

THE INTENTION OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS TO INCORPORATE
VOLUNTOURISM INTO CONVENTIONS: PERCEPTIONS OF MEETING
PROFESSIONALS

By

TARA SCHICKEDANZ

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To my family and friends, who offer unconditional support.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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By

Tara Schickedanz

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Meetings and conventions represent a large and ever-growing industry. Associations and corporations host literally thousands of these events each year, and are always looking to include new and exciting free time activities for their attendees. However, with rising costs (fuel, airline tickets, hotel rooms, etc.), it has become much more difficult to schedule these free-time activities. Meeting professionals are constantly looking for budget-friendly, exciting endeavors to offer convention attendees. Voluntourism, or a volunteer project undertaken when traveling, could be a great, low-cost alternative to traditional add-on activities such as golf and spa visits.

For this study, which was exploratory in nature, the intention of meeting professionals to incorporate voluntourism into their upcoming conventions was analyzed with four separate variables. These variables were knowledge of voluntourism, attitude toward voluntourism, motivations to include voluntourism, and past experiences with voluntourism. A survey was created online, and an email containing a link to the survey was sent out. In total, 100 responses were received – a low number, but enough to be able to generalize the results. Other than the knowledge variable, all the independent variables significantly correlated to the intention variable. Just over half (58%) of the sample did demonstrate high knowledge of voluntourism,

but this did not correlate significantly with their intent to include it in an upcoming meeting or convention. However, meeting professionals who exhibited a positive attitude toward voluntourism, or higher motivations, or past experience (or some combination of all three), were likely to intend to include voluntourism at upcoming conventions. Interestingly, this sample also admitted the personal importance of what other people thought of their including voluntourism in their conventions. For example, if important others in their lives approved of their decision to incorporate voluntourism, meeting professionals were much more likely to reveal their intent to do so.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The convention industry, which is typically considered a young industry, has experienced the majority of its growth in the last 20 years. Some believe that as long as there are people, there is a need to meet to discuss things (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Spiller, 2003). It is this belief which has formed the impetus for the meetings industry being considered the oldest industry in the world. Conventions, however, can trace their origins to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period in history, industrialization was spreading rapidly throughout the United States and Western Europe. This speedy industrial growth led businessmen and entrepreneurs to realize a need to arrange opportunities to meet with clients, suppliers, and industry leaders.

An increase in association activity in the early 1980s has necessitated more meetings among association affiliates (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Therefore, the idea of conferences and conventions was further developed. Lawson (2000) believed that there were numerous reasons for the growth of the convention industry, including the expansion of both government and non-government organizations, an escalating need for discussion between public and private segments; development of international corporations; progression of association interests, professional groups, etc.; modification of sales techniques (including the use of product launches and promotional meetings); consistently improving methods of doing business and the need to update/train employees; and finally the ability to package work and play in an inclusive setting.

In the United States, Detroit can claim the first opening of a convention bureau, which was established in 1896 (Spiller, 2003). In the United States, convention bureaus were founded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On February 19, 1896, members of the local Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Club united to form a new institute, The Detroit Convention

and Businessmen's League. They established their mission as "hustling for all these conventions" (Ford & Peeper, 2007). Detroit's Convention Bureau began a fast-paced trend, and many other cities followed suit by opening their own convention bureaus (Rogers, 1998). According to Ford and Peeper (2007), there are many different factors which can be attributed to the considerable growth in the convention industry, including the expansion of organizations, introduction of new sales techniques, the need to train/update employees (Lawson, 2000), technological innovations, the industrial revolution, and the Panic of 1893 – with its resulting depression and need for economic recovery – urban renewal, and economic development. However, the overall reason for the growth of the industry is its practicality. Meetings and conventions bring people together to do business, discuss new ideas and innovations, and further their education. These reasons, along with subsequent increases in disposable income, the availability of technology, and ability to travel, have allowed the meetings and conventions industry to experience unprecedented growth.

The convention industry can now be considered quite a sizable business. In fact, in the year 2001 alone, a total of 79,900,000 traveling meeting attendees generated over \$93 billion in spending (Lee, 2006). Then, in 2004, the meetings, incentive travel, convention, and exhibition industry (i.e. "MICE" industry) contributed more than \$122 billion to the United States' economy, and directly created over 1.7 million jobs, according to the Convention Industry Council [CIC]. A relevant deduction, based on the above information, is that many meetings and conventions are being planned in order to create an economic impact. The 2006 *Meetings Market Report*, published by *Meetings and Conventions*, reported that almost 1.25 million meetings and conventions, for both associations and corporations, were held in 2005. Total direct expenditures for these events were approximately \$107.2 billion (this is an increase above

the Convention Industry Council's 2004 figures, since incentive travel was included in the earlier estimates and was not in the *Meetings Market Report*). Meeting professionals do not expect their workload to decrease; both association and corporate meeting professionals expect the number of events held by their organizations to increase within the next year (Meeting Professionals International, 2007). However, although the industry and the number of meetings/conventions planned is growing, planner's budgets are not.

According to Meeting Professionals International's [MPI] FutureWatch 2007, 46% of 1,433 surveyed meeting professionals did expect an increase in the number of meetings they would personally oversee, but only 48% of those expecting the increase expected a commensurate increase in their personal budgets, so their ability to be able to plan these extra events will be, to say the least, hindered. Ng (2007) indicated that up to 76% of meeting professionals have listed budget pressures and rising costs among their largest concerns for 2008. That, along with their concern over rising oil and gas prices, makes the lack of increase in budget even more problematic. These factors, along with concerns about war and terrorism, are likely going to cause planners to arrange more meetings and conventions domestically than internationally (International Association of Expositions and Events [IAEE], 2007; MPI, 2007; CIC, 2007).

Although meeting professionals must complete more tasks with less money in their budgets, meeting and convention attendees still expect great things. This leaves meeting professionals with a major dilemma: how to create budget-friendly, yet memorable, educational, and fun experiences for their event tourists. Yet another predicament facing meeting professionals and their chosen host communities is that although conventions offer many economic benefits to a host community, they have been shown to have negative environmental

and/or social impacts. Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) found that event tourists, particularly conference delegates, end up spending between two and four times as much money in a destination than tourists as a whole spend. Events can have their downfalls, and if an event is poorly managed, the effects will be felt by the local community. For example, conference travelers are inclined to use environmentally unfriendly forms of transportation, have a tendency to be wasteful, can be insensitive or ignorant toward local culture (thus offending local citizens), and can attract crime, since they are unfamiliar with the area and become easy targets. Also, local citizens may be made to feel inferior by convention attendees who have more wealth and/or education than they possess (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001).

The negative publicity has not slowed the convention industry's growth whatsoever. The majority of associations – 74% - claim to host major conventions at least once a year (Meetings and Conventions, 2006). Fifty percent of attendees at out-of-town association events stay for three or more days at a time, generally in a conference or convention center hotel (IAEE, 2007). Since these events tend to be several days long, meeting professionals must arrange a variety of activities in which attendees can participate in their free time. These add-on activities can, if planned well, draw convention attendees back, and create economic benefits for both the host association and the host city. The most popular add-on activities planned for association meetings and conventions include golf, spousal programs, attractions/theme parks, spa activities, and team-building activities (IAEE, 2007). A breakdown of the free time activities typically scheduled by meeting professionals can be seen in Figure 1-1.

These activities are usually expensive, so it is typically the responsibility of the attendee to pay for his or her chosen activity. According to Meetings and Conventions (2006), associations pay an average of \$465,000 for major conventions, while attendees at these events

spend, on average, \$1,460 each; this includes the hotel stay (where room rates for convention hotel rooms average \$145 per night). So, although conventions have been praised for being able to bring vendors, clients, and thought leaders together while earning money for the host association, they can present a rather significant financial burden for each individual attendee. Add the likely upcoming budget cuts for meeting professionals, and associations could be facing a rather significant dilemma regarding their annual meetings.

A wonderful opportunity presents itself in the midst of all the problems. This opportunity is known as voluntourism. The inclusion of voluntourism as an add-on activity at a convention combats issues that convention attendees may have with local citizens (as they will likely be working with some, thus creating a mutual understanding/appreciation), and issues with traditional, expensive, familiar add-on activities. Wearing (2001) defines volunteer tourism as it applies to:

those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment (p. 1).

Forward-thinking, socially responsible meeting professionals could be on the forefront of a movement if they plan activities that allow their convention tourists to volunteer in the host community.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual foundation of this study is based on four characteristics of meeting professionals: 1) their meeting planning experience; 1b) their industry knowledge; 2) their attitudes toward voluntourism; 2b) their past experiences with voluntourism; 3) their motivations to include voluntourism activities at conventions; and finally 4) their past travel experiences.

This framework will be used to determine meeting professionals' intention to include

voluntourism activities into conventions. Meeting professionals who arrange meetings and conventions were chosen as research subjects in order to gauge their interest in philanthropic and socially responsible activities (Platzer & Fisher, 2007), as they are the ones responsible for recommending such activities to their convention attendees.

The concept of adding voluntourism to meetings and conventions is quite novel, so academic research pertaining to this topic is scarce. Due to the paucity of research regarding volunteer tourism (i.e. “voluntourism”), this study will instead synthesize past research in the fields of psychology, leisure, and tourism. This synthesis will be used to prove a case which explains why meeting professionals would be likely to include voluntourism activities into their already-full convention schedules. A model has been developed (see Figure 2, below) to show how a combination of the four factors could lead a meeting professional to include a voluntourism activity, possibly as a spousal activity, ice breaker, team building activity, or any other type of free-time activity.

The first factor that could potentially affect meeting professionals’ intention to include voluntourism into the conventions that they plan is each planner’s event industry experience. There has been a major paucity of high-quality research directed toward the effect of a meeting professional’s industry knowledge and planning experience on any decision-making and/or risk-taking propensities. In fact, many of the studies found regarding the experience and/or industry knowledge of meeting professionals was poorly conducted and quite fragmented. The lack of pertinent research was even addressed in one study conducted by Yoo and Weber (2005), who found that academic research on this topic has not kept up with the growth of the convention industry. Meeting professionals tend to be trendsetters, and their influence in each planned convention is far-reaching. They are usually involved in a large percentage of the decisions

made for each convention, beginning with site selection, as evidenced in a study conducted by Clark, Price and Murmann, back in 1996. As they wrote, "...it would be naïve of hospitality marketers to underestimate the influence of meeting planners, even when the decision process does not give them the final say...this individual is placed in a powerful position" (p. 76). The large influence of meeting professionals with aspects such as site selection is only one component of the entire package, as associations put their faith in meeting professionals throughout the entire planning process.

The fact that meeting professionals do play such a large role in one of associations' and corporations' largest money producers makes the lack of pertinent research even more puzzling. One champion of the event industry, Weber (2001), managed to provide the following information about association planners: a sample of participants from Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) had ample experience in the events industry, with 37% of survey respondents claiming to have between 10 and 20 years of industry experience, and 11% having over 20 years of industry experience. The survey respondents were all association planners, and had arranged conventions for anywhere between 100 and 68,000 people. The vast majority – 89% - reported being between the ages of 25 and 55, with 63% of respondents professing to be between the ages of 36 and 55. However, different studies have yielded different results; this issue will be addressed in further detail in Chapter Two.

A relevant topic that ties in with industry experience is a meeting professional's familiarity with, or knowledge of, voluntourism. Of course, a voluntourism activity cannot be planned if the person responsible for planning has no idea that this concept exists. However, as Milman and Pizam (1995) found, knowledge does not always lead to participation – it leads, at best, to a curiosity in the product/service, which could potentially lead to a trial run (or, a

meeting professionals possibly incorporating voluntourism on a small scale). For a voluntourism program to be successful, there must first be meeting professional knowledge, and a corresponding positive image, or perception, of the activity. All else being equal, a positive image, not just knowledge, will lead to a first-time trial. Stringer's (1984) findings correlated with those of Milman and Pizam, as he stated, "... images are a crucial basis of choice and decision-making in tourism, however incomplete or indistinct people's anticipations may be" (p. 155). Although both studies were conducted with regard for a universal measure of the tourism industry, the results are generalizable to special fields in this industry, such as voluntourism.

Another substantial factor in the intention of meeting professionals to include voluntourism in their conventions could be their attitudes toward the act of voluntourism itself. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, and its in-depth offshoot, the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes play a significant role in the intentions to and therefore the eventual performance of behaviors (Fishbein, 1965; Ajzen, 1985; 1991; 2002; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Working back from the performance of a behavior, behavior stems from an intent, which stems from a combination of attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms – i.e. what important others will feel about the performance/nonperformance of the behavior – and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, if a meeting professional already exerts a positive attitude toward volunteer activities and tourism, and the association (especially the executive board) approves of voluntourism, the meeting professional will likely feel a considerable amount of control and therefore be quite likely to include voluntourism activities. Although these theories have been criticized and updated through the years, the Theory of Planned Behavior still remains one of the most widely used and well-respected attitude theories (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Originally, Ajzen and Fishbein came up with a theory that became known as the Theory of Reasoned Action. This theory measured the effects of attitudes toward a specific behavior, along with subjective norms, on the intentions to perform the behavior (Fishbein, 1963; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970). Unlike the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Theory of Reasoned Action assumes that an individual would feel volitional control in a situation, whereas Theory of Planned behavior accounts for behaviors performed when individuals' perceptions of control vary. Ajzen (1985) thus developed a new concept, and therefore new theory, that dealt with perceived behavioral control as well as attitudes and subjective norms. Therefore, the Theory of Planned Behavior, although seemingly not much different than the Theory of Reasoned Action, represents a whole new realm of thinking.

The Theory of Planned Behavior also indirectly addresses the influence of past behaviors/experiences on the prediction of future behaviors. Although Bandura (1986) found that past experience with a behavior is the most important source of information about feelings of behavioral control, Ajzen (1991) believes that past behavior, in and of itself, is not an actual causal factor of a yet-unperformed behavior. So, although past behavior and its associated experiences can indirectly affect current behaviors (through feelings of perceived behavioral control), it likely will not have an overriding effect on new or even repeated behaviors.

The idea of perceived behavior control, which is the distinguishing factor of the Theory of Planned Behavior, i.e. what separates it from the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action, also happens to tie in well with Self-Determination Theory, which will be investigated as a source for motivations, both to travel and to include volunteer activities in conventions.

The Self-Determination Theory will provide the theoretical background for a large portion of this study. Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) demonstrate that a task which begins as

extrinsically motivated (as most work-related tasks tend to be) can move along a continuum to become personally important and therefore feel self-determined. In order for a meeting professional to even consider integrating a voluntourism component into his or her event, there must be some motivation to do so. Of course, in order for a meeting professional to become motivated to include voluntourism, he or she must be aware of the opportunities that exist for its inclusion, and not have to feel any constraints under which the inclusion of voluntourism would be impossible. It can be assumed, therefore, that the proper combination of knowledge, motivation, and lack of constraints represent underlying currents for self-determination.

Typically, the type of motivation which leads one to action is intrinsic motivation, or doing something simply for the satisfaction one gets from the activity. There is no external reward; consequently, true intrinsic motivation is rare in the modern business world.

