident in the statistical difference from 6–10 to 1–5 courses. These findings indicate that any number of event management courses is better than

one, but the sufficient or optimal number of courses is between one and five. Any additional changes in the number of event management courses taken do not influence event professionals' perceived planning preparation.

Similar findings were not found because other studies either collected data on the overall landscape of event management courses offered or did not assess the number of courses. However, the possible reason that one to five event management courses are perceived as sufficient could be due to the typical number of courses offered across the event management education landscape. Nelson and Silvers (2004) found that out of 112 U.S. programs offering an event management curriculum, 66% offered only one course, 20% offered two courses, and 14% offered more than two specific event management courses. In addition, this current study indicated that the majority of respondents (52.4%) had taken one to five event management-specific courses. These findings show there may be a level of bias and that this would be a topic for further research.

Work-based (Internship) Hours

Work-based (internship) hours were found to be statically significantly different for planning competencies. Event professionals who had completed 1 to 500 internship hours perceived they were better prepared in planning competencies than event professionals with zero internship hours of internship. It could be inferred that additional hands-on experience and training are beneficial for the development of key industry competencies, the finding is interesting as it is the only significant difference within the group. Although previous literature did not assess the influences of work-based courses or internship hours on competency levels, this study did identify that the largest number of respondents (41.9%) were required to complete between 1 and 500 total hours, the next largest number of respondents (30.6%) completed 501 to

1,000 hours. Based on this study's education profile, the findings align with the possibility that the first 500 hours best prepared the planning competencies among event professionals.

Non-Statistically Significant Differences

There were no statically significant differences found for strategic management component within any of the three educational variables. Which promotes the question where do event professionals learn competency skills: manage return on investment, manage risk management plan, promote events. exhibit professional behavior, and manage budget? Three out of the five competency skills that extracted onto the strategic management component consist of roles and responsibilities related to a directors role of connecting business event strategies with the organization's business plan (MPI, 2012). Based on this study's findings, only 20 (8.7%) of the respondents identified a job tile within a director role, it can be inferred that the strategic management component was non-significant due to a commonality of perceived level knowledge among the larger population of coordinators and managers.

Implications for Research and Practice

The events industry must have a clear definition and recognition of standards that are internationally accepted (Cecil et. al, 2013). This study provides a clearer understanding of how event professionals perceive and self-rate their formal event management education preparation with globally recognized industry skills (MBECS). This study's competency profile was designed to identify areas of improvement and actionable suggestions for academia, industry associations, and employers to use for research, curriculum, programming, and training within industry standards, MBECS.

Research Implications

Previous studies have identified literature gaps when it comes to event management and even further evidence of the need for more event management education literature (Cecil, Fenich, Krugman, & Hasimoto, 2013; Jiang & Schmader, 2014; Jimenez, 2015; Sission & Adams, 2013). These limited studies on event management education are conducted from the perspectives of event professionals or students on how others' performances indicate if they have the necessary competencies to succeed within the meetings and events industry. However, no studies have explored event professionals' perspectives on their own personal competency skills or their formal event management education preparation. In this research, the industry professionals are narrowed to recent graduates entering the work force in order to better assess event management education preparedness, while taking into consideration educational variables such as the type of bachelor's degree, number of event management courses, and work-based courses. This exploratory study provides evidence that event professionals' knowledge level of industry competencies skills (MBECS) is influenced by formal event management education preparation.

Second, this study contributes to industry and association educational literature as it extends upon research utilizing industry competency standards. Typically, existing studies focus on non-globally accepted and inconsistent competency standards as the basis of their research (Fletcher et al., 2009; Jiang & Schmader, 2014; June et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009). Furthermore, research utilizing the globally accepted Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS) is extremely limited. There is one research study to date that statistically analyzes the usage of 12 MBECS among a general population of event professionals to investigate the years to master, frequency of use, and competency importance (Jimenez, 2015). This current study is

the second to utilize MBECS as a basis of measurement and the first to use MBECS when assessing event management education.

