PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND THE INTENT TO RETURN AMONG TOURISTS ATTENDING A SPORTING EVENT

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

The primary purposes of this study were to: a) propose a comprehensive set of dimensions of quality in sport tourism services; and b) propose and test a model where perceived quality in selected dimensions is said to lead to client Satisfaction with the experience which, in turn, is said to influence the intent of the tourist to return to the event in the future. A secondary purpose of the study was to develop a scale to measure service quality in selected dimensions, client Satisfaction and Intent to Return.

The model was tested using data collected from spectators traveling to a major league All-Star sporting event in the United States. All tourists responding to the questionnaire were from a residence 50 miles or more away from the stadium. The data from the 215 usable cases was analyzed using structural equation modeling. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the CFA Measurement Model was an acceptable fit (CMIN/DF=1.828, RMSEA=.067, NFI =.802, GFI = .840, TLI = 872, CFI =.897). The structural model was a good fit for the data (CMIN/DF= 2.394, RMSEA=.081, NFI =.932, GFI = .950, TLI = .932, CFI =.959).

The findings from this study point to support for a multi-dimensional model of service quality in sport tourism. The most important dimension was found to be the quality of the contest itself. The results suggested that there is an overall perception of sport tourism quality (ST Quality) which significantly contributes to a tourist’s perceptions of satisfaction. Moreover, Satisfaction was found to significantly contribute
to a tourist’s decision to return to a sporting event and/or to a particular destination. The scale developed in this study offers a good starting point for exploring services in sport tourism. A discussion of results is provided along with implications for sport managers and recommendations for future research.
Dedicated to my late father and coach

William Edward Shonk (1933-1990)
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The sport industry has witnessed tremendous growth over the last decade. By the end of the 1990’s the industry had grown to $213 billion, exceeding the growth predicted at the beginning of the decade by more than $90 billion (Mahoney & Howard, 2001). A large factor contributing to this growth derives from leisure-based travel for the purposes of either watching or participating in sport. During this time, sport-related travel accounted for 20% of the total sport industry, calling attention to the emergence of a specialized field of study labeled sport tourism (Chelladurai, 2001). Sport is now regarded by many to be the world’s biggest social phenomenon (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003) and tourism its largest economic sector (McCannell, 2002). McGehee, Yoon and Cardenas (2003) report that sport tourism is a $27 billion per year industry in the United States (p. 305). Hudson (2003) claims that 38 percent or 75.3 million adults in the United States travel to attend sporting events (p. 13).

Within the service sector, tourism has become a significant economic activity for many regions (Eugenio-Martin, 2003) and travel related to sport and physical activity one of the fastest growing sectors (Gibson, 1998a). Sport and tourism are believed to be among the world’s most popular leisure experiences (Ritchie & Adair, 2004). Two
important factors can be attributed to the growth in sport tourism over the last two decades. First, a general growth in discretionary income has provided consumers with greater choices concerning their leisure and recreational activities (Thwaites, 1999). Second, cities turned to sporting facilities in the early 1980’s as a way to assist downtown development and draw attention to their central localities (Turner & Rosentraub, 2002).

To date, much attention has been given to sport tourism within larger urban cities seeking to attract spectators for mega-events such as the Olympics or the World Cup (Jones, 2001). Up until the 1980’s, hosting these types of events was thought of as a financial and administrative burden to the organizing city and country (Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2000). Today, these events are integral components of the tourism and economic development strategies of most cities (Murphy, 1997) and help to promote the destination’s image (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003). Recent estimates suggest that event tourism is the largest growing sector of the leisure-travel market and the demand for room nights now surpasses that for business conventions (Chalip, 2004).

Sport tourism has been defined in the following ways. Standeven and DeKnop (1999) define sport tourism as “all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitates travel away from the home and work locality” (p. 12). Gibson (2003) defines sport tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (p. 207). Turco et al. (2002) describe sport tourism as “travel to and participation in or attendance at a predetermined sport activity” (p3).
In conjunction with major spectator events, other forms of sport tourism have also contributed to the marketing mix such as active sport tourism (Gibson, 1998a), adventure tourism (Hudson, 2003), small-scale event tourism (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003) and nostalgia sport tourism (Fairley, 2003; Gibson, 1998b). The influx of these types of tourism along with an increased focus on sport has led many cities to place a greater emphasis on sport tourism. Most cities have focused their attention on building new sport stadiums (Gee, Makens, & Choy, 1997). Gibson (1998a) reports that a whole industry of hotels, resorts and even a golf museum were created in the mid 1980’s to cater to tourists’ demands (p. 158). Standeven and DeKnop (1999) also point to luxurious clubs and hotels with sport and exercise facilities as important parts of the sport tourism market (p. 99).

Sports Commissions

The economic, environmental and social impacts of sport and tourism have helped to spur the interest of these two areas of activity within local, state and national governments (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, local administrators have used sport as a way to achieve economic and social development by creating a variety of sport-related organizations and services within urbanized communities (Bradish, 2003). In the United States, a considerable amount of attention has been focused at the local level where “sports commissions” have been established, often under the umbrella of a city’s Convention and Visitors Bureau (Weed, 2003). Gibson (2003) cites the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) as an important element in the growth of sport tourism at the community level (p. 206). The NASC was created in 1992 with the purpose of fostering communication among America’s public and private sector sports commissions and to formulate policy on major
issues (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999). The primary purpose of a sports commission is to attract major events to a city. Therefore, most cities welcome their existence because sporting events have a positive impact on the local economy (Pennell, 1990).

According to the NASC Website, more than 270 cities across the country currently have a sports commission or a similar type of entity focused on attracting sporting events (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2005). The enormous growth in the number of sports commissions is evident when considering that in 1993 there were only thirty such organizations in existence (Kelly, 2000). As the number of sports commissions has increased, so has the competition to attract new guests to one destination over another alternative. For many cities, entering into this highly competitive market makes survival even more stringent (Pennell, 1990). One way that many sports commissions could differentiate themselves is on the basis of providing a high quality of service. One could argue that it is the only way to gain a competitive advantage over competing sports commissions.

Providing the visitor with a superior experience is based upon the sports commission’s ability to help coordinate or provide a bundle of high quality services that meet or exceed the expectations of the guests visiting the city. Particularly salient “touch points” for many sports commissions are hotels, event venues and nodes of transportation (Logan, 2004). These “touch points” can be converted into a consumer benefit package comprised of a sporting event, hotel accommodation, and a host of other peripheral services. Collier (1994) describes a consumer benefit package as a “clearly defined set of tangible (goods-content) and intangible (service-content) attributes the customer recognizes, pays for, uses or experiences” (p. 63). The focus of the current study is the
quality of the service encounters experienced by the sport tourist. The theoretical framework for the study derives from the service quality literature.

**Service Quality**

The service quality construct evolved out of the quality literature in manufacturing. Quality initiatives date back to the 1920’s when manufacturers began to focus on controlling the physical production of goods and the internal measurements of the production process (Kandampully, 2002). The Total Quality Movement (TQM) within manufacturing slowly faded and has given way to a new paradigm focused upon the service sector and the customer/provider relationship. More than two thirds of American workers now reside in the service sector (Orwig, Pearson, & Cochran, 1997). Service quality has become a great differentiator between companies and is one of the most powerful weapons which many leading service organizations possess (Kandampully, 1998). Service quality has been linked to outcomes such as customer satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Grönroos, 1984, 1990, 2001; Ko & Pastore, 2004), customer loyalty (Kandampully, 1998; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990), value (Laroche, Ueltschy, Shuzo, & Cleveland, 2004) and repurchase intention (Fornell, 1992).
Table 1.1: Service Quality Dimensions

A wide variety of service quality dimensions have been proposed (See Table 1). Most targets of quality evaluation have emphasized: a) the physical context such as facilities; b) the interpersonal interactions between either the client and employee or two clients; and c) the core service (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000).

(pp. 12-40). Rust and Oliver (1994) introduced a three-dimensional model of service quality encompassing the service product, service delivery and service environment (pp. 11-13). Dabholkar, et al.’s (1996) three-dimensional model included physical aspects, reliability and personal interactions (pp. 3-16). Brady and Cronin’s (2001) three-dimensional model of service quality consisted of interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality (pp. 34-39).

Service Quality in Sport and Tourism

Service quality was not recognized as a major area of research in sport until the late 1980’s (Ko & Pastore, 2004). Scholars in sport have examined service quality within the context of health and fitness centers (Alexandris, Zaharaiadis, Tsorbatzoudis, & Grouios, 2004; Chang & Chelladurai, 2003; Chelladurai, Scott, & Haywood-Farmer, 1987; Kim & Kim, 1998; Papadimitriou & Karteroliotis, 2000; Tawse & Keogh, 1998; Westerbeek, 2000), athletic camps (Costa, Tsitsari, Tzetzis, & Goudas, 2004), golf courses (Crilley, Murray, Howat, March, & Adamson, 2002), recreational and leisure facilities (Ko & Pastore, 2004; Ko & Pastore, in press) and spectator sport (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002a, 2002b; Kelley & Turley, 2001; McDonald, Sutton, & Milne, 1995; Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan, 1996; Westerbeek, 2000).

According to Baker and Crompton (2000), the literature related to quality in the tourism and recreation field dates back to the early 1960’s (p. 785). The tourism literature has revealed various attempts to make sense of how tourists evaluate the quality of services they receive while on vacation (Atiglan, Akinci, & Aksoy, 2003; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chadee & Mattsson, 1996; Frochot, 2004; Hudson, Hudson, & Miller, 2004; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1995; Weirmair & Fuchs, 1999), travel agency quality (Ryan
& Cliff, 1997), hotel quality (Suh, Lee, Park, & Shin, 1997) and so forth. However, as Frochot (2004) points out, “the nature of tourism services, based as much on the sale of utilitarian services as on the provision of service through which consumers can achieve deep-rooted needs, renders its evaluation reasonably complex” (p. 224).

The complexity is even more pronounced in the combination of sport and tourism. Thwaites (1999) highlighted the multi-dimensional nature of service quality in sport tourism (pp. 500-516). While this statement is most relevant to sport tourism in general, it does not address the variety of sport tourism. Such variety is labeled variously as active sport tourism (Gibson, 1998a), adventure sport tourism (Hudson, 2003), event sport tourism (Gibson, 1998b), small-scale event sport tourism (Gibson et al., 2003), nostalgia sport tourism (Gibson, 1998b), and so on. The variety of sport tourism can be classified into one of four types based on the purposes or motives of the tourist.

1. **Participation in an organized sport event.** Many sport tourists travel to other places to participate in an organized sport or physical activity event (Bernthal & Sawyer, 2004). For example, a total of 20,405 runners participated in the Boston marathon in 2005 (Boston Athletic Association, 2005). While some of them would have engaged in the event with a view to win prizes offered by the organizers, the vast majority of the runners would have been motivated by prestige and status associated with the event. While events like the Boston Marathon are in the limelight, there are several other organized events that escape the radar of the media such as youth and adult sports competitions.
Examples of these types of events include junior volleyball or adult flag football tournaments.

2. **Participation at a specific location.** Many participants in a given sport or physical activity travel to specific destinations renowned for the facility in a given sport or physical activity. For instance, skiers from around the world travel to Aspen or to resorts in Austria and Switzerland to ski down the slopes renowned for their beauty and challenge. Similarly, golfers travel the globe to find the most aesthetically pleasing and challenging courses.

3. **Spectating at an organized event.** The most often recognized and studied type of sport tourism is when sport fans travel to specific destinations to attend a featured event such as the U.S. Open and Wimbledon Tennis championships, Super Bowl, World Cup Soccer, the Olympics, and so on. Gibson (1998b) refers to this type of tourism as event sport tourism (p 12C).

4. **Nostalgia sport tourism.** Finally, there is nostalgia sport tourism (Gibson, 1998b) where people travel to specific places to see the stadia or facilities of historic fame such as Yankee Stadium in New York or Fenway Park in Boston. This type of tourism would also include visits to the halls of fame or to places such as the Louisville Slugger Museum or the Kentucky Derby Museum in Louisville.

The present study is concerned with sport tourism focused on spectating at an organized sport event. While service quality in spectator sport has received considerable
attention in the literature, the concept of studying the construct in relation to a traveling spectator has been untapped. This type of research is needed in order to gain a better understanding of the sport tourist. Specifically, a model germane to service quality in sport tourism needs to be developed. The development of a sport tourism service quality model would help fill the relevant gaps in the literature and advance the study of sport tourism forward. Furthermore, the research along these lines on sport tourism would yield insights on enhancing the delivery of high quality services in this domain.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purposes of the current study are to: (a) propose a comprehensive set of dimensions of quality in sport tourism services; and (b) propose and test a model where perceived quality in selected dimensions is said to lead to client satisfaction with the experience which, in turn, is said to influence the intention to return to attend the event in the future. A secondary purpose is to develop a scale to measure service quality in selected dimensions, client satisfaction, and intention to return.
Figure 1.1: Quality Dimensions in Sport Tourism
Proposed Model

Based on other models found in the service quality literature (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Carmen, 1990a; Chelladurai, et al., 1987; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Ko & Pastore, 2004), the author proposes a multi-dimensional model of service quality applicable to traveling sport spectators (See Figure 1: Quality Dimensions in Sport Tourism). The multi-dimensional nature of sport tourism has already been advanced in the extant literature (Thwaites, 1999). The sport tourist encounters multiple targets and standards (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000) of evaluation in the process of the visit. For example, consider the following scenario:

A tourist arrives at the airport, buys a newspaper, waits at the gate, gets on the plane and eventually arrives at his or her destination. Upon arrival, the tourist gets off the plane, retrieves baggage, calls for a taxi-cab, waits for the cab, gets into the cab and eventually arrives at the hotel. Upon arrival to the hotel, the tourist is unable to check-in because the room is not ready. So the tourist checks his or her luggage with the bell captain and goes to the restaurant for lunch, but has to wait in line for 45 minutes before receiving a half-cooked hamburger. After lunch, the tourist returns to the front desk for check-in, goes to the room and calls for the luggage. After unpacking and taking a nap, the tourist turns on the television only to find out that unusually heavy traffic may cause a 2-hour delay for persons hoping to attend the baseball game that evening.

Here, the tourist forms an impression of the experience before even arriving at the sport venue. The point being made in the preceding scenario is that a sport tourist is engaged in a wide variety of complex service encounters that contribute to the overall sport tourism experience. These service encounters or moments of truth (Grönroos, 1990) are both related and un-related to the sporting event itself, are evaluated at several levels of
abstraction, and help to form an aggregate evaluation of the consumer’s overall sport tourism experience.

The proposed model is comprised of four primary dimensions or targets of evaluation: a) access quality; b) accommodation quality; c) venue quality; and d) contest quality. The model suggests that a visitor attending a sporting event is best satisfied when he or she perceives high quality service within the context of: a) access to the destination where the event occurs; b) the accommodation during the stay; c) the venue of the sport event; and d) the sport contest. These four dimensions are said to account for the overall quality of sport tourism which leads to satisfaction with the visit to the event. Satisfaction with the event would, in turn, influence the tourists’ intention to return to the event (and thus to the city or town of the event). The variables included in the model are explicated below.

**Quality Dimensions of Sport Tourism**

**D1. Access Quality**

The first primary dimension of the proposed model is access quality. Accessibility has been described as an important element within the context of sport tourism (Weed & Bull, 2004). Accessibility may entail services related to how customers reach the event such as parking and easy connections to airports, freeways and public transport terminals (Getz, 1997). Turco, Riley and Swart (2002) describe quality evaluations concerning approachability and ease of contact as important elements to marketing a sport event (p. 87). Sport tourists are more likely to perceive a higher quality experience when they can
easily access the various places and things they want to see and do. Tourists will seek access to three primary areas, which include: a) the destination; b) the sport venue; and c) the accommodation.

**D1.1. Destination.** The geographical location where the event takes place should be highly accessible. Some destinations are more accessible than others because a wide variety of airlines provide transportation services into the regional area (Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond, & McMahon-Beattie, 2004). It should be easy for the visitor to reach the destination, whether traveling by plane, train, bus or automobile and appropriate signage should be displayed at various transportation nodes to provide direction to points of interest. Getz (1997) points out that organizers of an event often select a site with a central location relative to the market targeted to attend the particular event (p. 83). Because of these factors, many of the largest sporting events are held in larger urban areas where the infrastructure exists to service the influx of tourists.