Associations and corporations alike cannot count on all employees to be intrinsically motivated at all times. However, motivations can become internalized and personally meaningful if a meeting professional feels competent, autonomous, and able to relate to others around them and the task at hand (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Internalization of motivation can be defined as:

People taking in values, attitudes, or regulatory structures, such that the external regulation of behavior is transformed into an internal regulation and thus no longer requires the presence of an external contingency (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Once the basic antecedents of competency, autonomy, and relatedness have been met, and amotivation (i.e. lack of motivation) has been overcome, the internalization process has three stages: introjections, identification, and then integration. These stages will be explained in more detail over the remainder of this study.

The past travel experiences of meeting professionals is another relevant factor in their adventuresomeness and therefore their intention to try something new, like incorporating

voluntourism into their convention arrangements. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) introduced the idea of past travel experiences having an effect, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, on trip decisions. Their study assisted in the confirmation of the idea of a "travel career," which was studied by Pearce and Lee (2005), as well, who "demonstrated that travel motivation could be identified as patterns and combinations of multiple motives that are influenced by previous travel experience and age" (p. 235).

The idea of past travel experience has been examined, based on perceptions of risk and/or safety (Sonmez and Graefe, 1998). These factors become relevant to international meeting professionals, who may be planning conventions in an area that is unfamiliar. Therefore, a meeting professional who has traveled extensively may feel more behavioral control in the planning process and therefore more likely to incorporate voluntourism into his or her association convention.

Based on the above theories, a model has been developed (see Figure 1-2) to demonstrate how a combination of the four factors could lead a meeting professional to include a voluntourism activity, possibly as a spousal activity, ice breaker, team building activity, or any other type of free-time activity. As can be seen in Figure 1-2, it is the belief of this researcher that a simple combination of the proper motivations (to both volunteer and travel), positive past travel experiences, and a fairly thorough knowledge of and/or experience with the events industry will lead a meeting professional to have a greater intention to arrange a voluntourism activity in his or her next convention. Also, more positive experiences in past travels, or even simply more travel experience, especially travel experiences related to the planning of conventions and other events, could lead to a greater, more comprehensive knowledge of the

event industry and its many forms in different regions and countries. Once again, this graphic representation is a simple outline of the overall concepts utilized in this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand and measure the intention of meeting professionals to schedule voluntourism activities into their associations' annual meetings and/or conventions. The dependent variable of each individual meeting professional's intention to include these activities is based on three separate independent variables: their motivations (or, more specifically, their ability to internalize the motivation to include voluntourism activities, as described by SDT), their past experiences with travel and volunteerism, and their knowledge and experience in the event industry.

Research Questions

The basis of this study is to introduce the idea of adding a voluntourism activity to conventions and address it within a scholarly approach. The intention of meeting professionals to do so will be examined, due to the fact that they are the change leaders and trend setters in the event industry, and thus more likely to be open to new ideas. The intention of meeting professionals to include a voluntourism activity into one of their conventions will be investigated based on their knowledge of the event industry, their attitudes toward both volunteerism and travel, their overall motivations, and their past experiences with travel and volunteer travel (See Figure 2). Accordingly, the research questions for this study were formulated as follows:

1. To what extent do different levels of planning experience characterize meeting professionals?
2. Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' level of experience and intentions to include voluntourism in convention plans?
3. To what extent do meeting professionals exhibit different levels of industry knowledge?

4. Is there a relationship between level of industry knowledge and intentions to include voluntourism in convention plans?
5. To what extent do meeting professionals view voluntourism favorably?
6. Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' attitudes and intentions to include voluntourism in conventions?
7. To what extent do meeting professionals exhibit different motivations for voluntourism?
8. Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' type of motivation and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans?
9. To what extent have meeting professionals been exposed to voluntourism?
10. Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' past exposure/experience with voluntourism and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans?
11. To what extent are different types of meeting professionals represented by the sample?
12. Is there a relationship between type meeting professionals' and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans?
13. What is the best predictor of a meeting professional's intent to include voluntourism in their convention plans: knowledge, attitudes, motivations, or past experiences?

Limitations

The discussion did not include an in-depth analysis of potential obstacles to incorporating voluntourism activities into association conventions, such as a lack of time or money necessary for the activity.

	Association	Corporate	Independent
Attractions/theme park	37%	39%	45%
Casinos/gaming	17%	24%	34%
Cooking programs	9%	17%	15%
Festivals	9%	6%	17%
Golf	53%	67%	53%
Skiing	5%	7%	11%
Spas/spa activities	29%	47%	48%
Sporting events	17%	39%	31%
Spousal programs	43%	32%	40%
Team-building activities	29%	55%	52%
Other	14%	10%	12%

Figure 1-1: Typical Activities Incorporated Into Meetings (IAEE, 2007)

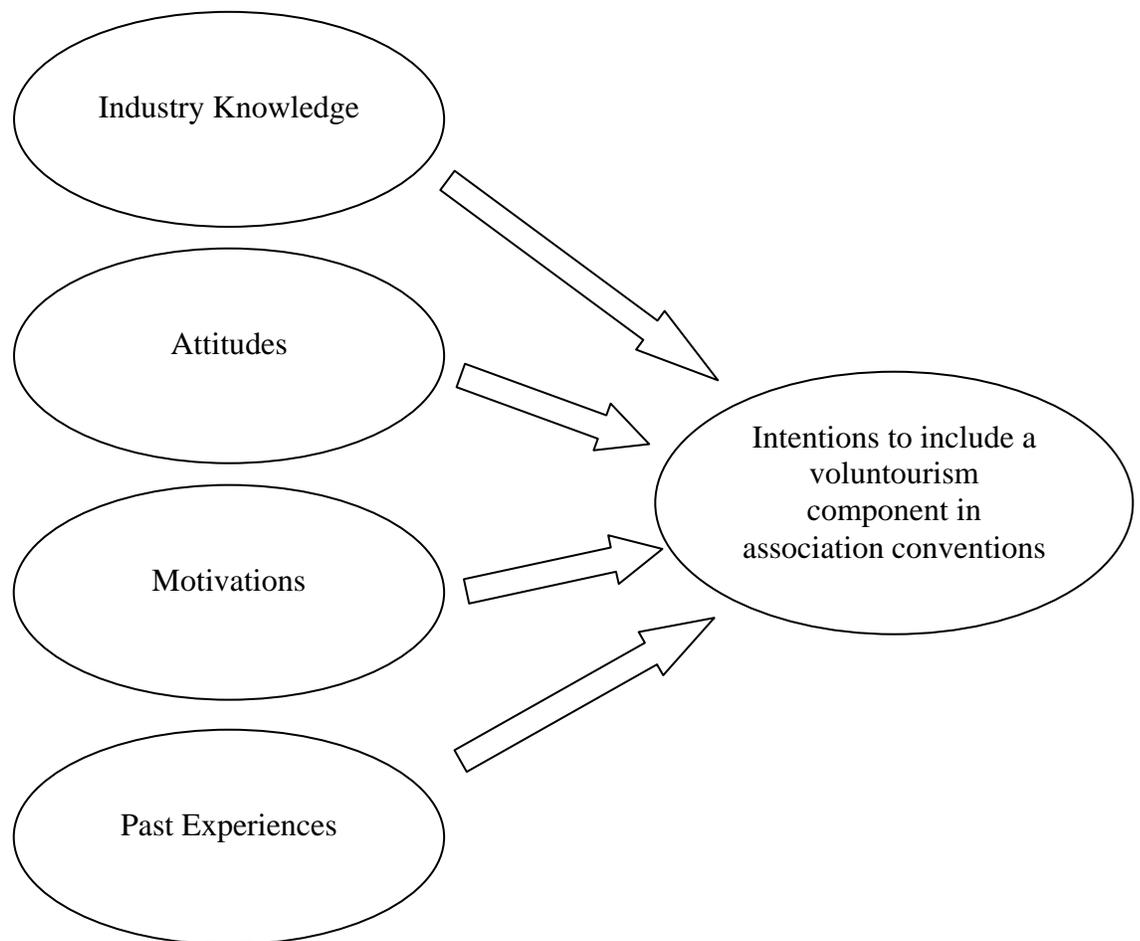


Figure 1-2: Conceptual Model of Research

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a synthesized review of literature written with regard for pertinent topics such as: the event industry (and, more specifically, meetings and conventions), meeting professionals, their attitudes, motivational theories, travel and tourism, and voluntourism. Studies conducted in each of these areas are relevant to the research purposes of this paper, and therefore should be taken into consideration. An overview of the event industry, and its scope, becomes the starting point for this review, and has the ability to introduce further topics, such as the events hosted by associations and corporations and those responsible for arranging meetings. A profile of meeting professionals will include their attitudes and motivations and then preview their individual intention to include a voluntourism activity in their events. Their inclination to include voluntourism will be discussed based on the above attitudes, motivations and demographics, along with their past travel and tourism experiences. Then, this review will wrap up with a description of voluntourism activities that have already been included into meetings and conventions, and the inclusion of some ideas as to how these activities could be offered at a meeting or convention.

Event Industry

According to international economist Santiago Guerreiro, “It is clear that the meetings industry has an economic relevance and is a key driver of [economic] growth” (Meetings Industry Megasite, 2007). Conventions, when combined with the already-huge tourism industry, represent huge amounts of business for host communities. In fact, according to Montgomery and Strick (1995), the meetings and conventions industry acts as a major source of revenue under the umbrella of the tourism industry. People have been meeting for as long as they have been on this

earth, so the value of meetings has been known for many years. As mentioned in Chapter 1, only fairly recently has the meetings and convention industry experienced real, rapid growth.

This growth has led to the multi-billion dollar meetings and convention industry that exists today. Although this industry, just like tourism, is highly dependent on political and economic stability, as was evidenced by the drop in both travel and meeting attendance after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (Power, 2001; Vest, 2002), it has always been able to, at the very least, stay afloat. The tourism and meetings industries may be susceptible to any threat of danger and/or risk, but both are quite resilient, as can be seen in the schematic representation in Figure 3-1 (Bonham, Edmonds, & Mark, 2006).

The monetary figures listed in Chapter 1 prove the resiliency of the convention industry, as it is once again booming. Countless events are being planned, which tends to put an extraordinary amount of pressure on meeting professionals. Keep in mind that, of the 46% of meeting professionals that expected an increase in the number of events that they would have to plan, less than half expected a large-enough increase in the planning budget to accommodate extra events, and the rising prices of hotel rooms and airline tickets (Meeting Professionals International, 2007). In fact, Boehmer and Baker (2007) predict that in 2008, more and more corporations will be attempting to save some of the money that is currently being spent on travel and hospitality, although decision-makers are aware that prices will be increasing. So, although the industry itself has proven to be durable, meeting professionals' jobs will only become more difficult in the coming years.

In addition to stress over budget cuts, meeting professionals must also contend with critics who do not believe that meetings and conventions are as beneficial as many believe. Sanders (2002), after analyzing market and feasibility studies for over 30 U.S. cities – which

were conducted between the early 1980s and 2000 – found many of the facts and figures to be under researched and over inflated. Some of his criticisms were not well-founded, and he did admit that “both performance history and opinion surveys [which he apparently used to critique the feasibility studies] are imperfect guides to the future (p. 206). However, this did not stop Sanders from publishing yet another critique of the success of the events industry in 2004. In this study, Sanders took it upon himself to point out what he considered six myths of the convention industry. He wrote that the following were common beliefs about the industry that are not true: it is perpetually growing, although it declined after 9/11 it has picked back up, all consultants are reliable, more space leads to more business, attendees will stay for a long time and spend lots of money, and that there is a need for a headquarters hotel. He presented the idea that the convention industry had been built up beyond its actual potential. While he does present some valid arguments, his issue seems to be with marketing and public relations/research companies than with the events industry itself. Even those who cite Sanders in their work cannot deny the potential economic impact that conventions may have on a host community. Laslo and Judd (2004), in their criticism of convention centers and the local politics responsible for their construction, first mention how profitable meetings and events are to communities, and then argue that local governments are not taking responsibility for the huge investments necessary to build such infrastructure. So, although there has been a certain amount of vilification of the industry, the aforementioned authors are actually concerned with the costs of building and maintaining convention centers, not the profitability of the meetings and conventions market itself.

In addition to the claims about the over inflated potential benefits of convention centers and meetings, the events industry has endured other criticisms. While the economic benefits to

both host association/corporation and host community have been viewed positively, the social impacts tend to be viewed positively only by convention attendees and not local citizens, and the environmental impacts are viewed negatively by many, if not all, involved (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001). Three figures (Figure 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4) show how a host destination can be both positively and negatively economically, environmentally, and socially affected by business tourists. For the purposes of this research business tourists will be considered very similar, if not exactly the same, as convention tourists, and therefore their impacts will be considered comparable.

Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) did an excellent job sorting through the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of business tourism. They also mention that these impacts may be affected by several factors, including the size of the host destination, its population, level of economic development, and existing infrastructure; the overall contributions of business tourism (i.e. use of local facilities/opportunities other than those provided at the hotel/convention center), the type of tourism that the destination attracts, the amount of tourists from more well-developed and/or richer countries, who owns the facilities/transport services (locally vs. remotely owned), and the local government policies towards tourism. Their analysis of the impacts of business travel and tourism was in-depth and insightful, and should be used by meeting professionals who show concern for their relationship with a host destination.

The budget cuts and criticisms of the events industry make planning large-scale conventions and meetings difficult; add to this mix the fact that convention attendees will always expect great things and some conventions would seem unable to be pulled off. On top of the typical meetings and breakout sessions and potential trade shows usually involved in conventions, meeting professionals are also expected to devise innovative social and/or free-time

activities for all attendees. These activities are especially meaningful to association convention attendees, as they are the most likely to stay longer in a destination and bring accompaniment on their travels (International Association of Exhibitions and Events, 2007). Association convention attendees are also more likely to pay for these add-on activities – along with their rooms and travel expenses – than corporate convention travelers, so they want a good deal (Meetings and Conventions, 2006).

However, add-on activities at meetings and conventions have become fairly standard – golf, spa days, etc. – and although attendees do appreciate these activities, people are always interested in something new and exciting to do. So, what should a meeting professional, working with a bare-bones budget, plan in order to make attendees pay attention and appreciate their participation in an annual convention? An activity that will please many and cost little: in other words, an activity in which attendees are given the chance to make a difference and feel good about themselves and the community to which they traveled – an activity involving voluntourism.

Voluntourism

Wearing's (2001) definition of voluntourism has already been provided. According to voluntourism.org, voluntourism is “a seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination and the best, traditional elements of travel—arts, culture, geography, and history—in that destination” (2007). Voluntourists are exposed to a destination in a comprehensive manner, as opposed to undergoing the superficial experiences characteristic of mass tourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). Although traveling to volunteer first took off with the introduction of the Volunteer Service Overseas [VSO] in 1958, and then the 1961 introduction of the Peace Corps (Voluntourism website, 2007), the amount of those who participate in volunteer vacations is far less than those who simply take vacations. Just as the tourism industry as a whole experienced a

prolonged development that was dependent on advances in knowledge and technology, so must the voluntourism industry.

