

**An Exploration of Career Progression in the Events Industry: From  
Volunteer to Event Professional**

**Kirene Yiwei Jiang**

**A dissertation submitted to the  
Auckland University of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Master of International Hospitality Management (MIHM)  
2016**

**School of Hospitality and Tourism**

Primary Supervisor: Dr Steve Cox

Secondary Supervisor: Lexie Matheson

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. OPENING REMARKS.....	1
1.2. SYNTHESIS .....	2
1.3. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE.....	4
1.4. METHODOLOGY OUTLINE.....	7
1.5. DISSERTATION OVERVIEW.....	8
<b>CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. THE EVENTS INDUSTRY AND EVENTS VOLUNTEERS .....	10
2.1.1. <i>The events industry</i> .....	10
2.1.2. <i>Events professionals</i> .....	12
2.1.3. <i>Event volunteers</i> .....	15
2.1.4. <i>Benefits between volunteers and the events industry</i> .....	18
2.1.5. <i>Motivations of volunteers</i> .....	18
2.2. VOLUNTEERS IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION .....	24
3.2. PARADIGM AND PERSPECTIVE.....	24
3.3. GENERALISATION, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY .....	25
3.4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE.....	26
3.5. DATA COLLECTION .....	27
3.5.1 <i>Pilot study</i> .....	28
3.6. DATA ANALYSIS .....	29
3.7. METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS .....	30

<b>CHAPTER 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	31
4.2. THE EVENT INDUSTRY CONTEXT.....	31
4.2.1. <i>Finding One: Interviewee demographic background.</i> .....	31
4.2.2. <i>Finding Two: What the events industry is like in Auckland.</i> .....	41
4.2.3. <i>Finding Three: Reasons for people to volunteer</i> .....	44
4.2.4. <i>Finding Four: Benefits through volunteering in the events industry.</i> .....	47
4.3. FINDING FIVE: EXPLOITED VOLUNTEERS.....	50
4.4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	52
<b>CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1. EVENT INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION .....	54
5.1.1. <i>Working hours.</i> .....	54
5.1.2. <i>Working venues.</i> .....	55
5.1.3. <i>Working status.</i> .....	55
5.1.4. <i>Event professional roles.</i> .....	56
5.1.5. <i>Event-related qualifications and certificates.</i> .....	58
5.2. ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	59
5.2.1. <i>Findings to RQ1: Why do people volunteer for events?</i> .....	59
5.2.2. <i>Findings to RQ2: What are the benefits for individuals that volunteer in events?</i> .....	60
5.2.3. <i>Findings to RQ3: What role does volunteerism play in the career development of events professionals?</i> .....	61
5.3. ADDITIONAL FINDING: EXPLOITED VOLUNTEERS.....	63
<b>CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1. CONTRIBUTIONS .....	66
6.2. IMPLICATIONS .....	67
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>	<b>77</b>

<b>APPENDIX D</b> .....	<b>78</b>
<b>APPENDIX E</b> .....	<b>79</b>

## List of Figures and Tables

<i>Figure 1. A new model: The professionalization of event management (Harris, 2004)</i> .....	13
<i>Figure 2. Job roles of events workers</i> .....	39
<i>Figure 3. Attributes of an event professional in the Auckland events industry</i> .....	56
Table 1 <i>Demographics of Interview Participants</i> .....	32
Table 2 <i>Descriptive Statistics</i> .....	33
Table 3 <i>Benefits Ranking for Event Volunteers</i> .....	48

### **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks to my supervisors Dr Steve Cox and Lexie Matheson, for their professional supervision and support through all stages of my dissertation. I want to give my deep thanks to Dr Steve for being such an awesome supervisor. I could not have finished this study without his input, help and inspiration. Also, Lexie has been a wonderful mentor to assist me and inspire me to pass the obstacles and complete my work. I really appreciate all the encouragement from my supervisors and I cannot thank them enough for being around and believing in me, especially when I was showing my weakness and almost about to give up. Thanks also go to Dr Charles Johnston for his professional advice regarding my study. Moreover, thanks to Miss Claire Li for her kind help to ensure the completion of my dissertation. Thanks to all the participants in my study who gave their precious time to be my interviewees to provide their valuable input into this study.

I want to thank my parents, with their generous financial support and unconditional love, as well as their understanding and encouragement. I would not be able to finish my study without them. Also, thanks to my landlord Lina, who has been taking care of me, like family.

I am also very grateful to have many great friends around me who have been there for me during this year. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Blake who has patiently and supportively assisted me, and shared her experience to help me complete this study. Thanks my dear Nico has been there for me as always. Thanks to Aakrithi, Sarah, Kris, Matt and Tama who have helped me with my language barriers, and also been around to support me morally. Thanks to Alex and Zhengye for their professional inputs into my study. I also appreciate my dear friends Polina, Bei, Shiqi, Qianqian,

Victoria, Jay, Momoe, Yumtso, Thu, Lisa, Brandon, Andy, Bhushan, Xiaoying, Kevin, Robby and all other lovely people who have been there for me and supported me.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank Jo Adams, Independent Professional Academic Proofreader and Editor, who proofread and edited this document prior to submission.

I am very lucky to have so many lovely people around me, and thank you all very much for being you and being there for me.

Thank you all.



## **Abstract**

Volunteerism is a major part of the events industry. Many people enter and develop their career in this field through volunteering activities. The events industry in the Auckland region frequently engages with volunteers. Many of the volunteers take part in annual events, such as the Auckland Lantern Festival, Pasifika Festival and the Diwali Festival of Lights. People also volunteer at some of the city's sporting events, such as national rugby league, netball and basketball matches. However, there seem to be limited opportunities for people to work in this field, due to a difficulty in finding routes by which to enter into the industry. In terms of theory, there is a large research gap in the link between the events industry and volunteerism, especially regarding event volunteerism and motivations towards pursuing a career in the industry. To fill this gap, this study employed a qualitative approach to explore the career pathway of individuals to enter the events industry through volunteering. This study conducted a case study by interviewing event workers who have had volunteer experience within the Auckland region. This study contributes to enriching our understanding of how volunteering facilitates career development in the events industry, and also offers practical suggestions on how to advance professional careers through volunteerism in the field.

The current study aimed to review the events industry, volunteer motivations, and volunteerism as an influential factor for career progression. To achieve the stated aims and objectives, the study employed empirical qualitative research to explore events volunteers' career progression. By exploring the events industry in the Auckland region, this dissertation provides evidence gathered from events volunteers and event professional workers. This study aims to identify the events industry and event professionals in the researched area. Also, it draws a picture of the events industry in the real world and reveals the attributes of an event professional in the field. The findings described have refined the events industry literature including the understanding of

people's intentions, expectations and motivations as an event volunteer. Moreover, this study investigated volunteerism as an important part of career progression in the events industry.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Opening Remarks**

Volunteerism is a major component of the events industry worldwide and New Zealand's events industry is no exception. Auckland, as the largest city in New Zealand, with most events taking place in the country, frequently engages volunteers. Many of the volunteers take part in annual events, such as the Auckland Lantern Festival, the Pasifika Festival and the Diwali Festival of Lights through one host organisation, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (also known as ATEED). People also volunteer at some of the city's sporting events, such as national rugby league matches, and national netball and basketball tournaments. Likewise, there are occasional mega-events including the FIFA World Cup, the Cricket World Cup and Rugby World Cup which engage a huge number of volunteers. Moreover, some private companies engage volunteers to assist with their conferences, functions, concerts or shows, as well as some other event-related activities.

At the present time, it appears to be fairly common for people to enter and develop their career in the events industry through volunteering activities in the Auckland region. In this researcher's experience, it may not be easy to become an events' employee; especially for those new to this field. Job opportunities in the events industry are usually internal and not externally advertised. The event roles usually require specific professional experience, skills and knowledge; higher positions, including events managers, require expert working experience (Getz, 2008). Event management courses appear to be provided by the hospitality and tourism departments in universities. In addition, the prerequisites to work in the events field in a paid position are unlike some other hospitality roles, which have a low entry barrier in terms of qualifications and experience requirements (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Tromp & Blomme, 2012).

When the researcher conducted an informal online search of the job opportunities advertised in events, the most commonly available role in events companies was that of a volunteer. Thus, to the researcher's knowledge, events manager's positions and other roles in the events industry (especially in New Zealand), appear to be scarce. Statistics indicate that the number of event managers employed in this country is increasing and event management-related courses have a rising number of graduates (Event Manager, n.d.). The website Careernz describes three scales for the chance of getting a job in different roles: "poor", "average", and "good". The chance of getting work as an event manager has been described as "good", because it appears on the Internet that the demand for event managers in the industry is strong. Based on the researcher's observation (as a student majoring in event management at AUT), there appears to be a growing number of events-related undergraduates and an increasing demand for events-related jobs; that is, more people are interested in enhancing their knowledge and awareness of this field. In contrast, there also appears to be limited access for students, especially those new to the industry and those interested in gaining information and facts, to employment and work experience, due to the lack of event-related job opportunities to be found on the Internet. There are, however, many volunteer roles and opportunities available on event-related web pages.

## **1.2. Synthesis**

In the context of having experience as an event management major student at AUT University, there is a lack of information in terms of the career pathway in becoming an event employee, both academically and job-wise in the real world. Meanwhile, statistics indicate that event employees are strongly needed in the industry (Event Manager, n.d.). It appears that the pathway for entrance to the events' industry for people who are new to the event field is vague. According to the events-related job advertisements on the Internet, and identifiable internal job opportunities, volunteers and event managers are

the most commonly available roles in Auckland's event companies. However, most of the job opportunities are only available from some private or internal sources. From personal experience in the events industry, there have been examples of people becoming an event worker from volunteering. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine the relationship between event volunteers and event professional workers, and explore volunteerism as a career pathway in the events industry.

The aim of this study was to investigate three research questions. Firstly, by exploring people's intentions in volunteering through events activities, to find out what makes an individual decide to become an event volunteer? Secondly, the term 'events volunteer' is defined as someone offering to contribute their time, skills and knowledge in the events industry but with no financial gain (Getz, 2008; Doherty, 2009). Thus, this begs the question, what are the other benefits people can gain from volunteering in events activities which motivate them to become involved? So RQ1 was designed to assist the study in investigating from the volunteers' personal perspective. Meanwhile, there can also be other benefits for the event stakeholders, including the event organisations and event communities (Getz, 2008). Thus, the two research questions were:

RQ1: Why do people volunteer for events?

RQ2: What are the benefits for individuals that volunteer in events?

By answering RQ1 and RQ2, this study aimed to identify the event volunteers and their importance in the events industry. Those two research questions were also intended to assist the study to demonstrate the significance of the events industry in the volunteer sector. Also, the questions were to assist in looking for the evidence whether people volunteer with career-oriented intentions and motivations, as well as any other possible diverse range of benefits through volunteering. Furthermore, RQ1 and RQ2 looked at the reasons why people become event volunteers in regards to career navigation, and

were designed to find out what role volunteering plays in event career progression, so this study included one more research question.

RQ3: What role does volunteering play in the career development of events professionals?

This study aimed to explore and understand how volunteering contributes to career development in the events industry and provide a practical contribution to the understanding of how volunteerism is an important part of becoming an event professional. By linking the reasons for volunteering activities in the events industry, this study aimed to explore what role volunteerism plays in events career progression. To answer the three research questions, the study firstly aimed to describe the events industry through gathering general facts about the working environment and conditions in the Auckland events field. Secondly, it intended to reveal the career experiences of event employees in the industry in terms of their volunteering experience. By investigating those people, the study aimed to elaborate on the nature and context of the industry as a foundation and background for the study and assist in answering the research questions.

### **1.3. Research Significance**

Though a large number of events take place daily in Auckland, it appears, to the new events student, that there is a lack of understanding and awareness of what the 'events industry' really is, and a corresponding lack of study in the academic area. By the end of September 2015, it was counted that there were an estimated over one million events which occurred in the Auckland region (ATEED, 2015). Those events included meetings and seminars, incentive activities, conferences and conventions, trade shows and exhibitions, special occasions and some other small events. However, there is a research gap for what the Auckland event professional worker's life is really like,

including their working conditions, working hours and many other work-related factors. Thus, this study was designed to provide some baseline information about events industry in the Auckland region and explore the facts about the field to enrich the resources available for event management.

Practically, the current study was intended to be beneficial for events practitioners to gain an understanding of the nature of events workers and volunteers, and look at the process they undergo to become a volunteer and develop into a professional events worker in the industry. Firstly, the results of this study were intended to be useful for the events organisations that require volunteers, by assisting the events employers to gain an understanding of their volunteers. The investigation of the motivations of volunteers was designed to assist events organisations to gain a general and in-depth understanding from the volunteers' perspective and gain insight into their satisfaction with the experience (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Herzberg, 1986). By understanding the volunteers, it was intended the findings would be useful for the events host companies so they would be better able to attract people to participate and remain with the company as volunteers. Secondly, event management teaching institutions would have information when introducing practical experience to their students, to help students have a better view of the role of volunteering work and its value for their career development process. Finally, as the result of the study, it could be possible for events companies, and their training processes using volunteers, to better cultivate potential events professionals for the industry. This is because people can gain work skills, knowledge and real event experience through volunteering activities (Getz, 2008; Doherty, 2009). From being better able to evaluate volunteers' performance, companies can recruit potential event professionals and start hiring them for paid roles.

Academically, this dissertation develops an understanding of the events industry literature with regards to volunteerism and the events workforce career development. To

date, there is a lack of study in the research field, especially in the Auckland events industry. Volunteering is one of the most important segments in the events industry and has been a popular topic in many aspects of the literature (Doherty, 2009; Getz, 2008; Neufeind, Gühbert & Wehner, 2013). However, most events volunteerism-related research is predominantly in the motivation and sports events field. There are no studies regarding why people volunteer for the events industry in general and what the benefits are in the Auckland events industry. There are several researchers who have researched the motivation of event volunteers since the 1980s (Treuren, 2009), but studies are rare which consider volunteering as part of the career progress factors for events professionals. This study filled this gap and explored the career progression of events professionals through volunteering in the Auckland events sector.

Further research can make a valuable contribution not only to the Auckland events industry, but can also contribute benefits both practically and academically to the events industry in general. This knowledge can further how these practices are valuable, in terms of how people develop their skills, experience and knowledge from their involvement in real events. Volunteering is potentially a good starting point for those who have an intention of entering the events field. Participation as volunteers also can provide opportunities for personal connections and job offers. Volunteer, particularly in special and sporting events, is also a main pillar for events workforce. Such volunteering experience can also be applied to other types of events. Using volunteering as a pathway, it can be hypothesised that events management people will find it beneficial in their career development. This current study therefore explored what exactly events professionals have experienced through their volunteering activities, and investigated whether volunteering assisted them to be where they are now. Meanwhile, the results also address the nature of volunteerism in Auckland region events practitioners and the progression of events employees' career development through



volunteering. If volunteering does happen as a career path, it was anticipated that the study findings would be valuable to events people including those in the education sector, events workers, events students and at management level. The findings from the current study are therefore not only valuable for events practitioners, but also fill the gaps in event industry literature.