**D1.2. Sport Venue.** Accessibility of the venue where the event is staged is an important factor. Accessibility pertains to access to highways, public transportation, and parking facilities. The proximity to modes of transportation may reduce time, cost and distance constraints that result in altered spatial travel patterns and desired visitor experiences (Hinch & Higham, 2004). Wakefield et al. (1996) suggest that customers may not enter the sporting venue in cases where they have trouble finding a parking space or anticipate problems with exiting the parking lot (p. 18). For many years, cars were parked bumper-to-bumper at Baltimore’s Memorial Stadium making it impossible
for a spectator to leave the parking lot until all surrounding cars had exited. Today, many facilities are designed so as to allow for quick entry and exit of fans with automobile (Crompton, 2004).

**D1.3. Hotel.** The location of the hotel can be a tremendous source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for the sport tourist. Proximity from the hotel to the sporting venue is an important factor for many travelers (Bernthal & Sawyer, 2004). Hotels that are not within walking distance of the sporting venue often provide public transportation shuttles. When the hotel provides shuttle services it is important to have a sufficient amount of signage directing customers to the bus pick-up and drop-off locations. The guest may also evaluate the ease of access to their room, restaurants, parking, taxi-cabs and transportation stations such as bus stops, airports, train stations and so forth. Transportation should be readily available from the hotel to move spectators to the sport venue and various other attractions around the city.

**D2. Accommodation Quality**

Within urban areas, accommodation usually refers to hotels, although it can refer to a wide variety of other accommodations such as motels, cabins, lodges, resorts and so forth (Murphy, 1997). Sport tourists may judge accommodation based upon several considerations, including the evaluation of interactions, hotel environment and the value associated with staying at the place of accommodation.

**D2.1. Interactions.** One way to evaluate customer satisfaction concerning the accommodation is on the basis of interactions that take place during the stay. This
concept is similar to Grönroos’ (1984) reference to functional quality and Brady and Cronin’s (2001) interaction quality. Interactions can take place in relation to the accommodation provider’s personnel and/or other guests staying at the place of accommodation. Service personnel may include employees at the front desk, housekeeping, bell services, concierge services and restaurant employees. Hotel personnel can directly influence the quality of the visitor’s experience. For example, a hotel bell captain may misplace a team’s sporting equipment vital to the contest or the reservation department may overbook the hotel and leave a visitor with nowhere to stay. In the same way, other guests can be a source of dissatisfaction when a crying baby or a loud television from a neighboring room prevents a guest from sleeping.

**D2.2. Environment.** Environment of the hotel pertains to the servicescape (Bitner, 1992) of the facility. The service quality literature suggests that physical evidence such as noise level, odors, temperature, colors, textures and comfort of furnishings may influence perceived performance in the service encounter. Such variations in physical environment can affect perceptions of an experience independently of the actual outcome (Bitner, 1990). Brady and Cronin (2001) suggest that ambient conditions, facility design and social conditions directly influence the physical environment (pp. 39-40). Cooper, Fletcher, Gilber and Wanhill (1993) claim that the accommodation market competes for customers based on physical facilities (p. 172). Facilities may include such items as the room, lobby, hotel restaurant, pool, and fitness center.
D2.3. Value. Delivering high quality service within the hospitality industry positively influences a customer’s perception of value. The process of the purchase judgment originates from the trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (Al-Sabbahy, Ekinci, & Riley, 2004). Guests judging the value of the accommodation to be worth the cost paid are more likely to stay past the end of the sporting event and will tend to be more satisfied with the event itself. In the case of many events, Silvers (2004) claims that specific hotels may be identified, rooms are blocked or reserved, and housing is assigned without much input from the attendees (p. 123). This occurrence may be especially true for sporting events such as tournaments whereby either the governing body of the sporting event, the Convention and Visitors Bureau or the Sports Commission reserves the rooms. Therefore, event attendees have little input into where they stay. Customers may evaluate the perceived value of their stay in terms of the cost they paid for the room, food and amenities. Amenities refer to services such as phone, premium cable channels, spas, etc.

D3. Venue Quality

Venue quality focuses on quality evaluations that take place in the sporting facility. According to Greenwell et al. (2002a), facility factors and personnel factors have been shown in more than one study to be significantly related to customer behavior. Three sub-dimensions of venue quality are proposed in the current study: a) interactions; b) environment; and c) value.
D3.1. Interactions. Client-employee interactions underscore the significance of the interface between the service provider and the client. Quality in such instances may include the helping orientation and behavior of the employee, courtesy and care toward clients and prompt delivery of individualized attention (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). Brady and Cronin (2001) referred to client-employee interactions as “interaction quality” and Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) labeled this dimension as “interactive quality.” Interactions are intangible service encounters with stadium employees or even other spectators. Targets of evaluation in relation to sport may be related to employees attending the concession stands, souvenir merchandise, ticket personnel, ushers and vendors.

D3.2. Environment. Wakefield et al. (1996) suggest that the stadium environment may have a significant effect on the extent to which a spectator desires to stay and return to the venue (pp. 15-31). Environment quality is similar to Chelladurai and Chang’s (2000) dimension “context”, Parasuraman et al. (1988) “tangibles” dimension, Bitner’s (1992) “servicescape”, Lehtinen and Lehtinen’s (1991) “physical quality” and Brady and Cronin’s (2001) physical environment quality. According to Greenwell et al. (2002a), consumer perceptions of the physical environment at a sporting event contribute to approach and avoidance behaviors leading to attendance at a sporting event, influence motivation to attend an event and an increased willingness to attend an athletic event (p. 131). Salient factors of the physical environment may include cleanliness of the restroom, seating, sound system, parking, stadium signage, facility
layout, facility design and a wide variety of other factors germane to the tangible aspect of the service provision.

**D3.3. Value.** An extensive body of research suggests that consumers’ satisfaction with a service is influenced in part by price. Price-related factors such as perceived value or money well spent may not be able to be evaluated until such time that the service has been performed (Kennett, Sneath, & Henson, 2001). Perceptions of value are dependent upon the spectators and the type of sporting contest. For example, Bernthal and Graham (2003) found that spectators attending a minor league baseball game are likely to consider ticket cost and overall cost to attend a game as important motivators of attendance. Whereas, collegiate baseball fans did not consider value as a significant motivator of attendance despite being admitted to many games for free (p. 234). Value may be evaluated based on factors such as cost of tickets, concessions and merchandise.

**D4. Contest Quality**

The actual sporting event is the core service in event sport tourism while the foregoing three dimensions may be considered the facilitating services. Contest quality comprises both the process of the contest and the products (or outcomes) of the contest.

**D4.1. Process Quality.** Process quality refers to the way the contest is organized, monitored, and controlled. More specifically, it would refer to the start of the contest at the appointed time, the quality of officiating, the quality of public announcements, the display of correct scores, the replay of plays, crowd behavior and control, and such other factors associated with the conduct of the competition. In their study of a United States
Tennis Association match, Bernthal and Sawyer (2004) referred to these types of items as play factors. Included among the items was quality of officiating, court condition, courts conducive to spectating, all matches played on same surface type and others (Results).

**D4.2. Product Quality.** The product quality refers to the quality of the contest itself. A spectator (i.e., the sport tourist in our context) may perceive quality of the contest on the basis of the final score (i.e., win or loss) or on the basis of the performance of the favorite team, the opponent or both (Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003). While fans generally would like to see their favorite team outperform the opponents, they are also to a large extent fans of the sport. Hence, they are likely to evaluate the event from the perspective of the performance of either or both of the teams. That is, even though the favorite team might loose, the spectator is likely to be satisfied because the favorite team played to its full potential. By the same token, the spectators may also be enthralled by the outstanding performance of the opponents. It then follows that the spectator may be highly satisfied if both opponents performed at their respective best and provided high quality entertainment characterized by demonstrating excellent athletic ability, suspense, and drama.
Research Model

The model for the proposed research (Figure 2: Research Model) has four primary dimensions of service quality for sport tourism comprised of access, accommodation, venue and contest quality. As explained earlier, each of the four primary dimensions of ST quality has two to three sub-dimensions each. Visitors will evaluate overall ST Quality based on their perceptions of the four primary dimensions which, in turn, would influence the overall perceived sport tourism quality (ST Quality). ST quality directly contributes to visitor satisfaction, which enhances the guest’s intention to return to the destination and the event at a future date. The causal relationships will be explained below, including the primary dimensions, sub-dimensions and outcomes.

Primary and Sub-dimensions

The first primary dimension of the model is access quality. Sport tourists are more likely to perceive a higher quality experience when they can easily access the various places and things they want to see and do. The sub-dimensions of access quality include the: a) destination; b) sport venue; and c) hotel. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceptions of the quality of accessibility to the places and things one wants to see and do directly contributes to the perceptions of sport tourism quality.

H1A: Perceptions of the visitor’s access to the destination directly influences the perceptions of the quality of access.

H1B: Perceptions of the visitor’s access to the sport venue directly influences the perceptions of the quality of access.

H1C: Perceptions of the visitor’s access to the hotel directly influences perceptions of the quality of access.
The second primary dimension of the model is accommodation quality. In the present context, accommodation refers to Hotels or Motels. Sport tourists may judge accommodation based upon several considerations, including the evaluation of interactions, hotel environment and the value of staying at the hotel perceived by the visitor. Therefore, the following hypotheses are being proposed:

H$_2$: Perceptions of the quality of the visitor’s accommodation during the stay directly contribute to the perceptions of sport tourism quality.

H$_{2A}$: Perceptions of the accommodation provider’s environment directly influences the perceptions of the quality of accommodation.

H$_{2B}$: Perceptions of the interactions that occur at the place of accommodation directly influence the perceptions of the quality of accommodation.

H$_{2C}$: Perceptions of the value of products and services delivered by the accommodation provider directly influences perceptions of the quality of accommodation.

The third primary dimension of the model is venue quality in reference to the sporting facility where the actual contest takes place. The three sub-dimensions of venue quality include interactions, environment and value.

H$_3$: Perceptions of the sporting venue directly contribute to the perceptions of sport tourism quality.

H$_{3A}$: Perceptions of the environment at the sport venue directly influences the perceptions of the quality of the sporting event.

H$_{3B}$: Perceptions of the interactions that occur at the sporting venue directly influence the perceptions of the quality of the sporting event.

H$_{3C}$: Perceptions of the value of products and services delivered by the sporting venue directly influences the perceptions of the quality of the sporting event.
The fourth primary dimension of the model is contest quality. Contest quality encompasses the core service which is the game itself. Sub-dimensions for contest quality include the process and the product.

H₄: Perceptions of the sporting contest directly contribute to sport tourism quality perceptions.

H₄A: Perceptions of the process for organizing the sporting contest directly influences the perceptions of the quality of the sporting event.

H₄B: Perceptions of the sporting product in the contest directly influences the perceptions of the quality of the sporting event.

**Outcomes: Satisfaction and Intent to Return**

An important outcome for a sport tourism provider is a satisfied customer who intends to return to the destination. Tourist satisfaction is the result of the interaction between a tourist’s experience in the destination area and his or her previous expectations about the destination. Satisfying the tourist is critical because it has an effect on the expectations and intentions for the customer’s next destination purchasing decision (Fuchs & Weiermair, 2004).

Similar to service quality, no clear definition of satisfaction currently exists, although most definitions would involve an evaluative, affective or emotional response to a consumptive experience (Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Service quality has been widely defined as the gap between the customer’s expectations of a service and the customer’s perceptions of the service received (Grönroos, 1984, 2001; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). The consumer satisfaction literature views these expectations as predictions about what is likely to
happen during an impending transaction, whereas the service quality literature views them as desires or wants expressed by the consumer (Kandampully, 2002; Millán & Esteban, 2004; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996).

Satisfaction is most commonly described in terms of the disconfirmation approach, viewed as the variation between a customer’s pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase perceptions of the actual service performed (Oliver, 1980; O’Neill, 2001). Depending upon the complexity of the service, Oliver (1993) claims that a customer can experience both negative and positive affective reactions (p. 420). Satisfaction is dependent upon the customer’s subjective perception and evaluation of service performance rather than the organization’s objective standards of quality (Greenwell et al., 2002a). Service providers who meet or exceed expectations are more likely to have satisfied customers (Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham, 1995).

The general thought is that satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and firm performance (Babikas, Bienstock, & Van Scotter, 2004; Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Fornell, 1992; Gotlieb et al., 1994). In the case of sport tourism, financial performance is an attribute of satisfied customers who intend to return to both the sporting event and the destination. Cronin and Taylor (1992) highlight the link between service quality and satisfaction and between satisfaction and purchase intention (pp. 55-68). Sport tourism providers must consistently strive to enhance the quality of their services to satisfy customers and keep them coming back to the destination. According to Fuchs and Weiermair (2004), many tourism destinations
consider customer satisfaction as one of the most important sources of their competitive advantage (p. 213).

Greenwell et al. (2002a) suggest the literature supports the notion that satisfaction is a primary indicator of profitability (p. 132). Sport tourism providers benefit from increased ticket sales for the event. Many other organizations also benefit financially from a high quality sporting event. For example, a high quality event with satisfied customers attracts more visitors to the destination. More visitors spend more money in local businesses, the regional economy is enhanced and so forth.

Customer satisfaction is an important outcome for sport tourism providers. Because of the existing literature regarding satisfaction that leads to repurchase intentions, the author proposes the following hypotheses:

H5: Perceptions of sport tourism quality directly contribute to visitor satisfaction.

H6: Satisfaction directly contributes to the intent of the visitor to return to the destination for another sporting event.

**Significance of the Study**

This study represents one of the first attempts to integrate the sport and tourism literature in an effort to empirically assess the service quality construct. It serves to advance the sport management literature in several ways. First, it provides further testing into the multi-dimensional nature of service quality in sport and tourism. Second, it provides additional evidence as to the relationship between sport tourism quality and satisfaction thereof. Overall, it extends the sport management literature.
The theoretical and conceptual basis for understanding the nature of the sport tourist is still relatively immature. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a first step in discovering the perceptions of this unique type of consumer. The findings that result from this study would be germane to a wide variety of disciplines. Scholars studying topics such as consumer behavior, event management, sport management, tourism and services marketing are just a few who seek to gain from the findings of this study. The study has wide application for practitioners as they constantly strive to provide the very best experience for sporting guests visiting their destination. Finally, this study presents a starting point for developing a framework for identifying points of failure in the delivery of sport tourism services.

**Limitations of the Study**

As can be said for all research, this study does not proceed without limitations. The most obvious limitation is the type of research being conducted. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002) suggest that survey research, as employed in the present study, may be problematic in the sense that: a) respondents may misinterpret various items on the questionnaire; b) some subjects in the study may simply forget to complete and return the questionnaire; and c) it is possible that segments of the population may not be able to read and respond to the questionnaire (p. 384). In addition, the researcher must be concerned that respondents not provide socially acceptable answers (Miller, 2004).

A variety of factors germane to sport tourism also limit the study. First, the study is limited in scope in regard to the types of sport tourists being asked to respond to the questionnaire. For example, because spectators are the primary respondents, the study
provides no insight into the perceptions of active sport participants, nostalgia sport tourists and so forth. Furthermore, the study is limited in scope as to the number of quality targets of evaluation. For example, the four primary dimensions outlined in the research model does not take into account a tourist's perceptions while visiting a local grocery store, amusement park or a variety of other places that a tourist may visit while visiting the destination.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today, there is an ever increasing need for enhancing the quality of services for sport-related travelers. The tremendous growth in sport-related travel calls attention to the emergence of a specialized field of study labeled sport tourism (Chelladurai, 2001). Sport is now regarded by many to be the world’s biggest social phenomenon (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003) and tourism its largest economic sector (McCannell, 2002). McGehee, Yoon and Cardenas (2003) report that sport tourism is a $27 billion per year industry in the United States (p. 305). Hudson (2003) claims that 38 percent or 75.3 million adults in the United States travel to attend sporting events (p. 13). This section will outline the literature germane to sport tourism and service quality.