Before the initiation of the Grand Tour and ensuing trend of mass tourism, many saw travel as a necessary evil, if they left home at all. Those who did travel did so strictly for business purpose – mostly merchants – or had been banned from their hometowns (Enzensberger, 1996). Tourism, with its connotations of pleasure and choice, as opposed to obligatory travel, became popular after the 1836 publication of John Murray's *Red Book*, which contained detailed descriptions of the most picturesque and visit-worthy sites of several countries in Western Europe. Along with the availability of travel books, the advances in travel technology (i.e. invention of the steam ship/railroad expansion) aided in the tourism explosion. Enzensberger (1996) does mention that a love of travel was a characteristic of the Roman Empire, whose idea of travel was actually quite similar to our views today. However, no period in history comes close to matching the volume of travel and tourism seen in the world today. Tourism is now one of the world's largest industries, accounting for over 10% of the world's gross domestic product, and over 840 million arrivals worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2007). The United States is a world leader in the tourism industry: by the end of the third quarter of 2007, the United States had welcomed 36,135,201 international visitors (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, 2008). That does not include all of the domestic travel in which Americans partake. In 2007, travel and tourism in the United States was expected to generate \$1,689.3 billion of economic activity, and generate 15,040,000 jobs (TSA Country Report, 2007).

There are many different forms of tourism, and as the industry developed, more varieties have been devised. One of the newer forms of tourism is known as alternative tourism, which is

the antithesis of mass tourism. The idea of an alternative vacation was formulated by those who felt disillusioned by the commercialization of popular vacation spots, and wanted to be able to experience the authentic host culture during their travels. Alternative tourism is an umbrella term for any type of travel in which the tourist is concerned with the local environment, whether with sustainability of their travels, the host community's culture, or possibly even biodiversity. There are several types of alternative tourism, including: adventure tourism, ecotourism, and, most importantly, volunteer tourism – otherwise known as voluntourism. The term 'voluntourism' was supposedly recently coined at a conference, and is seen by Wearing (2001) as quite similar to ecotourism. Wearing's depiction of how volunteer tourism fits into the concept of tourism overall can be seen in Figure 2-5. To Wearing, voluntourism could fit in to any combination of several types of alternative tourism, as its interpretation can become quite flexible. The term 'voluntourism' was first used by the Nevada Board of Tourism in 1998, in the development of a program to encourage local citizens to volunteer to promote tourism in rural areas of the state. The term was used differently than it is today; as with many concepts, voluntourism has and still is undergoing its evolution.

Wearing also believes that the commercialization inherent in mass tourism leads to the eventual exploitation of host communities. He understands that voluntourism, when well-planned, can create a powerful link between the voluntourist and the destination area; the ensuing relationships are mutually beneficial (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). However, if it simply becomes yet another tourist commodity to be consumed at will, the voluntourism experience will not be able to provide the same significance to either the voluntourist or host community, and may therefore become ineffectual. The benefits may far outweigh and potential damages, though, when used as a model of best practice; by exposing tourists to a new, local culture and

people, personal development related to tolerance, compassion, and understanding will likely develop (Wearing, 2004). Adding a voluntourism activity to a convention or meeting agenda provides attendees with a low-cost, yet meaningful experience which could enhance the reputation of not only the association or corporation but also the host community. Meeting professionals must understand all the potential benefits of incorporating voluntourism, and be able to find activities which fit with the mission of their respective associations and/or corporations, to make these programs successful.

Voluntourism Today

Although the movement has started out small, voluntourism has, to date, been included as an activity in several meetings and conventions. Members who attend Professional Convention Management Associations' annual meeting have been able to participate in community service projects for several years now, although they have yet to arrange voluntourism as a spousal activity (Clemmons, 2005). For their 2008 annual meeting, held in Seattle in January 2008, PCMA has arranged "Hospitality Helping Hands," which is a program that allows the first 120 attendees that sign up the opportunity to venture into a Seattle neighborhood to work on a community service project. The program was full well before the start of the convention (PCMA, 2007). According to *Successful Meetings* (2007), associations such as the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons [AAOS], National Association of Realtors [NAR] and Future Farmers of America [FFA] have been incorporating volunteer activities into their annual meetings since the year 2000. Not surprisingly, these activities have grown exponentially in popularity. For example, interest in a volunteer program more than doubled in one year for FFA – from around 800 attendees signing up for volunteer programs to over 2,000 the next year! Another great feature of these voluntourism programs is their ability to be expanded and/or replicated on a local level, so those who participated at annual conferences can implement

similar volunteer programs in their own community. AAOS has begun to do this with their playground-building program – it began in 2000 at their annual meeting (in Orlando that year), and not only have they built a playground in every host community for their annual meeting since then, but they also now, through individual chapter participation, are building playgrounds throughout the United States. These volunteer programs have the ability to boost an association’s reputation not only in the meeting destination, but all over. This trend is growing, and will continue to do so, especially if meeting professionals are able to continue implementing them successfully at their meetings and conventions. Rothgery (2007) gives tips for meeting professionals interested in implementing voluntourism into their meetings, including: linking the voluntourism activity to the theme of the meeting, finding an organization that has a good reputation and actually needs whatever services your attendees are willing to offer, remembering that planning a voluntourism activity can be difficult, but that the return on investment to convention participants much outweighs any and all scheduling difficulties, and to use a knowledgeable local source, such as a destination management company or convention and visitors bureau, to get in touch with a local charitable organization, among other things. The voluntourism trend is growing; however, it is the responsibility of meeting professionals to maintain this growth and implement successful voluntourism activities into their conventions.

Meeting Professionals

Meeting professionals, or more specifically, planners who arrange meetings and conventions, were chosen as the focal point since, “the planner’s responsibility is to provide guidance as well as the leg work for the planning. Planners oversee budget development, site selection, entertainment, transportation, and on-site management” (Montgomery & Strick, 1995, p. 167). Meeting professionals’ duties include devising fresh, innovative ideas and activities to incorporate into their events. To integrate voluntourism into any event, the individual planning

the event must be committed to the idea. Although meeting professionals have been included in the scope of past research, the most frequently found focus of research is event marketing. There has been a definite paucity in research pertaining to meeting professionals; actually, the academic research pertaining to conventions has not corresponded to the rapid growth of the industry (Yoo & Weber, 2005). In fact, one study claiming – through its name – to list the attributes of meeting professionals, was quite poorly conducted. Beaulieu and Love (2004) wrote an article entitled *Characteristics of a meeting planner: Attributes of an emerging profession*; however, the study contained information regarding minority representation in the industry, availability of educational information to high school students via their counselors, and a listing of planner certifications, none of which really describe characteristics of current meeting professionals. Besides the inherent misrepresentation of facts due to a poor choice of title, the researchers were guilty of asking leading questions in their survey, not using a random sample, not conducting any pre-test, and perhaps worst of all, the author alone performed the necessary coding, with no outside help. Each of these factors likely led to biased results.

There has been a growth in attention to the meetings market research. Jun and McCleary (1999), clustered association planners based on their selection criteria for an international meeting site. The only issue with this research is its inability to generalize the results, as they were based on meeting professionals' opinions regarding South Korea as a convention destination. Three clusters emerged in their research: Cluster 1 contained planners who were distance/environment-oriented, Cluster II was comprised of planners who were social-elements-oriented, and Cluster III was made up of planners who were logistics/cost-oriented. There were no differences in these clusters based on age, gender, or number of members in the planners' associations; differences were found based on level of education, type of meeting planned, and

the type of association. The results of this research suggest that incorporating voluntourism could potentially be marketed to all three clusters, especially meeting professionals who belong to Clusters II and III, which were the two largest clusters.

Knowledge

Likely due to the paucity of research pertaining to meeting professionals, there was difficulty finding information related to demographics or industry knowledge/experience. According to Milman and Pizam, in order for tourists to want to travel to a destination (or to plan/participate in activities such as voluntourism in a foreign destination), they must not only be aware that the destination exists, but also possess a favorable image toward that destination and/or activities. “Unlike material products or pure services, the tourism [and voluntourism] experience is an amalgam of experiences with various products and services. Therefore, it is possible to say that the image of the destination is a sum total of the images of the individual elements or attributes that make up the [volun]tourism experience” (p. 22). A meeting professional must be aware, and also view favorably, the idea of incorporating voluntourism into conventions before they can plan the voluntourism activity. Their study was conducted to measure tourist’s knowledge of central Florida as a vacation destination, and the effects of their knowledge on their actual travel behavior. They also looked at the destination’s image as it was perceived by the tourists, since the concepts of knowledge and image align closely in the decision to implement (or not implement) an action or behavior or purchase decision. In fact, knowledge is needed in order to form an image of a destination (or action/behavior). Interest in participation increased not when people (i.e. meeting professionals) reached a level of knowledge, but instead when that knowledge gave way to familiarity. Stringer (1984) reached a similar conclusion in the examination of the theses/dissertations of six of his own students, all of which were related somehow to tourism, and how social psychology can assist tourism research.

His analysis of a study regarding a vacation to a tropical destination provided interesting an evaluation, especially regarding destination image.

Image is dependent on knowledge, but provides a much bigger motivation (when the image is positive, of course) to travel to a destination or participate in (plan) an activity.

Although none of Stringer's student research was sufficient to publish (due to limited sample sizes/results that were somewhat ambiguous), Stringer's analysis of the studies is insightful, and provides enough information in itself to draw relevant conclusions, especially regarding image.

Therefore, based on the conclusions drawn from these two studies, one can safely assume that a meeting professional must not only be aware of the voluntourism concept, but also maintain a positive image of the idea of incorporating voluntourism into their conventions. Meeting professional knowledge and ensuing positive image toward voluntourism could be achieved through the publication of voluntourism success stories, such as those listed in the "Voluntourism Today" section, in industry magazines and journals. Or, a how-to workshop (or a voluntourism activity) could be organized for an industry conference, like the annual Meeting Professionals International or Professional Convention Management Association conventions. That way, meeting professionals could get hands-on experience and become familiar with voluntourism.

Possibly due to the amount of accumulated experience, meeting professionals have a positive outlook on the amount of work they will be able to find – 95% of planners feel secure in their jobs for 2008 (Lemann & Katz, 2007). One stereotype in the event industry is the idea that the vast majority of meeting professionals are women. According to *Successful Meetings' 2005 State of the Industry Report*, in 2004, 38% of meeting professionals were male. According to a study conducted by Nice (2004), 79.1% of the participating meeting professionals were female –

however, this could be due to the fact that female meeting professionals were more willing to participate in the research. Male meeting professionals are more likely to work in a corporate setting, though, so association planning is still dominated by women (Torrise, 2005). Meeting professional salaries are somewhat modest, with over 60% of meeting professionals in Nice's (2004) research earning less than \$50,000 each year, but money does not seem to be the reason one becomes a planner. In a job satisfaction survey conducted by *MeetingsNews* (Krantz, 2007), association planners' top four factors linked to contentment in their careers were, in order: helping their organization achieve its objectives, the relationships developed between team members, industry peers and suppliers, travel, and autonomy/control. Interestingly, perceived behavioral control is one of the essential elements listed in the Theory of planned behavior, which measures the effects of attitudes on intention to perform certain behaviors.

Attitudes

The Theory of Planned Behavior applied to Voluntourism

Therefore, if the Theory of Planned Behavior was to be related to meeting professionals, those who already hold positive attitudes towards volunteering, and potentially voluntourism, and work for organizations which also view volunteering in a positive light (subjective norms), then they will likely feel volitional control in the incorporation of voluntourism activities into conventions. This could lead to the intention to include voluntourism, and intentions are perceived as the immediate antecedents of behavior, provided that one feels a sufficient degree of actual control (Ajzen, 2002). While control beliefs may be based in part on past behavior, they will also be influenced by second-hand information about a behavior, past experiences of acquaintances and friends, and other factors that could increase or reduce the perceived difficulty of performing the behavior in question. This has led to the discovery that past behavior cannot be considered a direct factor in the performance of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It may have

indirect influence by swaying one's attitudes or beliefs about perceived control, but as was proved in numerous studies (Ajzen, 1991), it is simply a mediator; its residual effects may be seen in future behaviors, but only in an ambiguous manner. This could also be due to the automaticity of certain behaviors; however, the introduction of new, relevant information can change even the steadiest of behaviors. According to a study conducted by Bamberg, Ajzen, and Schmidt (2003, p. 186), in which they introduced a semester bus ticket to see if it would change the behaviors of driving or riding a bike,

...past behavior clearly is not always a good predictor of future behavior. Only when circumstances remain relatively stable does prior behavior make a significant contribution to the prediction of later action. Complex human behavior is cognitively regulated and, even after numerous enactments, appears to be subject to at least some degree of monitoring. As a result, new information, if relevant and persuasive, can change behavioral, normative, and control beliefs; can affect intentions and perceptions of behavioral control; and can influence later behavior.

So, even if a meeting professional is not aware of the voluntourism concept, and has been planning the same types of convention activities for years, the introduction of the idea could well change his or her behavior, especially if the necessary antecedents to the behavior of including voluntourism are present.

The idea of these beliefs/attitudes eventually leading to behaviors has been empirically proven many times. Ajzen (1985) cited several studies which were used to prove a strong correlation between peoples' intentions and resulting actions/behaviors. These studies were based on behaviors such as career orientation, the use of birth control pills, voting, and smoking marijuana, among others. The wide variety used only further proves that, when faced with choices in a situation in which a person feels volitional control, actions will closely follow intentions. However, perceived control differs from the idea of locus of control in the fact that it varies across situations, whereas locus of control remains relatively consistent (Ajzen 1991).

To reiterate, the Theory of Planned Behavior recognizes that human action is likely directed by three distinct functions; the salient beliefs about: the likely outcomes of performing the behavior (which produce either a positive or negative attitude toward the behavior), the normative expectations of important others (i.e. loved ones, coworkers, bosses, etc., which produces social pressures), and the presence of controls that may either assist or prevent the performance of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Bamberg, Ajzen & Schmidt, 2003). This relationship can be seen both in its early stage and most recent configuration in Figures 2-6 and 2-7.

One issue in the Theory of Planned Behavior has been the relatively low correlation between beliefs and corresponding attitudes. However, the reason for this is not likely due to the theory itself, but rather with issues in the methods of measuring this correlation. It can be quite difficult to measure intentions, and they can still change between the intention assessment and the performance of a behavior. Also, many background factors other than past experiences can have an indirect effect on behavior through their influences on attitudes, normative beliefs, and control beliefs: age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, nationality, intelligence, exposure to information, group membership, coping skills, etc. People may not realize that these factors are present when participating in a study, and that their intentions may become indirectly skewed due to their impact. However, these factors may relate only to specific, specialized behaviors and therefore do not represent authority in the overall attitude theory (Ajzen, 2002; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

This theory ties in well with Self-Determination Theory in the fact that in order for a behavior to be carried out, one must feel a certain amount of control on his or her own behalf. The ideas of self-efficacy and autonomy reign prevalent in both theories, providing a good

sounding point for the prediction of behaviors, especially those which may not be habitual or even ever performed before, such as the incorporation of voluntourism into a convention.