#### **1.4. Methodology Outline**

The current study aimed to review the events industry, volunteer motivations, and volunteerism as an influential factor for career progression. To achieve the stated aims and objectives, the study employed empirical qualitative research to explore events volunteers' career progression. This study investigated a relatively unexplored topic in the events field and for this reason a qualitative approach was selected. The researcher sought answers as to why people volunteer for events and how volunteering contributes to progression in an event-related career; to this end qualitative research is best suited to investigating opinions and perceptions of individuals (Creswell, 2013). In addition, empirical qualitative research is characterised by in-depth interviews that allow the researcher to ask particular questions which seek to address set aims and objectives (Moody, 2002).

The case study was formulated by recruiting a group of participants who had event work and volunteering experience, and were based in the Auckland region of New Zealand. The participants were interviewed individually through a semi-structured interview method which facilitates confidentiality and openness of opinions and perceptions (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The research used thematic analysis of collected data to interpret and answer the research questions. From the analysed and interpreted data, this dissertation provides a discussion to advance knowledge about participant motivation, volunteerism and career progression in the events industry, in order to achieve the research aims and objectives, as well as answer the research questions.

## **1.5. Dissertation Overview**

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature and theoretical facts in the research field by describing the events industry, events professionals and events volunteers. The review of the theories of the benefits of volunteerism and participant motivations was intended to assist with an in-depth understanding and analysis of the findings later on. Moreover, the reviewed literature assisted in identifying potential gaps which needed to be filled from the research. There are three major parts to this chapter: firstly there is an outline of the background of the event industry in the respect of the nature and characteristics of the industry, the events professional and events volunteers. The second part focuses on volunteerism in the events industry, including the benefits for both volunteers and the events industry, and the motivation factors of the volunteers. The third part reviews the career choice factors that influence event careers, especially among the volunteers.

Chapter 3 details the methodology undertaken by the study. The study adopts a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm using an empirical qualitative approach which focuses on the events industry in the Auckland region as a case study. The data was collected from semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis method was conducted. This chapter details the research paradigm and research strategies applied in the study. This chapter also clarifies the research samples, data collection and analysis process, as well as outlining the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 and 5 present the findings and discussion from the data collection. Chapter 4 focuses on the five major findings from the interview data and also presents an overview of the Auckland region events industry as perceived by the interviewees. Chapter 5 links the findings and establishes the answers to the research aim and objectives by answering the research questions.

The last chapter summarises the key findings of the study and provides a series of conclusions and recommendations, clarified as a future research agenda. More importantly, this chapter outlines the research findings in terms of implications for the events industry in the Auckland region.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

Volunteerism has been a popular topic in the events industry literature and many researchers claim that volunteers play one of the most important roles in the sector, particularly in special events and sporting events (Han, Quarterman, Strigas, & Ha, 2013; Nassar & Talaat, 2008; Nichols & Ojala, 2009; Treuren, 2009). It is also true in practice that such events in the Auckland region require volunteers. In this section, the researcher will focus on the theoretical backgrounds of the topics and enlarge upon these issues.

In order to illustrate the relationship between volunteers and events professionals, and explore the development from one to the other, it is important firstly to identify the key concepts of volunteerism in the events industry, the motivations of volunteers and their career choice factors. Second, this section will explore the requirements to be professionals in the events industry. Finally, the section will explore career choice factors from the perspective of career development. By looking at previous studies in the mentioned fields, this dissertation will propose three research questions to achieve the stated aims and objectives.

### **2.1. The Events Industry and Events Volunteers**

#### **2.1.1. The events industry.**

In general, events can be described in many ways. Van der Wagen (2010) classified events, based on their size, into mega-events, hallmark events, major events and minor events. Also, there are studies showing that events can be categorised due to the nature or theme of them, including normal and special events (Getz, 2008; Van der Wagen, 2010). Getz (2008) has explained that normal events include sporting events, meetings, parties, carnivals and prize-giving ceremonies; and that special events are classified depending on their frequency. Usually, special events take place once in a lifetime, or

once every few years, such as the Olympics and national days (Getz, 2008; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011; Nassar & Talaat, 2008). Despite the types or sizes of events, all are usually expensive and need adequate professional management and arrangements to ensure the success of the performance (Baum & Lockstone, 2007; Getz, 2008).

New Zealand has climbed in the ranking of events destinations. According to New Zealand Tourism (2014), New Zealand was ranked as 51<sup>st</sup> in the International Conference and Convention Association's (ICCA) annual country and city rankings ("New Zealand climbs in ranking," 2014). Meanwhile, the Global Sports City Index recognised Auckland as a global sports city, due to the non-stop global events lined up during summer and other mega-sports events such as the Rugby World Cup 2010, ICC Cricket World Cup 2015, and the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2015 ("Global Sports City Index Ranking," 2014). Auckland has also won as the third best sporting city in the world at the Sport Business Ultimate Sports Cities Awards, ranked just after London and Melbourne in 2014 ("Auckland third best," 2014).

Auckland, as the largest city in New Zealand, has been undertaking an increasing number of events in New Zealand. One of the most significant organisations is ATEED, an Auckland City Council-controlled organisation. The purpose of the company is to market Auckland as a destination by attracting more visitors to the city and raising its international profile (ATEED, 2015). To achieve this, the organisation needs to attract investment by means of tourism, major events, business and industry sector development and activities. ATEED aims to improve New Zealand's economic prosperity by leading the successful transformation of Auckland's economy. This company identifies and joins events and economic development activities across the region to achieve a consistent approach. It plays an important role in attracting and planning for major events in Auckland, such as one-off sponsorship with Rugby World Cup 2011, and a multi-year sponsorship of events such as the Chinese Lanterns

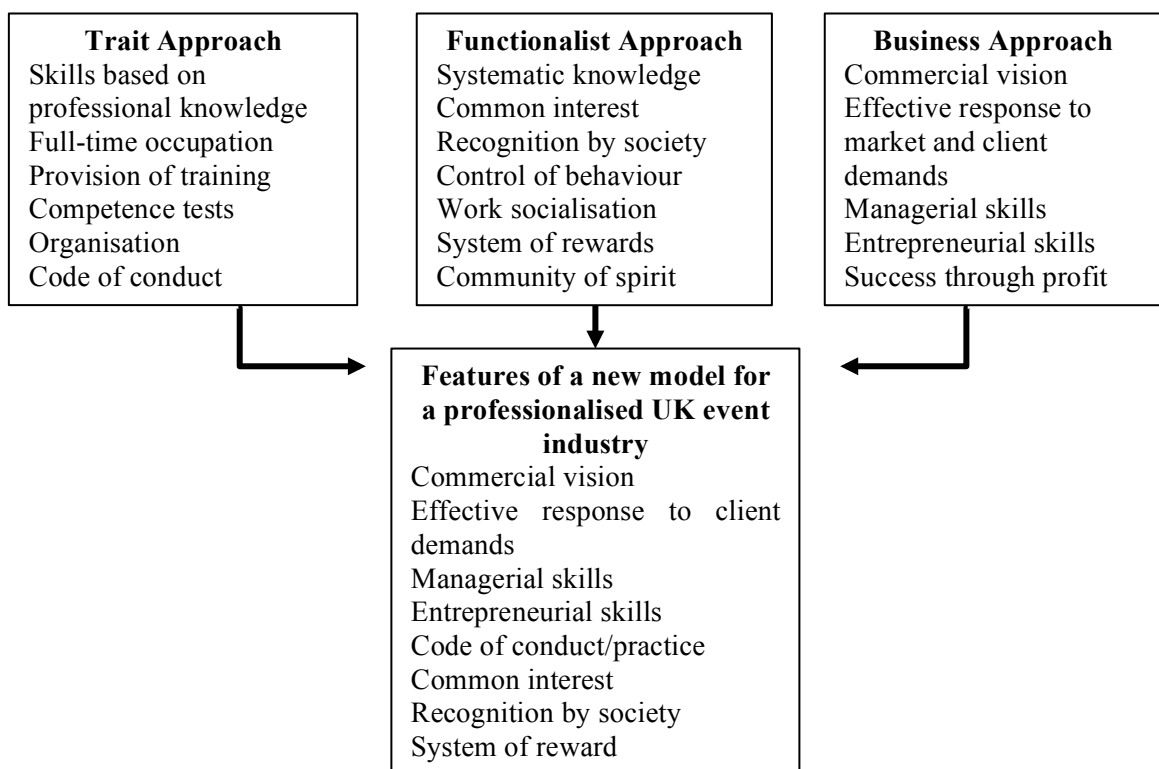
Festival, V8 Supercars, Pasifika Festival, and the Auckland Diwali festival. The major functional units of ATEED are Destination, Business and Sector Development, supported by Planning and Performance as well as Marketing and Communications benchmarks (Auckland Tourism, Event and Economic Development, n.d.; ATEED, n.d; Business Plan, Jul, 2011-June 2012). Besides ATEED, the New Zealand Association of Event Professionals (NZAEP) is one of the most important boards in the New Zealand events industry. NZAEP is directed by a group of event professionals as a board to provide leadership and representation to contribute in the events industry at a world-class level (“Inspiring a world-class,” n.d.).

On the other hand, there are very limited sources of information available about event management and the industry, apart from the topic of volunteerism in sports events and mega-events in the academic field. Much existing research about events is associated more with tourism and hospitality studies. Apart from the academic field, event management is categorised under the hospitality sector (“Event manager,” n.d.). However, Getz (2008) pointed out that ‘event management’ has individually been a fast growing field and not only in terms of the tourist-oriented aspect. According to Getz (2008), event management and event studies include firstly, “design, production, and management of events”, and secondly “understanding planned event experiences and the meanings attached”. There is a lack of research in the event industry field, especially concerning Auckland.

### **2.1.2. Events professionals.**

Similarly to the general events industry and Auckland events industry, the term *event professional* is yet to be well defined. In the late 1990s a few academics agreed that event managers had to be able to meet the necessary skill and knowledge requirements which included production, business strategy, marketing, controlling, promotion and human resource management; as well as the ability to manage projects, budgets, time,

and media relations and be able to carry out business planning. In the early 2000s there were more studies which developed the definition of an event manager. In 2001, Eyerman described the events industry as a professional industry; Harrison (2004) discussed the definition of *professional* and refined the definition of events management as a new profession. The requirements to be an events manager included the additional aspects emerging in the events industry. An event manager should be able to foresee every detail of the event in their overall strategy and approach of undertaking the management of an event. According to Harris (2004), the United Kingdom's (UK) event industry is yet to have a clear understanding of the requirements of professionals in the industry. After a decade, there is still a research gap which exists in event management studies, as well as event-related jobs, and this current study investigated those areas in the events industry in the Auckland region.



**Figure 1. A new model: The professionalization of event management (Harris, 2004).**

Harris (2004) has proposed event management as a new profession in its field and a model for future professionalisation in the events industry (see Figure 1). Figure 1 represents a new model identifying the professionals in events management. Harris has suggested three categories in regards to trait, functionalist and business approaches. Combining the three approaches, Harris has proposed a new model with specific features, including commercial vision, effective response to client demands, managerial skills, success through profit, entrepreneurial skills, code of conduct/practice, common interest, recognition by society, systems of reward, and the provision of training. According to Harris (see Figure 1), an event professional should embrace all those features. However, it is difficult to evaluate event workers with such criteria, and also there is a lack of criteria in the New Zealand event field to identify the professionals.

To date, applying Harris' (2004) new model for the UK events industry, it is still unclear what an events professional is in New Zealand. According to the New Zealand Association of Event Professionals (NZAEP), there is evidence that indicates an event professional requires work experience in certain positions and having specific qualifications. Based on data from Careers.govt.nz. ("Event managers," n.d.), there is only an event manager's job summary within the events industry. Descriptions of events manager roles include the characteristics and functions of project management, concept development, budgeting, time management, relationship with the media and business planning. Also, they need to be capable of overseeing and arranging every aspect of an event including researching, planning, organising, implementing, and controlling of it; and evaluating the design, activity and production of an event. This skill and knowledge requires a high level of written and communication skills and cooperation; and knowledge of the events industry, the organisations involved and the people. However, there is no clear requirement or benchmark relating to event manager ethics, qualifications or education. Working condition descriptions mention working hours and



venues, but little else. This study endeavoured to draw upon Harris's (2004) new model features and NZAEP job requirements to recognise event professionals.

### **2.1.3. Event volunteers.**

The volunteer is one of the most important sectors in the events field. For example, Getz (2008) has defined that events stakeholders include host organisations, host communities, co-workers and the audience amongst others. Volunteers are an essential group of co-workers. Volunteering is the inherent exchange relationship between individuals and their organisations (Getz, 2008). People offer their time, skills and energy to events and gain non-financial benefits in return (Doherty, 2009). They contribute both economic and non-economic inputs during the event to ensure its success. Regarding the costs (and their minimisation) of hosting an event, volunteers are increasingly one of the most important resources for events companies (Doherty, 2009; Neufeind, Gühbert, & Wehner, 2013). Researchers claim that volunteerism is a legacy of the events industry (Doherty, 2009; Solberg, 2003). Volunteers' job performance often forms the lasting image of events as perceived by the public, as being the face to the games (Doherty, 2009).

In the events industry currently volunteer groups are playing an important role. Doherty (2009) states, "Volunteering is inherently an exchange relationship, where individuals offer their time, skills and energy to assist with an event, and experience various benefits as well as cost, in return" (p. 191). In general, good event practices will encourage people to engage with further volunteering activities. As Doherty noted, for major sports events, because of the positive experience volunteers gain, they are more likely to participate in some similar future events. However, Baum and Lockstone (2007) stated that volunteers are not substitutes for the normal paid staff and they are also not a replacement for paid workers. They are less likely to have the same responsibility as the paid employees and potentially do not take the job duties as

seriously as the other employees do. Meanwhile, Baum and Lockstone (2007) suggested that volunteerism is a serious leisure form of work performance. According to the research of McKee (2003), there are three levels of volunteer motivation: Basic Level – self-serving drive; Secondary Level – relational drive; Highest Level, – a belief drive. People become volunteers because the jobs fulfil their individual need for friendship or reinforce their beliefs. Monga (2006) classified the motivations to volunteer as material/utilitarian, solidarity/affective/social and purposive/normative /altruistic.