Sport Tourism

The term “sport tourism” first appeared in France and Europe in the middle of the 1970’s (Pigeassou, Bui-Xuan, & Gleyse, 2003). However, Weed and Bull (2004) cite the pan-Hellenic games at Olympic in 776 B.C. as the earliest documented example of sport tourism. Touring was an important aspect of sport during this time as athletes received awards for participating. The Pan-Hellenic Olympic Games attracted more than 40,000 spectators who traveled from all parts of Greece. During this time, most cities in Greece had their own stadium. However, each city did not have modern day accommodations, so
tourists were found sleeping in tents or in the open air (p. 3). “Sport derives its root meaning from ‘disport’ meaning to divert oneself. It carried the original implications of people diverting their attention from the rigours and pressure of everyday life” (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003, p. 35).

**Defining Sport Tourism**

Standeven and DeKnop (1999) define sport tourism as “all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitates travel away from the home and work locality” (p. 12). Gibson (2003) defines sport tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (p. 207). Turco et al. (2002) describe sport tourism as “travel to and participation in or attendance at a predetermined sport activity” (p3).

Standeven and DeKnop (1999) define sport as “the whole range of competitive and noncompetitive active pursuits that involve skill, strategy, and/or chance in which human beings engage, at their own level, simply for enjoyment and training or to raise their performance to levels of publicly acclaimed excellence” (p. 12). Kurtzman and Zauhar (2003) suggest that sport builds character, teaches values, encourages healthy competition, provides an outlet for aggression, and promotes international friendship and understanding (p. 37). Higham and Hinch (2003) highlight three characteristics unique to sport: a) each sport has its own set of rules; b) sport encompasses a continuum from elite
competition to recreational sport or “sport for all”; and c) sport is characterized by its playful nature (p. 238).

Sport varies across cultures and has acquired different meanings at various times within its historical development. For example, cultural definitions of sport in North America are very narrow and focused upon competitive activity in an organized manner. Whereas, in Europe, sport is defined in a much broader context such that it encompasses all forms of physical activity either through casual or organized participation. Over the years, societal shifts have changed the importance placed on certain types of sport. For example, rarely emphasized sports like hunting and shooting were an important part of American culture in the eighteenth century (Weed & Bull, 2004).

Kurtzman and Zauhar (2003) claim that the word ‘tour’ derives from the Latin ‘tonare’ and Greek ‘tornos’ meaning the movement around a central point (p. 38). “Tourism usually denotes form of activity that takes place beyond a specific distance from the home or in a geographic administrative jurisdiction different from one’s place of permanent residence” (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003, p. 38). However, as Reisinger (2001) points out, it is difficult to provide a definition that would give a meaningful and adequate explanation of tourism because the concept is fragmented, wide-ranging and multidimensional (p. 1).

**Conceptualizing Sport Tourism**

Weed and Bull (2004) suggest that sport tourism may involve multi-sport or single sport participation. An example of a multi-sport event is the Olympics. In contrast, a skier, golfer, marathon runner, rock climber, windsurfer or tennis player is
representative of individual sport tourists. Sport tourism may also be classified as either active or passive. For example, a golfer traveling overnight to participate in a golf match is an active participant. However, a sport tourist may also be someone who travels overnight to watch a golf match as a spectator (pp. 134-136).

Moutinho (2001) claims that the travel decisions made by tourists are influenced by social influences such as family, reference groups, social classes, culture and subculture (p. 5). Reisinger (2001) cites several characteristics of tourism. First, tourism entails traveling to and from a destination along with an overnight stay outside of one's permanent residence. Second, tourist movement to and from a destination is temporary, short-term and includes an intention to return to a permanent place of residence. Third, the destination is visited for purposes other than taking up permanent residence or employment. Finally, the activities in which the tourist engages in are distinct from those of the local residents and working populations of the place visited (p. 2).

Weed and Bull (2004) discuss five types of sport tourism: a) sports training; b) tourism with sports content; c) luxury sports tourism; d) sports participation tourism; and e) sports events (p. 136). Gibson’s (2003) definition recognizes three categories of sport tourism: a) event sport tourism (travel to watch a sporting event); b) nostalgia sport tourism (visiting sport related attractions); and c) active sport tourism (travel to take part in a sport event) (p. 207). Chalip (2001) contends that the categories can be integrated because each one helps to foster or facilitate the other (pp. 77-89). Active sport tourism and event sport tourism “may engender memories that motivate subsequent sport tourism,
and that those memories become meaningful and motivating because of the social experiences through which they are engendered” (Fairley, 2003, p. 285).

According to Gibson (1998b), Event Sport Tourism refers to tourists who travel to watch sporting events (p. 109). Examples of Event Sport Tourism may include events such as the Olympic Games, World Cup, Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournaments and events related to professional sport teams or top U.S. college basketball and football teams (Gibson, 1998a). Hudson (2003) cites economic and community benefits as salient to event sport tourism from the perspective of a destination. Forces and trends shaping event sport tourism include the media, sponsorship, urban renewal and economic development, strategic event and facility development along with the popularity and increasing diversity of sport (pp. 50-64).

Nostalgia Sport Tourism includes sport related attractions such as a hall of fame, sport museum or a stadium (Gibson, 1998a). According to Fairley (2003), nostalgia and memory are inextricably linked because you cannot have feelings of nostalgia without the memory or perceptions of how things used to be. Nostalgia helps to explain an individual’s sense of identity and self concept (pp. 284-304).

Active sport tourism refers to resorts and other segments of the hospitality industry such as golf courses, ski resorts, country clubs and so forth (Gibson, 1998b). The highest rates of participation for these activities stemmed from individuals between 25 and 34 years of ages with household incomes of between $50K and $75K U.S. dollars (pp. 155-170). Shamir and Ruskin (1984) found that socialization into participation in
physical activity is not related to the level of spectatorship and interest in sport in adulthood (p. 18).

There has been a growing demand for active vacations since the 1980’s (Priestley, 1995). Green and Chalip (1998) suggest that the distinction between attendance at sport events and active participation is as simple as that between watching and doing (p. 276). According to Gibson (1998a), the active sport tourist is likely to be male, affluent, college educated, willing to travel long distances to participate, likely to engage in active sport tourism well into retirement and tends to participate in active sport tourism repeatedly (pp. 155-170).

Some active sport tourists can also be classified as adventure travelers. Sung, Morrison and O’Leary (1997) define adventure travel as “a trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participation to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting” (p. 66). Adventure travelers may participate in activities such as mountain climbing, hiking, backpacking, repelling and snowboarding. Pizam, et al. (2004) analyzed the risk-taking and sensation-seeking (RSS) of the travel behavior and preferred tourist activities of young adults on leisure trips. Respondents scoring high on the scale were found to prefer mostly high-energy, outdoor activities. Higher RSS scores were noted among males than females and the study confirmed previous findings showing a strong relationship between adventurous recreational activities and the personality predisposition of risk-taking (pp. 251-260).
Sports Commissions

Gratton, et al. (2000) claim that cities hosting major sports events in the United Kingdom have the unique opportunity to market themselves to the world (p. 19). Weed and Bull (2004) report the economic impact of sport tourism in the U.K. as totaling £2.5 billion annually. To maximize the benefits of hosting the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, responsibility for sport and tourism in Australia was allocated to a single Federal Government Minister (Lago, 2003).

In the United States, a considerable amount of attention has been focused at the local level where “sports commissions” have been established, often under the umbrella of a city’s Convention and Visitors Bureau (Weed, 2003). Gibson (2003) cites the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) as an important element in the growth of sport tourism at the community level (p. 206). The NASC was created in 1992 with the purpose of fostering communication among America’s public and private sector sports commissions and to formulate policy on major issues (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999). According to the NASC Website, more than 270 cities across the country currently have a sports commission or a similar type of entity focused on attracting sporting events (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2005).

An examination of the membership roster listed on the NASC Website (www.sportcommissions.org) reveals over 200 cities or metropolitan areas that are bidding on sporting events (Organization Roster). The majority of those organizations actively engaged as members are listed as convention and visitors bureaus. The Website suggests that only 91 of the 243 active members are listed as a sports commission,
foundation, council or authority. This confirms Pennell’s (1990) report that most sports commissions typically exist as private independent corporations, as parts of chambers of commerce, or as part of convention and visitors bureaus. Most are classified as nonprofit organizations and have ties to some other city organization, sports facility, or local government (p.2). For example, the Washington, D.C. sports commission is a quasi-independent arm of the D.C. city government ("Audit says D.C. sports panel may need to downsize," 2003, p. C07).

Indianapolis is credited with being the first U.S. city to establish a sports commission in the late 1970’s (Caywood, 1997; Kelly, 2000). Pennell (1990) notes that the Indianapolis commission was formed shortly before hosting the U.S. Olympic Festival in 1982 (p. 8). Today, with more than 200 sport commissions, cities across the country are lining up to bid for all types of sports events and the competition continues to increase. But as Pennel (1990) points out, the rise in the number of sports commissions makes survival even more stringent because of the limited number of sporting events (p. 16). Furthermore, within this competitive marketplace, not all cities are prepared to handle major sporting events primarily due to a lack of physical or human resources necessary to carry out an event. Copeland (2002) claims that sports generated more than $4.5 billion for Atlanta’s local economy from 1999 to 2003, attracting events such as the Super Bowl, baseball All-Star game and the PGA golf championship (p.1b). Cities with fewer resources, like Norfolk, Virginia, are focused on attracting amateur sporting events such as the National Junior Olympics (Cohn, 1999).
In order to attract sporting events, it is important that cities have resources in place. “Other things being equal, customers will choose service providers whom they view as having resources appropriate to perform the job” (Brown & Bond III, 1995, p. 31). For example, sports commissions seeking to lure a large sporting event like the Olympics must have physical facilities in place such as large stadium venues, parking spaces, a sufficient number of hotel rooms, airport accommodations and so forth. Few cities are equipped to bid on an event like the Olympics without building this infrastructure. Only a handful of cities can offer similar physical resources.

**Sport and Tourism Motivation**

Within the extant literature in consumer behavior of sport, a considerable amount of work has been done investigating spectator motives for attending a sporting event. Fans and spectators are motivated to attend a sporting event based on a variety of reasons. Some of the most common motivational factors found in the literature include entertainment, eustress, group affiliation, escape, drama, aesthetics, vicarious achievement, knowledge, family and social interaction. In addition, motivational factors related to sport spectator consumption has also been explored based on racial differences (Armstrong, 2002; Bilyeau & Wann, 2002; Wann, Bilyeau, Brennan, Osborn, & Gambouras, 1999), gender differences (Armstrong, 1999; Funk, Mahoney, & Ridinger, 2002; Weiler & Higgs, 1997), value differences (Kahle, Duncan, Dalakas, & Aiken, 2001), nationality differences (Kwon & Trail, 2001), differences between sports (McDonald, 2002) and social psychological motives related to fan identification (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001).
The rise in popularity of spectator sport points to its increasing value as a form of entertainment. James and Ross (2004) found that many people attend sporting events just for the entertainment value (pp. 17-25). Funk et al. (2002) examined spectator motives for attending a women’s professional soccer event. They found that most spectators attended the event because: a) they were soccer fans; b) they were fans of the team; c) they found the event to be entertaining; d) they perceived the players as role models; and e) they experienced vicarious achievement (pp. 33-43). Sport marketers recognize that many spectators attend events for reasons beyond just watching players on the field. Today, major sporting events include fancy half-time shows, dancing players, on-field and on-line contests, corporate promotional giveaways, national television audiences and considerable pre-game hype by the national media. Thus, spectators attending any sporting event may be considered event sport tourists. For example, a business traveler with discretionary time and income may spend an evening of entertainment watching a National Basketball Association (NBA) game during a two-night stay in Cleveland.

Relaxation and pleasure are common motivational factors for many tourists (Moutinho, 2001). A restful vacation has been found to buffer certain aspects of post-vacation work-related stress (Strauss-Blasche, Ekmekcioglu, & Marktl, 2002). Many sport spectators are in attendance to escape into a world of fantasy. “Some fans use sport to escape from under-stimulation and boredom while others use it to escape from over-stimulation and stress” (Wann, Allen, & Rochelle, 2004, p. 110). Bernthal and Graham (2003) found that collegiate football fans were motivated to achieve some degree of freedom from the stress and anxieties of daily life (p. 225). James and Ridinger (2002)
studied the motivation differences between female and male spectators at a college basketball game. The motives rated the highest by females were related to the action in the game of basketball, the opportunity to escape from one’s daily routine and the drama of the game. In contrast, males attended the game because they appreciated the natural beauty of basketball, they desired to be associated with a successful team and they enjoyed the game because of their knowledge of basketball (pp. 260-278).

Another significant contribution to the sport spectator consumption literature is related to the sense of identity one forms as a sport fan. In the same way, sport tourism allows an individual to celebrate shared identities or cultures with others interested in a particular sport or event (Green, 2001; Green & Chalip, 1998). Furthermore, sport tourism contributes to Melnick’s (1993) conception of the “third place” and Hom Cary’s (2004) description of the “tourist moment.” Melnick (1993) describes sport events as “third places” because they not only bring people together for the purpose of entertainment, but also serve as a place to enrich one’s social life (pp. 45-49). In a similar manner, Hom Cary (2004) describes the tourist as one who experiences a spontaneous moment where he or she goes beyond “being a tourist” and may experience communal belonging (pp. 61-77).

For the highly identified sport fan, the team becomes so salient that the individual defines his or her identity in relation to the team (Dalakas, Madrigal, & Anderson, 2004). Individuals who are emotionally involved with a sport team experience high team identification. Kwon and Trail (2001) describe three levels of fan identification. Level 1 individuals (social fans) have low levels of identification with a specific team or player
and do not care about the outcome of the game. Instead, they care about social interactions they may experience. Level 2 fans have moderate levels of identification, but may change their attachment to their team if the team begins to lose. Level 3 individuals (vested fans) have high emotional attachment to a team and are usually not affected by the game outcome in terms of their identification level (pp. 148-149). Likewise, Mahoney, Madrigal and Howard (2000) differentiate between higher and lower level identified fans by referring to them as fans or spectators, respectively (p. 15).

According to Dietz-Uhler and Murrell (1999), highly identified fans are more likely to experience team defeat as though it were a personal defeat (p.16). Wann and Branscombe (1990) suggest that those who are highly identified with a team may be less likely to distance themselves from a team following defeats. This concept is commonly referred to as cutting-off-reflected failure (CORF) (p.106). Hirt, Zillman, Erickson and Kennedy (1992) found that fans felt worse about themselves, their abilities and their team following a team loss (pp. 724-738). Cialdini et al. (1976) found that college students were more likely to wear team-identifying clothing after a team victory than after a loss. They referred to this phenomenon as basking-in-reflected glory (BIRG) (pp. 406-415).

Fink, et al. (2002) investigated the following motives in regard to team identification: a) vicarious achievement; b) acquisition of knowledge; c) aesthetics; d) social interaction; e) drama/excitement; f) escape; g) family; and h) quality of the physical skill of the participants. Understanding motives linked to team identification is important because highly identified fans are more likely to attend games, pay more for
tickets and so forth. Their findings suggest that vicarious achievement explained the
greatest amount of variance (40%) in terms of team identification. The remaining
factors each explained less than 5% of the variance. Spending time with family was
found to have an insignificant relationship with identification (pp. 195-207).

Some research has distinguished between fans and spectators, pointing out that
they are two distinct groups (Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003). Laverie and
Arnett (2000) suggest that highly identified fans are deemed to be a useful segmentation
for sports marketers because they are more likely to attend games regardless of their level
of satisfaction (p. 240). Likewise, Fink, et al. (2002) point to fan identification as a vitally
important measure of a team’s economic success. More importantly, they reported that
highly identified fans have expressed a greater likelihood of attending away games, a
contributing factor to sport tourism (p. 195-207).

**Service Quality**

We live in a society whereby our very functioning depends upon the services of
others. More than two-thirds of the U.S. workforce is presently employed in the service
sector (Orwig et al., 1997). Advances of innovation within the 21st century, such as
sophisticated technology, have only served to increase the importance and need for
services. However, all too often we hear about the negative aspects of services or lack
thereof. As Grönroos (1990) points out, “in everyday discussion the services provided by
insurance companies, repair and maintenance firms, banks, restaurants, plumbers, and
motor vehicle bureau clerks are targets of attack” (p. 10). The financial impact on the
bottom-line of these types of organizations is regularly affected by the quality of services they provide (Wuest, 2001).