This research adds to a much-needed academic body of knowledge of event management education. Additionally, the findings from the current study can be essential building blocks for event management education, especially as the demand for event management education continues to increase and institutions look for resources that will provide information to further curriculum improvement.

Practical Implications

The current study's findings provide an insight into skills that recent graduates and event professionals perceive as strong or weak based upon their formal education. Educators may deem the findings particularly helpful when understanding and improving event management curriculum. One possible curriculum improvement would be that schools could offer more dedicated and diverse event management core courses. For example, educational institutions could create a technical production course that provides foundational KSAs, so students are aware of various types of equipment and how to operate technical aspects of an event. Curriculum developers could also use competency skills rated lower by the subjects to identify topics that should be integrated into existing courses. For example, incorporating additional human resource topics that are specific to event management could improve the KSAs pertaining to managing a human resource plan. This creates repetitive exposure and opportunities to enhance these skills. Additionally, educators can also use the results of this study to identify other colleges or programs within the institution that already offer a course related skill identified by responses as being less will prepared. For example, curriculum could include a technical production course that is already offered by the college of performing arts to further improve the

technical production competency skill without having to develop and fund new courses or curriculum.

Furthermore, educators can utilize the findings regarding the academic unit offering event management courses to identify other colleges or programs that were perceived as providing a higher competency component. For instance, this study found that events, sports, and entertainment (ESE) programs offering event management curriculum had a lower perceived preparedness for marketing competency skills than colleges of business or communications. Therefore, it would be beneficial for ESE programs to work with colleges of business or communications to assist students' development of marketing competency skills. Also academia can utilize the findings regarding educational variables to further structure learning opportunities. University programs offering event management can utilize this study's findings to structure the number of course offerings and work experience or internship hours. Statistically significant differences were found for courses greater than zero and from 1 – 5 courses to 6 – 10 courses for planning competencies. It may be beneficial for academic programs to increase the number of offered event management specific courses between six and ten. Additionally, curriculum that does not require internship hours can utilize the study to require at least 1 – 500 internship hours to further develop students' planning competencies.

Although industry associations, such as the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), highlight the value of networking with their membership, they also market the benefits of having "access to superior events and resources to elevate your career" (Professional Convention Management Association, n.d.). The lack of participation from recent graduate event professionals in the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) hints at a possible opportunity to gain membership from the audience by creating professional

and educational content/programs for as continuing education credits are necessary for entry-level event professionals to qualify for the Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) exam. The results of the study identified the seven weakest perceived skills as developing financial resources, managing stakeholder relationships, developing sustainability plans, managing event merchandise, engaging speakers/performers, managing human resources plans, and managing technical production. These are skills that can be addressed and developed within associations' professional development and educational training. One way to coordinate these training opportunities is the establishment of skill "tracks" that would be most beneficial to particular members. For example, an industry professional and association member could participate in a sustainability planning or technical production track with a clear understanding that they are receiving fundamental training within a skilled area that is tailored to their developmental needs. The content of tracks can be further broken down by level of awareness and difficulty of the material to be shared. All of these can help associations create tailored programs for young event professionals, which can not only increase the KSAs of recent graduates but provide tangible benefits for maintaining or joining the association during periods of time that young professionals identify as valuable.

Limitations

This study, like all studies, is subject to limitations. The first limitation is that the current study includes a small sample size from PCMA and M-Turk. The survey was circulated through the PCMA catalyst membership database, and qualified participants were encouraged to complete the survey, as well as share access with other qualified colleagues, employees, or peers who may or may not be PCMA members. But there is likely a greater population of full-time entry-level event professionals who are not members of PCMA, and for reasons such as lack of

awareness of PCMA, time, and/or funding. These professionals are not adequately represented in this study. Without a random selection, the results from this study may not be generalizable to recent event graduates and professionals within the events industry population.