Volunteers contribute both economic and non-economic inputs for major events for the organisation. Organisations and volunteers have a correlative dependence that complements each other. To host an event needs the help from voluntary manpower, and the volunteers can gain personal satisfaction during the work. Volunteers contribute both economic and non-economic inputs during the event to ensure its success. The study by Doherty (2009) shows that volunteers for major sports events contribute a significant economic effect in a positive way. According to the research, the Sydney Olympics volunteer workers saved approximately \$4.5 million American dollars, and the 800 volunteers at the World Ice Hockey Championships in 1999 donated more than 71,000 hours of service to the event (Doherty, 2009). Doherty points out that major sports events have a high demand for volunteer labour; for example, the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 had over 100,000 people participating voluntarily, and in 2010 at the Vancouver Olympics 25,000 volunteers were required from the host community. On the non-economic side volunteers donated their time, skills and their passion for the events to assist the performance favoured by the host organisations and their audiences. As Doherty states, volunteers can be seen as the face to the games” and that is a positive image which is promoted to the public. Furthermore, this good image can encourage more people to get involved in the same type of events and work for the organisations to provide better work performance. Thus, volunteerism is a legacy in the event industry.

According to the study by Doherty (2009), in sporting events the benefits experienced by volunteers could be described by six types: social enrichment, community contribution, positive life experience, skill enrichment, privileges of volunteering, and a connection with sport. Aside from work performance, the study also mentioned that voluntary workers gain satisfaction from making new friends, learning new skills and proving their ability and capability. According to Solberg (2003), the volunteer experience could have a positive impact on further occasions for both host community and the volunteer group. People with a positive experience and encourage others to be involved can be motivated to get involved with similar events. It is an advantage for the host company to use those experienced volunteers and reduce the organisation's training efforts (Solberg, 2003).

The events industry in the Auckland region frequently engages volunteers. For example, one host organisation, ATEED, hosts many mega-events each year and has a database of volunteers, branded 'Team Auckland'. Many of the volunteers take part in annual events such as the Auckland Lantern Festival, the Pasifika Festival, the V8 Supercar Autoversary and the Diwali Festival of Lights. People also volunteer at some of the city's sporting events such as the Rugby World Cup, national rugby league matches, and the Cricket World Cup. From ATEED's viewpoint, volunteer management and understanding the motivations of the volunteers could assist in enriching that database and ensuring the retention of current volunteers. Baum and Lockstone (2007) agreed that the positive contribution from volunteers helps in the arrangement of events.

As already stated, volunteerism can be regarded as a legacy of the events industry (Doherty 2009) and a positive experience motivates people to involve themselves in future events. Likewise, host organisations benefit from being able to use these experienced volunteers to reduce training costs and efforts (Solberg, 2003). Some

volunteers might also take the opportunity to become a formal employee of the organising events companies.

#### **2.1.4. Benefits between volunteers and the events industry.**

Organisations and volunteers have a correlative dependence which complements each other. To host an event needs the help from voluntary manpower and the volunteers may gain personal satisfaction during the work (Doherty, 2009). Volunteers contribute both economic and non-economic inputs during the event to ensure its success. Volunteers can also gain individual satisfaction from the events in which they participate.

Volunteers contribute both economic and non-economic inputs to an organisation's major events. The study from Doherty (2009) shows that volunteers for major sports events contributed a significant economic effect in a positive way. Doherty points out that major sports events have a high demand for volunteer labour. However, much remains to be documented about the interactive benefits between organisations and volunteers in the Auckland events industry.

#### **2.1.5. Motivations of volunteers.**

The importance of research into the motivation of volunteers has been documented in the literature. The motivational factors of individuals can influence people's perceptions and intentions of staying with the host organisations (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Herzberg, 1986). However, the individual motivation of volunteers can be different. Motivation is also a popular topic in the special events literature. Nassar and Talaat (2008) agree that such studies could be useful to human resource management. According to Khoo and Engelhorn (2011), in order to reduce the turnover rate it is important for management to understand the motivation of volunteers.

Additionally, volunteers gain satisfaction by way of new friendships, new skills, personal recognition and intergradation (Doherty, 2009). Different researchers categorise volunteer motivation in different ways. Han et al. (2013) proposes that a volunteer's motivation influences their job performance, absenteeism, tenure and productivity. Solberg (2003) agrees that awareness of these motivations links personal satisfaction to long-term participation and helps organisations reduce training efforts and costs.

The motivational dimension of why people volunteer has been popularly studied since the 1980s (Treuren, 2009). Researchers divide the factors for volunteering in several ways, as people choose to work in a particular workplace for many reasons. Herzberg (1986) explains that job satisfaction is one of the most important factors in inspiring people to join a particular industry. Volunteers could be motivated based on extrinsic factors which include benefits, good faith, and fair dealings, as well as intrinsic factors including job characteristics and working conditions (Vantilborgh et al., 2011). Two sets of things may largely influence job satisfaction: the motivator factors (also known as intrinsic factors) which include achievement, interest, recognition, challenge and personal growth; and hygiene factors (or extrinsic factors) which include money, security, working conditions, company policies, interpersonal relations, and promotion opportunities. Both sets of factors affect people's intentions and decision-making in their careers and impact on job satisfaction (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010).

Han, Quarterman, Strigas and Ha (2013) isolated four types of motivation dimensions in volunteering: purposive, solidarity, external traditions and commitments. Such dimensions have been used as yardsticks in several studies which explore volunteer motivation in special events and sporting events (Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011; Treuren, 2009). According to Treuren (2014), there are five types of motivations conducted as variables in that study: altruistic, solidarity, instrumental and egoistic motivations.

Some studies also classify the motivations of volunteers based only on altruism, egoism, or sometimes both (Treuren, 2009). People who participate in the events industry voluntarily could do so for several of the reasons. As Treuren (2014) has noted, the motivation of volunteers could be both singular and multiple.

To achieve the research objectives, this study explored the motivation of volunteers and refined the factors into lists to assist with interpretation. Researchers can expect to find several motivations during any investigation into volunteer motivation. As Treuren (2009) demonstrated in the results of that study, different types of volunteers have very different expectations from their individual volunteering experience.

## **2.2. Volunteers in the Events Industry**

When the event industry literature addressed the field of volunteerism, it was always associated with sporting events and mega-events. However, the motivation factors of volunteerism suggest that people could gain connections and job opportunities through volunteering in other events activities. There is a potential gap in the literature, as little research can be found in the area of event professionals. The events industry is yet to have established clear entry points for career pathways and studies on events career progression are scarce (Harris, 2004). Based on the researcher's observation as an event major student, events management courses appear to be becoming more popular and the number of events students are increasing. Events students use volunteering as a way to gain practical knowledge, skills and experience and to further their career opportunities. Researchers have claimed that the career pathway in the events industry is not as well defined as in the tourism and hospitality industries (Robinson, Barron, & Solnet, 2008). Robinson et al. (2008) revealed that one of the most common approaches to getting into the events industry is through volunteering. Thomas and Thomas (2013) have agreed that, to date, even though there are many graduates in event management there is little evidence to support that they become events professionals in their careers. To be events

professionals there are some specific requirements listed in the industry. For example, according to the researcher's experience, in New Zealand, as shown on job search websites, a qualified events manager is expected to have at least five years paid, full-time, direct events-related work experience.

Volunteers comprise a large portion of the events workforce, and fully understanding the development of the career path from volunteer to events professional is very important. Official event employees usually hold more responsibility and face more pressure in the workplace than volunteers (Baum & Lockstone, 2007). A major reason for people's volunteering is to seek a personal connection with the events organisation (Treuren, 2009). These connections provide the volunteer with prime opportunities for career advancement.

Career choice factors are yet to be well developed in the events industry. There are some previous studies into aspects of hospitality and tourism undergraduates regarding perceptions of these as a career choice (Richardson, 2009). Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) also canvassed hospitality undergraduates' views and examined their career decision-making and intentions. Both articles reveal the focus of individual interests and attractions that could drive students to join the industry. As noted by Richardson (2009), the image a particular industry projects is instrumental in attracting potential employees. Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) further state that volunteers themselves reflect this image to the public. Their study indicates that the volunteer might be one of the factors that influence people's career choices. On the other hand, the outcomes from volunteering activities for individuals could assist volunteers' further development including skills, knowledge and experiences as an event worker.

Robinson et al. (2008) discovered events people realised the importance of gaining experience and networking to step into the career. The events companies appreciate event management students with more work experience. Many job opportunities in the events industry are not advertised externally. However, to the researcher's experience, events students have a lack of recognition of such realities. Some of the events undergraduates end up over-qualified but not experienced and it is difficult for such students to get job opportunities after tertiary education.

The links between volunteerism, volunteer motivations and career choice factors in the events industry are yet to be well developed. Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) state that volunteers reflect an image of the organisation to the public and show that volunteering might be one of the factors that influence people's career choice. On the other hand, people could develop their skills, knowledge and experiences by volunteering in the event's activities.

Furthermore, there is yet to be a clear definition in the literature of what an 'events professional' is. The latest literature associated with events professionals has failed to identify a professionalised events sector (Thomas & Thomas, 2013). The intention of this study was to describe and identify event professionals in the Auckland events industry in order to address the research gap. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the link between events volunteerism and events professionals as a career in the events industry. Volunteers comprise a large portion of the events workforce. There is considerable sports events and mega-events literature, which has emphasised the importance of engaging with volunteerism. This current study explored the field and investigated volunteerism as part of a career progression. It is particularly relevant to address the role of volunteers in other events activities, such as festival events and other functional events. At present, there is an increasing rate of event management graduates (Fotiadis & Sigala, 2015; Thomas & Thomas, 2013). Understanding fully the



development of the career path from volunteer to events professional is very important, and this study was intended to be an important contribution to the field.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This study employed an empirical qualitative method. As an unexplored area, by using a qualitative approach, the researcher could seek answers to how, why and what types of questions to explore in the events industry, in regards to exploring the links between event employees and event volunteers (Creswell, 2013). As part of employing empirical qualitative research, the researcher interviewed people to answer particular research questions (Moody, 2002). The current study aimed to review the events industry, volunteer motivations, and volunteering as an influential factor for career progression. The use of a empirical qualitative research method allowed this study to use prior knowledge and develop the current literature to provide answers and suggest practical applications (Moody, 2002). With such methods, the research could gather rich and dense descriptive data from interviewees and gain in-depth and detailed answers to questions such as “what is the event industry like?” and “how do event employees work?” (Goodwin, 2009; Heitink, 1999). This research can be used in events management and events studies to understand this industry and its career development, helping to establish the key requirements for an events professional. This section will outline the methodology of the current study.

### **3.2. Paradigm and Perspective**

The study used a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm to answer the research questions. Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) suggest interpretivism is dependent on constructivist ontology. Constructivism allows a researcher to understand the researched individuals, their values and their experiences. Within such a paradigm, a researcher can aim to understand the researched group and make sense of the data (Goldkuhl, 2012). The researcher can then explain and evaluate the effectiveness of the theoretical perspective and apply examples within the research areas. Meanwhile, the interpretivist approach

allows the interviewee to describe their experience and interact with the researcher; the researcher then takes the essence of the data and makes sense of it (Creswell, 2012; Lester, 1999).

A qualitative study with an empirical method was conducted during the research process. An empirical study using qualitative research methods could objectively and critically analyse behaviours, beliefs, feelings, or values when there is little or no numerical data available for analysis (Deesomlert & Sawmong, 2013; Gökgöz & Gülşen, 2014). Through qualitative data collection and analysis, it provides collected evidence to define and answer the empirical questions. Through interviews, the participants provide anecdotes, cases and express their feelings and understanding of the topics (Goodwin, 2009; Heitink, 1999). According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative method is the best way for a researcher to gain an understanding of actions and therefore was chosen as the best method to discover insights about the motivation and actions of volunteers in the events industry.

### **3.3. Generalisation, Reliability and Validity**

A case study method was adopted as the strategy for this current study. A case could include events, problems, processes, activities and programmes (Gray, 2013). The case study may involve a single person or several people. Initially, it was intended that the researched group in this study would comprise of 20-25 current events professionals based in Auckland, New Zealand who had volunteering experience in the events industry. Gray (2013) suggests a case study strategy is an exploratory analysis of the researched group exploring the phenomena, which will provide rich sources of evidence. In the current study, the members of the researched group shared similar experiences suitable for the researcher to answer the research questions. For example, by using event workers in the industry in Auckland as a case study, the volunteer motivations within this field provided a rich source of evidence that contributes and

links them to career progression and their development as an events professional (Moody, 2002).

Moreover, qualitative research has a unique approach to ensuring the validity of the study (Creswell, 2012), because with researcher interviews, the participant, as working in the field could raise a bias in the data collection process. To provide valid data, this research utilises rich and detailed descriptive language in the data-finding chapter (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, to minimise bias in the current study, a bracketing technique occurred during the data collection process. The researcher has been studying event management as a major during their bachelor's degree and is currently working in the events industry. Bracketing requires the researcher to set aside personal experience, bias and any preconceived notions to ensure the participants relate their story "as it is" and without interference from the interviewer (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

#### **3.4. Population and Sample**

The snowballing technique is the use of participants to contact other respondents (Streton, Cooke, & Campbell, 2004). With such an approach the researcher could gain access to the target population through an informal social network. An informal network, for example the Facebook community, was chosen with a focus on contact snowballing. To meet ethical and legal requirements, the potential interviewees contacted the researcher and applied to participate in the data collection process. There were initially 22 respondents who agreed to be interview participants and seven who cancelled or asked to reschedule the meeting due to personal reasons, which included a time clash or sickness. A total of 15 respondents participated in the interview process. As shown in Table 1, there were 15 participants identified as working part-time in the events industry. According to the original data, a few participants had considered themselves as working full-time in the events industry, but because they were under a part-time contract they have been measured as having "part-time working status".

### **3.5. Data Collection**

The study adopted a semi-structured interview as the main research instrument to collect the primary data. Participants were questioned face-to-face, individually and used the format of semi-structured interviews, which were recorded (with the participants permission, see Appendix B and Appendix C) with digital recording devices. There were also notes taken during the conversation. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes in duration and took place with a mutual agreement between the interviewer and interviewee.

The study applied semi-structured interviews, which employ open-ended questions to the interviewees based on the main research questions. Creswell and Clark (2007) highlight that, with such a tool, interview subjects are free to explain their ideas and detailed viewpoints and ensure their voice is heard. Creswell (2013) shows that, with semi-structured interviews, the questions posed elicit more easily manageable answers for the interviewer, who may then relate them directly to the research questions. The types of questions asked during the conversation can include essential questions, extra questions, throwaway questions, probing questions and detrimental questions. Essential questions are usually based on the research questions. Extra questions elicit some additional information from interviewees (Creswell, 2013; Luo & Wildemuth, 2009). Detrimental questions usually arise when emotion appears. There also exist some double-barrelled and complex questions which are used to emphasise the researcher's voice. It was intended that, using this interview technique, during the interview process data could be collected which would allow for rich, in-depth analysis and interpretation at a later stage.