The services offered by these types of firms differ from physical goods in the sense that they are intangible, heterogeneous and inseparable at the points of production and consumption (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Llosa, Chandin, & Orsingher, 1998; Parasuraman et al., 1988a). To address these differences, scholars in the early 1980’s began to integrate the quality literature germane to manufacturing and apply it to services. Throughout the years, quality has taken on a variety of definitions and no consensus has been reached as to how to define or evaluate this elusive concept. For example, Reeves and Bednar (1994) report the following definitions of quality found in the literature: a) Quality as Excellence; b) Quality as Value; c) Quality as Conformance to Specifications; d) Quality as Conformance to Requirements; e) Quality as Fitness for Use; f) Quality as Loss Avoidance; and g) Quality as Meeting and/or Exceeding Expectations (p. 419). Quality can also be defined as: a) Delighting the Customer (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Ermer & Kniper, 1998); and b) Satisfying or Meeting Implied Needs (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). The broad nature in which quality is defined suggests that it is evaluated based on the targets or features of a product or service, the standard or criteria applied in the judgment, and the evaluator or arbiter of quality (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000).

The greatest debate within the services literature focuses upon these targets of evaluation, thus seeking to answer the question as to “what” should be evaluated (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991). Two camps of scholars have emerged from
the service quality literature: a) the Nordic perspective; and b) the American perspective (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Kandampully, 2002). The Nordic school is based upon the thinking of Grönroos (1984) who proposed a two-dimensional model of technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality refers to what the consumer receives, whereas functional quality is concerned with how it is received (p. 36-44). The popular American conceptualization of service quality is Parasuraman et al.’s (1985) SERVQUAL model. Although a tangible element similar to Grönroos’ (1984) concept of technical quality exists, the American perspective describes quality in terms of characteristics as to how the service is delivered (Brady & Cronin, 2001). For example, the American perspective describes the service provider as reliable, responsive and empathetic or the service employee as assuring.

A second debate within the literature pertains to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the company and more likely to return (Greenwell et al., 2002a). Understanding satisfaction is important in the sense that dissatisfied customers rarely complain, but rather simply purchase from another service provider (Milbourn, 1998). Satisfaction is most commonly described in terms of the disconfirmation approach, which describes it as the variation between a customer’s pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase perceptions of the actual service performed (O’Neill, 2001) The general thought is that satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and firm performance (Babikas et al., 2004; Fornell, 1992; Gotlieb et al., 1994). However, some research suggests that satisfaction is an antecedent to service quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991).
Thus, no consensus has been formed concerning the relationship between these two constructs.

**Characteristics of Services**

Berry (1980) defines services as acts, deeds, performances or efforts. In turn, goods can be defined as articles, devices, materials, objects, or things (pp. 24-29). When a customer buys a physical good, they acquire a title to the goods and there is a transfer of ownership. In contrast, a service consumer receives only the right to that service and for only a specified amount of time (Kandampully, 2002). Four unique characteristics describe the difference between a service and a product. These four characteristics include: a) intangibility; b) heterogeneity; c) inseparability; and d) perishability.

**Intangibility.** Intangibility is the primary characteristic that differentiates a service from a product (MacKay & Crompton, 1988). Services are deemed intangible in the sense that they cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched (Kandampully, 2002). Lovelock and Gummeson (2004) cite three dimensions of intangibility: a) physical intangibility; b) mental intangibility; and c) generality. Physical intangibility refers to that which is impalpable or cannot be touched. Mental intangibility points to the degree to which a service can be visualized and can provide a clear and concrete image before purchase. Generality encompasses the notions of accessibility versus inaccessibility to the senses, abstractness versus concreteness and generality versus specificity (pp. 24-25).

**Heterogeneity.** The heterogeneous nature of a service suggests that its delivery may vary from one time to the next because people are often involved in supplying it and because each customer is different (Klassen, Russell, & Chrisman, 1998). As Lovelock
and Gummeson (2004) point out, heterogeneity has also been referred to as variability and describes the challenge of establishing standards when behavior and performance vary, not only among service workers, but also when consumers have unique demands and experience services in a unique way (pp. 27-28).

**Inseparability.** Inseparability refers to the notion that a service is both simultaneously produced and consumed at the same time. Kandampully (2002) points out that goods are normally produced first and then consumed. In contrast, a service is typically sold, and then produced and consumed simultaneously (p. 32). The production, distribution, and consumption of a service in a service encounter are simultaneous processes (Svensson, 2003). However, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) suggest that a group of separable services exist that do not involve the customer directly such as transporting freight and laundering clothes (p. 28).

**Perishability.** Services are perishable in the sense that they cannot be saved, stored for reuse at a later date, resold, or returned in the same sense as a product (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). For example, Kandampully (2002) points out the non-recoverable loss sustained by an airline when an aircraft takes off without its seats being filled. As soon as the airplane lands at its destination, the service is complete and there is no opportunity to recover the loss of not selling the empty seats (p. 37).

**Defining Service Quality**

Service quality has been defined as a gap between the customer’s expectations of a service and the customer’s perceptions of the service received (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The consumer satisfaction literature views these expectations as predictions about
what is likely to happen during an impending transaction, whereas the service quality literature views them as desires or wants expressed by the consumer (Kandampully, 2002). To date, “there is no universal, parsimonious, or all-encompassing definition or model of service quality” (Reeves & Bednard, 1994, p. 436). Grönroos (1984) defines service quality as “the outcome of an evaluation process where the consumer compares his expectations with the service he perceived he has received” (p. 37).

Definitions of quality have included: a) satisfying or delighting the customer or exceeding expectations; b) product of service features that satisfy stated or implied needs; c) conformance to clearly specified requirements; and d) fitness for use, whereby the product meets the customers needs and is free of deficiencies (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000)

**Service Quality Dimensions**

The literature reveals that no generic measure of service quality for all industries has emerged (Blose & Tankersley, 2004). Thus, service quality is generally believed to be a multi-level construct with multiple dimensions making up each level. However, scholars have varied as to the number of dimensions included in each model.

The most popular conceptualization of service quality is Parasuraman et al.’s (1985) SERVQUAL model. Originally containing 10 dimensions, Parasuraman et al. (1988) later reduced the SERVQUAL instrument to its present five dimensions (see Table 2 below): a) tangibles; b) reliability; c) responsiveness; d) assurance; and e) empathy (pp. 12-37). However, scholars continue to examine issues related to the validity and reliability of the SERVQUAL instrument (Carmen, 1990b; Nel, Pitt, & Berthon, 2000).
The SERVQUAL instrument consists of two sections: a) a list of 22 statements designed to determine general expectations of customers concerning service; and b) a matching set of 22 statements used to measure a customers’ assessment of a specific firm’s service quality (Orwig et al., 1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: SERVQUAL Dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The SERVQUAL model assumes quality is the result of gaps between a customer’s expectations and their perceptions of service performance. Gap 1 is the difference between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations. Gap 2 is the difference between management perceptions of consumer expectations and service quality specifications. Gap 3 is the difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered. Gap 4 is the difference between service delivery and what is communicated about the service to consumers (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Among scholars, the SERVQUAL model has stirred a considerable amount of debate which has been focused on two issues of concern. First, while many authors have examined service quality and customer satisfaction, no agreement can be reached whether customer satisfaction results from the degree of service quality provided, vice versa, or neither. Second, there is disagreement as to whether service quality should measure the
service a provider should provide or whether the consumer’s “desires” or “ideal standard” should be measured (Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 2003). According to Hernon and Nitecki (2001), SERVQUAL is a standardized instrument that has been used in many settings. Most notably, they point to its uses in the consumer retail environment, banks, accounting firms, hotels, restaurants, real estate, the industrial market, hospitals, travel agencies, higher education and libraries (p. 690).

Grönroos (1984) suggests that perceived service is the result of a consumer’s view of a bundle of service dimensions, some of which are technical in nature and some of which are functional in nature. His model (generally referred to as the Nordic perspective) of service quality conceptualizes service quality as primarily two-dimensional, consisting of technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality answers the question as to what the consumer actually receives. It is the technical result of a service production process and has to do with buyer-seller interactions such as contacts that the consumer has with various resources and activities of the firm. Functional quality answers the question as to how the consumer receives the service. It is more difficult to evaluate Functional quality objectively as compared to technical quality because it is perceived in a very subjective way (pp. 36-44) Technical and Functional Quality are described in Table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical quality</td>
<td>What the consumer actually receives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional quality</td>
<td>How the consumer receives the service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Dimensions of service quality described by Grönroos (1984)
Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) proposed two approaches to the analysis of service quality and its dimensions. The first approach contains three dimensions consisting of physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Physical quality refers to both the quality of materials and facilities and is representative of Grönroos’ (1984) technical and functional quality. Interactive quality pertains to interactions that take place during service delivery between: a) the customer and service personnel; b) the customer and other customers; and c) the customer and equipment (e.g., technology). Corporate quality concerns how customers view the company’s image and is representative of Grönroos’ (1984) dimension of corporate image (pp. 287-303).

Lehtinen and Lehtinen’s (1991) second approach to the analysis of service quality and its dimensions was comprised of two dimensions labeled process quality and output quality. Process quality is the customer’s personal and subjective judgment of his/her participation in the service production process. Output quality is the consumer’s evaluation concerning the result of the service. Output quality is measured by not only the customer, but also by people in the surrounding environment (pp. 287-303).

Dabholkar et al. (1996) suggested that retail customers form evaluations of quality at three different levels: a) a dimension level; b) an overall level; and c) a subdimension level. Five dimensions of retail service quality are proposed: a) physical aspects; b) reliability; c) personal interaction; d) problem solving; and e) policy. Physical aspects refer to the layout of the physical facilities of the retail store. The reliability dimension is similar to the same dimension from SERVQUAL. Personal interactions refer to how the customer is treated by the employee. Problem solving addresses how the retail store
handles returns, exchanges and complaints. The final dimension, policy, captures those aspects of the store’s service quality related to their policies (pp. 3-16).

Brady and Cronin’s (2001) model of service quality had three primary dimensions: a) interaction quality; b) physical environment quality; and c) outcome quality. Each of these three primary dimensions was found to have three sub-dimensions. Interaction quality refers to the perceptions of the customer concerning the interpersonal interactions that take place during service delivery. The sub-dimensions of this dimension suggest that an employee’s attitude, behavior, and expertise help to shape a customer’s perceptions of interaction quality. Physical environment quality focuses on the influence that the surrounding environment or physical facilities have on the perceptions of the customer. Customer perceptions of the facility design, ambient conditions, and social conditions of the physical facility directly influence the quality of the physical environment. Outcome quality refers to a customer’s perceptions of what he or she is left with after the service is rendered. Sub-dimensions of outcome quality include perceptions of waiting time, tangibles and valence (34-49).

Service Quality in Sport

Kennet et al. (2001) highlight the difficulty of assessing consumer perceptions of a service encounter within the context of sport. In contrast to evaluating a good, it is difficult for a spectator to evaluate their experience at a sporting event. The authors suggest that while spectators may have widely varying expectations leading up to an event, there may be tangible cues that can be evaluated during the course of the event itself. For example, spectator evaluations of perceived value, quality of entertainment,
physical facilities and interactions with employees such as ushers, ticket takers, concessionaires and merchandisers can only be evaluated during or after the actual event (p. 133).

Understanding service quality within the context of sport entails an understanding as to what should be evaluated. Chelladurai and Chang (2000) cite three targets of quality evaluations: a) the core service; b) the physical context such as the physical facilities and equipment in which the service is provided; and c) the interpersonal interactions in the performance of the service. The core service relates to the performance of the promised service such as expert coaching or fitness instruction. Core service is described as similar to the conceptualization of the “reliability” dimension in the SERVQUAL instrument. The physical context dimension is described as the quality of the facilities, their location, the equipment and tools used in the production of the service, the amenities provided to the clients, the accessibility of the facilities, and the equipment’s ease of use. Physical context is described as similar to the conceptualization of the “tangibles” dimension in the SERVQUAL instrument. Finally, the interpersonal interactions dimension refers to the helping orientation and behavior of the employee, courtesy and care toward clients, and the prompt delivery of individualized attention. This dimension is described as similar to the conceptualization of the responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions in the SERVQUAL instrument (pp. 4-5).

Chelladurai (1992) presents a model for classifying sport and physical activity services offered by sport and recreation organizations. The classification is based on two dimensions: a) type and extent of employee involvement; and b) client motives for
participation (p. 38-51). The first dimension is categorized based on three types of
services: a) consumer services; b) professional services; and c) human services.
Consumer services are based on low-skilled and routine services that require little
expertise from the employee. For example, a tennis club may rent the use of the court or
sell sporting goods in its pro shop. Professional services are based on the knowledge,
expertise and special competencies of the employee providing the service. The
instructions provided by a tennis or golf professional would constitute this type of service.
Human services help to define or alter a customer’s behavior, attributes, and social status
in an effort to maintain or enhance his or her well being. Two distinct types of human
services are prevalent: a) services that provide the client with knowledge or guidelines
regarding something of interest; and b) services that transform the client such as a
teacher’s lecture or a minister’s sermon are good examples (p. 41).

Chelladurai (1992) highlights the salience of consumer motivation because the
production of a physical activity service is dependent upon the client’s active physical
exertion. For example, an aerobics instructor only provides a service when he or she is
able to motivate the customer to physically participate in the exercise regimen. Four types
of motives are presented to suggest why a consumer may participate in a physical activity
service: a) pursuit of pleasure; b) pursuit of skill; c) pursuit of excellence; and d) pursuit
of health/fitness. Pursuit of pleasure suggests that the consumer may participate in sport
and physical activity because they enjoy the kinesthetic sensations experienced in the
activity or the competitive nature of certain activities. In contrast, pursuit of skill suggests
that some consumer’s may engage in physical activity in an effort to gain the skills
necessary to gain a sense of competence. Pursuit of excellence is defined as the effort to win in a contest against a standard. Lastly, consumers may be motivated to engage in physical activity due to health-related benefits such as fitness, stress reduction and longevity (pp. 42-44).

McDonald et al. (1995) proposed TEAMQUAL, an adaptation of SERVQUAL, used for measuring service quality within the context of team sport. Season ticket holders of a National Basketball Association franchise were surveyed. Their findings suggest that the most salient dimensions of service quality for season ticket holders were: a) tangibles (aspects such as appearance of equipment, personnel, materials, and venue); and b) reliability (the team’s ability to perform services dependably and accurately). In all, the team met or exceeded the expectations of season ticket holders on 38 out of the 39 items measured (pp. 9-15).

Kelley and Turley (Kelley & Turley, 2001) investigated the importance that sports fans place on certain service attributes when evaluating the quality of service experienced at the event. The most important attributes identified were the quality and outcome of the game, cleanliness of the arena, security in the parking area, seat location, parking location and cleanliness of the restrooms. The findings suggest that service quality dimensions tend to vary across different types of services and different categories of customers place different weights on quality attributes. It is also interesting to note that game experience, deemed to be the most important attribute emerging from the study, is not under the control of sport marketers (pp. 161-166).
Chelladurai et al. (1987) describe five dimensions salient to services in the fitness industry: a) primary core professional services; b) primary core consumer services; c) primary peripheral services; d) primary facilitating goods; and e) secondary consumer services and facilitating goods. They found that facilities and equipment are essential to the delivery of a fitness service, thus confirming that consumers would evaluate whether to join a fitness club based on those aspects they can see such as the tangible facilities and goods.

Crilley, et al. (2002) identified twenty-one service quality attributes for sport and leisure centers derived from focus groups at selected golf courses across Australia. Their findings suggest that tangible aspects of service (areas of service seen or affected by the senses) recorded the largest service quality gaps for consumers. For example, on-course drink fountains and course maintenance represented the most negative aspects of service quality at the golf courses (pp. 369-380).

Costa, et al. (2004) identified four salient factors affecting young participants and their parents when they evaluate the services offered in a Greek athletic camp. These factors included services related to: a) the accommodation installations such as housing at the camp; b) coaches behavior toward the participants; c) contentment with the camp; and d) the access opportunities provided by the camp (pp. 22-35).

Westerbeek (2000) identified a number of significant differences between heavy and light consumers of Australian Rules Football. It was found that heavy consumers of the sport place importance upon characteristics of the stadium and its environment. Older spectators were found to place importance on those characteristics of the stadium which
make them feel at home. Thus, they were able to engage in casual conversation which was valued more highly by older fans. Finally, younger fans were found to place greater emphasis upon experiencing the sounds and smells of the stadium (pp. 194-202).