The "snowball sampling" method was convenient and limited to the waves of participants informing each other (Erickson, 1979; Heckathorn, 2011). However, with an increase of respondents, the initial bias of the nonrandom participants decreases over each wave of respondents (Heckathorn, 1997; 2011). However, there is no known method for reaching all entry-level event professionals who graduated between the years 2016 and 2018. Additionally, nonresponse bias could be a limitation of this study. Those who participated in the survey may respond differently than those who chose not to participate. A higher response rate would have added to the validity of the study and results.

An additional limitation to the study is the use of the Amazon M-Turk platform. Although M-Turk was used to reach a larger population of event professionals, M-Turk is an incentive or labor platform that pays workers for their survey responses. Therefore, workers are largely motivated by completing surveys for money. There is inadequate quality control, missing support for fraud prevention, and validity and reliability concerns regarding responses and workers' qualifications.

The present study contains two additional, less significant, but still notable, limitations that might have influenced the results and interpretation. Survey responses are subject to self-selection bias, where participants must decide to take the survey. Responses from those who chose not to take the survey are not included. Additionally, this survey asks respondents to honestly self-reflect on their own knowledge, skills, and abilities. This could be subject to misperceptions of self-meta-cognition and could be subject to Dunning-Kruger effects, in which

participants perceive their KSAs to be greater than reality (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Survey and time burden due to the length and multiple questions asked of each subskill may have impacted responses rate, quality, and numbers. Other limitations are related to time constraint and the nature of an internet-based study. The survey link was forwarded in emails. Since online surveys are available at leisure, the respondents were reminded over five weeks' time to participate in the study. Due to time constraints, the survey was promoted as necessary and was able to collect the finished responses. Another limitation was survey length. Given that the survey was an audit of practice, it was essential for the instrument to be comprehensive; therefore, the survey was quite extensive and may have resulted in the large drop-out rate. Additionally, given that the survey was lengthy, tasks were not explored that went beyond the MBECS 33 skills scope of what is generally thought to be the event professionals core body of knowledge. Therefore, it is unknown if there are additional subskills in MBECS that are involved in tasks less frequently recognized as responsibilities in this role.

Future Research

This was a first-time study of event professionals' self-reported perception of their formal education regarding industry-specific skill, knowledge, and abilities (KSAs) preparation using the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). This study obtained the perception of entry-level event professionals who graduated from a U.S.-based university between 2016 and 2018. Biases of a convenient sample can be reduced if responses from a more diverse sample population are compared (Heckathorn, 1997; 2011).

Future studies may increase validity of research findings by increasing survey responses and sample population. Future research may include a qualitative study that would add an interview component in order to arrive at more in-depth findings about the events industry and

personal thoughts behind self-perception of their formal education concerning industry KSAs (MBECS). Future research utilizing a paired survey approach, where matched participants' employers evaluate the event professionals' knowledge and performance of MBECS competencies, could also counteract Dunning-Kruger effects.

In addition, PCMA and M-Turk entry-level events professionals were surveyed for this study. Exploring and comparing the perspectives of PCMA members and non-PCMA members is recommended for future research. Utilizing other meeting and event industry associations such as Meeting Professionals International (MPI), International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE), or others could be used for a more diverse and larger population size. Many professionals may work with events and not consider themselves as solely an event professional, and as such did not participate in this study (Bureau of Labor Services, 2014; International Business Machines Corporation, 2015). Other roles that work with event professionals, such as audio-visual technicians and volunteer coordinators, may be surveyed in future research to provide different perspectives as to what is expected from event professionals.

Although the survey utilizes the 33 subcategories of the MBECS, instead of all 134 competency items, participants can grow fatigued, bored, or become distracted if the length of the survey exceeds their willingness to participate. A shorter survey may not yield valuable data, and as such future research utilizing focus groups or interviews could engage participants and yield further data on how education affects one's self-evaluation of their MBECS competency levels.

This research provides a foundation for a future study on the relationship between how event professionals' perception of their KSAs (MBECS) provided by their formal education may affect their job performance or confidence. Additionally, the relationship between institutions'

required hours of work-based courses, hosting college of event management curriculum, and number of event courses offered was analyzed. Future research could further analyze this relationship between perceived career preparation and the number of core or required event management courses.