Motivation

Self-Determination Theory [SDT] is actually a synthesis of four mini-theories, each relating to its own set of phenomena that arose during the past three decades of research performed by Deci and Ryan (2004). The four mini-theories, which combine to form the overall constitution of SDT, are: (1) Cognitive Evaluation Theory, which focuses on the ways in which our social contexts affect intrinsic motivation; (2) Organismic Integration Theory, which addresses the continuum of internalization of extrinsic motivations; (3) Causality Orientations Theory explains the differences in individuals' views of their environment and its effect on the level of self-determination in their own resulting behaviors; (4) Basic Needs Theory covers the idea of overall health and well-being in relation to the fulfillment of basic human needs (Deci & Ryan, 2004).

Self-determination is based on individuals feeling as though they have a choice and control of a situation (i.e. an internal locus of causality), which can be easily influenced by one's environment. Self-determination theory posits that human beings are active organisms, striving at all times to develop and learn; if our environments allow, all human beings would experience an internal locus of causality (Deci & Ryan, 1985). When an individual feels as though a task is externally regulated, or not chosen and/or controlled by him or herself, then that activity will lead to feelings of alienation and/or being controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, when an association planner is scheduling meetings and activities, which are mostly extrinsically motivated tasks, if he or she feels competent to take on the challenges inherent in the planning process, is able to personally relate to the task at hand, and feels in control of/autonomous in their current situation, the completion of the scheduling will become easier and allow for more

intrinsically-oriented motivation. A task that is originally extrinsically motivated (for example, the responsibility for arranging add-on activities for an association convention) may become internalized if the three nutriments of competency, relatedness, and autonomy are met. If these three nutriments are not met, the task will never cause feelings of personal importance to the meeting professional, and if this does not lead to feelings of being controlled, then another grave consequence could occur: amotivation, or complete lack of motivation.

If the nutriments are met, an internalization of an extrinsic motivation can occur. As was mentioned in the Introduction, internalization is the taking in of external values so that one feels more self-determining, although the goals of the behavior are extrinsic (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Internalization of motivations can be represented along a continuum; three stages occur as a motivation moves from completely extrinsically motivated to completely intrinsically motivated – these stages are introjection, identification, and integration. Introjection represents the most shallow form of internalization, and happens when a task or regulation is taken in by an individual, yet not accepted as his or her own. The motivation represented at this step is stronger and more personally meaningful than extrinsic motivation, yet there is still a sense of outside control. The next step along the continuum is identification. At this stage, an individual accepts a regulation as his or her own, and therefore feels a greater sense of freedom, since the resulting behavior is more congruent with their views of themselves, and aligns well with their goals. The value of the outcome is understood, and the task is taken on in order to reach the desired outcome. The most comprehensive form of internalization is integration. To reach this step in the motivation continuum, an individual must feel that his or her behavior is self-determined, and the task becomes an integral part of who they are. This can happen when the process of internalization is not thwarted by an individual's environment, and

they are able to fully appreciate the importance of the task and their corresponding choice of behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Gagne & Deci, 2005). Figure 2-8 is an illustration of the internalization continuum. The drawing represents all aspects of the Self Determination Theory, including the four mini-theories, although the basic needs are not displayed. This representation assumes that basic needs have been met in order for a regulation to even begin to move along the continuum. This illustration is one of the more recent updates to the original representations of Self Determination Theory.

The social environment and its influence on an individual are mentioned several times in all Self-Determination Theory readings. Deci and Ryan (1985) described three types of orientations, each of which exists in everyone, although in differing intensities. The first type is autonomy orientation, where an individual feels the freedom to make his or her own choice, and see their environment as informational. Autonomy oriented individuals are able to use this information to make knowledgeable decisions regarding their actions, and are therefore less likely to lose their intrinsic motivations, or self-determination. The second type is control orientation, in which an individual likely feels outside (environmental) pressure to behave or perform a certain way. Those who experience a strong control orientation accommodate the demands of their environment, and ignore their own feelings and needs. The final type is known as the impersonal orientation, in which an individual believes that environmental forces are uncontrollable, and one's behavior and outcomes are independent of one another. Those who naturally lean towards an autonomous orientation would be most likely to volitionally engage in prosocial behavior (Gagne, 2003). Therefore, a meeting professional who is able to feel satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs (competency, autonomy, and relatedness) is more likely to be able to internalize an external regulation (i.e. the planning of voluntourism

activities) than one who may have a control or impersonal orientation. The satisfaction of the three aforementioned nutrients may also lead to higher job satisfaction, effective performance, more positive work-related attitudes, psychological well-being, and organizational citizenship behavior, among other benefits (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Self-Determination Theory provides the best fit in the description of the potential motivations of meeting professionals to organize voluntourism activities, especially when two studies conducted by Gagne (2003) – in which she found that, once the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness have been met, autonomy orientation is a significant predictor of participating in prosocial behavior – are taken into consideration. Nonetheless, other theories were analyzed during the research period. Clary, et. al. (1998) examined volunteer motivation through six separate studies in order to develop the Volunteer Functions Inventory, or VFI. With the results of the six studies, six volunteer motivation functions were established. The first was values, which allows an individual to express values related to altruism; the second was understanding, described as the opportunity to participate in new learning experiences; the third motivational function was social, concerning relationships with others; the fourth was career, described as the opportunity to obtain career-related benefits through volunteerism; the fifth motivational function was protective, which served to protect the ego from negative features of the self and possibly reduce guilt; the sixth and final motivational function in volunteering was enhancement, or personal development. Although this study was very well done and explained volunteer motivations quite well, it did so from a perspective of continuous volunteering in one place. It relates well to those who are able to volunteer on a regular basis, but did not fit the motivations of a meeting professional interested in adding a voluntourism component to a convention.

Another theory which was reviewed was Beard and Ragheb's (1983) *Measuring Leisure Motivation*. They examined the intention of individuals to choose their particular leisure activities over other available activities. Their literature identified four factors as relevant measures of leisure motivation. The first factor, intellectual, refers to an individual's motivation to participate in leisure activities that contain an educational/discovery element. The second factor, social, refers to leisure activities which showcase an individual's needs for friendship and the esteem of others. Yet another factor, competence-mastery, measures the extent to which an individual will participate in leisure activities in order to master skills or compete (this factor generally involves physical skills). The final factor listed, stimulus-avoidance, examines an individual's motivation to escape from everyday and/or over stimulating life situations. Overall, this theory addresses the differing reasons for individuals to choose to engage in certain activities during their leisure time. Although it could provide an excellent explanation as to why convention attendees may participate in voluntourism, this theory does not address the motivations to engage others in voluntourism, as meeting professionals would. Therefore, Beard and Ragheb's ideas were not adapted for this research.

Ryan and Glendon (1998) took an interesting approach to travel motivation: they applied Beard and Ragheb's (1983) scale of leisure motivation to travel and motivation to travel. They found many reasons to explain why people take vacations (their individual motivations), and listed them in order of importance: "Relax mentally, discover new places and things, avoid the hustle and bustle of daily life, relax physically, be in a calm atmosphere, increase my knowledge, have a good time with friends, be with others, build friendships with others, use my imagination, gain a feeling of belonging, challenge my abilities, use my physical abilities/skills in sport, and develop close friendships" (p. 183). Their findings could also be applied to uncover the

motivations of those who attend conventions, but not necessarily to those who plan the conventions, so their study will no longer be addressed in this research.

Past Experience

Past experience of meeting professionals is a relevant topic, though, and should be taken into account. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) introduced the idea of past travel experiences having an effect, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, on trip decisions. They found that when tourists had a negative experience, they were more likely to be concerned with the impediment of their self-actualization, whereas positive experiences caused tourists to be less worried about safety and self-esteem, and more focused on fulfilling physiological, love and belongingness, and self-actualization needs. Also, this study proved the idea of a "travel career" to be true, as more experienced travelers reported being concerned with higher-order needs than their less experienced study peers. The idea of the travel career was further explored by Pearce and Lee (2005), However, the concepts of self-development, novelty, escape/relax, and relationship can describe travel motivations for many, regardless of their travel experience.

Sonmez and Graefe (1998) also researched travel behavior based on past experiences, but added the element of perceived safety and risk to their study. They found that individuals who had previously visited various regions are more confident when traveling and therefore more likely to either return to those regions or travel to a new location. However, when lacking actual travel experiences, individuals tend to avoid places they perceive as risky in favor of seemingly safe destinations. As they wrote, "whether a destination or region is really safe or risky does not seem to be as relevant to travel decisions as potential travelers' own perceptions" (p 176). Therefore, one can safely assume that meeting professionals who have more extensive travel experience, and have undergone positive experiences in their travel career, will be more willing to travel to and plan in foreign locales.

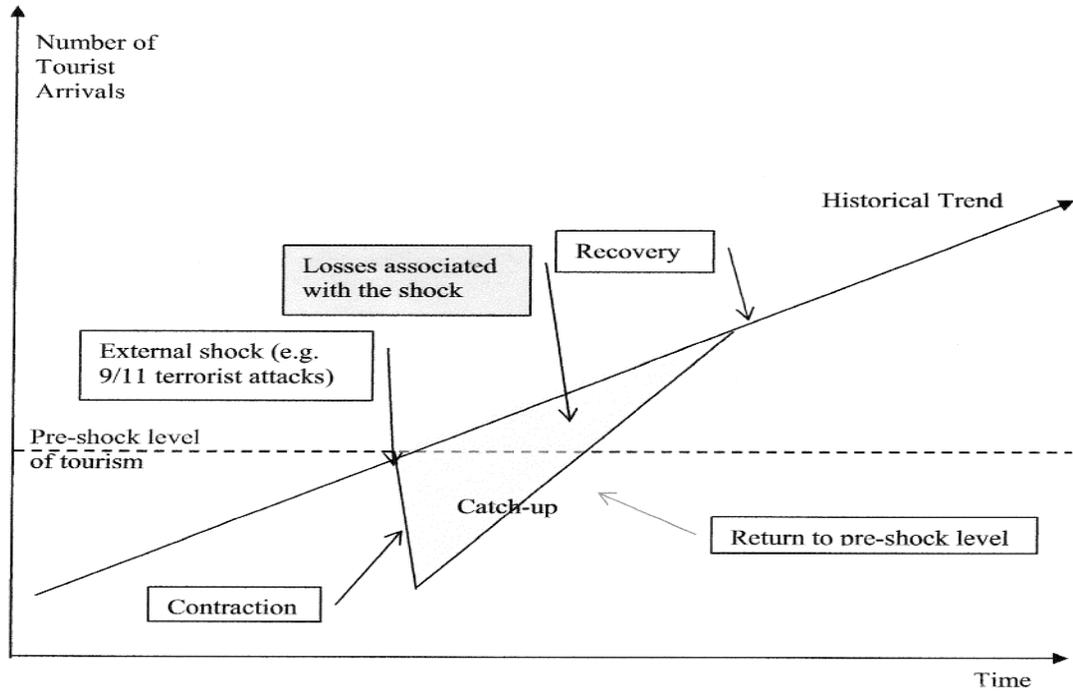


Figure 2-1: Schematic representation of tourism downturn and recovery (Bonham, Edmonds, & Mark, 2006, p. 17)

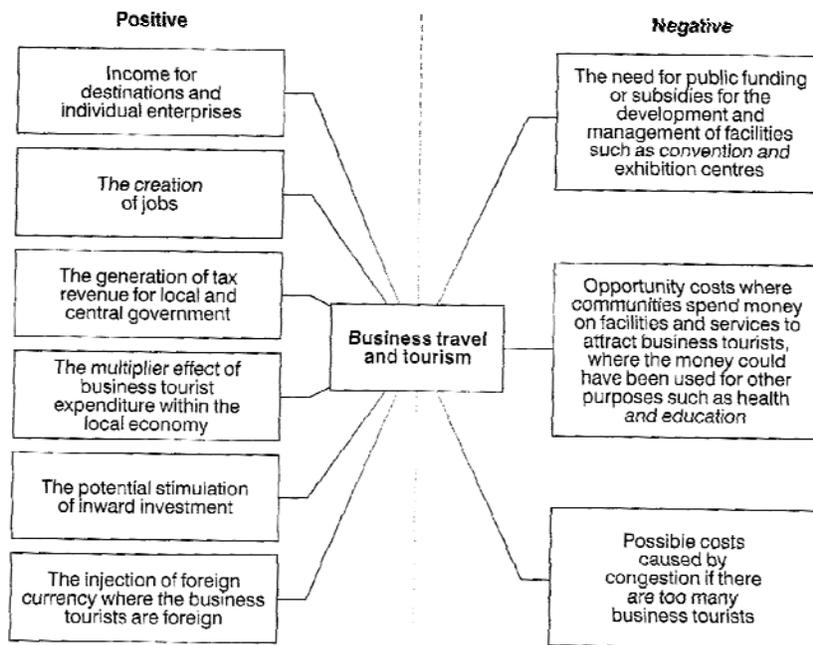


Figure 2-2: Economic impacts of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001, p. 76)

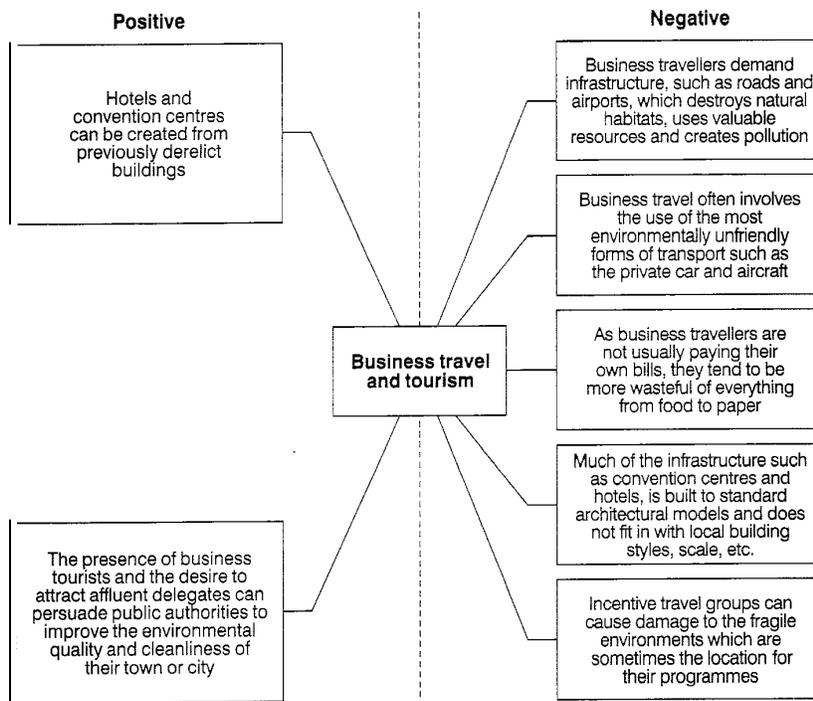


Figure 2-3: Environmental impacts of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001, p. 77)