Kim and Kim (1998) sought to identify different segments within sport centers located in Seoul, Korea based upon their attitudes toward service quality. Random stratified sampling of nine sport centers within the city was used. The sport centers were segmented by facility conscious members, goal-oriented members, convenience-seeking, personal gratification-oriented and employee behavior-conscious. With the exception of the program factor, each of the five groups was differed significantly with respect to the following factors examined: a) ambiance; b) employee attitude; c) employee reliability; d) information; e) personal consideration; f) price; g) privilege; h) security; i) stimulation; j) program; and k) convenience. The findings suggest that segmentation can help a sport center manager identify what services are important to certain members. Furthermore, it allows the organization to cut back on services deemed less important by members (pp. 273-287).

Wakefield et. al (1996), studied the relationship between a sport spectator’s perception of a stadium that desire to spend time in the stadium. They examined factors such as facility parking, facility aesthetics, scoreboard configurations and perceived crowding, stadium signage, space allocation, seating comfort and layout accessibility. The findings from the study indicate that one of the most significant factors affecting a spectator’s pleasure with the sportscape is dependent upon whether they feel crowded or cramped due to limited access and space in the stadium (pp. 15-31). Wakefield and Sloan
(Wakefield & Sloan, 1995) suggest that spectators who enjoy spending time at the stadium are more likely to return for future games. Thus, stadium administrators should make every effort to ensure that spectators have a positive experience (pp. 153-172).

Greenwell et al. (2002a) examined how customer perceptions of a sport facility, within the context of the service experience influenced customer satisfaction. The findings suggested the customers’ perceptions of the physical facility were moderately associated with customer satisfaction. The study found that customer perceptions of the core product, the physical facility and service personnel together explained variance in customer satisfaction. However, a marginal amount of the variance was unique to the physical facility or to service personnel (pp. 129-148).

Ko and Pastore (2004) proposed a four dimensional model of service quality in the recreation industry comprised of program quality, interaction quality, outcome quality and physical environment quality. Program quality refers to the customer’s relative perception of the excellence of the program experienced. Interaction quality focuses on how the service is delivered and focuses on the attitudes and behaviors of both the employees of the service provider and other customers. Outcome quality represents what the consumer gains from the service. Physical environment quality refers to physical facilities or surroundings (pp 159-167).

*Service Quality in Tourism*

Managers in tourism strive to improve the quality of their services and the level of customer satisfaction in the belief that this effort will create loyal visitors. Loyal visitors will return to the destination and recommend it to others (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003).
Sparks and Westgate (2002) suggest that service failure can have devastating effects on an organization because customers frequently switch to a different provider when they experience a service failure. However, among customers who experience service problems, those who receive satisfactory resolution are more likely to remain loyal to the service provider (p. 214).

Pawitra and Tan (2003) use SERVQUAL in order to analyze the image of Singapore from the perspective of tourists from Indonesia. The authors note that the use of SERVQUAL in measuring a destination image requires that it be modified in order to ensure that the data reflect the unique attributes provided by the destination. Tourist satisfaction can be obtained by assessing the gap between predicted and perceived service. The destination image can be determined by analyzing tourist perceptions (p. 399-411).

Atilgan et al. (2003) suggest that cultural characteristics have an effect on perceptions of service quality in tourism. They found that different cultural groups can have different levels of expectations and perceptions in terms of service-quality dimensions (p 420). Therefore, many of the items on the SERVQUAL instrument can be salient to different customers for different reasons. Brown and Bond III (1995) attribute the importance of these items as to whether or not the customer is conscious of aspects such as time, quality of work, finances, and so forth (p. 30).

Customer Satisfaction

Considerable confusion continues to exist regarding the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality (Burns et al., 2003). Caruana (2000) claims that service quality and satisfaction have often been used interchangeably. Distinctions
between customer satisfaction and service quality include: a) satisfaction is a post-experience decision customer experience while quality is not; b) in the satisfaction literature “expectations reflect anticipated performance” made by customers about levels of performance during a transaction. In the service quality literature, expectations are conceptualized as a normative stand of future wants.

According to Spreng and Mackoy (1996), there is no clear definition of satisfaction, although most definitions would involve “an evaluative, affective or emotional response.” The distinction between perceived service quality and satisfaction is important because managers need to know whether their objective is to provide the maximum level of perceived service quality or to have satisfied customers. The standard of comparison in forming satisfaction is predictive expectations, or what the consumer believes will happen. Perceived service quality is the result of a comparison of performance and what the consumer feels a firm should provide (pp. 201-214).

Burns et al. (2003) describe negative disconfirmation as an occurring when performance is less than expectations. Positive disconfirmation is evident when performance is greater than expectations (pp. 363-380). Customer satisfaction results in the disconfirmation of prior expectation, that is if the service provider meets or exceeds expectations then the customer is more likely to be satisfied (Rust et al., 1995).

Millán & Esteban (2004) claim that satisfaction is perceived as the final result of all activities carried out during the process of purchase and consumption. All reviewed definitions imply: a) the existence of an objective that the consumer wishes to reach; 2) the attainment (satisfaction) of this objective can only be judged by taking a standard of
comparison as a reference; and c) the evaluation process of satisfaction implies the intervention of at least two stimuli; a result and a reference or standard of comparison. Satisfaction is related to size and direction of “non-confirmatory: experience defined by the difference between initial expectations of the individual and the actual result derived.” Expectations are the needs or desires of the consumer, based on what the consumer feels should be delivered before receiving it. Perceptions are the beliefs of the consumer relative to the service received. The consumer’s opinion of satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends on how the consumer perceives the actual result obtained relative to what was expected (pp. 533-546).

Much of the attention given to service quality is motivated by the premise that it will increase customer satisfaction and ultimately lead to better financial performance (Babikas et al., 2004). The quality of products and services has also been linked to external indicators of customer satisfaction such as complaints, warranty, litigation and market share (Ahire & Dreyfus, 2000). Satisfied customers often lead to loyal customers who continuously repurchase the product or service. Depending upon the industry, Fornell (1992) contends that not all companies are equally affected by customer satisfaction. However, all organizations are dependent upon repeat purchases that lead to higher profitability (p. 7). Empirical evidence suggests that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and firm performance (Babikas et al., 2004; Fornell, 1992; Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994).

“Incidents of satisfaction over time result in perceptions of service quality” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 16). Some research suggests that satisfaction is an
Tian-Cole and Cromption (2003) suggest that service quality is related but not equivalent to satisfaction because perceived service quality is a global judgment or attitude relating to the superiority of service. In contrast, satisfaction is related to a specific transaction (p. 71).

Milbourn (1998) suggests that the economic success of companies fluctuates with the quality of service that is offered. They report that dissatisfied customers rarely complain. Instead, most dissatisfied customers simply purchase from another store. Across industries, service organizations who deliver high quality service consistently receive repeat customers. More importantly, these repeat customers account for increased profits (pp. 15-19). Depending upon the complexity of the service, Oliver (1993) claims that a customer can experience both negative and positive affective reactions (p. 420).

Uelschy, Laroch, Tamilia and Yannopoulos (2004) claim that measures of service quality and satisfaction can be nonequivalent across cultures. In other words, a measure that works well in the United States may not perform properly overseas. Across cultures, the translation, interpretation and meaning of particular terms can introduce response bias. Thus, due to cultural differences, one cannot assume that a citizen of one country will perceive quality in the same way as one from a different country. Because beliefs are a part of culture, two individuals can experience identical consumption and register differing levels of satisfaction based on differing schematic reference points they bring to a situation (pp. 901-912).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to describe the research design and the methodological procedures for conducting this study. The discussion will describe the following: a) type of research to be conducted; b) subject description; c) sampling method; d) threats to external validity; e) independent and dependent variables; f) scale development; g) data collection methods; and h) data analysis methods.

Type of Research

Research can be classified as quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitative research is the focus of the current study. According to Ary, et al. (2002), quantitative research explains phenomenon by using objective measurement and statistical analysis of numeric data. Quantitative research can be classified as either experimental or non-experimental. Experimental research involves the manipulation of one variable on another variable. Non-experimental research looks for relationships among variables, but does not manipulate them. Three types of non-experimental research include: a) causal-comparative research; b) correlational research; and c) survey research (pp. 24-25). The methodology chosen for the present study is survey research. Survey research provides a
broad picture of the subject being studied and provides an easy way to generalize to a population (Salkind, 2000).

Survey Research

Many advantages and disadvantages have been cited in regards to survey research. Miller (2004) cites the following advantages: a) the ability to collect a wide scope of information from a large population; b) it deals with a real situation in the sense that a researcher collects data in the actual situation; and c) it provides a first step in developing hypotheses or in identifying more specific problems for research. The disadvantages suggest that survey research can be: a) more extensive than intensive in the sense that it does not dig down to discover deeper issues below the surface; b) demanding of time and money; and c) lacking in external validity (p. 61).

Cross-Sectional Survey Research

The current study will employ a cross-sectional method. Salkind (2000) highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages for using this type of approach. The advantages for using cross-sectional survey research include: a) it is relatively inexpensive; b) the study can be conducted in a short-time span; c) there is a low-rate of subjects who drop out the study; and d) it requires no long-term administration or cooperation between staff and participants. The disadvantages are related to the following: a) it limits the comparability of groups; b) it does not reveal the continuity of development on a person-by person case; c) it examines people of the same chronological age who may be of different maturational ages; and d) it does not reveal the direction of
changes that may take place in a group (p. 202). For purposes of the current study, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages for using cross-sectional survey research.

**Subject Description**

Subjects for this study were tourists attending a large professional All-Star soccer sporting event taking place in Columbus, Ohio. A total of 23,309 spectators attended the event. In the current context, tourists are defined as spectators visiting the destination specifically to attend the sporting event and traveling from a residence that is 50 miles or more from the sport stadium. More specifically, data will be collected from three types of sport tourists:

1. Tourists staying for at least one night in a Hotel or Motel in the Columbus area.
2. Tourists staying with friends or relatives in the Columbus area.
3. Tourists driving to the sporting event and returning home later the same day.

It should be noted that the third category can be labeled as excursionists. For the purposes of this study, excursionists will be lumped as sport tourists because of their economic contribution to an event, destination or region.

**Sampling Method**

The sampling method proposed for the current study is analogous to the mall intercept or street intercept method, which has been used when examining service quality and satisfaction in spectator sport (Greenwell et al., 2002a). These methods entail face-to-face interviewing. The mall intercept method started in the 1960’s as a result of the development of totally enclosed shopping centers. The method provides researchers access to a large number of shoppers from a wide geographic region (Gates & Solomon,
The street-intercept method provides access to people on the street engaged in a wide variety of activities such as sitting on steps, walking, running, preparing to use public transportation and so forth (Miller, Wilder, Stillman, & Becker, 1997).

Proponents of the mall intercept or street-intercept methods argue that members of the population of interest are interviewed in a realistic setting (Cowan, 1989). The mall intercept method has been described as a relatively inexpensive method of collecting high quality, accurate data in a face-to-face manner (Bush & Hair, 1985). Critics of these types of methods are concerned as to the probability that any member of the population of interest will be observed at one of the intercept locations (Cowan, 1989).

For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire was directly administered to the target population. Questionnaires save time because they allow respondents to complete them without any direct assistance or intervention from the researcher. Questionnaires are also cheaper and allow for more truthful responses because they offer a greater sense of anonymity (Salkind, 2000). Questionnaires that are directly administered are done so to a group of people assembled at a certain place for a specific purpose. The main advantages of directly administered questionnaires include a high response rate, low cost and the researcher is often able to answer questions. The primary disadvantage of the directly administered questionnaire is that the researcher is usually restricted as to when and where the questionnaire can be administered (Ary et al., 2002).

**Threats to External Validity**

One purpose for conducting research is to be able to generalize the findings to some group of subjects and set of conditions not included in the experiment. Only to the
extent that the researcher can generalize the findings does the study possess external validity (Gliem, 2004). Ary et al. (2002) cite three types of external validity: a) population external validity; b) ecological external validity; and c) external validity of operations. Population external validity refers to the way subjects are selected for a study. The major threat to population external validity is the possibility of interaction between subject characteristics and treatment due to non-random selection of subjects. Ecological external validity is concerned with generalizing the results to other situations. Thus, the researcher must be concerned that the experimental environment is not drastically different from the environment to which the results are to be generalized. External validity of operations asks if similar results would be expected from different researchers with different definitions. In this respect, the researcher must be concerned with the operational definitions given to each variable. It is important to ensure that the operational definitions fit the definitions of each construct (pp. 298-300).

In terms of population external validity, the sample for this study draws from only those subjects attending a sporting event and traveling from a residence 50 miles or more away from the stadium. Thus, ecological external validity suggests that it would be difficult to generalize to the entire population of spectators attending the sporting event because many spectators will not be sport tourists. However, the study should be able to generalize to all sport tourists attending the event. Another question to be considered is whether the experimentally accessible population is the same as the target population. The target population is all tourists attending the sporting event who are either:

1. Staying in a Hotel or Motel in the surrounding area for one night;
2. Staying with friends or relatives in the surrounding area; or
3. Driving to the sporting event and returning home the same day.

In the case of the current study, the accessible population is comprised of visitors who meet the above criteria and are willing to complete the administered questionnaire.

**Independent and Dependent Variables**

Within the context of the current study, independent variables are those variables which are not influenced by any other variable. In contrast, a dependent variable is defined as one that is influenced by another variable in the model. Therefore, independent variables in the proposed model include: a) *Access Quality*; b) *Accommodation Quality*; c) *Venue Quality*; and d) *Contest Quality*. The dependent variables in the model are: a) *ST Quality*; b) *Satisfaction*; and c) *Intent to Return*. It is important to note that *ST Quality* would seem to be an independent variable in the current model because it is hypothesized to influence *Satisfaction*. In the same way, *Satisfaction* is hypothesized to influence *Intent to Return*. However, because these variables are influenced by other variables, they are not considered independent variables.

**Scale Development**

Scale development consisted of two parts. These include: a) item generation; and b) item verification. These two areas of development are explained below.

*Item Generation*

The instrument was developed based on an extensive review of literature from services marketing and consumer behavior within sport and tourism. The author took into account the following recommendations by Devillis (2003) when developing the scale: a)
avoiding exceptionally lengthy items; b) readability level of each item; c) double-barreled items; d) ambiguous pronoun references; and e) positive and negatively worded items (pp. 66-70). A total of 91 items were generated in the first stage and the questionnaire was divided into three sections as described below.

Section I. Section I had 56 items related to *Access Quality, Accommodation Quality, Venue Quality, Contest Quality, ST Quality, Satisfaction* and *Intent to Return*. Respondents were asked to rate the items in each scale on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The items for each dimension are explained below.

**Access Quality** was indicated by two sub-dimensions: a) Access to *Destination*; and b) Access to *Sport Venue*.

**Destination** is the first sub-dimension of *Access Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the ease in getting to the destination. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. It was difficult for me to get to Columbus.
2. I experienced no problems in getting to Columbus.
3. Finding ways to get to Columbus was a difficult process.
4. Coming to Columbus is so easy.

**Sport Venue** is the second sub-dimension of *Access Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of gaining access to the sport venue. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. It was difficult for me to get to Crew Stadium.
2. Getting to Crew Stadium was not difficult.
3. Crew Stadium is a convenient location.
4. Crew Stadium is centrally located in Columbus.
5. Getting to Crew Stadium was a round about and slow process.

Venue Quality was indicated by three sub-dimensions: a) Employee Interactions; b) Physical Environment; and c) Value.

Interactions is the first sub-dimension of Venue Quality, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the various interactions encountered during service delivery at the sport venue. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. It was difficult for me to purchase tickets for the MLS All-Star Game.
2. The concession employees at Crew Stadium are friendly.
3. Ushers are very helpful at Crew Stadium.
4. I enjoyed interacting with vendors at Crew Stadium.
5. My interactions with the merchandise employees at Crew Stadium were pleasant.

Environment is the second sub-dimension of Venue Quality, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the physical environment at the sport venue. The items for this sub-dimension were developed based on a review of the literature (Wakefield et al., 1996). The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. The design of Crew Stadium befits the MLS All-Star Game.
2. Crew Stadium has an efficient layout.
3. Crew Stadium is an attractive stadium.
4. The landscape of Crew Stadium is lovely to look at.
5. The parking at Crew Stadium makes it easy to get in and out quickly.