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Appendix A - Approved Institutional Review Board Application

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | University Research Compliance Office

TO: Dr. Jichul Jang
Hospitality Management
105 Justin Hall

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 03/14/2019

RE: Proposal #9579.1, entitled "Event Management Education and the Meeting and Event Business Competency Standards: The Perspectives from Alumni."

A MINOR MODIFICATION OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROPOSAL #9579, ENTITLED, "Event Management Education and the Meeting and Event Business Competency Standards: The Perspectives from Alumni"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University has approved the proposal identified above as a minor modification of a previously approved proposal, and has determined that it is exempt from further review. This exemption applies only to the most recent proposal currently on file with the IRB. Any additional changes affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Unanticipated adverse events or problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the IRB Chair, and / or the URCO.

It is important that your human subjects project is consistent with submissions to funding/contract entities. It is your responsibility to initiate notification procedures to any funding/contract entity of changes in your project that affects the use of human subjects.

203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine, 1601 Vattier St., Manhattan, KS 66506-1103 | 785-532-3224 | fax 785-532-3278
comply@k-state.edu | k-state.edu/research/comply

Appendix B - Event Management Education Preparedness Survey

Consent

I would really like to hear about your educational and professional experiences within the meeting and events industry. The purpose of this survey is to explore the perspectives of industry professionals, just like yourself, on how your formal education helped with your preparation when entering the workforce upon graduating with your Bachelor's degree. The survey results will be used for a graduate student's Masters thesis research study and not shared with your University except in aggregate form in a write up of all responses. The results of this survey will also provide insights on which industry competency areas related to event management taught at formal educational institutions can be better delivered to the next generation of industry professionals you will one day work with and hire. Your participation is highly appreciated and valuable to the continuous development of all event management professionals.

This survey will take 10-15 minutes of your time. Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time. All information gathered in this survey will be kept completely confidential. By continuing with this evaluation, you agree to participate in this study and confirm that you are at least 18 years of age. If you chose to provide your information at the end, there is an opportunity to enter a drawing to win 1 of 2 $50 Amazon Gift Cards. There is minimal risk associated with this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Tia Gamble at tiagamble@ksu.edu. Concerns can also be addressed to the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board at comply@ksu.edu.

Screening Questions

Did you graduate with a bachelor's degree in a field that is related to event management and/or the event industry (i.e. hospitality, business, communications and other related fields)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Did you receive your bachelor's degree within the last two years (in or since 2016)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Are you currently working as a full-time events industry professional with at least an average of 30 hours per week?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please think of how your bachelor's degree prepared you in terms of the following competencies. This is separate from the competencies you have learned/mastered since being in the workforce. Please only think about these competencies in terms of your formalized higher education experience. Pay attention to the scales.

Estimated time of completion is 4 -6 minutes.

	Not knowledgeable at all	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
Manage Strategic Plan for Meeting or Event (e.g., develop mission, goals, feasibility, required actions, strategic plan)	○	○	○	○	○
Plan Meeting or Event Project (e.g., develop project standards, theme, procurement plan, milestones, communication plan, evaluation procedures)	○	○	○	○	○
Develop Financial Resources (e.g., manage sponsorship, donor, funding, registration process)	○	○	○	○	○
Perform Administrative Tasks (e.g., admin coordination, manage information system, reports)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Workforce Relations (e.g., supervise, motivate, manage, evaluate staff and volunteers)	○	○	○	○	○

Manage Stakeholder Relationships (e.g., identify, assess, classify, and manage stakeholders, stakeholders' activities, relationships)					
Design Program (e.g. ,determine, select, structure program components)					
Manage Technical Production (e.g., determine, acquire, install, oversee staging and technical equipment)					
Select Site (e.g., determine, identify, inspect site specifications)					
Manage On-site Communication (e.g., establish, specify, and acquire communication framework, procedures, protocols, equipment)					
Manage Marketing Plan (e.g., conduct situational analysis, define target market, develop branding, select marketing channels, develop and implement marketing strategy)					
Manage Sales Activities (e.g., develop sales objections and plan conduct sales activities, determine sales platforms)					

Please think of how your bachelor's degree prepared you in terms of the following competencies. This is separate from the competencies you have learned/mastered since being in the workforce. Please only think about these competencies in terms of your formalized higher education experience. Pay attention to the scales.