Data saturation can be reached when multiple participants are asked the same interview questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). One of the contexts shared by the participants was that they were all current event industry workers and had event volunteering experience. The

semi-structured interview questions design enabled the researcher to obtain if there is new information to add into the data. Additionally, the data analysis process started after the data was collected from ten interviews. The number of themes stopped increasing rapidly after eight transcripts were coded. There were only three new themes (out of a total of 38) which were created when the remaining five participants were interviewed. Each of those three new themes needed their own new group due to the participants' own unique statement: "Unforgettable experience as an event worker" (see Appendix C, Indicative Interview Questions, section 2, question 8). A saturation point was reached because the data provided enough replicated information to assist the researcher to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

### **3.5.1 Pilot study**

To strengthen the validity of the findings, the researcher was required to move back and forth between question formulation and data collection strategies (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008). A pilot interview took place with two respondents participating in the pilot study process. A pilot study is a crucial element in good study design. Morse et al. (2008) suggest that good qualitative research should validate the question formulation and data collection strategies and that a pilot study could assist in pre-testing the research instrument to check if the proposed interview questions are appropriate (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Qualitative studies require careful planning; a pilot study could ensure the findings provide valid data for the research and also could increase the success in the main study through pre-testing the indicative semi-structured interview questions (Otmár, Kotowicz, Nicholson, & Pasco, 2011). The pilot study participants in the current study answered all the indicative questions to assist the researcher in keeping the interview duration to time. Additionally, during the pilot study the researcher refined the interview structure, which included combining the

repeatable questions and linking similar questions together. Also, the pilot study developed the researcher's interview skills in the data collection process.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was conducted in the data analysis procedure. It is one of the foundational methods in qualitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis allows a researcher to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within the collected data and apply to the data set in rich detail. Such analysis in qualitative studies provides data items which give considerable information to support the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that, while the themes could be irrelevant to the proportion or quantity in the data sets, they may capture their importance in the overall research area.

In the current study, the researcher used thematic analysis methods to understand the detailed experience among the individual participants, gaining the necessary resources to interpret the data and answer the research questions (Goldkuhl, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the themes can capture important contexts from the data and elicit the responses or meanings based on patterns that could give considerable information. For instance, all participants talked about "networking" when answering the questions relevant to the events industry. This was an important pattern and the researcher will explain more in detail in the findings section.

The data sources for this study were collected from 15 individual interviews conducted in 2015. Appendix A is the interview guide which was used for this study. There were three sections for the indicative questions: demographic background, event industry-related questions, and volunteering-related questions. The identification of these themes was individually attained in each session. As there was a small number of

interviews, the data analysis was manually conducted using the thematic analysis model (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

All interview data was transcribed, coded and grouped. The thematic analysis offered a flexible and useful research tool for the current study that provided rich and detailed data for the study. Thematic analysis can start to identify themes before, during and after data collection (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). There was reading and re-reading while looking at the interview data and a few notes of initial ideas arose. This process assisted the researcher to generate initial codes that could have interesting features within the entire data set. Then, the codes were collated into potential themes which were possibly useful to the research area. After reviewing the themes, the name of each was refined and finalised.

### **3.7. Methodological Limitations**

It is important to maximise validity and trustworthiness in qualitative research studies (Morse et al., 2008). However, one of the limitations of this study was the chosen paradigm, which has a disadvantage in that it fails to explore the overall and common nature and meaning amongst event workers in general (that is, it has limited generalisability) (Schutz, 1972). A further possible limitation in qualitative research with face-to-face interviews was that the researcher could have carried some personal bias into collecting and interpreting the data without realising it. There was a small number of participants involved in the study and the target region is restricted to within the Auckland region of New Zealand. The results from the current study might not be transferable to other places or generalisable to the entire event industry worldwide (Bryman, 2004). Furthermore, the diversity of the participant demographic background was not addressed in this study. Different results could be generated by recruiting event workers in more diverse groups including age, ethnicity and gender.



## **Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

To present the findings, this chapter firstly identifies the events industry context that emerged in the interviews, including the interviewees' descriptive statistics. The study explored, from the event worker's point of view, how the industry is perceived in general and what the workplace is really like. This included the working hours, working venues, and some job highlights. Meanwhile, this chapter elaborates on the interpreted data to present an analysis of the motivations and expectations from people volunteering for events, as well as describing some hardships or experiences of exploitation. This chapter will also present advice and suggestions from the experienced events volunteers to people who would like to join this industry.

### **4.2. The Event Industry Context**

#### **4.2.1. Finding One: Interviewee demographic background.**

There were 15 participants. As shown in Table 1, all participants were currently active in the events industry as workers and had been working in it from a few months up to seven years. As shown in Table 1, participants were coded as 'EV'. The majority of the participants had worked in the events industry between one and three years and all those participants had experienced working over 60 hours a week. The employment status definition was based on the Employment Act, 2004 in New Zealand. Working hours of a full-time employee are at least 40 hours per week; part-time employees are required to have a working time of a minimum 20 hours per-week. Casual workers are not the employees of the company and could provide labour at any time; there is no expectation of regular work from the company. In the current study the contract status definition was based on that provided by each participant's workplace.

Table 1 *Demographics of Interview Participants*

	Industrial Experience (Years)			Experienced 60+ hour/week		Current Employment Contract Status				Events Major Qualification	
	<u>&lt;1</u>	<u>1-3</u>	<u>≥3</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-time</u>	<u>Casual</u>	<u>Self-Employed</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
EV1		✓		✓				✓			✓
EV2			✓	✓					✓	✓	
EV3			✓		✓			✓		✓	
EV4		✓		✓			✓				✓
EV5		✓		✓				✓		✓	
EV6		✓		✓			✓				✓
EV7	✓				✓			✓		✓	
EV8		✓		✓					✓	✓	
EV9		✓		✓				✓			✓
EV10		✓		✓			✓				✓
EV11		✓		✓			✓				✓
EV12		✓		✓			✓				✓
EV13	✓				✓			✓			✓
EV14		✓		✓			✓			✓	
EV15			✓	✓			✓				✓

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	%
<b>Industry Experience (years)</b>		
<1	2	13
2-3	10	67
>3	3	20
<b>Experienced 60+ hour/week</b>		
Yes	12	80
No	3	20
<b>Current Employment Contract Status</b>		
Full-time	0	0
Part-time	7	47
Casual	6	40
Self-employed	2	13
<b>Events Major Qualification</b>		
Yes	6	40
No	9	60

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the interview participants, which provides the descriptive statistics of the data. The majority of the participants had 2-3 years of industry experience in the sector (67%). Eighty per cent of the participants had experienced working over 60 hours per week. None of the interviewees were under a full-time contract and most of the participants were either working with a part-time contract (47%) or casual contract (40%). Over half (60%) of the respondents had not taken any event management-related courses.

As described in Chapter 2, there was a lack of information on event employees' working time periods in the literature, or from online sources. Research and Internet

sources only mentioned ‘flexibility’ in working hours for events managers, but there was no evidence of how many hours exactly an events manager needed to work on a weekly basis. However, data from the interviews indicated the irregular working hours and working season as the interviewees mentioned below:

*EV15: “It [working hours] can be flexible; usually 23 hours a week from the company I work at,... I pick up hours from different places [event companies]. In a single week, probably could up to 70 hours.”*

*EV6: “...especially in December and summer period, it can be anywhere from 40 to 70 [hours] per week,... because it can be a quiet time, you can be doing 20 to 25 [hours per week].”*

*EV9: “...during the summer holidays, work five to six days per week is normal...everyday could be from early morning till really late, sometimes after midnight.”*

It was indicated by some participants that long hours during the events season is a common occurrence, as noted by EV8:

*“...it could be a couple of days or a couple of weeks we are onsite. I’ll be the first person there and last person to leave; ... you stay long hours, 18 hours. People might say 18 hours is long, but I have other days where I only do four hours a day.”*

The working hours could be up to about 80 hours a week, but none of the participants were under a full-time contract. Some participants were likely to have another job, for example:

*EV1: “I’m working in an insurance company, but when needed, I take jobs from the event company I have a contract with and during summer I’m mainly working for them [the event company].”*

A few participants chose hospitality jobs as their other source of employment to get regular income and work for events just for work experience, as EV7 indicated:

*“I am mainly working in the hospitality industry, like cafés and restaurants. I work in events when they need me and I can get some work experience...”*

Events jobs are sometimes related to hospitality and tourism jobs (Getz, 2008; Harris, 2004). In the study, there was no clear evidence of why those people choose jobs in the

hospitality and tourism industry. However, EV9 mentioned some events such as conferences and functions including catering. As EV9 stated, there is catering involved in some conferences and functions:

*EV 9: "...[in the resort] we were working in the restaurants, but during summer we work at weddings a lot, usually three to four weddings a week. In winter we switch to conferences and functions; between from 10 up to 80 people or more."*

According to the data, there were two major reasons for participants not working full-time. Firstly, due to the seasonal work conditions in the events industry, a part-time contract with the event companies allowed participants to work in different companies, including both events companies and non-event companies. Based on the data, event industry work can be very seasonal. Working hours on a daily or weekly basis can be very different:

*EV 2: "I am under a part-time contract, but when it is a busy season, whenever they [the event company] need it I am full-time working for them [the event company]. It is not an everyday job; they [the event company] are not having events every day, and not every week or Monday to Friday full-time like that. I had a week with over 80 hours, and when it comes to quiet times, I only work six to eight hours a week, or no jobs from them [the event company]... I also do some other jobs to earn money, not events."*

According to EV2, there are people working in different industry sectors besides events jobs and among the interviewees, hospitality was a popular choice. For example, apart from events jobs, a few participants mentioned they had been working in cafés and restaurants. For example, EV2 had been working in a catering company, EV7 had worked in a café and EV9 had worked in a restaurant in a resort. Also, many event management jobs are related to hospitality jobs such as catering. The hospitality sector appears suitable for event workers to make money during quiet times in the events sector.

Another reason volunteers were working part-time with the event companies is because some participants were still full-time students. Five participants were still current tertiary students. Students could have more work opportunities during the summer holidays because of the busy season in the events industry, when it requires more workers. Also, some participants took casual jobs during their school or university holidays to earn money and gain work experience.

Table 2 shows that 60 per cent of participants did not hold an event management-related qualification, because not many workplaces require a formal event education qualification such as a tertiary degree or diploma in event management, hospitality and tourism. However, there are a few necessary certifications required to work in some specific jobs. For example, the general manager needs to undertake several industry training courses including food safety, licence management and licence control, and have a liquor license, especially when coming into events with alcohol service. Additionally, in some specific jobs and event venues it is required to have an Elevated Work Platform (EWP) operator certificate, especially in event production operational work. EWP training courses allow people who wish to, or are required to, operate machines including the Scissor Lift, Vertical Lift, and Trailer Mounted Boom, to do so (“EWP operator training,” 2014). Also, it could be beneficial to hold a truck license (Class Two), as sometimes the job would require volunteers to drive a truck for set up and pack down. Participants who did have production jobs revealed:

*EV4: “I have a Class Two license to be able to drive a truck for production, and I also need to get a few endorsements such as scissor lifts and boom lifts, those kind of technical abilities for different equipment.”*

*EV6: “You will need to have the licenses to be able to drive a Class Two truck for moving the props and furniture in the warehouse... Some venues will require technical ability for different equipment.”*

*EV7: “I have a lot of licenses and are still getting some more for the production. It is not a must, but it is good to have them, so when they [event companies] hire*

*you, they don't need to hire someone else to do that work [event production works]."*

Practical certificates and licenses are useful in events jobs. Not only had participants from the events production side acquired all or were working towards a few industry-required licenses or certificates, but also participants had become familiar with the operational side of events and were interested to work in such an area. Some participants noted that they did not know those certificates or licenses were needed until they started to work in those particular positions. Additionally, some participants mentioned that a First Aid certificate might be advantageous to have. Events workers sometimes need to operate on the expectation that people might need first aid, for example, EV4 stated:

*"We had one event as an example – it was an outdoor one and our guests would need to do sport near the beach. There were ambulances there, but it is good to have a First Aid [certificate] in case people fell down with some minor injuries. More workers from us have First Aid [certificates] which is better. If one who's on holds a First Aid [certificate] then they are the ones who need it, then we have backups."*

The EV7 participant suggested it is good to have the First Aid certificate, but it is not necessary to apply first aid to others when there are professionally trained medical staff around:

*EV7: "It is good to have first aid... It is good to know what's going on, but try not to do it, especially consider this from the company's perspective. When people collapse, you can pass out, so it is better to not be liable. You are not a professional as the medical group is – especially in that kind of situation you cannot guarantee you will remember what you learnt over just a weekend."*

For the job roles among the participants, Figure 2 represents two categories of roles; the analysis was based on these participants' roles. The role analysis was based on the interviewee's different working styles. There were two major working styles identified: the first is associated with the whole event's progress, including the manager, coordinator and event's assistants. In this study they were named "managerial roles". The job features of managerial roles are similar to Harris's (2004) new model (see

Figure 1, p 13). The other style was named “operational roles”, which includes a brand ambassador and the event production workers. Those workers will sometimes only show up during the events to execute the tasks to assist in its running. For the operational workers, it is likely that they are not aware of much of the detail of the event’s planning procedure and are only briefed about the tasks close to the date of the event or on the day. Meanwhile, there are some participants who were working both managerial roles and operational roles. For example EV1 worked at one events company as an event manager, and was doing production work in another event company. Also, EV5 was both an event assistant and a production worker due to the shortage of staff in the high season.

Besides the event managers, there were no other events roles mentioned in the literature or industry reports. Depending on the job title in the workplace of the events workers, the roles of participants predominately were in two categories; managerial roles and operational roles. In accordance with the interview data and the event manager requirements described in Chapter 2, managerial roles require those people to cooperate with different stakeholders to organise the events, including sponsors, clients, co-workers, and guests. Managerial roles will include tasks and responsibilities from event preparation until event finish, such as managing the workers for the events and arranging the venue prior to the event taking place; setting up and packing down the site when events take place; running it when events are happening; and some office administration work after the event is finished. People in managerial roles should be able to manage an event in these respects including project management, concept development, budgeting, time management, media relations and formulating business plans. There could be other event roles which were not represented in the current study, due to the small number of potentially non-representative participants. On the Careersnz website it is suggested the related event roles could be in areas including project



management, electronic security, renovation, intermediate, hospitality, tourism, business and marketing.