Value is the third sub-dimension of Venue Quality, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s evaluation of the perceived value (trade-off between benefits and sacrifices) of their visit to the sport venue. The items for this sub-dimension included:
1. Ticket prices for this event at Crew Stadium were worth the money.
2. Food was priced too high at Crew Stadium.
3. The souvenir merchandise at Crew Stadium was too expensive.
4. I have been to other stadiums with better prices than Crew Stadium.

*Contest Quality* was indicated by two sub-dimensions: a) the *Process* in which the contest is organized; and b) the *Product* or contest itself.

*Process* is the first sub-dimension of *Contest Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the way in which the contest is organized, monitored and controlled. The items for this sub-dimension were developed based on a review of the literature (Bernthal & Sawyer, 2004). The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. The officiating at the MLS All-Star Game was fair.
2. The public address announcements at the MLS All-Star Game were prompt.
3. The scoreboard made it easy to keep track of the score at the MLS All-Star Game.
4. The crowd made the MLS All-Star Game very exciting.
5. The various ceremonies for this event were well planned.

*Product* is the second sub-dimension of *Contest Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the quality of the actual game or contest itself. The items for this sub-dimension were developed based on a review of the literature such as (Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003). The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. The teams in the MLS All-Star Game were playing their best.
2. Players made the game exciting.
3. Players were hustling and showed they care about their performance.

*ST Quality* is a global measure construct that takes into account the tourist’s overall judgment regarding their trip to Columbus for sport-related purposes. *ST Quality*
is measured on an interval scale. The items for ST Quality were developed in a similar fashion to Brady and Cronin’s (2001) overall perceived service quality. The items for ST Quality included:

1. This was the best trip I have ever taken for sport purposes.
2. This trip has been a great sport tourism experience.
3. The MLS All-Star Game was an event worth visiting.

Satisfaction is an evaluative, affective or emotional response to a consumptive experience. Satisfaction is measured on an interval scale. The items for Satisfaction were developed based on adaptations from Greenwell, et al. (2002a). The items for Satisfaction included:

1. Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to attend the MLS All-Star Game.
2. I believe I did the right thing by attending this game.
3. Satisfied is a good description of how I feel about my visit to Columbus.
4. I am so glad that I came to Columbus.

Intent to Return refers to a spectator’s desire to attend another sporting event at the destination in the future. Intent to Return is measured on an interval scale. The items for Intent to Return included:

1. I plan to attend another MLS All-Star Game in the future if it is held in Columbus.
2. I plan to return to Columbus for another visit in the future.
3. I plan to return to Columbus for another sporting event.
4. There is no doubt that I will return for another visit to Columbus.

Section II. Section II included 13 items. The first nine questions asked for demographic information such as gender, marital status, age, ethnic background, annual household income and highest level of education. It also asked respondents how many times per year they travel for the purposes of attending a sporting event and how many
nights they will spend in Columbus. Section II also asked spectators for a “yes” or “no”
response to the following 4 items:

1. Are you traveling from a residence 50 miles or more away from Columbus?
2. While in the Columbus area are you staying with friends and/or relatives?
3. Did you drive to Columbus for the MLS All-Star Game and plan to return
   home later today?
4. While in the Columbus area are you staying at a Hotel or Motel for at least
   one night?

Respondents indicating that they were staying in a Hotel or Motel were prompted
to proceed to section III. All other respondents were asked to return the questionnaire.

Section III. Section III included 22 items related to the Hotel or Motel. These
items were placed towards the end of the questionnaire to highlight the fact that only
guests staying in area Hotels or Motels should respond. Respondents were asked to rate
the items in each scale on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly
agree. The items for Section III are listed below.

Hotel is the third sub-dimension of Access Quality, which is measured on an
interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of gaining access to and
from their Columbus area Hotel or Motel. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. It was difficult for me to get to my Hotel/Motel.
2. My Hotel/Motel is in a convenient location.
3. I experienced no problems in getting to where I needed to go from my
   Hotel/Motel.
4. The Hotel/Motel in which I am staying is close to everywhere I want to go.
5. My Hotel/Motel is great because of its proximity to the places I want to go.
6. Parking at my Hotel/Motel is convenient.

Accommodation Quality was indicated by three sub-dimensions: a) Hotel/Motel
Employee Interactions; b) Hotel/Motel Environment; and c) Hotel/Motel Value.
**Interactions** is the first sub-dimensions of *Accommodation Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the various interactions encountered during service delivery at the Hotel or Motel. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. I enjoyed interacting with front desk employees at my Hotel/Motel.
2. My interactions with housekeeping employees were pleasant.
3. It was difficult for me to make a reservation at my Hotel/Motel.
4. Foodservice employees at my Hotel/Motel were courteous.

**Environment** is the second sub-dimension of *Accommodation Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s subjective perceptions of the physical environment at the Hotel or Motel. The items for this sub-dimension were developed based on adaptations from Bitner (1992) and Brady and Cronin (2001). The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. The Hotel/Motel is one of the best I have ever stayed in.
2. The design of my Hotel/Motel is what makes it great.
3. My Hotel/Motel is very comfortable.
4. My Hotel/Motel is attractive.

**Value** is the third sub-dimension of *Accommodation Quality*, which is measured on an interval scale and defined as the tourist’s evaluation of the perceived value (trade-off between benefits and sacrifices) of their Hotel or Motel. The items for this sub-dimension included:

1. Costs associated with my Hotel/Motel are very affordable.
2. My Hotel/Motel is definitely worth the money.
3. You just can’t beat the price of staying in Columbus hotels.
4. Columbus has great Hotel/Motels for the price.
Item Purification

In order to identify ambiguities, misunderstandings or other inadequacies the instrument was field tested (Ary et al., 2002). This stage purifies the measures in the instrument (Churchill, 1979). Validity should also be established in this stage. Validity can be defined as “the extent to which an instrument measured what it claimed to measure” (Ary et al., 2002, p. 242) or the concern as to “whether the variable is the underlying cause of item covariation” (Devillis, 2003, p. 49). Subjects are less likely to complete and return a questionnaire perceived to be inappropriate. Therefore, the instrument should have face and content validity. In other words, the instrument should appear valid for its intended purpose and measure what it is purported to measure (Ary et al., 2002). Two types of validity must be established: a) face validity; and b) content validity.

Panel of Experts. To establish validity, the researcher asked for feedback from three different panels of experts to comment on whether the questionnaire appeared to measure the actual constructs intended. The first group included four doctoral students from a large state university in the Midwest who are familiar with the topics of service quality and sport tourism. The second group included three experts in the field of sport tourism who work for the local sports commission and convention and visitors bureau. The third group included three professors of a large university in the Midwest who teach and conduct research in the area of sport management. Each panel member was asked to fill out the questionnaire and comment on the questionnaire based on its wording, clarity, layout, ease of filling out, and total time to complete.
Content validity refers to “the extent to which a specific set of items reflects a content domain” (Devillis, 2003, p. 49). To establish content validity, each panel member was asked to evaluate the items of each domain to be measured and to comment on the appropriateness of the items. Respondents were also asked to suggest any content areas that have been omitted or that are unclear. The feedback from the panel of experts was used to add items, reword items and delete items on the scale.

Field Test. A field test was conducted after receiving feedback from the panel of experts. The field test was administered to a group of 15 students enrolled in a sport sociology class in a large university in the Midwest. The class focused specifically on issues pertinent to a sport spectator. Students participating in the field test were asked to complete the questionnaire and to comment on the total time it took to complete. Based on feedback from the 15 participants, the average time for completing the questionnaire was 8 minutes.

Data Collection

Prior to administering the instrument, the researcher met with the Executive Director of a local Sports Commission to discuss the study. One aspect of the discussion was related to requesting the Sports Commission’s assistance in regards to data collection. The Sports Commission pledged their support in so far as contacting the various venues and gaining permission from the various sport organizations to implement data collection. This section will discuss data collection and how it will be analyzed.

Data was collected at a Major League Soccer (MLS) All-Star Game in a Midwestern city. Nine volunteers helped to distribute questionnaires to spectators as they
entered two separate entrances of the stadium. A total of 4 trained volunteers recruited by
the researcher were placed at one of the entrances. The remaining 5 volunteers were
positioned at the other entrance. All subjects were screened to ensure that they were 18
years of age or older and were traveling from a distance of 50 miles or more away from
the stadium. Subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire while in the stadium and
to return it to research associates in red Ohio State T-shirts or to the Guest Services booth
upon exiting the stadium. Questionnaires were distributed to 811 spectators attending the
game. A total of 225 questionnaires were returned. However, only 215 usable cases are
included in the data analysis. Only 61 of the 215 respondents stayed in a Hotel or Motel.
Therefore, the variables relating to Accommodation Quality and Hotel were excluded
from further analyses.

Data Analyses

The data received from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS and Analysis of
Moment Structure (AMOS 4.0) software. SPSS is a statistical package used to code data
and run descriptive statistics. AMOS 4.0 is user-friendly software for conducting
structural equation modeling (SEM).

SEM uses various types of models to depict relationships among observed
variables. Various theoretical models can be tested in SEM that hypothesize how sets of
variables define constructs and the constructs related to each other (Schumacker &
Lomax, 2004). According to Klem (1995), the starting point for SEM is the researchers
theory about the causal relationships among a set of variables. Hair, Anderson, Tatham
and Black (1998) suggest that SEM provides the appropriate and most efficient
estimation technique for a series of separate multiple regression techniques estimated simultaneously. SEM comprises two components: a) the structural model; and b) the measurement model. In the structural model, theory, prior experience, or other guidelines allow the researcher to distinguish which independent variables predict each dependent variable. The researcher uses several variables for a single independent or dependent variable in the measurement model. The measurement model also allows the researcher to assess the contribution of each scale item as well as incorporate how well the scale measures the concept into the estimation of the relationships between dependent and independent variables.

Scale Purification

At this stage of scale development, each subscale was subjected to Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) using Varimax rotation. The purpose of subjecting the items in a subscale to PAF was to verify if all of the items loaded highly on a single factor. Those items that loaded at .50 or higher were retained to measure the construct. For these analyses, the responses of 30 randomly selected respondents were used. The loadings for each subscale is summarized below.

Access Quality. The first subscale for Access Quality to be subjected to PAF was Destination with four items (V2, V15, V28, V41). Two of the items (V15, V41) which loaded higher than .50 were subjected to another PAF. The loadings in the second PAF were: V15 = .624; and V41 = .624.

The second subscale for Access Quality to be subjected to PAF was Sport Venue with a total of five items (V29, V42, V3, V16, V53). All items loaded higher than .50 and
were retained. The loadings were: $V_{29} = .568; V_{42} = .865; V_{3} = .639; V_{16} = .570; \text{ and } V_{53} = .858$.

**Venue Quality.** The first subscale for *Venue Quality* to be subjected to PAF was *Interactions* with a total of five items ($V_{5}, V_{18}, V_{31}, V_{44}, V_{54}$). Three of the items ($V_{5}, V_{31}, V_{44}$) which loaded higher than .50 were subjected to a second PAF. The loadings in the second analyses were: $V_{5} = .617; V_{31} = .599; \text{ and } V_{44} = .722$.

The second subscale for *Venue Quality* to be subjected to PAF was *Environment* with a total of five items ($V_{6}, V_{19}, V_{32}, V_{45}, V_{55}$). Four of the items ($V_{19}, V_{32}, V_{45}, V_{55}$) loaded higher than .50 and were subjected to a second PAF. The following were the loadings in the final analyses: $V_{19} = .816; V_{32} = .845; V_{45} = .631; \text{ and } V_{55} = .547$.

The third subscale for *Venue Quality* to be subjected to PAF was *Value* with a total of four items ($V_{7}, V_{20}, V_{33}, V_{46}$). Two of the items ($V_{20}, V_{33}$) loaded higher than .50 and were subjected to a second PAF. The following were the final loadings: $V_{20} = .640; V_{33} = .640$.

**Contest Quality.** The first subscale for *Contest Quality* to be subjected to PAF was *Process* with a total of five items ($V_{9}, V_{22}, V_{35}, V_{48}, V_{56}$). Three of the items ($V_{22}, V_{56}, V_{48}$) loaded higher than .50 and were subjected to a second PAF. The following were the final loadings: $V_{22} = .740; V_{56} = .723; \text{ and } V_{48} = .515$. The second subscale for *Contest Quality* to be subjected to PAF was *Product* with a total of three items ($V_{10}, V_{23}, V_{36}$). All items loaded higher than .50 and were retained. The loadings were: $V_{10} = .649; V_{23} = .847; V_{36} = .957$.  

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**ST Quality** was subjected to PAF with a total of four items (V11, V24, V37, V49). The two highest loading variables (V24, V37) above .50 were subjected to a second PAF. The final loadings were: V24 = .797; V37 = .797.

**Satisfaction** was subjected to PAF with a total of four items (V12, V25, V38, V50). The two highest loading variables (V12, V25) above .50 were subjected to a second PAF. The following were final loadings: V12 = .975; V25 = .975.

**Intent to Return** was subjected to PAF with a total of four items (V13, V26, V39, V51). The three highest loading variables (V26, V39, V51) above .50 were subjected to another PAF. The following were the final loadings: V26 = .947; V39 = .846; and V51 = .789.

A total of 29 items were retained. The final loading for the items in each subscale is presented in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Final Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Quality</td>
<td>V15</td>
<td>I experienced no problems in getting to Columbus</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V41</td>
<td>Coming to Columbus is so easy</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V29</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to Crew Stadium</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V42</td>
<td>Getting to Crew Stadium was not difficult</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V3</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is in a convenient location</td>
<td>.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V16</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is centrally located in Columbus</td>
<td>.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V53</td>
<td>Getting to Crew Stadium was a round about and</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slow process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3.1: Factor Loadings (Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Final Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venue Quality</strong></td>
<td>V5</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to purchase tickets for the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V31</td>
<td>Ushers are very helpful at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V44</td>
<td>I enjoyed interacting with vendors at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V19</td>
<td>Crew Stadium has an efficient layout</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V32</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is an attractive stadium</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V45</td>
<td>The landscape of Crew Stadium is lovely to look at</td>
<td>.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V55</td>
<td>The parking at Crew Stadium makes it easy to get in and out quickly</td>
<td>.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V20</td>
<td>Food was priced too high at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V33</td>
<td>The souvenir merchandise at Crew Stadium was too expensive</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contest Quality</strong></td>
<td>V22</td>
<td>The public address announcements at the MLS All-Star Game were prompt</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V48</td>
<td>The crowd made the MLS All-Star Game very exciting</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V56</td>
<td>The various ceremonies for this event were well planned</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V10</td>
<td>The teams in the MLS All-Star Game were playing their best</td>
<td>.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V23</td>
<td>Players made the game exciting</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V36</td>
<td>Players were hustling and showed they cared about their performance</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ST Quality</strong></td>
<td>V24</td>
<td>This trip has been a great sport tourism experience</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V37</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was an event worth visiting</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>V12</td>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to attend the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V25</td>
<td>I believe I did the right thing by attending this game</td>
<td>.975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Factor Loadings (Continued)
### Table 3.1: Factor Loadings

**Intent to Return**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Final Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V26</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another visit in the future</td>
<td>.947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V39</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another sporting event</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V51</td>
<td>There is no doubt that I will return for another visit to Columbus</td>
<td>.789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A reliability analysis for each subscale with the selected items was conducted for 215 cases using SPSS. For each subscale, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) was estimated and means and standard deviations were analyzed and reported (See Table 3.2). Because the alpha level for Interactions was very low (α = .452), that subscale was eliminated from further analyses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>5.877</td>
<td>1.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td>5.671</td>
<td>1.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venue Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions</td>
<td>.452</td>
<td>5.571</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td>5.328</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>3.131</td>
<td>1.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contest Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>5.341</td>
<td>1.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>5.817</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ST Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>5.873</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent to Return</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>5.865</td>
<td>1.211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Cronbach’s alpha, Means and SD for each subscale

**Analyses**

**Missing Data**

Missing data may occur for a number of reasons and can have an impact on the statistical results of the study. Missing data may result from invalid procedural factors on the part of the researcher or may derive from subject who refuse to respond to certain items on the questionnaire (Hair et al., 1998). The primary procedure used in this study was to replace missing values with mean substitution. Mean substitution is a widely used method for replacing missing data, whereby missing values for a variable are replaced with the mean value based on all valid responses (Hair et al., 1998).
Sixty seven of the 91 applicable variables in the questionnaire had missing data. The number of cases missing data for variables 1 through 56 ranged between 1 and 9, for a mean of 3.67 per variable. Only 4% of the total number of missing data had missing values and were replaced with the mean substitution approach in SPSS. Variables 74 to 95 had a significant amount of missing data because these variables were applicable to only 61 persons who stayed in a hotel or motel during their visit. Ding, Velicer and Harlow (1995) suggest that 100 to 150 subjects is the minimum satisfactory sample size for structural equation models. As only 61 respondents stayed in a hotel, their responses relating to their hotel stay were not subjected to any analyses.