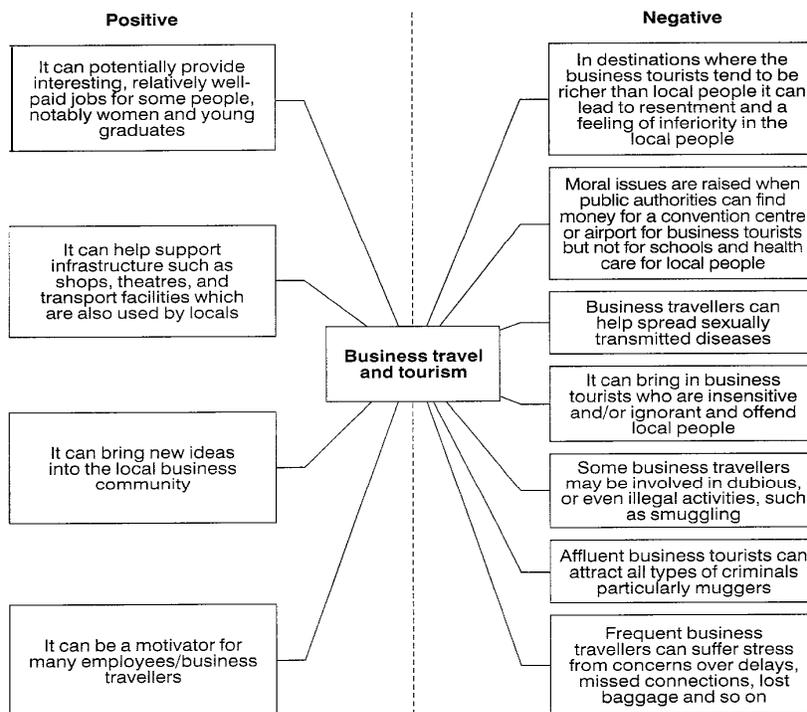


Figure 2-4: Social impacts of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001, p. 79)

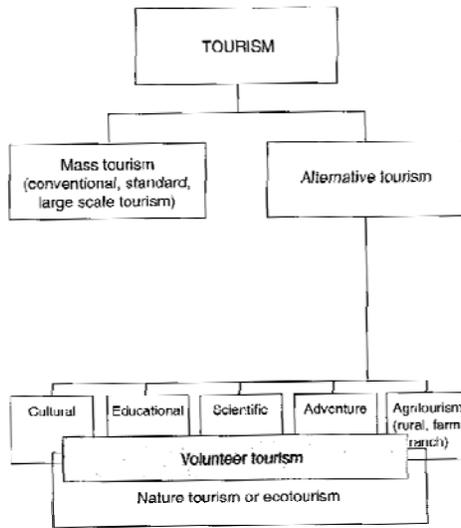


Figure 2-5: Conceptual Model of Alternative Tourism (Wearing, 2001, p. 30)

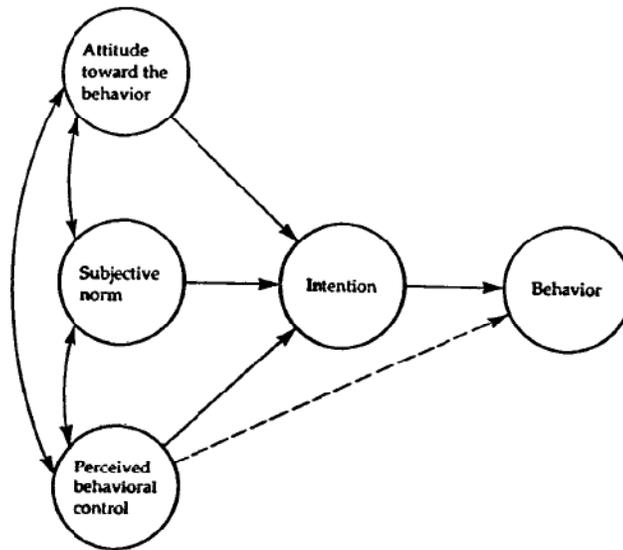


Figure 2-6: Theory of Planned Behavior Diagram (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182)

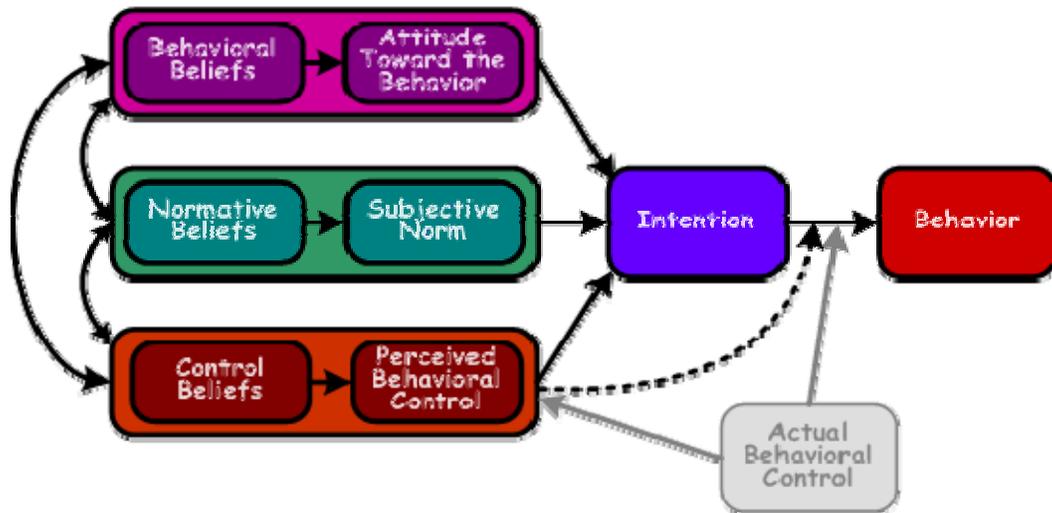


Figure 2-7: Modified Theory of Planned Behavior Diagram (Ajzen, 2006, <http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html>)

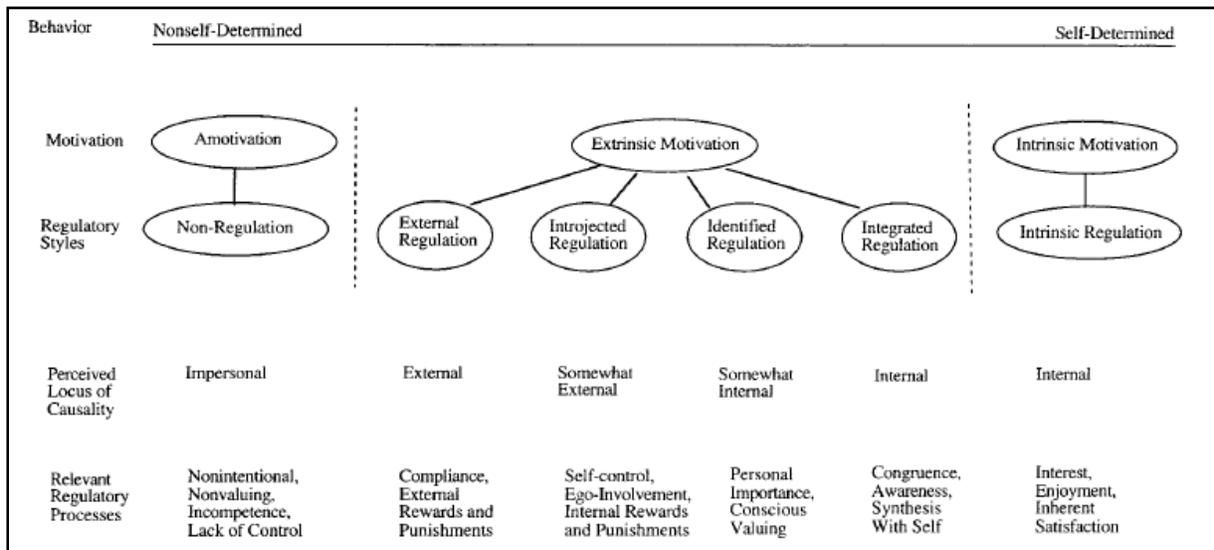


Figure 2-8: Motivation Continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 72).

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

This chapter will entail all research methods used for the purposes of this study. The five sections included are as follows: sampling frame, data collection, instrumentation, operationalization of the variables, and data analysis and testing of the research questions. The sampling frame section will describe the sample population used and how it was found, the data collection section will explain thoroughly the methods used to collect the actual data, the instrumentation section will explain how the survey will be administered, the section regarding operationalization of the variables will specify each variable and how they will be operationalized with the survey instrument, and the data analysis section will identify any and all findings, and how the research questions were tested (Nice, 2004).

Sampling Frame

For this research, a list of meeting professionals from Teramedia Corporation, a private database firm in Orlando, was purchased to be used. All members of this sample identified themselves as players in the convention industry, more specifically as meeting professionals. The entire sample was sent the invitation to participate in the study via email.

Although a list was purchased and utilized for an initial email blast, issues with the list vendor prohibited any and all follow-up email reminders. Therefore, the initial pool of respondents was quite small (73 out of 5,810 emailed completed the survey), and further measures needed to be taken. In order to gather data from a larger sample, the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives was approached, and agreed to send the survey to its meeting planner members. On Monday, May 5, 2008, the survey was emailed to 214 more meeting professionals – members of the Society of Association Executives. A follow-up reminder was sent one week later, and a total of 100 completed surveys were submitted (73 from the

Teramedia email, and 27 from the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives), when the Teramedia list and Tallahassee Society of Association Executives were both included. Therefore, the response rate from the Teramedia survey was a disappointing 1.26%, and the response rate from the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives was 12.62%. Since the Teramedia list was composed of meeting professionals from around the nation, and the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives possessed a list composed of meeting professionals from the Southeastern United States, the results may be slightly skewed due to geographical inconsistencies.

Data Collection

The use of a web survey was chosen as the method based on Kwak and Radler's (2002) findings that web surveys ultimately have a quicker turnaround and more complete responses than mail surveys, albeit lower response rates. The use of an email directing potential participants to the online survey, and the use of email reminders, was derived from the research of Sue and Ritter (2007).

Instrumentation

The survey was administered online. An email blast was sent out to all contacts, directing them to the webpage on which the survey instrument will be located. The survey was available for a month, with an initial email sent to a list purchased from Teramedia, and a later blast sent out courtesy of the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives, with a reminder sent to the latter list after one week to all those who had not yet completed and returned the survey instrument. The survey instrument consists of 43 questions, categorized into eight sections. The explanation for the development of the questions and the past literature from which they were developed can be found in Tables 3-1 through 3-6. The independent variables are the industry knowledge and experience of each meeting professional, their attitudes towards

voluntourism (including any past experiences with voluntourism), their motivations to include voluntourism activities at conventions, and their past travel experiences. Each of these independent variables could potentially lead a meeting professional to incorporate voluntourism at a convention, so the intention to do so is the dependent variable in this study.

Operationalization of Variables

The first section of the survey instrument consisted of eight true-or-false statements. Four were true (that is, they are voluntourism activities), four were false, (that is, they would not be considered voluntourism activities) These statements measured the knowledge of meeting professionals regarding voluntourism, and their perceptions regarding what voluntourism means to each individual. These questions were ranked on a summated scale; questions answered correctly were given a score of one, and incorrect answers received a score of zero. Respondents who answered four or fewer of the questions correctly were considered to have “low knowledge,” and those who answer five to eight correctly were considered to have “high knowledge” of voluntourism. Due to a small sample size, the respondents were split into two, not three, groups ranking knowledge. The final question of the first section was to measure whether or not they would include voluntourism at a convention, based on a seven-point likert-type scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree.” The second section of the survey instrument consisted of 8 questions – the first question had four measures of one statement – based on a semantic differential scale. The semantic differential scale will range from 1 – 7, with (1) showing a negative attitude toward voluntourism, and (7) demonstrating a more favorable attitude toward voluntourism. The second section also boasts two categorical (yes/no) questions, with the second question leading into 2 short answer questions. This section was used to measure meeting professionals’ attitudes toward voluntourism, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, and therefore included attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral

control. The third section of the survey instrument contained questions to measure meeting professionals' motivations. This section contained 9 likert-type questions with a range of 1 – 5, with (1) meaning “not at all true” and (5) meaning “very true” The fourth section of the survey instrument measured travel motivations and past travel experiences of meeting professionals. This section consisted of three yes or no questions to distinguish previous participation in voluntourism, one ranked question to measure amount of times the meeting professional had participated in voluntourism (if he or she had actually done so), and one question to utilized to determine what types of voluntourism activities had previously been included by the respondents in their conventions, if any had. The last section of the survey instrument was a mixture of typical demographic questions (age, gender, level of education) and scaling questions to determine length of time in the event industry, type of meeting professional, average length of a convention, average number of attendees, expected convention/meeting budget, and typical activities included in a convention (See Appendix A).

Creation of the Independent Variable: Knowledge

Industry knowledge was operationalized through the use of eight survey questions, which measured meeting professionals' familiarity with the concept of voluntourism. The knowledge/familiarity domain contained, as mentioned, eight items, statements about voluntourism that were either true or false. These eight items were: 1) working in a destination's food bank is voluntourism, 2) assembling care packages in a hotel's convention room is voluntourism, 3) hosting a fundraiser, yet not including local citizens is voluntourism, 4) donating bicycles to local children is voluntourism, 5) voluntourism is tax-deductible, 6) voluntourism activities can never be sponsored, 7) building/renovating homes in a destination is voluntourism, and 8) donating money to a charity is voluntourism.

In order to determine knowledge of voluntourism among survey respondents, 8 questions on the survey instrument were created to directly measure familiarity with the voluntourism concept. In Table 3-8, familiarity is measured between 0 and 7. Those who did not answer any of the voluntourism questions correctly received a score of “0,” and had anyone answered every question correctly, he or she would have received a score of “8.” Those who received a score below “5” were considered to have “low knowledge” of voluntourism, and those who received a score of 6 or higher were considered to possess a “high knowledge” of voluntourism. Therefore, 42% of the sample have a low knowledge of the concept of voluntourism, while the majority (58%) enjoy a high level of knowledge regarding the concept of voluntourism.