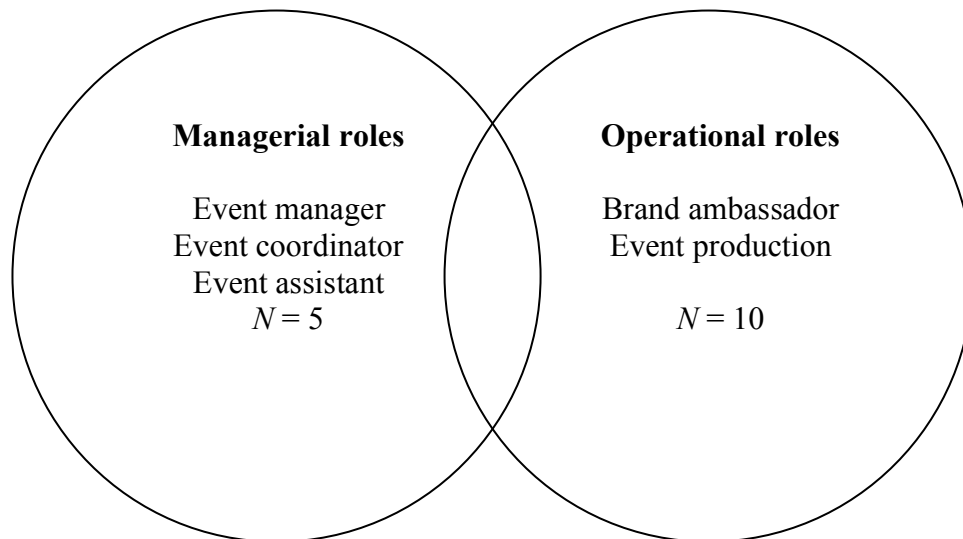


Figure 2. Job roles of events workers.

The operational role refers to participants who are involved when events take place, including the tasks of setting up and packing down and running them when they are happening. Interview data suggested brand ambassadors need to represent the client's company or sponsors, such as the brand or product from the clients. As EV3 indicated:

*“We need to understand the product we are representing, because we will expect people to come to us and ask us questions about the products or a particular event we are working at... and we need to know what we are there for and what we are talking about. We need to showcase the product and give information of the product.”*

Figure 2 shows that in the events industry people could be working in the event managerial roles section, operational roles section, or both. EV2, EV4, EV8 and EV14 all had a similar experience of working in different roles in the events company at the same time:

*EV2: "I do some office jobs such as doing the run sheets, work plans and requirements for the events from the hiring companies and venues. Also, I put up the centrepieces, polish the glasses to prepare the events, and serve the guests for some dinner functions. It [the jobs] happens differently for different events and client companies. You could set up all tables, and you need to watch everything, and see what's going on...pay attention to what might go wrong."*

*EV4: "I am still doing some BA [brand ambassador] jobs, but mainly, I'm working in the production side. When all other managers are busy, I could take some management work or work as onsite manager for some events."*

*EV8: "I do many management roles and lots of other different roles... Need to be more specific, more close to the event, during the event or after the event. You could spend months in the office, a lot of paperwork, meetings with the event people, clients or calling the vendors, making sure everyone is happy, the account is happy... I built the site...when events are happening I just sit back and watch. Everything should be going well as planned, and if problems happen make sure I deal with it nicely. There is a bit of office work afterwards [after the event happens], talk to the vendors, talk to the clients, get the feedback, and pay the bills."*

*EV14: "I do some basic roles and some coordination roles. I do BA [brand ambassador], admin [administration] works, production assistant, production coordinator and some coordinator jobs."*

According to the above experience from interview participants, event workers should be able to cope with different roles when necessary. Event managers sometimes need to do some production work or work as a brand ambassador, and experienced brand ambassadors could get some management jobs when other managers are busy.

All event workers mentioned it is hard to describe their form of work on a daily basis, but there is a pattern that for each event, there are three stages: before the event, during the event and after the event. Different event roles will evolve in different stages across one particular event. Managerial roles are usually the ones who will be able to participate in the whole process, but operational roles are usually the only participants at one particular stage of each event. For example, event brand ambassadors usually only work during the event stage. This is one of the reasons participants who were mainly working as event brand ambassadors found it is difficult to say what they do every day, because they are always working at different events and the jobs are usually not the same. On the other hand, the managerial role participants or the ones who had

experience in those roles would see a more holistic picture of the events system. Those participants were more likely to take part in the work on a day-to-day basis, which might be different on a daily basis, but the basic things remain the same.

#### **4.2.2. Finding Two: What the events industry is like in Auckland.**

All participants mentioned that people outside of the events industry have no idea what the industry is really like, based on their individual experience. It could have an influence on attracting people to join the industry. There are people outside of the industry who think the events industry is a low profile job with low entry requirements. There were participants who mentioned that people have a misunderstanding of what they really do. Such as EV2 and EV13 who indicated that:

*“People I am not so close to think I am no good at study so I do events, because it is an easy job to do. The majority of my friends are working in the business sectors, and they think I am doing a job with long working hours, very physically demanding but very little pay.”(EV2)*

*“There are people who think the reason why people are doing events is because they did not do well at school, and they relate events to hospitality automatically.”  
(EV 13)*

There are also people who think events work is easy to do, but event workers actually do not think so. For example EV5 complained that:

*“People outside of the industry believe it is very easy to do an event; you just need to hire stuff from the websites and put everything together and an event is done.”*

Some interviewees stated that people who know events workers, including their friends, acquaintances and family relatives, have a lack of awareness and understanding of the industry and related jobs. Sometimes before they started working in the sector, they also

did not have much knowledge of such a field, including the participant themselves. On the other hand, more than half of the participants mentioned that people think that working in events is a very fun job to do, but for the event workers it is not really like that. Generally, people only relate the event to parties, concerts and weddings. However, there are many other events which people did not think of, including functions, catering, activities, and some big events such as festival events or mega-sports events. Interview data indicated that while events work is fun, it is also a job, as EV3 said:

*“Work is not always that much fun because you are working there just like any other job.”(EV3)*

EV14 has indicated that people do not fully understand the size and complexity of the events industry and the jobs:

*“There is so much stuff behind the scenes which people don’t realise, such as in a concert, people don’t think of the stage, lights, planning and logistics or all the props we organise, or even managing the staff. There is a lot of work there that people don’t know about.” (EV14)*

Participants agreed that it might look glamorous or fun, but employees need to work in a professional way and be looking at the event through a professional lens, rather than enjoying the event as guests. For each particular event, even if just a small one, there is a lot of work behind the scenes that event guests or sometimes even the clients would not notice. Especially such details as a particular colour and material of the carpet for a five-minute red carpet walk event, as well as the banners behind the media walls which need to be booked months in advance. Thus, people outside of the particular event hardly realise what goes into it.

Participants reported that those not in the events industry would have very little idea about what event roles are. When they mention that they are working in the events industry, most people could only relate to the description of event manager, but there are many other roles in event companies. Meanwhile, EV2 experienced that people mixed up event jobs with catering:

*EV 2: "Some of my mates think I'm doing catering there, just polishing the glasses or serving people like a waiter."*

Participants found many people outside of the events industry have no idea of the event roles and think there is only the event manager role in the field. However, it is not true. There are many jobs in the event industry and people are not aware of the title of those occupations. It is similar to what Thomas and Thomas (2013) found, that many in the event sector have failed to professionalise their roles.

Even among the current event workers, many participants said that event management and the event industry is developing and there could be tertiary qualification requirements in the future as a benchmark. According to the interview data from EV3, EV7 and EV8, participants who have been working in the sector without an event management tertiary qualification are more likely to say there were no event management-related courses while they were studying. Also, current events students in their first year mentioned there are more students in the class and more course options than students who have already graduated. According to the interviewees' own knowledge, there is yet to be a benchmark of event employees to have a certain type of qualification.

Meanwhile, all participants mentioned the term "networking", which refers to a stepping-stone to entering the events industry because the job opportunities usually apply to internal companies and employees only. EV8 indicated that:

*“You gotta know somebody to get in [the events industry]”*

Developing the connection to current event employees is helpful to join the events industry, and also it is how some of the participants started to work for some events and events companies. Most of the participants emphasised the importance of “networking”, or knowing someone as their way to get a job in events companies. People in managerial-level roles also stated they would look for new employees within the sector because practical experience is crucial.

#### **4.2.3. Finding Three: Reasons for people to volunteer.**

People working as volunteers are motivated by many reasons. Some participants have emphasised having a job is the main reason for doing volunteering activities in the events industry. It is a useful way to step into the events industry through volunteering. Participants, especially the current events major students participating in volunteering jobs, reported they were willing to gain personal connections for career advancement and job opportunities through volunteering in some events work. For example, EV1 mentioned that:

*“I could meet many people from volunteer jobs and get to know them in the future when I need to run my own events, or if I work in some companies, I know who to contact.” (EV1)*

Participants who had clear goals or aims to work in the events industry were more likely to indicate job opportunities as one of the main reasons for participating in volunteer activities. For example, EV5 said:

*“I was aiming for a job that time [when volunteering].” (EV5)*

However, there are companies who require volunteers or internships as part of their recruitment and selection progress. Some participants had the experience of the event

company requiring them to have unpaid roles before they could be offered a paid position, such as EV8 who used to volunteer at a company to be able to work there as an employee later on. There are also participants who were offering to work for free and prove their excellence to the company in exchange for a position eventually. For example, EV5 become an event worker by starting as a volunteer and finally got paid.

*EV5: "I was desperately wanting to work for that company and I told them I don't mind volunteering for them and later if they are happy with my performance they can start to pay me."*

The event industry is competitive, and volunteering is a good way to get into event companies. As described in Chapter 2, event managers are required to have a high standard in many aspects of knowledge, skills and experience. Similar requirements might also apply to the other roles in the industry.

Meanwhile, there were participants who believe volunteering while studying is a good way to gain practical experience:

*EV2: "...it's [volunteering in events] good for my profile, for my CV [Curriculum Vitae], and also I can gain real experience and see how events are really work like."*

*EV3: "...they [companies] always ask for two years, or three years work experience, but I full-time study, I won't have enough time to commit to any [event company] jobs. Volunteering is more flexible, I work when I can, there's not much workload, and it will be good on my CV [Curriculum Vitae]."*

*EV7: "When I just started [studying in events management courses], I found this [event volunteer] opportunity. I only learnt the textbook things that time, and I thought*

*it is a good chance to see what a real event is like and get some real experience.”*

As the event companies' require high standards for their event professionals (Harris, 2004), graduates that have just finished study, but are yet to have much work experience, are at a disadvantage. As mentioned above, EV2, EV3 and EV7 agreed that volunteering could assist the undergraduate gain some practical experience in the field and it also might give them referees through volunteering activities with some particular companies.

According to the participants' experience, people volunteering at the event companies could be doing so because they want to get paid roles in the future. There is a lack of paid job opportunities for people who are new to the event industry, but there are many volunteer roles required by companies. Some interviewees mentioned many companies need volunteers. Meanwhile, there are many volunteer advertisements which attract people who are interested in events and events management students. For example, on Facebook, there is an “event management job opportunities” page which constantly has posts about recruiting volunteers for different events.

Work experience is one of the key reasons to motivate events students to participate as a volunteer in the events industry. The events industry will require work experience while recruiting their employees. Some job descriptions require a minimum of two years' experience as an undergraduate, so it is not likely the students can both work full-time and study full-time. Volunteering is a good opportunity for students to gain real-life experience.

There are people working as volunteers for some particular events based on their own individual reasons. For example, EV4 mentioned that:



*“My first time being an event volunteer was because there was a music festival; I really wanted to go, but I couldn’t afford it.”*

EV8 volunteered once for a conference because it was a very interesting subject. Meanwhile, EV13 had participated at an event as a volunteer because the ticket cost was not affordable and there were other friends attending. EV14 was attracted to a sports event as a volunteer to be able to work there with other friends. Besides the above reasons, participants also mentioned other reasons to be an events volunteer, including personal interests, passion, enjoyment, self-recognition, and influence from other people.

#### **4.2.4. Finding Four: Benefits through volunteering in the events industry.**

Besides the benefits an individual could gain through volunteering mentioned in the last section, there are also some other benefits the data represents through volunteerism. Treuren (2009) reviewed the views of some researchers in the field, who believe that there was a dichotomy between altruism and egoism with volunteer motivations, and the motivation of egoism is acknowledged to have both tangible and intangible sources for the individual’s benefit. Table 3 presents the interview data and groups the items into two separate categories.

Participants mentioned more intangible benefits than tangible benefits through volunteering activities. For the intangible benefits, the top three *data extras* represent the benefits participants had mentioned when talking about them in the events industry. All 15 participants mentioned “networking” is an important benefit that people could gain through volunteering; 13 participants emphasised “personal connections” and 12 participants agreed “experience” is one of the major benefits through volunteering activities.

On the tangible benefits side, through volunteering, tangible benefits could roll over to be intangible benefits; for instance, “reward” is related to “self-recognition” and “positive feelings”. Six participants answered they made some “friends” through volunteering jobs. It could also be related to an intangible benefit: “personal connections”. Eight participants mentioned volunteering could bring potential job opportunities in the events industry. Six participants mentioned that volunteering in some particular events could allow the volunteers to get into the event for free. Another participant had experienced that volunteering in some particular functions meant they could bring some free food home.

*Table 3 Benefits Ranking for Event Volunteers*

Intangible Benefits Ranking	Tangible Benefits Ranking
1 Networking	1 Job opportunity
2 Personal connections	2 Free entrance
3 Experience	2 Friends
4 Friendship	3 CV reference letters
5 Keeping an open mind	4 Free goods
6 Communication skills	5 Rewards
7 Self-development	6 Free food
8 Self –recognition	
9 Positive feelings	
10 Teamwork skills	
11 Practical working skills	

*Note.* Based on *data extras*, the importance of the benefits is ranked in a descending order.

In the long term, some benefits could become both tangible and intangible. For example, there were participants who had gained knowledge, skills and experience from event volunteer work, and also had the chance to meet the current workplace manager and get a job that way. From this perspective, volunteer experience can be translated into monetary value and become tangible benefits (Treuren, 2009). For example:

*EV14: "... that [volunteering in the events industry] is how I get my job. I didn't expect that when I first started to volunteer."*

Additionally, some participants mentioned volunteer activities could be used as career navigation in the events industry. Some interviewees suggested people who are interested in working in the events industry could volunteer in different events and events companies to gain some idea of the industry. This was elaborated in Finding Two, where people outside of the events industry did not generally understand how the events industry works. EV9 stated:

*"...it [volunteering] gives people an understanding of what's involved in an event."*

Two participants who work in events managerial roles suggested that working in events is one way of gaining that understanding, but working as a volunteer requires less responsibility than the employed volunteer workers. On the other hand, by participating in practical events, volunteers would be able to experience the event working conditions and practices in reality. It is good for people who intend to work in such an industry in the future. For example:

*EV 8: "If you cannot even survive as a volunteer, it is definitely not your job."*

Meanwhile, EV3 and EV5 suggested that working in different types of events could help people's decision-making about going into their chosen careers.