**Analyses of Fit**

Two sets of analyses were carried out at this stage. First, a confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) was carried out to assess the validity of the questionnaire. In other words, this analysis assessed the fit between the data and the specified CFA Measurement Model. The second set of analyses tested the structural model.

**CFA Measurement Model**

The CFA measurement model (See Figure 3.1) involves the six sub-dimensions \((\text{Destination}, \text{Sport Venue}, \text{Environment}, \text{Value}, \text{Process}, \text{Product})\), \(\text{ST Quality}\), \(\text{Satisfaction}, \text{Intent to Return}\) and the number of items selected in the scale purification stage to measure them.

**Structural Model**

The structural model (See Figure 3.2) specifies that the latent quality dimensions of \(\text{Access Quality, Venue Quality}\) and \(\text{Contest Quality}\) contribute to \(\text{ST Quality}\) which, in
turn, influences Satisfaction; and finally, Satisfaction is said to influence tourists’ Intent to Return. The dimensions for the proposed structural model used summated scores and the model was tested through structural equation modeling.
Figure 3.1: CFA Measurement Model
Figure 3.2: Structural Model
**Analysis of Fit**

The fit of the measurement model and the structural model were assessed using indices taken from the output of AMOS 4.0. Specific indices germane to this study include: a) Chi Square/df; b) Goodness of Fit index (GFI); c) Root-Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); d) Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI); e) Normed Fit Index (NFI); and h) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of chapter four is to report the results of the study. The results being reported relate to demographic characteristics, the fit of the Measurement Model and the Structural Model, path analysis, hypotheses testing and testing of the Alternative Model.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics are provided in Table 4.1. Male tourists (n = 117) outnumbered female tourists (78) by a 3 to 2 ratio. The majority of tourists attending the game were single (71.6%) as opposed to married (28.4%). More than half of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49 and the majority (88.6%) were white or Caucasian. The second most prevalent ethnic group was Asian American or Asian. Almost 70% of the respondents held a college degree. A total of 54 of the 173 (31.2%) respondents who provided their annual household income in the study reported an income of more than $100,000. A total of 16.7% of respondents reported an income of $40,000 or less. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the three year average median household income in the United States between 2002 and 2004 was $44,473. Thus, the majority of visitors to the MLS All-Star Game had an annual household income above the national average. These high annual incomes may suggest why respondents are able to travel so frequently for sport-related purposes. Almost 80% of respondents reported traveling for sport-related purposes 3 or more times per year. However, it is interesting to note that the
majority of respondents did not spend a single night in the host city, but rather drove in for the game and home the same night. Only 61 of the respondents reported staying in a hotel or motel and 36 respondents claimed to be staying with family and/or friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or over</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American or Asian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 - $19,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or over</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree or above</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics (n =215)
### Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times per/yr travel for sport</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 times</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 times or more</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of nights spent in Columbus</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 nights</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 night</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 nights</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 nights</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 or more nights</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drove to game and home on same day</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staying with friends and/or family</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staying in a hotel or motel</th>
<th>Respondents n = 215</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Travel Characteristics (n = 215)

### CFA Measurement Model

The CFA Measurement Model (See Figure 4.1) is the first step in the two step approach to Structural Equation Modeling (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). It uses one or more variables for a single independent or dependent concept and then estimates reliability. The researcher can assess the contribution of each scale item and determine how well the scale measures the concept (Hair et al., 1998). The CFA Measurement Model analyzes Destination, Sport Venue, Environment, Value, Process, Product, ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return and the items selected in the scale purification stage to measure them. AMOS 4.0 was used for analysis along with the Maximum
Likelihood Method. The CFA Measurement Model was analyzed using 185 cases from the sample.

The researcher’s first step is to assess the CFA Measurement Model by examining offending estimates. Examples of offending estimates include: a) negative error variances for any construct; b) standardized coefficients exceeding or very close to 1.0; or c) very large standard errors associated with any estimated coefficient. The researcher may consider eliminating one of the constructs when correlations in the standardized solution exceed 1.0 (Hair et al., 1998).

The next step is to determine model fit. Model modification may be necessary if model fit indices are less than satisfactory. Parameters may be eliminated when they do not exceed the tabulated t-value (e.g., \( t > 1.96 \)) for statistical significance. Global fit measures such as the chi square test and RMSEA are assessed. RMSEA should not exceed 1.0 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Kline (1998) recommends a value of 3.0 for the chi square statistic (CMIN/DF) to be acceptable. Other fit indices, such as NFI, GFI, TLI and CFI are also assessed. For these indices, values close to 1.0 indicate a good fit. Smaller values, which are close to .00 indicate a poor fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).
Figure 4.1: CFA Measurement Model
Results of Fit Indices for the CFA Measurement Model

For purposes of assessing the CFA Measurement Model, the items in the six sub-dimensions (Destination, Sport Venue, Environment, Value, Process and Product), ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return were subjected to CFA. The first step in assessing the CFA Measurement Model was to consider the fit indices. The results from analyzing the model indicate a good fit of the nine subscales of Destination, Sport Venue, Environment, Value, Process, Product ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return. The value of CMIN/DF was 1.828, below the recommended value of 3.0. The RMSEA for the measurement model was .067. Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggest that a value less than .08 indicate a good model fit. The RMSEA value also falls within the lower limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA (.058, .077). Other fit indices also point to a fair and acceptable model fit (NFI = .802, GFI = .840, TLI = .872, CFI = .897). Table 4.3 provides the results for each of the fit indices of the CFA Measurement Model. Figure 4.1 depicts the CFA Measurement Model.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% CI of RMSEA</td>
<td>(.058, .077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/DF</td>
<td>1.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Results of Fit indices for CFA Measurement Model

Correlations for the CFA Measurement Model

The model had 351 distinct sample moments, 88 distinct parameters to be estimated and 263 degrees of freedom. One correlation (ST Quality <-> Satisfaction) was
above 1.0. Six of the correlations were negative (Value <-> Process; Environment <-> Value; Value <-> Destination; Value <-> Intent to Return; Value <-> Satisfaction; Value <-> ST Quality). The sub-dimension of “Value” was involved in all of the negative correlations. The correlations ranged from -.0279 to .900. The highest correlation was between sub-dimensions of Process and Product. Correlations for 28 of the covariances were significant (i.e., C.R. > 1.96). The correlations are presented in Table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covariances</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-&gt; Product</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>6.010*</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Product</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Product</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>4.202*</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Process</td>
<td>-.151</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-1.183</td>
<td>-.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Value</td>
<td>-.287</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>-2.380</td>
<td>-.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Process</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>4.602*</td>
<td>.690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &lt;-&gt; Sport Venue</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>3.229*</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &lt;-&gt; Destination</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>3.524*</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-&gt; Sport Venue</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>3.017*</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-&gt; Destination</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>3.995*</td>
<td>.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Sport Venue</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Destination</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>-3.71</td>
<td>-.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Sport Venue</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>3.888*</td>
<td>.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Destination</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>4.017*</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination &lt;-&gt; Sport Venue</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>5.268*</td>
<td>.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.760</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>6.529*</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST Quality &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>6.041*</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>2.216*</td>
<td>.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.459</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>3.953*</td>
<td>.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>-.519</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>-3.333</td>
<td>-.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>4.997*</td>
<td>.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>2.944*</td>
<td>.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination &lt;-&gt; Intent to Return</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>3.953*</td>
<td>.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST Quality &lt;-&gt; Satisfaction</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>7.436*</td>
<td>1.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &lt;-&gt; Satisfaction</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>4.714*</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-&gt; Satisfaction</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>4.866*</td>
<td>.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-&gt; Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.268</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>-2.284</td>
<td>-.193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Correlations for CFA Measurement Model (Continued)
Table 4.4: Correlations for CFA Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covariances</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-- Satisfaction</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>5.168*</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue &lt;-- Satisfaction</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>4.289*</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination &lt;-- Satisfaction</td>
<td>.457</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>4.786*</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>6.115*</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>5.863*</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>-.311</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-2.440</td>
<td>-.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>5.060*</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>4.983*</td>
<td>.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue &lt;-- ST Quality</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>4.571*</td>
<td>.582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Correlations for CFA Measurement Model

Variance for CFA Measurement Model

The variances for each of the items in the six sub-dimensions (Destination, Sport Venue, Environment, Value, Process and Product), ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return were analyzed (See Table 4.5). The critical ratio of parameter estimates ranged from 3.426 (Value) to 8.050 (Intent to Return). All parameter estimates were significant (i.e., they had a C.R. > 1.96) at the .05 level.

Table 4.5: Variances for CFA Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimension</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>3.715*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>2.215</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>3.426*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>.835</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>4.666*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>5.299*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>4.525*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue</td>
<td>1.054</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>4.032*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST Quality</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>5.478*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>6.795*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent to Return</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>8.050*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structural Model

Analysis of the Structural Model is the second step in the two-step model building approach and it specifies relationships among latent variables as specified by theory (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). During this step, the researcher used partial disaggregation to test the primary dimensions or second-order factors. The three primary dimensions (i.e., Access Quality, Venue Quality and Contest Quality) were the latent variables indicated by the six sub-dimensions. According to Dabholkar, et al. (1996), the partial disaggregation technique allows for the study to proceed with meaning by combining items into composites to reduce higher levels of random error. At the same time, it retains all the advantages of structural equations, including accounting for measurement error, allowing for multiple, multi-dimension variables, and testing for hierarchical factor structure (p. 9). Shemwell and Yavas (1999) suggest that the analysis of latent variable represented by composite scales offers several critical advantages. First, comparison at the higher level of analysis may reveal patterns not seen by studying individual items only. Second, analysis at the higher level of analysis allows the theory underlying the latent constructs to be meaningfully extended to practical applications (p. 71).

Results of Fit Indices for the Structural Model

The structural model with all the coefficients is shown in Figure 4.2. The first step in analyzing the structural model was to evaluate the model based on the fit indices. Overall, the fit indices indicated a fair to good fit for the model. The value of CMIN/DF was 2.394, below the 3.0 acceptable level defined by Kline (1998). The RMSEA value
for the structural model was .081, which is just slightly above the recommended .08 level. The values for the 90% confidence interval were .053, .109. Other fit indices also point to a good model fit, with all incremental indices above the acceptable .90 level (NFI = .932, GFI = .950, TLI = .932, CFI = .959). Cumulatively, these results indicate that the data was a good fit for the model. Table 4.6 provides the results of the fit indices for the structural model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% CI of RMSEA</td>
<td>(.053, .109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/DF</td>
<td>2.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Results of Fit indices for Structural Model
Figure 4.2: Structural Model
Correlations for the Structural Model

The structural model had 45 distinct sample moments, 23 distinct parameters to be estimated and 22 degrees of freedom. The results were based on data taken from 215 cases and indicate that Access Quality, Venue Quality and Contest Quality play a role in contributing to ST Quality as shown in Figure 4.2. Contest Quality explains 49% of the variance in ST Quality, which is by far the most of the three primary dimensions. Venue Quality and Access Quality explained approximately 4% and 2% of the variance in ST Quality respectively. ST Quality explained approximately 72% of the variance in Satisfaction, which in turn explained approximately 27% of the variance in Intent to Return.

The values for all three primary dimensions were significant (i.e., C.R. > 1.96). As shown in Table 4.7, primary dimensions that were significant included: a) Venue Quality <-> Contest Quality (C.R. = 6.288); b) Contest Quality <-> Access Quality (C.R. = 4.503); and c) Venue Quality <-> Access Quality (C.R. = 5.395).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covariance</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venue Qual&lt;-&gt;Contest Qual</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>6.288</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contest Qual&lt;-&gt;Access Qual</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>4.503</td>
<td>.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Qual&lt;-&gt;Access Qual</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>5.395</td>
<td>.607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Correlations for Structural Model.

Variances for the Structural Model

The variance for each of the indicators was analyzed (See Table 4.8). The critical ratio of parameter estimates ranged from 1.926 to 6.271. Two of the three indicators were
significant (i.e., they had a C.R. > 1.96). Access Quality (C.R. = 5.102) and Contest Quality (C.R. = 6.271) were significant. Venue Quality (C.R. = 1.926) was not significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Quality</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>5.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Quality</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>1.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contest Quality</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>6.271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Variances of Indicators in the Structural Model.

Path Analysis

Path analysis is concerned with the predictive ordering of variables. The starting point is the researcher’s theory about the causal relationships among a set of variables. Path analysis produces two major kinds of results. First, path analysis provides estimates of the magnitude of the hypothesized effects of the model. Second, path analysis allows the researcher to test that the model is consistent with the observed data. Thus, the model can either be deemed consistent and plausible or it can be rejected for inconsistency. Path estimates in this study were calculated using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE).

The results of the standardized total effects indicate that Sport Venue (.769) and Destination (.763) were highly predictive of Access Quality. Environment (.835) was highly predictive of Venue Quality. Product (.801) and Process (.795) were highly predictive of Contest Quality. Contest Quality (.567) had the most influence on ST Quality. Whereas, Venue Quality (.155) and Access Quality (.132) had no significant influence on ST Quality. ST Quality (.786) had a significant influence on a sport tourist’s level of Satisfaction. Finally, Satisfaction (.468) of the tourist does influence his or her
*Intent to Return.* The total effects and (standardized total effects) are provided in Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Access Quality</th>
<th>Venue Quality</th>
<th>Contest Quality</th>
<th>ST Quality</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST Quality</td>
<td>.151(.132)</td>
<td>.186(.155)</td>
<td>.700(567)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>.128(.104)</td>
<td>.157(.122)</td>
<td>.592(.446)</td>
<td>.846(.786)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent to Return</td>
<td>.066(.049)</td>
<td>.082(.057)</td>
<td>.308(.209)</td>
<td>.440(.368)</td>
<td>.520(.468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.923(.801)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.00(.795)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.248(-.156)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.000(.835)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Venue</td>
<td>.918(.769)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>1.00(.763)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Standardized Total Effects of Model

**Hypotheses Testing**

The argument in this study is that tourists evaluate multiple targets and standards (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000) of evaluation in the process of their visit to a sporting event. Thus, the quality of service during the visit to the sporting event is evaluated by the tourist at multiple levels of abstraction. The hypotheses outlined in this study suggest that the model has three primary dimensions of service quality for sport tourism comprised of *Access Quality, Venue Quality* and *Contest Quality*. Each of the three primary dimensions had two sub-dimensions each. Thus, visitors will aggregate their evaluations of the quality of the sub-dimensions to form their perceptions of the three primary dimensions which, in turn would influence the overall perceived sport tourism quality (*ST Quality*).
ST Quality directly contributes to visitor \textit{Satisfaction}, which enhances the guest’s \textit{Intent to Return} to the destination and the event at a future date.

\textit{Access Quality}

H₁ proposed that perceptions of the quality of accessibility (\textit{Access Quality}) to the places and things one wants to see and do directly contributes to the perceptions of \textit{ST Quality}. The relationship between \textit{Access Quality} and \textit{ST Quality} was not significant (C.R. = 1.231). H₁A proposed that perceptions of the visitor’s access to the \textit{Destination} directly influences the perceptions of the quality of access, which was significant (C.R. = 7.091) and well supported. H₁B proposed that perceptions of the visitor’s access to the \textit{Sport Venue} directly influences the perceptions of the quality of access, which was significant (C.R. = 7.091) and well supported.