Table 3-1: Knowledge of Voluntourism

Example of Voluntourism/Not Voluntourism	Reference
1. Working in a food bank (passing out food, cooking, etc.) in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism	(Arai, 2004)
2. Assembling care packages for a charitable organization in a convention room at a destination hotel is an example of voluntourism	(Rothgery, 2007)
3. Hosting a fundraising event in a local community, although not including local residents, is an example of voluntourism	(Exploratory)
4. Donating bicycles to local children is an example of voluntourism	(Rothgery, 2007)
5. Voluntourism activities are tax-deductible	(Clemmons, 2005)
6. Voluntourism activities can never be sponsored	(Clemmons, 2005)
7. Building/renovating local homes in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism	(Maloney, 2007)
8. Donating money to the local community (or a local charity) in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism	(Clemmons, 2006)

Table 3-2: Attitudes toward the incorporation of voluntourism

Domain	Item	Reference
Attitude	1. Valuable/worthless	(Ajzen, 2006)
	2. Enjoyable/unenjoyable	(Ajzen, 2006)
	3. Beneficial/harmful	(Ajzen, 2006)
	4. Good/bad	(Ajzen, 2006)
Subjective Norm	5. Important others believe I should/should not incorporate voluntourism	(Ajzen, 2006)
	6. Expectations to include goodwill activities: expected/not expected	(Ajzen, 2006)
	7. People whose opinions are valued would approve/disapprove of the incorporation of voluntourism	(Ajzen, 2006)
Perceived Behavioral Control	8. Incorporation of voluntourism would be possible/impossible	(Ajzen, 2006)
	9. If I wanted to I could incorporate voluntourism; T/F	(Ajzen, 2006)
	10. How much control over incorporating voluntourism: complete control/no control	(Ajzen, 2006)
	11. Mostly up to me whether in include voluntourism: strongly agree/strongly disagree	(Ajzen, 2006)

Table 3-3: Past experiences with voluntourism

Question	Reference
1. Ever traveled with the specific intent to volunteer	(Exploratory)
2. Ever participated in a voluntourism activity as an attendee	(Exploratory)
3. Personally incorporated voluntourism	(Exploratory)

Table 3-4: Motivations to include voluntourism

Question	Reference
1. Would enjoy myself while planning a voluntourism activity	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
2. Would not feel nervous when planning voluntourism	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
3. Voluntourism does not hold my attention at all	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
4. Understand voluntourism concepts pretty well	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
5. Voluntourism is very interesting	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
6. Understand voluntourism pretty well, compared to other meeting professionals	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
7. Would enjoy planning a voluntourism activity very much	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
8. Would feel very tense while planning voluntourism	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)
9. Voluntourism would be fun to plan	(Deci & Ryan, 2006)

Table 3-5: Experience of the Meeting Professional

Question	Reference
1. How many years have you been a meeting professional?	(Weber, 2001)
2. What type of meeting professional do you consider yourself?	(MPI, 2007)
3. How long does your average convention last?	(IAEE, 2007)
4. What is the average number of attendees at your convention(s)?	(MPI, 2007; Weber, 2001)
5. In the upcoming year, what do you expect your average convention budget to be?	(Boehmer & Baker, 2007; MPI, 2007; Ng, 2007)
6. What types of activities have you incorporated into your convention(s)?	(IAEE, 2007)

Table 3-6: Meeting Professional Demographics

Question	Reference
1. What year were you born?	(MPI, 2007; Weber, 2001)
2. Gender	(Successful Meetings, 2005; Torrissi, 2005)
3. What is your highest degree earned?	(Jun & McCleary, 1999)

Table 3-7: Simple Frequencies of each item in the Knowledge Variable

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Food Bank		
True	81	83
False	17	17
Total	98	100
Care Packages		
True	85	86
False	14	14
Total	99	100
Fundraising Event		
True	60	61
False	38	39
Total	98	100
Donating Bicycles		
True	56	57
False	43	43
Total	99	100
Tax-Deductible		
True	46	47
False	51	53
Total	97	100
Never Sponsored		
True	12	12
False	86	88
Total	98	100
Building/renovating Homes		
True	87	91
False	9	9
Total	99	100
Donating Money		
True	58	59
False	41	41
Total	99	100

Table 3-8: Low vs. High Industry Knowledge

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
2	58	58.0	58.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The overall results of the data analysis are presented throughout this chapter in three sections: first, a description of the sample, second a description of the dependent variable and the creation of the independent variable of knowledge, and finally the results of each individual research question are described.

Description of the Sample

The survey was distributed to a sample of meeting professionals who fell into one of three categories (see Table 4-1, below). Thirty-five percent of the sample identified themselves as association planners, 31% of the sample identified themselves as corporate planners, and 34% identified themselves as either independent planners or another type of meeting professional. The largest percentage of respondents (31%) have been involved in the event industry for 11 to 15 years, while 27% have been planning meetings and conventions for one to five years, and 20% of the sample have been involved in planning meetings for over 20 years.

The decisions each meeting professional makes could be somewhat affected by their demographic profile (Table 4-2). In this sample, 65% of the respondents were female, and 35% were male. The largest age group consisted of those claiming to be between 46 and 55 years old, which represented 34% of this sample. Respondents between the ages of 25 and 35 made up 17% of the sample, those aged 36 to 45 made up 26% of the sample, and respondents over 55 accounted for 23% of the sample. This group could also be considered well-educated, as all respondents had at least finished high school (8%), 15% had earned their associates' degree, 36% possessed at least an undergraduate degree, 28% had completed a graduate degree program, and 12% had completed a post-graduate program.

Crosstabulations were utilized to get a better feel for the sample as a whole. As can be seen in Table 4-3, below, women tended to be more likely to be association meeting professionals, while men had a higher tendency to work as independent meeting professionals. Also, although corporate meeting professionals reported a slightly higher level of education than the other two groups of meeting professionals, this number was not statistically significant. As a whole, the group is fairly well-educated, as was previously mentioned. The last interesting finding of the crosstabulation was the fact that respondents who reported themselves as independent meeting professionals tended to be slightly younger, while those who were above the average age of the sample were most likely to be association meeting professionals.

The most often-cited length of conventions was three days (43% of respondents listed that as the average length of their conventions), while only 21% of respondents arranged conventions that lasted one or two days, and 36% of respondents planned conventions that lasted for four or more days. The amount of attendees per convention varied widely across the sample, from an average of less than 100 attendees per convention to an average of over 5,000 attendees per convention. In fact, 12% of the sample did not report an average number of attendees per convention, instead opting to respond that their average number of attendees per conventions varies. Budgets varied widely as well, from less than \$100,000 per convention (32% of sample) up to over \$1 million per convention (12% of sample). Seven percent of respondents also chose to disclose only that their budgets “vary.”

This group of meeting professionals plan many free-time activities for their convention attendees, most often golf (64% of the sample include golf in their conventions), team building activities (54%), and attractions/theme parks (48%).

Description of Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was a meeting professional's intentions to incorporate voluntourism into upcoming meetings and/or conventions. This variable was operationalized as a one item indicator called "intention to include." As can be seen in Table 4-4, of the total respondents, 14% said they strongly agreed that they would include voluntourism in future plans, while 29% agree, 42% remained neutral in their decision (neither agreeing nor disagreeing), 11% disagree that they intend to include voluntourism in future conventions, and only 4% of the sample strongly disagreed to having any intent to include voluntourism.

Results of the Research Questions

RQ 1: To what extent do different levels of planning experience characterize meeting professionals? Approximately 27% of the sample has been in the industry for one to five years, 8% have been in the industry for six to 10 years, 31% of the respondents have been in the industry for 11 to 15 years, 13% have worked as a meeting professional for 16 to 20 years, and 20% have been a part of the meeting industry for over 20 years. Therefore, 64% of the population surveyed have been planning meetings for well over 10 years and can thus be considered quite familiar with the meetings and conventions industry.

RQ2: Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' level of experience and intentions to include voluntourism in convention plans? The group with the most intention to include voluntourism in their plans was the meeting professionals with over 20 years of experience. The group with the least intention to include voluntourism was the 1-5 years of experience group. Results of the one-way ANOVA (Table 4-5, below) revealed no statistical differences among the groups. This means that years of experience as a meeting planner was not significantly related to intentions to include voluntourism in convention plans.

RQ3: To what extent do meeting professionals exhibit different levels of industry knowledge? The frequencies showed that there were varying levels of knowledge. As can be seen in Table 4-6, the scores ranged from 0 (no correct answers) to seven (seven correct answers). A total of 42% of the sample had a low level of knowledge of the concept of voluntourism, while a slight majority (58%) enjoyed a high level of knowledge regarding the concept of voluntourism.

RQ4: Is there a relationship between level of industry knowledge and intentions to include voluntourism in convention plans? Once the survey answers were properly recoded, descriptive statistics were used to divide the sample into low and high knowledge respondents – based on a mean of approximately five (see Chapter 3 for full discussion). Then, independent t-tests were utilized to determine whether level of industry knowledge would make a meeting professional more likely to incorporate voluntourism into an upcoming convention. The results of this analysis showed no significance between a meeting professional’s industry knowledge and intentions to incorporate voluntourism into upcoming conventions (see Table 4-7, below). Therefore, the amount of knowledge a meeting professional had regarding voluntourism had no bearing on their intention to include voluntourism in the conventions they plan.

RQ 5: To what extent do meeting professionals view voluntourism favorably? In order to find out how favorably meeting professionals viewed voluntourism, simple frequencies were run, and the results of that can be seen in Table 4-8. The most highly-correlated statement was “People in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my incorporating voluntourism into one of my next conventions,” with a mean of 5.13 (on a scale of 7). The least-correlated statement (or attitude) was “It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering in my convention planning” which had a mean of 3.04. Since the overall means fell on the

positive side of scale, it can be safely assumed that, overall, the meeting professionals in this sample have a positive attitude toward voluntourism.

RQ 6: Is there a relationship between meeting professionals' attitudes and intentions to include voluntourism in conventions? Use of bivariate correlations was used to determine if differences existed between attitudes and intentions to include voluntourism in conventions. The comprehensive correlation table exists below (Table 4-9). The attitudes which were most highly correlated with intention to incorporate voluntourism were: "Most people important to me think that (I should) incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions ($r=0.685$), and "For me to incorporate voluntourism into one of my next conventions would be (possible). ($r=.651$)" The least correlated variables were: "It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering in my convention planning," ($r=0.051$) and "It is mostly up to me whether or not I incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming convention" ($r=0.202$). In fact, the "it is expected" variable does not correlate with intention at all.

RQ 7: To what extent do meeting professionals exhibit different motivations for voluntourism? The motivation variable was measured with a total of 9 items. These items were first analyzed with simple frequencies in order to determine the level of motivation exhibited by the sample as a whole (see Table 4-10). The most agreed-with motivation item was "When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself," with a mean of 3.84 (on a scale of one to five). The response with the next-highest mean was "I would describe voluntourism as very interesting," with a mean of 3.76. The fact that the sample agreed the most with these two questions shows that the most motivating characteristics of voluntourism are its aspect of fun and interest. However, since none of the means were very high (i.e. none were very close to 5) overall, the sample did not exhibit a very high level of motivation to incorporate

voluntourism. The least agreed-with item was “The concept of voluntourism does not hold my attention at all,” with a mean of 2.12. The next least-agreed with item was “I would feel tense while planning/incorporating voluntourism,” with a mean of 2.35. Even these items, and the answers chosen by the respondents, demonstrate the importance of being comfortable and enjoying the planning process of voluntourism. So, even the items with low means prove the point that meeting professionals are interested in voluntourism, and in order to be motivated to incorporate voluntourism into upcoming conventions, they simply must be able to enjoy themselves.

RQ 8: Is there a relationship between meeting professionals’ type of motivation and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans? In order to determine whether a relationship existed between meeting professionals’ motivations to incorporate voluntourism into upcoming meetings and/or conventions and their actual intentions to do so, bivariate correlations were run between the motivation variable and the intention variable. Significant relationships were found between each motivation item and the intention variable (refer to Table 4-11), which leads the researcher to believe that each item in the motivation variable, and the variable itself as a whole, plays a significant role in the meeting professionals’ intentions to incorporate voluntourism into upcoming conventions.

In fact, the only item that was significant at the .05 level (and not at the .01 level, as all the other items were) was item (8) feeling tense when planning a voluntourism activity. Therefore, even if a meeting professional were to feel some tension, he or she is still likely to include voluntourism in their upcoming meeting or convention. The reason for the two negative correlations in Table 4-11 is that those two survey items were asked with a negative connotation. Therefore, one can safely assume that Q27 (“The concept of voluntourism does not hold my

attention at all”), and Q32 (“I would feel very tense while planning voluntourism”) go against the thoughts of the sample.

RQ 9: To what extent have meeting professionals had past experiences with voluntourism? There were five questions which gauged the meeting professionals’ past experience with voluntourism. The most agreed with statement (Table 4-12) was “I have participated in voluntourism as a convention attendee” (45.5%) while the least agreed with statement was “I have traveled with a specific intent to volunteer” (29.3%).

Past experience was measured by those who had responded that they had previously traveled with the specific intent to volunteer, with a range of one to ten times. The answers to this question presented a trimodal distribution, with 56.8% of respondents having participated in voluntourism one to two times, 38.4% of respondents having participated between three and seven times, and 12.8% of the respondents having participated in voluntourism at least ten times. Respondents who have traveled less to volunteer could be considered as having been introduced to voluntourism, while the 12.8% who have traveled to volunteer ten or more times could be considered highly experienced voluntourists.

Types of voluntourism activities that the sample had previously incorporated in their meetings and/or conventions ranged from intensely to moderately involved. Responses were divided into four main categories: Children’s Charities, Construction/Renovation, Environmental, and Food-Related. In the Children’s Charities category, a few examples of activities planned ranged from convention attendees volunteering at a children’s hospital to visiting schools and libraries to even searching for a lost child in the woods. In the Construction/Renovation category, at least five of the respondents had worked with local chapters of Habitat for Humanity, and others had either built or renovated homes or shelters.

The Environmental voluntourism activities included such things as planting trees and cleaning up local parks and beaches, and a few respondents even mentioned volunteering in post-hurricane cleanups. The respondents who had planned Food-Related voluntourism activities generally worked with local food banks, either packing boxes or distributing food.

RQ 10: Is there a relationship between the amount of meeting professionals' past experience with voluntourism and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans? In order to determine the significance of the relationship between past experience with voluntourism and intentions to include voluntourism in future meetings/conventions, independent-sample T-tests were run, utilizing the intention variable and each of the first three past experience items .

As can be seen in Table 4-13, there is a significant statistical difference between those who answered “yes” and those who answered “no”. Therefore, if a respondent had previously traveled to volunteer, he or she would express a higher intention include voluntourism in a future convention (mean = 3.93), than if they did not participate in voluntourism in the past (mean = 3.14).

Table 4-14 also shows a statistically significant relationship between this past experience variable (past participation in voluntourism at a convention, as an attendee) and intent to include voluntourism in future conventions. This t-test proves that if a meeting professional has previously participated in voluntourism as a convention attendee, he or she will be more likely (mean = 3.76) to include voluntourism in a future convention than if he or she had not ever participated in voluntourism at a convention (mean = 3.06).

The third main item in the past experience variable (“planning a voluntourism activity for a convention”), also asserted a significant statistical relationship with the intention variable

(Table 4-15). If a meeting professional has already included a voluntourism activity in one of their conventions, he or she will be more likely (mean = 3.97) to do so again in the future than a meeting professional who has not personally incorporated voluntourism into one of his or her conventions (mean = 3.10).

RQ 11: To what extent are different types of meeting professionals represented by the sample? Simple frequencies were run to determine the breakdown of type of meeting professionals that made up this sample. They were given a choice of three categories in which to place themselves: association planner, corporate planner, or independent planner/other. The breakdown can be seen in Table 4-16. Thirty-four percent of this sample considered themselves to be association planners, while 30% consider themselves corporate planners and 32% consider themselves independent planners or some other type (possibly a combination of two of the other categories) of planner.