*EV3: "...you might find you are more into the weddings than the sports event,... after volunteering, when you need to work in the events for real, you know what kind of events you should go after."*

*EV5: "...it could be that the event industry is totally not what you thought, and then don't step into it. It is good that you realised it as just a volunteer, you can walk away."*

The event types are different (Getz, 2008) and defined into several event types. It could be possible for the event undergraduate to be only interested in one particular type of event, or that some of them might be more likely to want to work in an events company which would allow them to work in a more diverse selection of events.

For current event students, all participants agreed it is definitely necessary and beneficial to start work as a volunteer while studying. Participants expect events students would work in events as their career after graduation. *Data extras* showed that event students could gain both tangible and intangible benefits through volunteering:

*EV15: "...it is not a paid job, but the experience you gain and skills you learn definitely pays off the labour you put in [as a volunteer]."*

On the other hand, there are several participants who raised a problem where people who want to work as a volunteer, but do not let the event company take advantage of this.

#### **4.3. Finding Five: Exploited Volunteers**

The study explored the idea that the events industry is not always as glamorous as people think it is. This process may happen to volunteers, where some events students might want to join the events industry by volunteering as a start. However, there are some downsides that occur in the industry of which they are not so proud. This finding contributed to this study to sketch the Auckland events industry as a whole.

The interview data appeared to show that volunteers are sometimes exploited in the events industry. Some participants experienced some financial hardship or witnessed

volunteers who were treated badly while they were working. There were a few typical examples. First of all, the job description did not match with the job they actually ended up doing:

*EV7: "...I applied for a role but I did not get to work on that role. I was staying at the registration desk, and it was not what I expected, and it was also boring."*

Secondly, some volunteers might be required to take on too large a workload. Both EV6 and EV8 had witnessed volunteers who were treated as labourers while they were working in the events industry. EV8 suggested that, for people who intend to, or already undertake volunteer jobs, they deserve to get paid for some jobs rather than working for free:

*"...do not volunteer for the jobs that you could get paid for,... they[volunteer management or events host party] should hire labourers if you need labourers, not using volunteers like that..., and the volunteers are not even fed." (EV8)*

In fact, there were a few unfortunate stories which were revealed from the participants during the interview. For example, EV6 witnessed a nasty story which happened to volunteers.

*EV6: "...the volunteers had to pay for their own travel, accommodation and even food,... later we find out that the guy who was organising this took that budget for himself! It was the nastiest thing I have ever seen."*

EV8 believed events with volunteers should not take advantage of having people work for free. For people working for free, the company should have fewer expectations of the volunteers. According to Doherty (2010), volunteers are not replacements for the employees. EV6 also agrees that, "...you can't shout at the volunteers, because they are not your employees".

There also some participants who experienced hardship themselves during volunteering.

*EV14: "...it [one of the volunteer jobs she took] requires a lot of time. That time I was still a student, and we [the volunteers for the particular event company] won't be able to have any other part-time jobs, because there were too many jobs to do."*

Participants also mentioned poor management sometimes occurs when there are volunteer activities involved. There are people in the event company who do not consider volunteers as an important part of the events, especially volunteers who usually undertake some basic roles and do easy jobs. Sometimes there are no people available from the company side to take care of the volunteers and give them clear job descriptions and training.

*EV1: "...people give up their time free to help, so they should not be treated like that."*

*EV 5: "...there are volunteers who just walk away from the site, and the management should know there is something wrong with their volunteer coordination."*

Volunteer exploitation needs to be payed attention to, otherwise there could be many drawbacks. Volunteerism is one of the most important segments in the events industry and an indispensable feature of many events companies and events activities (Doherty, 2009; Neufeind, Gühert, & Wehner, 2013). Exploited volunteers could have a negative influence on the events industry's reputation and avert people from joining in the volunteering activities. Also, it is not fair for the event volunteers to be treated poorly.

#### **4.4. Summary of Findings**

Finding One outlined some of the basic demographic backgrounds of the participants, including their work experience, position and status, as well as their educational backgrounds. Finding Two sketched an overall picture of the events industry by looking

at the nature of it and facts from the current employees' perspective. Both findings depicted the context of the events industry in the Auckland region. The above findings also allowed the researcher to achieve the research objectives by identifying the event industry and event employees.

The rest of the findings have addressed the research questions coming into volunteering in the events industry. Both Finding Three and Finding Four have adapted sports volunteer motivation theories (Treuren, 2009), and applied them to the events volunteers in Auckland. The findings suggested by Herzberg's (1986) motivation factors, and examination of the intention and decision-making factors to join the industry, have answered research Question One. Finding Four evaluated the benefits of event volunteers and answered research Question Two. Finding Five revealed the drawbacks in event volunteerism.

All five findings provide the answer to research Question Three. To answer research Question Three, the study firstly had to identify the events industry; secondly, observe the context of the event industry and workers' behaviours in that context of event jobs; moreover, it also needed to explore the intention of the event volunteers and the actual benefits from volunteerism. Finally, the findings were interpreted and analysed to identify the relationship of volunteerism to career progression.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

This chapter is going to address the issues from the previous chapter and discuss the findings. The demographic backgrounds of the participants and their profiles defined the events industry and event employees' contexts in the Auckland region. The interview participants exposed how event workers feel about people, including their friends and families, who have a lack of awareness of the events industry. Likewise, according to the previous chapter, participants claimed that people in the general public have a misunderstanding, or lack information about, what the events industry is and the nature of working in events. This section is going to outline the event industry contexts based on the Auckland example, the characteristics of, and event workers' working conditions and skill requirements. For people who are interested in the events industry, this section outlines the contexts of the events industry within the Auckland region.

### **5.1. Event Industry Description**

#### **5.1.1. Working hours.**

There is a common agreement that the working hours in the events industry are very flexible. "Event Managers" (n.d.) described how event management requires flexible working hours; this also applies to other event co-workers. There could be very long working hours; almost 90 per cent of the participants had experienced a week of over 60 hours (see Table 2). On the other hand, as a very seasonal working industry, there could be months with no work to little work; even down to 15 hours per week. Meanwhile, there is no fixed working time. A lot of after-hours work involved in the events industry, with weekend or public holidays being extremely busy; more than usual. Events commonly take place when people, in general, have free time, such as parties, functions and concerts in the evenings; also during the summer season, there are many sports events activities and Christmas parties. For example, some company's end of the year Christmas parties have hundreds of invited guests, and require a large workforce



for their events, requiring volunteer labour to help reduce the cost. On the other hand, there will be seasons with very few, or no, jobs for the workers.

### **5.1.2. Working venues.**

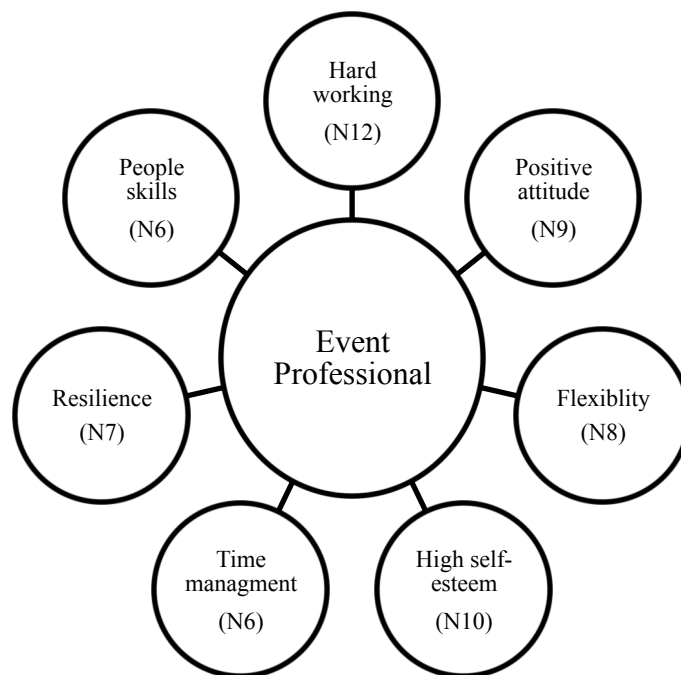
Working venues can be diverse unless people are working for one particular company with their own venue; for instance, theatres and arenas. The venue could be both indoor and outdoor, depending on what type of events are happening (Getz, 2012; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011; Nassar & Talaat, 2008). Based on the data, different stages of one particular event will also impact on the working venue on a daily basis. There could be work in the office for some administration jobs or paperwork during the preparation stage of a particular event or after the event. Also, there could be working venues in the warehouse to prepare packing in and packing out. Additionally, participants could take jobs from different companies; so the working venues could be diverse. Interview data proved that all participants have experienced working in different workplaces based on what event jobs they pick up, including offices, warehouses, stadiums, resorts, restaurants, beaches, and forests.

### **5.1.3. Working status.**

Nevertheless, due to the seasonal characteristics in the Auckland region event industry and an individual's background, none of the participants was under a full-time contract with one particular event company they were working with. Some event workers would need to have another job during the quiet season, or over a period of time, to earn money. Also, some participants were still full-time students and were not able to work full-time in the events industry. For example, the current participants from this study were all under a part-time contract and some of the participants were still university students.

From the events employer's perspective, according to the Employment Act 2000, employers need to provide at least 40 hours for full-time employees and a minimum of 20 hours per week for part-time employees. There will be a low season in the events industry that does not need so many workers. Part-time and casual contracts are commonly used in events employment relations.

#### 5.1.4. Event professional roles.



*Note.* In the diagram, using word frequency analysis, the participant perceptions are indicated (e.g. N6)

*Figure 3.* Attributes of an event professional in the Auckland events industry.

Based on the data, this research presents a framework of events professional in the Auckland events industry by using word frequency analysis (See figure 3). The framework has picked the top seven attributes that an Auckland event professional should have. According to the perceptions of Auckland event workers, an event professional worker should possess the attributes of being hard-working, having a positive attitude towards events, being flexible, having high self-esteem, having good

time management skills, being resilient, and with good people skills. Harrison (2004) has discussed the new definition of an event professional, but this study revealed the attributes of an event professional in Auckland events industry. To be an Auckland professional event worker, a person needs to be capable and hold the mentioned top seven attributes to be able to handle the intense work in the field. The mentioned attributes can be naturally occurring for some people, but with practical work experience, these qualities can also be developed. For example, with volunteering experience in the industry, people can efficiently gain real life experiences and develop their attributes in the event field and in working towards to becoming an event professional.

Event managers are not the only people working in the events industry; there are many co-workers needed to cooperate with each other to complete one particular event. Getz (2008) defined the co-worker in the event industry as the people who are running one particular event. They might be from different companies or organisations to ensure the event's success, such as event managers from the host companies and sponsors, or they could be from the vendors and stallholders.

According to the findings shown in Figure 2(p. 39), there are two types of event professional roles identified in the Auckland events industry. Firstly, there are managerial roles, including the manager, coordinator and assistant. Managerial roles would require more management-related jobs, which includes planning, cooperation with other event-related companies and venues, management of other event subordinates, as well as budgeting and control. Secondly, among the interview participants, the operational role refers to the brand ambassador and event production. Brand ambassadors mainly represent the client company or their products. Such roles require jobs interacting with the event guests or event attendees from the public. Event productions usually do not happen when the event is taking place. Their job is setting up

prior to the event and packing it down after. For example, building stages, setting up lights and audio systems for a concert, and breaking everything down after it finishes.

#### **5.1.5. Event-related qualifications and certificates.**

There is yet to be a benchmark for event employees to hold a formal qualification from tertiary education courses, such as event management certificates, a diploma or degree. However, Harris (2004) proposed that there is a trend that it might be a requirement in the future to have a formal qualification as an entry point in the events industry. Harris (2004) revealed over ten years ago that event courses have already become popular in the United Kingdom. Auckland, as one of the most popular event cities, shows that there are also some tertiary education groups starting to provide event management courses, such as a bachelor's degree major in event management. Also, participants who were still currently studying in the event courses at university mentioned there are more event-related papers developed to attract students.

Meanwhile, for event managers and production workers, there are a few certificates that are required for some particular jobs. Event managers would need to undertake a few courses through the Auckland City Council to be able to operate in some event venues, such as food and safety certificate and liquor license when food and beverages are served. It would be an advantage for event production workers to hold a few operational licenses and a Class Two driver's license due to the nature of the job. Based on the participants' individual experience, it seems to be easier to gain job opportunities with an operational license and truck drivers' license, because of the need to move large furniture items and props for some events. Additionally, some venues would require some particular valid licenses for entrance to the event production, so event companies might prefer to hire people who hold those particular certificates. Moreover, several participants identified the advantage of having a First Aid certificate going into some particular event jobs, but it is not always necessary.

## **5.2. Answers to Research Questions**

### **5.2.1. Findings to RQ1: Why do people volunteer for events?**

The reason why people volunteer in the events industry is due to several complex factors (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Herzberg, 1986; Vantilborgh et al., 2011). The motivation factors of volunteers in general have been a popular topic among researchers since last century. Among the 15 participants from the current study, there were people who had a clear intention to volunteer, such as looking for job opportunities and work experience, as well as to gain work skills. Also, there were people looking for networking and personal connections through volunteer jobs to step into the events industry and work towards their future career. In contrast, there were participants who were not so clear about their working purpose career-wise. They could work as an event volunteer because they were interested in such a particular event; or it could simply be just because those volunteers were influenced by other people who were attending the event. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors could have influence on an individual's intention and decision-making to involve themselves in the events volunteer activities.

Literature has revealed that volunteers are one of the most important segments in the events industry (Doherty, 2009; Neufeind, Gühert, & Wehner, 2013; Solberg, 2003). From a volunteer's perspective, individuals participate and are motivated to engage in particular events for a number of diverse reasons (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Monga, 2006; Vantilborgh et al, 2011). Findings from this study show that, people engage with the events industry as a volunteer, in order to make a first towards a career in events. It is also evident from this study that a motivation to volunteer for events allows individuals to establish personal connections and networking opportunities.

### **5.2.2. Findings to RQ2: What are the benefits for individuals that volunteer in events?**

Findings Four grouped two sets of benefits for volunteering in the events industry, and additionally, described the relationship between the intangible and tangible benefits established in the answers to RQ2: What are the benefits for individuals that volunteer in events?