	Not knowledgeable at all	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
Develop Sustainability Plan for Meeting or Event (e.g., implement and demonstrate environment responsibility)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Meeting or Event Project (e.g., manage critical path, contract, running of meeting/event)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Budget (e.g., develop budgets, establish pricing, financial control, manage cash flows, monitor performance, and revise)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Human Resource Plan (e.g.. determine requirements, establish policies, develop training plan, monitor HR plan)	○	○	○	○	○
Engage Speakers and Performers (e.g., determine requirements, develop selection criteria, select candidates, secure contract)	○	○	○	○	○

Coordinate Food and Beverage Services (e.g., determine requirements, select menu, plan service style, select providers, manage alcohol)	○	○	○	○	○
Design Site Layout	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Marketing Material (e.g., determine necessary materials, develop content and design parameters, produce and distribute marketing materials)	○	○	○	○	○
Contribute to Public Relations Activities (e.g., strategy and publicity plan, develop media relations, implementations of publicity plan, manage crises and controversies)	○	○	○	○	○
Exhibit Professional Behavior (e.g., professional image, demonstrate leadership and ethical behavior, manage time and stress, make decisions, solve problems, keep up to date on industry changes, facilitate continuous improvements)	○	○	○	○	○

Please think of how your bachelor's degree prepared you in terms of the following competencies. This is separate from the competencies you have learned/mastered since being in the workforce. Please only think about these competencies in terms of your formalized higher education experience. Pay attention to the scales.

	Not knowledgeable at all	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
Measure Value of Meetings and Business Events (e.g., develop an evaluation plan, measure ROI, evaluate/audit meeting)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Risk Management Plan (e.g., identify and analyze risks, develop management and implement an emergency response plan, arrange security)	○	○	○	○	○
Manage Monetary Transactions (e.g., establish and monitor handling procedures)	○	○	○	○	○
Acquire Staff and Volunteers (e.g., develop selection criteria, recruit staff/volunteers, interview candidates, select candidates)	○	○	○	○	○
Train Staff and Volunteers (e.g., provide orientation and training)	○	○	○	○	○

Design Plan for Managing Movement of Attendees (e.g., develop credential systems, select crowd management techniques, coordinate accommodations and transportation)					
Manage Meeting or Event Site (e.g., create logistics action plan, set up site, monitor site during event, take-down site)					
Manage Meeting or Event Merchandise (e.g., develop product design, determine pricing, control brand integrity, distribute merchandise)					
Promote Meeting or Event (e.g., develop advertising plan, cross-promotional activities, contests, and./or sales promotions)					
Conduct Business Communications (e.g., use communication tools, make effective presentations, plan and conduct meetings)					
Design Environment (e.g. establish functional requirements, select decor, coordinate event signage)					

From which University did you receive your bachelor's degree? (i.e. Kansas State University)

What is the official name of your bachelor's degree? (i.e. Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management, Business Administration, Communication, Restaurant, Event Management, etc.)

Reflecting upon your University experience, how many event-specific related courses did you take as part of your degree? Event-specific related courses are defined as courses where the majority of content and applications are specifically applied to events and not other areas of study.

As part of your coursework, did your program REQUIRE an internship or work-based experience requirements?

- Yes, less than 300 hours total
- Yes, between 300-500 hours total
- Yes, between 501 and 750 hours total
- Yes, between 751 and 1,000 hours total
- Yes, more than 1,000 hours total
- No, no internships or work experience was required as part of my curriculum

Do you have any additional comments about your educational preparations for your career in event management that you would like to share?