RQ 12: Is there a relationship between type of meeting professionals and their intentions to include voluntourism in their convention plans? To determine whether or not a relationship existed between intent to include voluntourism at a future meeting or convention and the type of meeting professional, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the means of the sample. As can be seen in Table 4-17, no statistical significance was found between any type of meeting professional and their corresponding intent to include voluntourism at a future convention. Since there was no significance when the initial ANOVA was utilized, no further breakdown or comparison between the types of meeting professionals was necessary.

RQ 13: What is the best predictor of a meeting professional's intent to include voluntourism in their convention plans: knowledge, attitudes, motivations, or past experiences? A regression was not utilized to test this research question, because the sample size

was too small. Instead, a table was created to show the significance of each variable as it relates to the Intention Variable. As can be seen from Table 4-18, the most likely predictors of intention to include voluntourism in an upcoming convention would be past experiences and motivations. However, as mentioned, this was conducted with a limited sample, and therefore more research should be done in order to consider these findings conclusive.

Summary

Statistically significant relationships were found with the attitude, motivation, and past experience variables, as they related to the intention variable. In the analysis of the attitude variable, it was found that meeting professionals have a more positive attitude toward voluntourism if those important to them have positive attitudes toward voluntourism. Also, they must feel as though it is okay for them to be incorporating voluntourism in order for them to do so. Statistical significance was found between each motivation item and the intention variable; however, motivations were measured on a scale of one to five, and no mean was higher than 3.84, thus demonstrating that on the whole, motivations to incorporate voluntourism in upcoming conventions were not very high among this sample. For the past experiences variable, a significant relationship was discovered between all three items and the intention variable. These significant relationships reveal that the more a meeting professional is made familiar with voluntourism (through participation), the more likely he or she will be to incorporate voluntourism at an upcoming convention.

Table 4-1: Professional Profile of Respondents

Type of Meeting Professional	Frequency	Valid Percent
Association	34	35
Corporate	30	31
Independent/Other	32	34
Total	96	100
<hr/>		
Years in the Industry	Frequency	Valid Percent
1-5	27	27
6-10	9	9
11-15	31	31
16-20	13	13
>20	20	20
Total	100	100
<hr/>		
Average length of Conventions (days)	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	9	10
2	10	11
3	39	43
4	18	20
5+	15	16
Total	91	100
<hr/>		
Average number of attendees per convention	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 100		
101-500	13	15
501-1,000	34	40
1,001-5,000	9	10
Over 5,000	16	19
Varies	4	4
Total	10	12
	86	100
<hr/>		
Average budget per convention	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than \$100,000	22	32
\$100,001 - \$500,000	30	44
\$500,001-\$1,000,000	3	4
Over \$1,000,000	8	12
Varies	5	7
Total	68	99
<hr/>		
Typically Planned Activities	Frequency	Valid Percent
Attractions/Theme Park	41	48
Casinos/Gaming	24	28
Cooking Program	17	20
Festivals	11	13
Golf	54	64
Skiing	6	7
Spas/Spa Activities	34	40
Sporting Events	28	33
Spousal Programs	36	42
Team-Building Activities	46	54
Other	23	27

Table 4-2: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Male	34	35
Female	63	65
Total	97	100
Age		
25 – 35	16	17
36-45	24	26
46-55	31	34
56 +	21	23
Total	92	100
Education		
Less than High School	0	0
High School	8	8
Associates Degree	14	15
Undergraduate College	35	36
Graduate Degree	27	28
Post-Graduate Degree	12	12
Total	96	100

Table. 4-3: CrossTabulations of Meeting Professional Characteristics

	Independent	Association	Corporate
Gender			
Female	59.4	73.5	63.3
Male	40.6	26.5	36.7
Highest Degree Earned			
Less than High School	15.6	2.9	3.3
High School	12.5	14.7	16.7
Associates Degree	37.5	41.2	30.0
Undergraduate College	25.0	29.4	30.0
Graduate Degree	9.4	12.8	20.0
Age			
Less than 40	27.0	8.8	10.0
40-50	16.2	12.9	23.3
51-60	35.1	50.0	43.3
61+	21.9	28.3	23.4

*No significantly different findings based on type of meeting planner

Table 4-4: Intention to Incorporate Voluntourism

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Will Include						
Frequency	4	11	41	28	14	98
Valid percent	4	11	42	29	14	100

Table 4-5: ANOVA of level of experience and intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Probability
1-5 years	27	3.26	0.813	.892	.472
6-10 years	9	3.38	0.518		
11-15 years	30	3.27	1.112		
16-20 years	13	3.31	1.316		
over 20 years	20	3.75	0.967		
Total	90	3.38	1.034		

Table 4-6: Percentage of Respondents' Familiarity with Voluntourism

Familiarity	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	1	1.0	1.0
2	3	3.0	4.0
3	4	4.0	8.0
4	11	11.0	19.0
5	23	23.0	42.0
6	38	38.0	80.0
7	20	20.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Table 4-7: T-Test of Knowledge Variable

Sig.	T-Value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
.569	-.506	96	.614	-.104	.206	-.512	.304
	-.512	89.89	.610	-.104	.203	-.507	.300

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Table 4-8: Descriptive Statistics of the Attitude Variable

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q15: The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my incorporation of voluntourism into one of my next conventions.	93	5.13	1.583
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be good.	94	4.66	1.787
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be valuable.	96	4.60	1.750
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be beneficial.	95	4.56	1.791
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be enjoyable.	96	4.52	1.686
Q17: If I wanted to I could incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	96	4.47	1.875
Q16: For me to incorporate voluntourism into one of my next conventions would be possible.	94	4.21	1.684
Q13: Most people important to me think that I should incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	96	4.12	1.591
Q18: How much control do you believe you have over incorporating voluntourism into any of your upcoming conventions? (complete)	97	4.10	1.879
Q19: It is mostly up to me whether or not I incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	95	3.07	1.925
Q14: It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering in my convention planning.	95	3.04	2.108

Table 4-9: Correlation Matrix of Attitudes and Intention to Include Voluntourism

	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Q16: For me to incorporate voluntourism into one of my next conventions would be possible.	0.685**	.000
Q13: Most people important to me think that I should incorporate voluntourism	0.651**	.000
Q17: If I wanted to I could incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	0.482**	.000
Q15: The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my incorporation of voluntourism into one of my next conventions.	0.476**	.000
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be valuable.	0.412**	.000
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be good.	0.354**	.000
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be beneficial.	0.327**	.001
Q12: The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be enjoyable.	0.323**	.001
Q18: How much control do you believe you have over incorporating voluntourism into any of your upcoming conventions (complete)	0.234*	.022
Q19: It is mostly up to me whether or not I incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	0.202	.051
Q14: It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering, in my convention planning.	0.047**	.000
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)		

Table 4-10: Descriptive Statistics of the Motivation Variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q25. When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself	96	3.84	0.886
Q29 I would describe voluntourism as very interesting	95	3.76	0.740
Q33: A voluntourism activity would be fun to plan.	95	3.75	0.875
Q28: I think I understand voluntourism concepts pretty well.	95	3.73	.844
Q31: I would enjoy planning a voluntourism activity very much.	96	3.66	0.881
Q26: I would not feel at all nervous planning a voluntourism activity.	94	3.49	1.180
Q30: I think I understand the concept of voluntourism very well, compared to other meeting professionals.	95	3.32	0.902
Q32 I would feel tense while planning/incorporating voluntourism.	95	2.35	0.965
Q27 I doesn't hold my attention at all.	96	2.12	0.997

Table 4-11: Correlation Between Intention Variable and Motivation Items

	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Q25: When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself.	0.326**	.001
Q26: I would not feel at all nervous planning a voluntourism activity.	0.398**	.000
Q27: The concept of voluntourism does not hold my attention at all.	-0.411**	.000
Q28: I think I understand voluntourism concepts pretty well.	0.424**	.000
Q29: I would describe voluntourism as very interesting	0.393**	.000
Q30: I think I understand the concept of voluntourism very well, compared to other meeting professionals.	0.385**	.000
Q31: I would enjoy planning a voluntourism activity very much.	0.479**	.000
Q32: I would feel very tense while planning/incorporating voluntourism.	-0.243*	.018
Q33: A voluntourism activity would be fun to plan.	.387**	.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-12: Frequencies of Past Experience Variable

Item	N (yes)	%	Mean/ Standard Deviation
Q20: Have you every traveled with the specific intent to volunteer	29	29.3	
Q21: Have you ever participated in a voluntourism activity as a convention attendee	45	45.5	
Q22: Have you personally incorporated a voluntourism activity into any of your conventions	32	32.3	
Q23: If you have traveled to volunteer, how many times have you done so?	47	50% of total	3.53/2.96

Table 4-13: T-test of Q20 and Intention Variable

Question 20: Have you ever traveled with the specific intent to volunteer?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	Probability
Question 11: I will include voluntourism in future meetings I plan	No	69	3.14	.959	-3.788	.000
	Yes	29	3.93	.884		

Table 4-14: T-test of Q21 and Intention Variable

Question 21: Have you ever participated in a voluntourism activity as a convention attendee?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	Probability
Question 11: I will include voluntourism in future meetings I plan	No	53	3.06	.949	-3.661	.000
	Yes	45	3.76	.933		

Table 4-15: T-test of Q22 and Intention Variable

Question 22: Have you ever personally incorporated a voluntourism activity into any of your conventions?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	Probability
Question 11: I will include voluntourism in future meetings I plan	No	67	3.10	.890	-4.320	.000
	Yes	31	3.97	.983		

Table 4-16: Frequencies of Type of Meeting Professional

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Independent/Other	31	3.35	.950
Association	34	3.35	.950
Corporate	30	3.43	1.165
Total	95	3.38	1.012

Table 4-17: One-Way ANOVA of Types of Meeting Professional

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	Significance
Independent/Other	31	3.35	.950	0.062	0.940 ^(ns)
Association	34	3.35	.950		
Corporate	30	3.43	1.165		
Total	95	3.38	1.012		

(ns) no statistical difference

Table 4-18: Best Predictor of Intent to Include Voluntourism in Convention Plans

	Intention
KNOWLEDGE	
High	ns
Low	ns
Attitude	
For me to incorporate voluntourism into one of my next conventions would be possible.	**
Most people important to me think that I should incorporate voluntourism	**
If I wanted to I could incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	**
The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my incorporation of voluntourism into one of my next conventions.	**
The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be valuable.	**
The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be good.	**
The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be beneficial.	**
The addition of a voluntourism activity into one of my upcoming conventions would be enjoyable.	**
How much control do you believe you have over incorporating voluntourism into any of your upcoming conventions	*
It is mostly up to me whether or not I incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.	ns
It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering, in my convention planning.	**
Motivations	
When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself.	**
I would not feel at all nervous planning a voluntourism activity.	**
The concept of voluntourism does not hold my attention at all.	**
I think I understand voluntourism concepts pretty well.	**
I would describe voluntourism as very interesting	**
I think I understand the concept of voluntourism very well, compared to other meeting professionals.	**
I would enjoy planning a voluntourism activity very much.	**
I would feel very tense while planning/incorporating voluntourism.	*
A voluntourism activity would be fun to plan.	**
Past Experiences	
Have you every traveled with the specific intent to volunteer	**
Have you ever participated in a voluntourism activity as a convention attendee	**
Have you personally incorporated a voluntourism activity into any of your conventions	**

ns = not significant

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to gauge meeting professionals' knowledge, attitudes, past experience and motivations for voluntourism, and their intentions to include voluntourism activities in their upcoming conventions. The understanding of these relationships and their significance can contribute information to the meeting and event industry, and the tourism/voluntourism industry.

Since this research was exploratory in nature, this chapter will focus on the following sections: results and relevant findings, recommendations for industry professionals, and recommendations for future research. Therefore, the results and conclusions will be presented in the following four sections:

1. Discussion of Significant Findings
2. Recommendations for Industry Professionals
 - From a Destination Perspective
 - From a Meeting Professional Perspective
3. Recommendations to Academics
4. Recommendations for Future Research and Limitations of Current Study

Discussion of Significant Findings

Chapter 4 contained several exciting significant findings. Significant relationships were found between the attitude variable and the intention variable, between the motivations variable and the intention variable, and between the past experience variable and the intention variable. The intention variable was measured with a single item; whether or not meeting professionals will include voluntourism in future meetings they plan. Forty-three percent of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they intend to do so, while 41% would neither agree nor disagree that they definitely intended to incorporate voluntourism in future meetings, and only 15% of the

sample disagree or strongly disagree that they would include voluntourism in future meetings. A slight majority showed strong intent, and another large percentage is unsure. This could be due to any of this study's independent variables – knowledge of voluntourism, attitudes toward voluntourism, motivations for voluntourism, and past experiences with voluntourism – or possibly even an unknown variable.

No statistically significant relationships were discovered between the amount of knowledge one possessed about voluntourism and their intention to incorporate voluntourism in future conventions. However, slightly more than half (58%) of the sample did possess a high knowledge of voluntourism, and could thus be considered familiar with the concept. That does leave 42% of meeting professionals with a lower level of knowledge of voluntourism, and thus a need for further education in voluntourism concepts.

Further education could potentially influence meeting professionals' attitudes toward voluntourism, which (in this study) was shown to influence their intention to include voluntourism in their meetings. The link between meeting professional attitudes and intention to include voluntourism in upcoming conventions was consistent across all 8 attitudinal variables. The results of the attitude variable were based on the three antecedents to intent listed in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991; 2006), which are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The results were encouraging in that respondents who exhibited more positive overall attitudes toward voluntourism were more likely to include voluntourism in upcoming conventions, even if they had not done so in the past (Bamberg, Ajzen and Schmidt, 2003). Perhaps the most interesting finding was that the meeting professionals in this sample admitted that they cared about what others thought of their decision to incorporate voluntourism. (i.e. "The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my incorporation of

voluntourism into one of my next conventions”). This finding provides proof that guessing the likely outcome of the performance of a certain behavior – being admired by peers for including voluntourism – is more likely to lead to intent to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This may have implications for destinations who are marketing to these meeting planners. This will be discussed below.

This finding led the researcher to believe that some form of social desirability may be present. According to The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science (1994), social desirability can be defined as: “the tendency for individuals to portray themselves in a generally favorable fashion (p. 1557). Since voluntourism could be considered an altruistic and collectively beneficial activity, it is not surprising that respondents might respond the way they did. Most noteworthy, however, was the honesty with which the meeting professionals in this survey answered the attitude questions.

Another significant finding was the relationship between motivations and intent to incorporate voluntourism at future conventions. Although the correlation between each motivation item and intention was fairly low, each relationship represented a significant connection. This shows that although overall motivations for planning voluntourism activities are low, they do influence intention to do so.