The current study borrowed the “altruism and egoism” theory from event volunteerism studies (Treuren, 2009), which established two sets of volunteer benefits. The findings from this study indicated more intangible benefits than tangible benefits, which correlates in sections 2.3.2 that sports events volunteers are more likely to be motivated by psychological than material benefits. The most popular intangible benefits were ranked, with participants rating “networking”, “personal connections”, and “experience” as the highest. However, it was explained in Findings Four that those benefits could lead to future career opportunities. In this case, the difference between them and sport events volunteers is that the participants in the current study tended more to be egotistical rather than altruistic. The tangible benefits current participants could gain, or intended to gain, in the Auckland events industry were similar to sports volunteers, which are to gain job opportunities, free entrance to particular events, and to make friends. Furthermore, participants mentioned one of the benefits of being a volunteer in the events industry is “career navigation” which will be expanded on in Section 5.2.3.

Literature has revealed that volunteers are one of the most important segments in the events industry (Doherty, 2009; Neufeind, Gühert, & Wehner, 2013; Solberg, 2003). From a volunteer’s perspective, individuals participate and are motivated to engage in particular events for a number of diverse reasons (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Monga, 2006; Vantilborgh et al, 2011). Findings from this study show that, people engage with the events industry as a volunteer, in order to make a first towards a career

in events. It is also evident from this study that a motivation to volunteer for events allows individuals to establish personal connections and networking opportunities.

### **5.2.3. Findings to RQ3: What role does volunteerism play in the career development of events professionals?**

According to the above findings, it is a fact that people who are outside of the events industry have very limited access to gain entry. However, there are a large number of volunteering roles which are required by the event companies. Based on Finding Three, participants have emphasised “networking” and “personal connections” as an access to getting work opportunities in event companies. To gain that access, based on Finding Four, volunteers in events activities could have such benefits. Therefore, participating in volunteer activities is a pathway to getting into the events industry in the Auckland region. Furthermore, Finding Four also indicated that people who are interested in working in the events industry should involve themselves in different types of events as volunteers as a way to “career navigation”. There are many opportunities to participate in various events as a volunteer, and people who are new to the events industry could have a different taste of what those events are like. In this way, it could assist people to gain a better understanding of 1) if they are the right fit for working in the events industry; 2) what events they are more interested in and more passionate about; 3) which company they prefer to work with; 4) what roles they are more suitable for or which particular events, before deciding to pursue events work as a career.

Finally, to answer RQ3: What role does volunteerism play in the career development of events professionals? Firstly, volunteerism is the access and entry point to step into the events industry in Auckland. It is similar to the claim by Robinson et al. (2008) that volunteering is one of the common approaches for people to get into the events industry. Also, volunteers are seeking a personal connection with the events organisation through volunteering activities (Treuren, 2009). According to the findings,

it is possible to gain personal connections, and sometimes it could assist volunteers to get a job in the future. However, there is no guarantee of getting work career-wise for events volunteers because of the competitive nature of the industry. Secondly, participating in various events jobs and volunteering for different companies could assist people in understanding the industry and themselves towards their ideal career. According to Chapter 2, there is a lack of studies in the events industry and the field does not advertise to the public; however, volunteering is a good platform to provide an inside view of the industry. Through volunteering at various types of events and with different events companies, people could mature their own understanding of the field and navigate their career pathway. Thirdly, through volunteering activities, people could gain multiple benefits and contribute towards the work of events professionals. However, at this stage volunteers are usually only working at the level of the “event taking place”, which means the volunteer will have some limits on being able to understand the entire events procedure. Moreover, volunteers are usually working in entry-level positions with ‘easy’ jobs, so the experience from volunteering might not have a huge contribution to being an event professional. Nevertheless, it is a good starting point and will have benefits in the entire process of developing to become an event professional.

As mentioned in Chapter two, career choice factors are yet to be well developed in the events industry (Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Richardson, 2009). This study, however, confirms the importance of volunteerism plays an important factor for those indicating a career in the events industry—These findings have filled a gap in the literature, and indicate that volunteering is an influence on individuals considering a career in Events and therefore an important career choice factor for the industry to take note of.



The literature review highlighted a lack of research into how the events industry is perceived and characterised (Getz, 2008; Harris, 2004). This research has revealed that the Auckland events industry can be distinctly characterised in terms of: working hours, venues and the employment relationships. Additionally, an event professional is yet to have a clear definition in the literature (see Harris, 2004). Findings from this study suggest that an event professional is expected to have certain attributes, such as be able to work for over 80 hours a week, capable of working at different venues in irregular working hours, good at communicating with co-workers and clients, and so on.

Literature has indicated that volunteerism is usually associated with sports events or 'mega events' (see Baum & Lockstone, 2007; Doherty, 2009; Neufeind et al., 2013; Solberg, 2003). This study, however, has indicated that volunteerism is not just isolated to sports and/or 'mega events', but also to local and regional events such as the Diwali Festival, Christmas parties, and fashion weeks based in the Auckland region.

In essence this research indicates that volunteerism plays an integral part in the career development of career progression in the events industry, and is a key motivator towards becoming considered as an events professional.

### **5.3. Additional Finding: Exploited Volunteers**

The research data has shown that there is not just a bright side for people participating in event volunteering activities. Finding Five exposed the fact that there are events volunteers being treated badly, and some participants have experienced financial hardship while volunteering. Participants suggested there are some jobs that should be paid, rather than taking advantage of having unpaid volunteers. Also participants,

especially the ones who had been working at the managerial level or had over three years in the industry, raised the issue that volunteer exploitation definitely exists. People who are interested in volunteer work should be aware of these issues and protect themselves, especially event students who are usually willing to involve themselves in many events as volunteers. Some event companies might take more advantage of event students than others.

Participants having had negative work experiences as events volunteers were revealed in two different ways. When asking questions for “advice for people who are willing to volunteer”, some participants might respond with some negative statements such as using the terms “*Don’t expect too much*”, “*They could be some less important jobs*”, and “*Expect to get dirty*”. In contrast, some participants had faced hardship during volunteering in events and would encourage new volunteers to “*Speak up*”, “*Keep asking questions*”, and “*Let yourself stand out*”.

Even though there may be a negative side to coming into the event as a volunteer, all participants agreed that, for a career in the events industry, student involvement in volunteering jobs is necessary.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion and Implications**

In conclusion, the current study explored volunteerism as a career progression in the events industry. Firstly, to develop the research questions to achieve the purpose of the dissertation, the researcher reviewed the events industry literature in its various aspects, including its definition, the motivation and benefits of volunteerism and career development theories. This was done by conducting a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. The researcher collected data from 15 participants who are currently working in the Auckland events industry and with volunteering experience. With thematic analysis, the data was interpreted in terms of the research questions, as well as achieving the research aims and objectives.

Based on the data, the researcher has refined the event industry contexts readings in terms of work status, the working environment and the job description. Furthermore, the three research questions were answered. Firstly, people might volunteer for events based on their individual reasons. There are two sets of motivation factors which could influence the people who volunteer. Also, the reason for volunteering is complex rather than for just one specific motivation. People could volunteer because of personal interest, or could be working towards their goals career-wise. Mainly, job opportunities, working experience and skills, as well as personal connections and networking were the most popular reasons amongst the event volunteers in the Auckland study participants. Those motivation factors were also the major benefits they could gain while they take part in volunteering. However, volunteer exploitation should also have attention drawn to it. Events management students and people who are intent on joining in the events industry should involve themselves in volunteering activities, but should determine whether they are doing the work for free for the benefits or have been taken advantage of by the events companies. Lastly, volunteerism is a common starting point for people who want to build up a career in the events field. In the Auckland region, volunteerism

could be a stepping-stone for people to get involved in the events industry. Moreover, for people who have clear goals and aims, participating in different events in the field could assist people to identify job opportunities. However, it is not guaranteed.

### **6.1. Contributions**

This dissertation has described the events industry in the Auckland region and contributes to the knowledge gap in the research field. This study explored the Auckland events industry, including the worker's working hours, working conditions and the attributes of an event professional. The mentioned findings are new to the events industry literature and provide the evidence to demonstrate what the event industry is like in Auckland. The study also theoretically described the Auckland event industry and identified the attributes and quality of events professionals in the field. Also, from interviewing the events volunteers, the current study successfully provided the evidence for why people choose to volunteer at Auckland events, as well as the benefits from volunteering the industry. The current study has achieved information to refine the understanding of the intentions, expectations and motivations among the Auckland events volunteers. Additionally, the research also revealed the exploited events volunteers and the findings provide an inside picture of the Auckland events industry and events volunteerism literatures.

Practically, it is beneficial for events practitioners to gain an understanding of the nature of events workers, events volunteers, and the process from being a volunteer to becoming a professional in the events industry. Firstly, this study is useful for the events organisations that require volunteers. Their motivation has an influence on an individual's intentions of joining in, staying and leaving a particular industry (Chuang & Dellman-Jenkins, 2010; Herzberg, 1968). Due to the study, an investigation of the motivation of volunteers could assist the events organisations in gaining a general and in-depth understanding from their perspective and an approach to their satisfaction.

Secondly, the events educators could consider the practical experience that involvement has for the events students. Meanwhile, the events students could have a better view of volunteer work and its value for their career development process. Finally, it could be possible for the events companies using volunteering as their training process to cultivate potential events professionals for the industry.

In the events industry, practical experience is valuable, and people could develop their skills, experiences and knowledge from an involvement in real events. Volunteering is a good starting point for people who have the intention of entering the events field. Furthermore, participating as volunteers could also possibly provide opportunities for personal connections and job offers. The events industry is similar to the hospitality and tourism industry, in that it values practical experience which is also useful in developing a career. As there are volunteers involved in the events area as main pillars for many types of events including special events and sports events, it could also apply to other events associated with volunteerism. Through volunteering as a pathway, events people could be benefited in their career development. Future studies therefore can explore exactly what events professionals experience through volunteering activities, and investigate whether volunteering assisted them to be what they are now. Meanwhile, the results can address the nature of volunteerism as events practitioners in the Auckland region and provide in-depth data regarding the voice of events employees' career development through volunteering. If volunteering does happen as a career pathway, the study can be valuable to events people; this includes educationists, events workers, events students and the management.

## **6.2. Implications**

The current study investigated the current event employees within the Auckland region and analysed several aspects of the event industry including the working environment, hours of work, and roles of event workers. However, the data was only collected in

Auckland, New Zealand. There is very limited research in the events industry which defines the nature of it, the roles of employees and the context of these workers. Event industry researchers could replicate the methodology in other countries. Moreover, this study could be extended into a cross-cultural context.

As a qualitative study, the current sample recruited a small sample of people. The participants represented different roles in the events industry; there are five major roles identified in the events industry within the Auckland region. There should be more paid positions and roles in the events area. Also, there is an opportunity for the researchers to explore in the event workers' context; for example, future research could gather data from full-time event employees and event employees with over seven years' working experience. Additionally, the quantitative study in the same study area might add some empirical evidence to validate further the study findings.

Additionally, the findings could also benefit event practitioners. For people who are interested in joining the events industry, this study offered some insights. Especially, for current events students, they should be conscious that the event industry has its own unique way of recruiting and selecting staff. Gaining personal connections and networking is crucial to get into event companies. Also, it is very important to gain practical working experience while studying, where volunteerism could be considered an access point. Meanwhile, event students should understand that volunteering is a good opportunity to get into the industry, but it does not guarantee people getting a job. According to the findings from Figure 3, events management education could provide or encourage events students to take real life opportunities in the events industry and develop their attributes present in the framework to be able to work as event professionals.

Future research could keep refining the topic of the events industry and events volunteerism theories in respect of the nature and context of it outside of the Auckland market. There could be a wider selection of participants in other events fields, and also take a look at people with longer working experience in the industry. As a similar industry to hospitality and tourism, the events industry could also face a high staff turnover in the long term, due to the irregular working hours, flexible working shifts, and high stress levels. Researchers could start to pay attention to these topics and might be able to prevent these drawbacks from happening.

Also, the exploited volunteers are a noteworthy aspect arising from the current study which has a negative influence on the events volunteerism aspect. Many participants in this study commented they have noticed the issue of exploitation exists in volunteerism, but “expect less” was the most popular suggestion amongst experienced volunteers for people who are volunteering for the first time. As volunteers are one of the more significant groups in the events industry, there should be other solutions coming from both academics and the events companies themselves to maintain a healthy environment within volunteerism which benefits the entire industry in the long run. Additionally, the events management education parties could provide more practical opportunities for their students and encourage them to involve themselves in volunteering activities in these events. This way could introduce the real industry to the students, and in the meantime they could develop themselves before attempting to step into the career. Meanwhile, this might prevent and reduce a number of graduates from being “over qualified but less experienced”, and provide excellent potential event employees for the industry.

## References

- ATEED.(n.d.). Retrieved August 22, 2015, from Stuff.co.nz: [http://events.stuff.co.nz/venue/auckland-tourism-events-and-economic-develop?&lang=en\\_us&output=json&session-id=a38009c0c90ab17340c94b634721ae9e](http://events.stuff.co.nz/venue/auckland-tourism-events-and-economic-develop?&lang=en_us&output=json&session-id=a38009c0c90ab17340c94b634721ae9e)
- Auckland third best sporting city in the world.* (2014). Retrieved 18th Feb, 2016, from [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/aucklander/sport/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1503376&objectid=11236459](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/aucklander/sport/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503376&objectid=11236459)
- Baum, T., & Lockstone, L. (2007). Volunteers and mega sporting events developing a research framework. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 3(1), 29-41.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Business Plan. (n.d.). Retrieved August 22, 2013, from Aucklandcouncil: [http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/SiteCollectionDocuments/aboutcouncil/cco/ateed/ateedatt620110624.pdf?&lang=en\\_us&output=json&session-id=a38009c0c90ab17340c94b634721ae9e](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/SiteCollectionDocuments/aboutcouncil/cco/ateed/ateedatt620110624.pdf?&lang=en_us&output=json&session-id=a38009c0c90ab17340c94b634721ae9e)
- Careers.govt.nz. n.d. Event Managers. Retrieved 08th Jul, 2015, from <http://www.careers.govt.nz/jobs-database/hospitality-tourism-and-recreation/hospitality/event-manager/>
- Chuang, N.-K., & Dellmann-Jenkins, M. (2010). Career decision making and intention: A study of hospitality undergraduate students. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*.
- Deesomlert, S., & Sawmong, S. (2013). Factors influencing service innovation and business performance of spa for health in thailand: Empirical study. *International Journal of Business, Marketing, & Decision Science*, 6(1).
- Doherty, A. (2009). The volunteer legacy of a major sport event. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 1(3), 185-207.
- EWP Operator Training.* (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.hianz.net.nz/EWP>
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408-1416.
- Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 403-428.
- Getz, D. (2012). Event studies: discourses and future directions. *Event Management*, 16(2), 171-187.
- Global Sports City Index ranking enhances Auckland's reputation.* (2014). Retrieved 18th Feb, 2016, from <http://www.aucklandnz.com/ateed/media-centre/listing/global-sports-city-index-ranking-enhances-aucklands-reputation>



- Gökgöz, F., & Gülşen, A. Z. (2014). Analyzing the impacts of privatization, liberalization and regulations on the telecommunication sector: An empirical study for OECD countries. *Advances in Management and Applied Economics*, 4(2), 9.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2012). Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 135-146.
- Goodwin, C. J. (2009). *Research in psychology: Methods and design*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gray, D. E. (2013). *Doing research in the real world*. Sage.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Han, K., Quarterman, J., Strigas, E., & Ha, J. (2013). Committed sport event volunteers. *The ICHPER-SD Journal of Research in Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport & Dance*, 8(2), 45.
- Harris, V. (2004). Management practice event management: A new profession? *Event Management*, 9(1-2), 103-109.
- Heitink, G. (1999). *Practical theology: history, theory, action domains: manual for practical theology*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Herzberg, F. (1986). One more time: How do you motivate employees. *New York: The Leader Manager*, 433-448.
- Inspiring a world-class events industry*. Retrieved 08th Aug, 2015, from <http://www.nzaep.co.nz/>
- Khoo, S., & Engelhorn, R. (2011). Volunteer motivations at a national Special Olympics event. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 28(1), 27-39.
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102-120.
- Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. *Stan Lester Developments, Taunton*. Retrieved 25th Sep, 2015, from <https://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/F50603E0-41AF-4B15-9C84-BA7E4DE8CB4F/0/Seaweedphenomenologyresearch.pdf>
- Luo, L., & Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). Semistructured interviews. *BM Wildemuth, Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*, 232-241.
- McKee, T. (2003). *Why people volunteer: The top three reasons people volunteer*. Retrieved from <http://www.volunteerpower.com/articles/Why.asp>
- Monga, M. (2006). Measuring motivation to volunteer for special events. *Event Management*, 10(1), 47-61.
- Moody, D. (2002). Empirical research methods. *Research Methods Class*. Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2008). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 13-22.