What is your current job title?

Which sector would you classify your current employment under?

- PRIVATE-FOR-PROFIT company, business or individual, for wages, salary or commissions
- PRIVATE-NOT-FOR-PROFIT, tax-exempt, or charitable organization
- Local GOVERNMENT employee (city, county, etc.)
- State GOVERNMENT employee; 5-Federal GOVERNMENT employee
- Federal GOVERNMENT employee
- SELF-EMPLOYED in own NOT INCORPORATED business, professional practice, or farm
- SELF-EMPLOYED in own INCORPORATED business, professional practice, or farm

As of January 1, 2019 how old were you?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- Prefer not to answer

How would you currently classify yourself? (Based on US Census)

- White/ Caucasian
- Black or African American Multi-racial
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- American Indian or Alaska Native Prefer not to answer
- Asian Other
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

What do you currently classify as?

- Male
- Female
- Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
- Prefer not to answer

Last question! Please indicate your best estimate of your current annual income.

- Less than $10,000
- $10,000 - $19,999
- $20,000 - $29,999
- $30,000 - $39,999
- $40,000 - $49,999
- $50,000 - $59,999
- $60,000 - $69,999
- $70,000 - $79,999
- $80,000 - $89,999
- $90,000 - $99,999
- $100,000 - $149,999
- More than $150,000
- Prefer not to answer

Appendix C - Consent to Provide an E-Newsletter

From: Arnold, Caitlin <CArnold@kellencompany.com>
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2019 4:04:17 PM
To: Tia' Gamble
Subject: RE: PCMA Heartland Chapter Inquiry

Great – can you draft up a paragraph explaining what you want people to do and what it's for (keep it short and simple) with a link to the survey? We can get it in this week's email, Jacky at HQ has also said we can send it to our chapter leaders group as well as post on PCMA's Catalyst!

Are you only looking for KState grads or all people who graduated with a degree in hospitality?

-Caitlin

Appendix D - Authorization to use the Meeting and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS) as survey foundation

MA

MPI Academy <MPIAcademy@mpiweb.org>
Thu 2/7, 4:06 PM
Tia' Gamble

Inbox

Good day Tia,

Thank you for your email. As long as everything is properly cited, it should be fine to use.

It is our pleasure to assist you, please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns.

Best regards,

MPI Academy
mpiacademy@mpiweb.org

Invest in yourself. Expand your career options.
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MPI is an Approved CAE Provider & CMP Preferred Provider

Appendix E - February 2019 PCMA Heartland Chapter E-Newsletter sent to PCMA Members

The latest info from your PCMA Chapter! View email in your browser»

KSU Student Project

A Kansas State University student would really like to hear about your educational and professional experiences within the meeting and events industry. The purpose of this survey is to explore the perspectives of industry professionals, just like yourself, on how your formal education helped with your preparation when entering the workforce upon graduating with your Bachelor's degree. The survey results will be used for a graduate student's Masters thesis research study and not shared with your University except in aggregate form in a write up of all responses. The results of this survey will also provide insights on which industry competency areas related to event management taught at formal educational institutions can be better delivered to the next generation of industry professionals you will one day work with and hire. Your participation is highly appreciated and valuable to the continuous development of all event management professionals. The survey will take 10-15 minutes of your time with an opportunity to enter a drawing to **win 1 of 2 $50 Amazon Gift Cards** for completed surveys.

http://go.pardot.com/e/589013/jfe-form-SV-a4cifXWSEp1WM7P/l9541/101521654?h=mtvn34Fm8eXeexRhShUGZVhLDcliocEKRtwNgXYXdKE

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 7, 2109

Social Impact Panel Luncheon (Overland Park)

Come learn how your next meeting can have a social impact on your members, community, and destination. Our panel will walk you through how they've created social impact experiences
LEARN MORE »

Appendix F - Amazon M-Turk Survey Description