Once again, several deductions can be made from the answers given for each of the motivation items. The item with the highest mean (meaning highest motivator) of 3.84 was “When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself.” The item with the next-highest mean (3.76) was: “I would describe voluntourism as very interesting.” These findings suggest that meeting planners see voluntourism as fun and interesting. This is important for destinations to know. It bodes well for the field of voluntourism that meeting professionals

feel this way. Not surprisingly, the more intrinsically rewarding meeting professionals find the experience, and the more comfortable they feel with the voluntourism concept, the more likely they will be to plan voluntourism activities for their future conventions. This idea ties in well with Self-Determination Theory – the meeting professional must find the activity personally interesting and/or enjoyable, and it helps if important others support their ideas (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000). As it was explained in Chapter Two, the ideal situation of voluntourism inclusion would be one in which a meeting professional feels completely intrinsically motivated to include voluntourism at a convention. The three antecedents, competence, relatedness, and autonomy, must be met for intrinsic motivation. This study found that, indeed, these factors must be present. The knowledge variable relates to a meeting professional's competence, the attitude and past experience variables align with relatedness, and autonomy represents the confidence of each individual meeting professional to be able to handle the task. Although the goal of the behavior (possibly attendee delight, client satisfaction) may be extrinsically motivated, the internalization of the motivation to perform the behavior makes it more likely to occur (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Yet another predictor of intention to include voluntourism in future conventions is past experience. Each item in the past experience variable demonstrated a significant relationship to the intention variable. Once again, it is not surprising that the more experience one has with voluntourism, the more likely they will be to include voluntourism in their future meetings and conventions – this is very similar to Pearce and Lee's (2005) idea of the "travel career." In fact, those meeting professionals who had not only participated in voluntourism but actually already included voluntourism in one of their conventions reported the highest intentions to incorporate voluntourism in future conventions (mean = 3.97 out of 5.00). Past experience could also be

linked to the type of clientele with which the meeting professional works. If a meeting professional works for a generally flexible, trend-setting client, he or she may have been more likely to travel, or travel to volunteer, or already have included voluntourism at a convention.

Recommendations for Industry Professionals

The significant findings of this study can and should be used by both destinations attempting to attract more convention business and by meeting professionals. Both groups can utilize this research to increase business and reputation.

From a Destination Perspective

Destination managers should use voluntourism opportunities as products to differentiate themselves from the competition. Meeting professionals admittedly care about what others (bosses, peers, event attendees) think of their choices in activities. Therefore, they are making social choices about what activities to include in their meetings when given the chance, particularly if these activities are low or no-cost. Therefore, destinations need to provide detailed lists of voluntourism opportunities which exist in their destination in their materials targeted at meeting planners.

One of the findings of this study suggests that meeting professionals are concerned with their choices of including voluntourism and want to feel secure when choosing these, therefore destinations need to employ marketing techniques and messages which ensure that these choices are good choices. Another technique is to use familiarization trips to introduce the meeting planners to the voluntourism activities so that they have a scope of what the activity is and the level of involvement by the participants.

Destinations have an opportunity to package their voluntourism experiences for meeting attendees. Partnerships with local charities are a good opportunity but also help keep the cost

down. Such charities might include food banks, children's charities or Habitat for Humanity. The packaging of an opportunity – such as visit a local park and then participate in a clean-up effort or a plant a tree program – is one way to include a voluntourism experience in an overall convention. These experiences could be combined with dinner excursions or spousal programs or various pre- and post-convention opportunities.

In order for a meeting professional to choose a certain destination for their convention, that destination must be innovative and well-prepared. A solid marketing plan must be in place, and good relationships with local charities must be established and then maintained. This research highlights the importance of attitudes, motivations, and past experiences of meeting professionals and their intentions. If a destination can position itself as an attractive locale that appeals to many and is able to offer voluntourism opportunities, it will become popular among meeting professionals.

From a Meeting Professional Perspective

Meeting planners are interested in incorporating voluntourism experiences into future conventions. Therefore, it is important to continually learn about voluntourism opportunities that work and ones that do not work. For example, as part of a continuing education program, a section could be added which covers the range of voluntourism opportunities and costs for varying types of conventions and meetings. A meeting professional must not only know of the benefits and expenditures necessary to implement a voluntourism program, but he or she must also be able to communicate these items to clients. It is the responsibility of the meeting professional to keep clients well-informed and updated.

Once a meeting professional has experience with voluntourism, he or she is much more likely to incorporate it into future conventions. Once meeting professionals are familiar with voluntourism, they are more likely to have positive attitudes and be motivated to include the

opportunities in their conventions. Several associations, such as the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, National Association of Realtors, and the Future Farmers of America have already successfully implemented voluntourism activities at their conventions.

Recommendations for Academics

Academic research specific to the event industry is, to say the least, limited. Although several industry associations and/or publications have collected data (IAEE, Meetings and Conventions, Successful Meetings), academic research tends to be irrelevant or not well-researched (Jun & McCleary, 1999; Beaulieu & Love, 2004). Academic research which focuses on voluntourism in conventions is, to the knowledge of this researcher, nonexistent. This study was exploratory in nature, and there is much more valuable knowledge to be obtained in this field. In fact, the Conceptual Model (Figure 1-2) was created for this specific research study, and can (and should) be modified in further research.

The four independent variables of meeting professional knowledge, attitudes, motivations, and past experiences present a good gauge with which to measure intent, yet each should be explored further. A different method, such as personal in-depth interviews with meeting professionals, is also recommended. If the interview method was utilized, a researcher could obtain a much deeper insight into each of the four independent variables, or even focus on one at a time with different interviewees. This research should be considered an introduction into an untapped discipline.

Both of the theories (Self-Determination Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, etc.) could provide even more insight into the intent of meeting professionals to include voluntourism. These theories could also be used to discover intention of convention attendees to participate in voluntourism, or even the intentions of destinations to offer voluntourism activities/packages. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) could be utilized to gauge attitudes and

intentions, while Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Gagne & Deci, 2005) could be utilized to measure the level of internalization of motivation for a task that was once only extrinsically motivated.

Recommendations for Future Research and Limitations of Study

Since there is so little research to draw on and/or critique, much more needs to be done in order to truly understand the concept of including voluntourism at conventions. There are many aspects that were not able to be touched on, yet should be in the future. For example, meeting professionals could be broken down to really explore each type further, or each variable could be further explored, or there is the possibility that there are many other variables that could induce meeting professionals to include voluntourism in their meetings and conventions.

Comparative research could be conducted to find the difference in intentions between association planners, corporate planners, and independent/other planners. For example, an association is more likely to feel a social responsibility to host communities and show more of an interest in goodwill activities (Platzer & Fisher, 2007), so an association meeting professional may be more open to the suggestion of adding a voluntourism activity to his or her next convention. Corporations tend to be focused on creating positive publicity and public relations opportunities, so a corporate meeting professional may view voluntourism as an excellent public relations prospect. Since an independent meeting professional may work for either an association or a corporation or both, his or her perspective may be much different than that of a meeting professional who focuses strictly on one or the other.

Another angle to this research would be to conduct it based on how voluntourism affects convention attendees, or voluntourism destinations – both local tour operators and community members affected by the voluntourism effort. All groups represent significant collections of information yet to be discovered.

Limitations of this study include a small sample size (and issues in data collection, seen in Chapter 3) and a narrow focus. However, all of these limitations are easily handled through further exploration and research studies. Thus, it is highly recommended that this study be used simply as a starting-off point for much future research. There are many facets of the event industry, and many facets of voluntourism, all of which need to be investigated.

Summary

In summary, there were several important findings in this study. Some were methodological – be sure that you can trust your source of data collection before you send out surveys, conduct interviews, etc. The other findings will contribute to the understanding of the event industry, more specifically to the activities planned for meetings and conventions. This industry is strong right now, and will continue to be. However, meeting professionals are always looking for ways to do more with less. Voluntourism represents the perfect option, when planned correctly. Meeting professionals are interested in voluntourism, and intend to include it in their conventions, but this study did not follow through to see if the meeting professionals actually will do so. However, with the proper combination of attitude, motivation, and past experience, intention to include voluntourism will be high. Future research and meeting professional behaviors will give much more insight into this topic.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The Propensity of Meeting Professionals to Incorporate Voluntourism into Association Conventions
University of Florida
Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management

Thank you for participating in this survey! This study will measure the propensity of meeting professionals to include voluntourism activities into their association conventions, as a spousal program, free-time activity, ice-breaker, team-building activity, etc. The research will gauge your propensity to do so by determining your knowledge of voluntourism and the event industry, your attitudes toward the incorporation of voluntourism, your motivations to include voluntourism, and finally your past experiences with both travel and voluntourism. The study necessitates answering the inquiries on this questionnaire, which will take approximately 7 – 10 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary, but your complete and honest input is vital to ensure the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and timeliness of this study. The survey is confidential, and your confidentiality will be protected according to law. There are no “wrong” or “right” answers to these questions, so please feel free to express your true thoughts and feelings. There is no penalty for not participating and you are free to withdraw at anytime without penalty. There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this survey, you may contact Lori Pennington-Gray at P.O. Box 118208, Gainesville, FL, 32611-8209, or (352) 392-4042 x 1318.

Please Circle either True (T) or False (F) for the following statements:

1. Working in a food bank (passing out food, cooking, etc.) in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
 2. Assembling care packages for a charitable organization in a convention room at a destination hotel is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
 3. Hosting a fundraising event in a local community, although not including local residents, is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
 4. Donating bicycles to local children is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
 5. Voluntourism activities are tax-deductible **T** **F**
 6. Voluntourism activities can never be sponsored **T** **F**
 7. Building/renovating local homes in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
 8. Donating money to the local community (or a local charity) in the destination where you travel is an example of voluntourism **T** **F**
-

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statement:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
9. Do you support the idea of including voluntourism in meetings and conventions?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How important is including voluntourism in future meetings to you?	1	2	3	4	5
11. How likely is it that you will include voluntourism in future meetings you plan?	1	2	3	4	5

ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTOURISM

Please answer the following accordingly:

12. The addition of a voluntourism activity in one of my upcoming conventions would be:

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Valuable _____						Worthless	
Enjoyable _____						Unenjoyable	
Beneficial _____						Harmful	
Good _____						Bad	

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
13. Most people important to me think that I should _____ I should not incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.							
14. It is expected that I include goodwill activities, such as volunteering in my convention planning. extremely expected _____ not at all expected							
15. The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve _____ disapprove of my incorporation of voluntourism into one of my next conventions.							
16. For me to incorporate voluntourism into one of my next conventions would be possible _____ impossible							
17. If I wanted to I could incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions. definitely true _____ definitely false							

18. How much control do you believe you have over incorporating voluntourism into any of your upcoming conventions?
 nocontrol _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____complete control

19. It is mostly up to me whether or not I incorporate voluntourism into one of my upcoming conventions.
 strongly agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____strongly disagree

PAST EXPERIENCES WITH VOLUNTEERISM/VOLUNTOURISM

Please answer the following either yes (Y) or no (N)

20. Have you ever traveled with the specific intent to volunteer (i.e. participated in a voluntourism trip)? Y N

21. Have you ever participated in a voluntourism activity as a convention attendee? Y N

22. Have you personally incorporated a voluntourism activity into any of your conventions? Y N

23. If you answered “yes” to Question #20, how many times have you done so?

24. If you answered “yes” to Question #20, what types of voluntourism activities did you incorporate?

MOTIVATIONS

The following items concern your experience with voluntourism. Please answer all items. For each item, please indicate how true the statement is for you, using the following scale as a guide

	Not at all true	Not true	Neither	True	Very true
	1	2	3	4	5
25. When planning a voluntourism activity, I would very much enjoy myself.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I would not feel at all nervous planning a voluntourism activity.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The concept of voluntourism does not hold my attention at all	1	2	3	4	5
28. I think I understand voluntourism concepts pretty well.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I would describe voluntourism as very interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I think I understand the concept of voluntourism very well, compared to other meeting professionals.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I would enjoy planning a voluntourism activity very much.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I would feel very tense while planning/incorporating voluntourism.	1	2	3	4	5
33. A voluntourism activity would be fun to plan.	1	2	3	4	5

MEETING PLANNER EXPERIENCE/DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female
- 2. What year were you born? 19_____
- 3. What is your highest degree earned?
_____ Less than High School

_____ High School

_____ Undergraduate College

_____ Graduate Degree

_____ Post-Graduate Degree
- 4. What type of meeting professional would you consider yourself to be?
_____ Independent

_____ Association

_____ Corporate

_____ Trade Show Organizer

_____ Other
- 5. How many years have you been in the meeting planning industry?
_____ 1-5

_____ 11-15

_____ 16-20

_____ > 20
- 6. What is the average length of your conventions? _____ days
- 7. What is the average number of attendees at each of your conventions? _____ attendees
- 8. What is your average budget per convention? _____ dollars
- 9. At your conventions, what types of activities do you typically plan for your attendees?
_____ Attractions/Theme Park

_____ Casinos/Gaming

_____ Cooking Program

_____ Festivals

_____ Golf

_____ Skiing

_____ Spas/Spa Activities

_____ Sporting Events

_____ Spousal Programs

_____ Team-Building Activities

_____ Other

10. If you checked "Other," please write what other types of activities you plan for your convention attendees.

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UF Institutional Review Board
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
352-392-0433 (Phone)
352-392-9234 (Fax)
irb2@ufl.edu

DATE: March 27, 2008

TO: Tara Schickedanz
5231 NW 4th Place
Gainesville, FL 32607

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD, Chair *ISF:dl*
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: **Approval of Protocol #2008-U-0333**

TITLE: Intention of Meeting Professionals to Incorporate Voluntourism into Association Conventions

SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants, and based on 45 CFR 46.117(c), authorizes you to administer the informed consent process as specified in the protocol.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, **including the need to increase the number of participants authorized**, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by **March 19, 2009**, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Hello!

I am a master's candidate of the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management at the University of Florida, conducting this research in order to understand the intentions of meeting professionals to incorporate voluntourism at association meetings and/or conventions. I will hopefully be sharing my results, provided by survey respondents, within the next few months.

I would greatly appreciate your completing the survey and submitting it. Every response is essential to the accuracy of this study, so your participation would be very helpful. The survey will take only 7 to 10 minutes to complete; all you have to do is click on the link at the end of this note to begin.

By completely filling out and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in this study. Please be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. The benefits of your participation include furthering the field of academic research pertaining to meeting professionals, which has thus far been sparse. The furthering of scholarly research allows for the growth of our field as a whole.

If you have any questions and/or comments regarding this study, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor:

Tara Schickedanz
Graduate Student
College of Health and Human Performance
Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management
P.O. Box 118208
Gainesville, FL 32611-8209
Phone: (561) 313-3931
Email: tas713@ufl.edu

Lori Pennington-Gray, Ph.D., Faculty Supervisor
Assistant Professor
Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management
325 Florida Gym
P.O. Box 118208
Gainesville, FL 32611-8209
Phone: (352) 392-4042 x 1318
Fax: (352) 392-7588
Email: penngray@hnp.ufl.edu

I hope that you will be able to participate in this study!

Sincerely,
Tara Schickedanz

LINK TO SURVEY: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227MGLAB3K6>

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tara Ann Schickedanz was born in 1985 in Stuart, Florida. The middle of five children, she grew up in sunny South Florida, graduating as the valedictorian of Lake Worth Christian High School in May 2003. She graduated cum laude with her B.S. in recreation and event management from the University of Florida in August 2007.

Tara began pursuing her master's degree to further her education in the fields of both Tourism and Event Management. While at the University of Florida, she was able to maintain internships with Sweetwater Branch Inn and United Franchise Group's Plan Ahead Events brand. Tara was awarded her M.S. in August 2008.