- Nassar, N. O., & Talaat, N. M. (2008). Motivations of young volunteers in special events. *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 4(1), 145-152
- Neufeind, M., Güntert, S. T., & Wehner, T. (2013). The impact of job design on event volunteers' future engagement: insights from the European Football Championship 2008. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 13(5), 537-556.
- New Zealand climbs in ranking of business events destinations*. (2014). Retrieved 18th Feb, 2016, from <http://www.tourismnewzealand.com/news/new-zealand-climbs-in-ranking-of-business-events-destinations/>
- Nichols, G., & Ojala, E. (2009). Understanding the management of sports events volunteers through psychological contract theory. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 20(4), 369-387.
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions. *Information Systems Research*, 2(1), 1-28.
- Otmar, R., Kotowicz, M. A., Nicholson, G. C., & Pasco, J. A. (2011). Methodological reflections on using pilot data from fracture patients to develop a qualitative study. *BMC Research Notes*, 4(1), 508.
- Richardson, S. (2009). Undergraduates' perceptions of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(3), 382-388.
- Robinson, R., Barron, P., & Solnet, D. (2008). Innovative approaches to event management education in career development: A study of student experiences. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 7(1), 4-17.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2000). *Data management and analysis methods*. Norman Densin and Yvona Lincoln, EDs. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 769-802
- Solberg, H. A. (2003). Major sporting events: assessing the value of volunteers' work. *Managing Leisure*, 8(1), 17-27.
- Streeton, R., Cooke, M., & Campbell, J. (2004). Researching the researchers: Using a snowballing technique. *Nurse Researcher*, 12(1), 35-46.
- Thomas, R., & Thomas, H. (2013). What are the prospects for professionalizing event management in the UK? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 6, 8-14.
- Treuren, G. (2009). The associative - supportive motivation as a factor in the decision to event volunteer. *Leisure/Loisir*, 33(2), 687-711.
- Treuren, G. (2014). Enthusiasts, conscripts or instrumentalists? The motivational profiles of event volunteers. *Managing Leisure*, 19(1), 51-70.
- Tromp, D. M., & Blomme, R. J. (2012). The effect of effort expenditure, job control and work-home arrangements on negative work-home interference in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1213-1221.
- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(1), 80-96.
- Van der Wagen, L. (2010). *Event management*. Pearson Higher Education AU.

- van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social Research Update*(35), 1-4.
- Vantilborgh, T., Bidee, J., Pepermans, R., Willems, J., Huybrechts, G., & Jegers, M. (2011). Volunteers' psychological contracts: Extending traditional views. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 0899764011427598.

## Appendix A



### AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology  
D-89, WA505F Level 5 WA Building City Campus  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

1 September 2015

Stephen Cox  
Faculty of Culture and Society  
Dear Stephen

**Ethics Application:** 15/308 An exploration of career progression in the events industry: from volunteer to event professional.

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to advise that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved your ethics application, subject to the following conditions:

1. Provision of a revised response to section H.4 of the application in relation to snowball recruitment;
2. Provision of a revised response to section H. 9.1 in relation to the question being asked;
3. Provision of a Consent Form;
4. Provision of the recruitment advertisement/notice;
5. Amendment of the Information Sheet as follows:
  - a. Amend the withdrawal statement to include an indicative date up to which withdrawal is possible;
  - b. Inclusion of information under a "How was I identified" section that explains the recruitment procedures being undertake;
  - c. Review for correct spelling and grammar, and clarity of expression.

Please provide me with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely



Kate O'Connor  
Executive Secretary  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Yiwei Kirene Jiang [kirene-j@hotmail.com](mailto:kirene-j@hotmail.com), Lexie Matheson

# Participant Information Sheet



### Date Information Sheet Produced:

12 08 2015

### Project Title

An exploration of career progression in the events industry: from volunteer to event professional.

### An Invitation

My name is Yiwei Kirene Jiang, a Master's of International Hospitality Management student at AUT University. I am undertaking a research project that leads to a dissertation and the completion of my qualification. The project is concerning the career progression in the events industry, and I cordially invite you to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from this research at any stage without any reason.

### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this study is to explore the perception of events volunteers towards career development in the events industry. The study will use empirical qualitative research to interview people and answer particular questions by data analysis. The current study aims to review the events industry, volunteering motivations, and volunteerism as an influential factor for career choice. This research can be used for the events industry and education to understand career development and help establish key requirements for an event professional.

### What will happen in this research?

If you are willing to participate this project after reading this information sheet, you will be invited to a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded (with your permission) with digital recording devices. Additionally, notes will be taken by hand during the conversation. You will be questioned face-to-face, individually, with semi-structured interview questions. You are welcome to explain your ideas in details, based on your individual roles and experiences related to the questions. Please note your participation in this project is entirely voluntary, you may skip questions or withdraw information at any stage during the research. Once you choose to withdraw, all data related to you will be destroyed. The information obtained in this study is strictly kept confidential.

### What are the benefits?

Your participation in this research will contribute to a better understanding of events industry, volunteerism, and volunteering activities as an influential factor for career choice. This study is expected to stimulate further research. Also, this study aims at deriving the results required for completing my Masters in International Hospitality Management.

### How will my privacy be protected?

All information you provide will remain confidential (unless agreed by you) and will be used for the purpose of academic research only. Also, no data will be provided to a third party, all data will be securely kept in a secure location, with access given only to the researcher and the participants upon request.

### What are the costs of participating in this research?

The research will cost approximately 30 minutes of your time.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will review this information sheet before the interview recording start. Please note that your participation is voluntary, you may skip questions that you feel uncomfortable at any time. If you are not willing to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any stage with no adverse consequences to you.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

By signing this agreement sheet. Please note that all your information will remain confidential.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, a summary of research findings will be sent to you after the completion of the study.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor Stephen Cox: [stephen.cox@aut.ac.nz](mailto:stephen.cox@aut.ac.nz)

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 6038.

For any further information about this project, please feel free to contact:

The researcher: Yiwei Kirene Jiang, [prq7091@aut.ac.nz](mailto:prq7091@aut.ac.nz)

Primary supervisor: Stephen Cox, [stephen.cox@aut.ac.nz](mailto:stephen.cox@aut.ac.nz)

Secondary supervisor: Lexie Matheson, [lexie.matheson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:lexie.matheson@aut.ac.nz)

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*,  
AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

# Appendix C



**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

## Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

**Project title:** *An exploration of career progression in the events industry: from volunteer to event professional*

**Project Supervisor:** *Stephen Cox, Lexie Matheson*

**Researcher:** *Yiwei Kirene Jiang*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 12.08.2015.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes  No

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

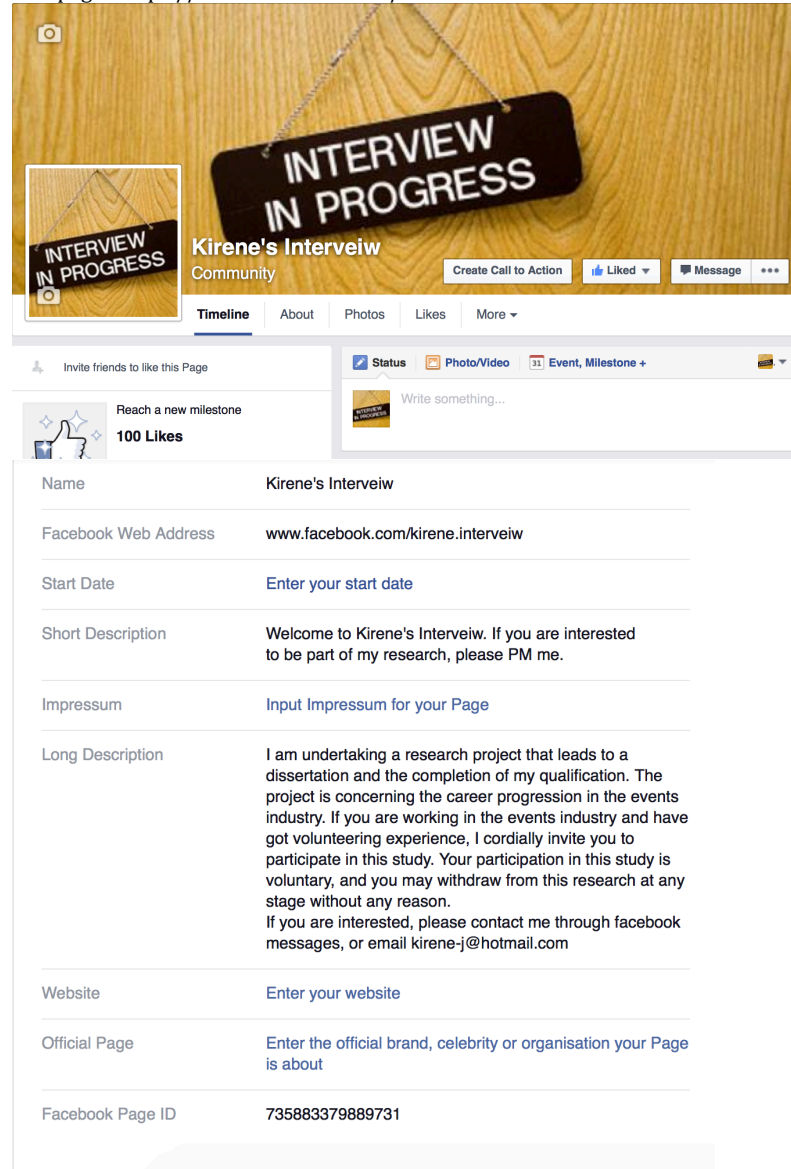
**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTECH Reference number *type the AUTECH reference number***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## Appendix D

Advertisement example

Webpage: <https://www.facebook.com/kirene.interveiw>



Name	Kirene's Interview
Facebook Web Address	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/kirene.interveiw">www.facebook.com/kirene.interveiw</a>
Start Date	<a href="#">Enter your start date</a>
Short Description	Welcome to Kirene's Interview. If you are interested to be part of my research, please PM me.
Impressum	<a href="#">Input Impressum for your Page</a>
Long Description	<p>I am undertaking a research project that leads to a dissertation and the completion of my qualification. The project is concerning the career progression in the events industry. If you are working in the events industry and have got volunteering experience, I cordially invite you to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from this research at any stage without any reason.</p> <p>If you are interested, please contact me through facebook messages, or email <a href="mailto:kirene-j@hotmail.com">kirene-j@hotmail.com</a></p>
Website	<a href="#">Enter your website</a>
Official Page	<a href="#">Enter the official brand, celebrity or organisation your Page is about</a>
Facebook Page ID	735883379889731



## Appendix E

### Indicative interview questions

*(These are the example questions to be selected on the bases of answers given by the participants. They are not a prescribed set to be asked in the allocated timeframe)*

#### Section 1 (Demographic/Background Questions):

1. Please tell me how long you have worked in the events industry?
2. Please give me a little background on your education and experience coming into the events industry.
3. Do you have any formal qualifications related to the events industry? If so, please clarify.
4. Do you currently work in the events industry? If so, are you working part-time or full-time?
5. What roles did you undertake and what type of events have you been involved in?

#### Section 2 (Events industry: what is it? / What are event workers?)

1. In general, how do you think the events industry is perceived? Any examples?
2. Do you think people outside of events industry know exactly what the workers in the events industry do? Please explain?
3. How would you define the role the events industry plays in society?
4. What would you expect someone entering the industry to know about the industry?
5. Can you describe the role of an event worker and what they might be expected to do on a day-to-day basis?
6. Can you list the types of events that you have gained experience in as an events worker?
7. What attracted you to join the events industry?
8. Can you recall an interesting/ unforgettable experience as an event worker? What was it and why was it memorable?

#### Section 3 (Volunteerism)

1. Why do you volunteer for events?
2. Do you volunteer for activities other than events?
3. Do you find that volunteering has relevance to your job? If so, why?

4. Do you think volunteering in the events industry will be helpful for your career? Why and how?
5. What do you feel are some benefits that you could gain from volunteering?
6. Do you think that volunteering will help you understand the events industry? If so, how?
7. How do you think that volunteering will be helpful for your chosen career?
8. Why do you think that it is important to have volunteers in the events industry?
9. What roles do you think the volunteers can undertake in the events industry?
10. What expectations do you think event volunteers have?
11. Would you recommend people who are interested in the events industry to participate in volunteering activities? If so, why?
12. Do you think people who are employed in the events industry should also involve themselves in volunteering activities? Please explain.
13. Do you think events students should involve themselves in volunteering activities? If so, please clarify.
14. Why do you think it is beneficial for the events industry to have volunteers?
15. Can you think of a time when it wouldn't be wise to engage volunteers?
16. Do you think volunteers are ever exploited? If so, how?
17. Please tell me about any personal connections you have gained through your volunteering experience?
18. Can you reflect on your experience as a volunteer and describe some hardship you faced?
19. What advice would you give people who are volunteering for the first time?