\textit{Venue Quality}

H₃ proposed that perceptions of the sporting venue (\textit{Venue Quality}) directly contribute to the perceptions of \textit{ST Quality}. The relationship between \textit{Venue Quality} and \textit{ST Quality} was not significant (C.R. = 0.719). H₃A proposed that perceptions of the \textit{Environment} at the sport venue directly influence the perceptions of the quality of the sporting venue. The relationship between \textit{Environment} and \textit{Venue Quality} was not significant (C.R. = -1.666). H₃C proposed that perceptions of the \textit{Value} of products and services delivered at the sporting event directly influence the perceptions of the quality of the sporting venue. The relationship between \textit{Value} and \textit{Venue Quality} was not significant (C.R. = -1.666) and the hypotheses was not supported.
Contest Quality

H4 proposed that perceptions of the sporting contest (Contest Quality) directly contribute to ST Quality perceptions. The relationship between Contest Quality and ST Quality (C.R. = 4.083) was significant. H4A proposed that perceptions of the Process for organizing the sporting contest directly influence the perceptions of the quality of the contest. This relationship between Process and Contest Quality was significant (C.R. = 10.529) and the hypotheses was well supported. H4B proposed that perceptions of the sporting Product in the contest directly influence the perceptions of the quality of the sporting contest. This relationship between Product and Contest Quality was significant (C.R. = 10.529) was significant and the hypotheses was well supported.

ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return

H5 proposed that perceptions of sport tourism quality (ST Quality) directly contribute to visitor Satisfaction. The relationship between ST Quality and Satisfaction was significant (C.R. = 18.585) and the hypotheses was well supported. H6 proposed that perceptions of Satisfaction directly contributed to the visitor’s Intent to Return to the destination for another sporting event. The relationship between Satisfaction and Intent to Return was significant (C.R. = 7.752) and the hypotheses was well supported. Table 4.12 indicates which hypotheses were supported or not supported. Figure 4.3 provides a graphic representation of the hypotheses by showing arrows and critical ratio values for those relationships in the model that were significant. Relationships that are not significant do not show a corresponding arrow or a critical ratio value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>Support (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Access Quality contributes to ST Quality</td>
<td>1.231</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1A</td>
<td>Destination influence Access Quality</td>
<td>7.091</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1B</td>
<td>Sport Venue influence Access Quality</td>
<td>7.091</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Venue Quality contributes to ST Quality</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3A</td>
<td>Environment influence Venue Quality</td>
<td>-1.666</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3C</td>
<td>Value influence Venue Quality</td>
<td>-1.666</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Contest Quality contributes to ST Quality</td>
<td>4.083</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4A</td>
<td>Process influence Contest Quality</td>
<td>10.529</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4B</td>
<td>Product influence Contest Quality</td>
<td>10.529</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>ST Quality contributes to Satisfaction</td>
<td>18.585</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Satisfaction contributes to Intent to Return</td>
<td>7.752</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Hypotheses Supported/Not Supported
Figure 4.3: Diagram showing significant relationships
Alternative Model Comparison

The last step in this analysis is to generate an Alternative Model (See Figure 4.3) and compare it to the hypothesized model. Hair (1998) suggests that numerous alternative models may provide an equal or even better fit. Therefore, it is necessary to test competing models that represent truly different hypothetical structural relationships (p. 591). The researcher has generated an Alternative Model that seeks to test the causal relationships between ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return. The general thought is that Satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and firm performance (Babikas et al., 2004; Cronin et al., 2000; Fornell, 1992; Gotlieb et al., 1994). However, some research suggests that Satisfaction is an antecedent to perceived service quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991). Thus, the Alternative Model where the causal relationships between Satisfaction and ST Quality are reversed will be examined.
Figure 4.4: Alternative Model
Results of Fit Indices for the Alternative Model

The Alternative Model had 45 distinct sample moments, 23 distinct parameters to be estimated and 22 degrees of freedom. The results were based on data taken from 215 cases. The value of CMIN/DF was 5.389, which is above the < 3.0 acceptable level defined by Kline (1998). The RMSEA value for the alternative model was .143, which is well above the .08 level and is not an acceptable fit. The results for the fit indices are reported in Table 4.11.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% CI of RMSEA</td>
<td>(.119, .169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/DF</td>
<td>5.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11: Results of Fit indices for Alternative Model

Based on the results from comparing the original model to the alternative model, the researcher has concluded that the original model is a better fit for the model than the alternative model.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The final chapter provides a discussion of the results of the study. First, an overview of the study will be presented. The overview will be followed by an analysis of the descriptive statistics. A discussion of the findings will follow. Finally, this chapter will provide a summary of implications for the sport practitioner and the sport management scholar.

Overview of the Study

The primary purposes of this study were to: a) propose a comprehensive set of dimensions of quality in sport tourism services; and b) propose and test a model where perceived quality in selected dimensions is said to lead to client Satisfaction with the experience which, in turn, is said to influence the intent of the tourist to return to the event in the future. A secondary purpose of the study was to develop a scale to measure service quality in selected dimensions, client Satisfaction and Intent to Return. The resultant dimensions were generated, an appropriate scale was developed, and the proposed model was tested.

The resultant model that was developed was multi-dimensional and was applicable to tourists traveling for sport-related purposes. The underlying notion is that the sport tourist encounters multiple targets and standards (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000)
of evaluation in the process of visiting the destination. The final model was comprised of
three primary dimensions or targets of evaluation: a) Access Quality; b) Venue Quality;
and c) Contest Quality. Each of these primary dimensions was said to have two sub-
dimensions. The sub-dimensions for Access Quality included: a) Destination; and b)
Sport Venue. The sub-dimensions for Venue Quality were: a) Environment; and b) Value.
The sub-dimensions for Contest Quality included: a) Process; and b) Product. The model
suggests that the three primary dimensions account for the overall ST Quality, which
leads to a tourist’s Satisfaction with his or her visit to the event. In turn, Satisfaction
would influence the tourists’ intention to return to the event, and thus to the city or town
in which the event is being held.

Upon completing the conceptual development of the model, the author began to
develop the scale to measure service quality in each of the selected dimensions along
with an overall ST Quality, client Satisfaction, and Intent to Return. The resultant
questionnaire generated a total of 95 items. Section I of the questionnaire generated 56
items related to Access Quality, Venue Quality, Contest Quality, ST Quality, Satisfaction
and Intent to Return. Section II of the questionnaire generated 13 items which asked for
demographic information such as gender, marital status, age, ethnic background, annual
household income and highest level of education. It also asked the tourist about certain
traveling habits. Section III of the questionnaire generated 22 items related to the hotel or
motel. These items were placed at the end of the instrument so that only those persons
staying at a hotel or motel would respond. Four of the items in the instrument were not
germane to the model. Instead, these items were generated solely to collect data for the local sports commission.

The final aspect of the study was to test the proposed model using data collected from the 95 item questionnaire. Data was collected from spectators traveling to a major league All-Star sporting event in the United States. All tourists responding to the questionnaire were from a residence 50 miles or more away from the stadium. A total of 811 questionnaires were distributed to spectators attending the game and 225 were returned. Data from 10 of the questionnaires was not used, thus resulting in 215 usable cases in the data analysis.

The data from the 215 usable cases was analyzed using structural equation modeling. The software programs SPSS and AMOS 4.0 were utilized during this stage. The 95 item scale was further purified using principal axis factoring and item-to-total correlations. The responses of the final sample were subjected to two sets of analyses. First, the CFA Measurement Model assessed six primary sub-dimensions along with ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return. Next, the structural model was assessed, which provided information about the causal links in the model.

**Interpreting the Descriptive Statistics**

The mean scores for each of the six sub-dimensions were analyzed and reported. These six sub-dimensions are important because they contribute to the primary dimensions, which in turn contributes to the overall impression that a spectator has regarding his or her trip. It is important to analyze the descriptive statistics because the
mean scores provide a starting point for identifying points of service failure in sport tourism services.

The first primary dimension is Access Quality, which is important because sport practitioners want to make it easy for tourists to access their services. The mean scores for the Access Quality sub-dimensions were 5.87 for Destination and 5.67 for Sport Venue. These mean scores indicate that tourists perceived that it was easier to gain access to the destination than it was to get to the stadium in which the event was being held ($t(214)=2.98$, $p<.001$).

The second primary dimension is Venue Quality. The mean scores for the Venue Quality sub-dimensions were 5.32 for Environment and 3.13 for Value. These mean scores indicate that tourists perceived the surrounding physical environment to be of high quality. Tourists rated Value lower than Environment ($t(214)=18.06$, $p<.001$). Thus event marketers may consider highlighting the attractive environment of the stadium in their promotional materials. In addition, it should be noted that the venue of interest in this study was the first stadium designed specifically for major league soccer. For this reason, it is possible that the environment surrounding this particular sport venue is more “prestigious” in the eyes of many soccer fans. In terms of Value, event organizers and stadium personnel may want to re-evaluate their pricing on items such as concession food and beverage, merchandise, tickets and parking.

The final primary dimension is Contest Quality. The mean scores for the Contest Quality sub-dimensions were 5.34 for Process and 5.81 for Product. These are fairly high mean scores and thus acknowledge the fact that the game itself was very highly rated by
spectators ($t(214)=-8.23, p<.001$). This finding was no surprise because the game was very exciting.

**Discussion of the Findings**

While further research should be done on the service quality construct in relation to sport tourism, the results indicate support for a multi-dimensional model of service quality in sport tourism. The findings suggest that there is an overall perceived perception of sport tourism quality (*ST Quality*) which significantly contributes to a tourist’s perceptions of satisfaction. Moreover, *Satisfaction* was found to significantly contribute to a tourist’s decision to return to a sporting event and/or to a particular destination. These findings are important because they recognize the need for sport and destination promoters to satisfy those tourists traveling to their event at a particular destination. Further, the findings provide support for other studies that highlight the multi-dimensional nature of service quality.

As Dabohkar, et. al (1996) noted, service quality instruments can be effectively used by managers as a diagnostic tool at different levels of analysis. The resultant scale in this study provides managers with information about a tourist’s overall perception of their sport tourism experience. Further, at the subdimension level, the scale provides managers with a pragmatic way to identify service areas in need of further improvement. Results from the scale can be provided to event organizers such as sports commissions, governing bodies, government officials and other network partners involved in planning a sporting event.
Several studies (Bitner, 1992; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991) in the literature have highlighted the importance of the physical environment in relation to the service quality construct. Within sport, research conducted by Wakefield (1996) suggests that the stadium environment may have a significant effect on the extent to which a spectator desires to return to the venue. However, the current study found no significant relationship between the physical environment and the spectator’s perception of the sport venue.

Another important dimension of many studies on service quality is concerned with client-employee interactions that take place during the service encounter. The behavior and attitude of the employee during the service delivery have been found to be salient dimensions in the service quality construct. In this study, because of the low alpha level for Interactions ($\alpha = 0.452$), that subscale was eliminated from further analyses. The items for Interactions were targeted towards services such as ticketing, concessions and ushers. In hindsight, the items for this subscale should have talked about various interactions from a more general perspective. Future studies should take note of this fact.

One of the interesting findings from this study suggests that sport tourists are not overly concerned about the Value they receive when attending the event. Value was evaluated based on consumer perceptions of the prices for tickets, food and souvenirs as well as their perception of costs at the stadium of interest versus other stadiums they have visited. The findings from this study suggest that tourists are more willing to spend more money while on vacation. However, it should be noted that the high annual incomes in this study may explain why Value was not a significant factor. Because of the smaller
amount of research done in regards to Value, other investigators should look into this dimension in future studies. Further, this finding should be taken into account by sport marketers when merchandising and pricing items for special events which will attract large numbers of tourists.

The results from this study indicate that Access Quality explains only 2% of the variance in ST Quality. Scholars in sport tourism would suggest that event venues should be highly accessible to major highways, public transportation, parking, restaurants, hotels and other various accommodations. It should be noted in this study that Columbus as a destination for a sporting events is easily accessible partly due to it central locality in the Midwest. Site selection has also been deemed important in that the destination should be easily accessible via all forms of transportation and should provide more than adequate transportation services throughout the city.

The findings suggest that the most important influence on the sport tourist is the quality of the contest itself. Specifically, tourists placed greater emphasis on what transpired on the field and how the contest was organized. Conversely, the findings suggest that perceived Venue Quality and Access Quality had no significant relationship to a tourist’s overall sport tourism experience (ST Quality). These findings are similar in manner to those of Greenwell et al. (2002a), who found that the core product explained the greatest amount of variance in customer satisfaction. Whereas, only a marginal amount of variance in their study was unique to the physical facility or to service personnel. Based on these findings, it may be suggested that sport managers should focus on ensuring that the best events are delivered to the fans. In terms of the current study,
the best players were drawn from franchises both within and outside of the United States. In the future, sports commissions may consider attracting events involving foreign teams.

While the results from the current study point to the importance of the contest, the author is less confident that Contest Quality would be the overriding factor in other types of events. The event being studied was an All-Star Game, which brings together the best players and coaches. Further, it can be said that an All-Star Game is a nonpartisan type of event in comparison to a championship, tournament or even a small scale-event such as a regular season game. Fans are less likely to be highly attached to a particular team in an All-Star Game, but rather attend the event to be in the presence of the most accomplished players. In contrast to an All-Star Game, a fan traveling to a championship game may be influenced by his or her identification with one of the teams. In this case, the fan is more likely to have widely differing perceptions of the contest based on the outcome of the game, the officiating, excellence of play and so forth. Further, it may be true that Access Quality and Venue Quality may be more important factors to fans attending these types of events.

**Implications**

Service quality has been described as a great differentiator between companies and one of the most powerful weapons which an organization can possess (Kandampully, 1998). Service quality has been linked to outcomes such as customer satisfaction (Anderson et al., 1994; Grönroos, 1984, 1990, 2001; Ko & Pastore, 2004), customer loyalty (Kandampully, 1998; Zeithaml et al., 1990), value (Laroche et al., 2004) and repurchase intention (Fornell, 1992). Within sport, the concept of service quality has been
investigated, but with little emphasis on the perceptions of tourists attending sporting events.

The most important factor identified in the model for tourists traveling to a sporting event was the contest or the game itself. Managers must recognize that tourists are interested in witnessing a good contest in the same way as local spectators, season ticket holders and any other sports fan. Thus, managers should do everything possible under their control to put the best product (i.e., best players) on the field. However, one of the difficulties that managers encounter in conjunction with the product is that they usually have no control over the outcome of the game and how it unfolds. Because of the lack of control that managers have over the contest, it would be wise for them to focus attention on other quality issues. For example, the process for how the game is organized, monitored and controlled is also important to the tourist. Further, managers can have significant control over the physical environment in and around the stadium as well as the training of employees.

Another important implication resulting from this research is that the hypothesized model provides a starting point for thinking about sport tourism services. Managers must recognize the increasing numbers of tourists that will be attending their event(s). Attention must be given to the need for accommodation in the area for which the event is to take place. Further, both destination promoters and sport promoters must work together in an effort to provide the tourist with easy access to both the destination and the sport venue. These types of services, along with an excellent product on the field,
provide the consumer a high quality event and ensure a greater probability that guests will return to the destination in the future.

The findings from this study have important implications for scholars studying service quality. The conceptual framework derived from this study must be further expanded upon by scholars in sport. The study finds support for a multi-dimensional model of service quality in sport tourism. However, more research must be done to investigate additional factors in sport tourism services. For example, research should be conducted to examine the perceptions of active sport tourists when traveling to participate in a sporting event. An additional line of research inquiry may examine the perceptions of tourists traveling to nostalgic sport places such as museums, halls of fame and historic stadiums. The scale developed in this research may provide other scholars with ideas for future exploration into service quality within these areas of sport tourism.

The validity and reliability of the scale proposed in this research is dependent upon further research and replication of the scale and sub-scales. Scholars need to conduct further research to determine if tourists perceive an overall sport tourism quality in a variety of different events. Further, additional sub-dimensions should be generated and tested. The scale should be tested in a number of different destinations. For some events, it may be necessary to omit items or to make modifications of the scale. As new types of sport tourism are identified, it may also be necessary to modify the present structure of the scale to ensure its validity.

Finally, the results from this study can help to frame public policy initiatives in sport tourism. Public policy has been discussed within the sport tourism literature. For
example, the importance of the sport venue and its accessibility are important topics of interest within the public realm. However, this study found that perceptions of quality in relation to both accessibility and the sport venue explained only 2% and 4% of the variance in a tourists overall perceived quality while in Columbus. These low percentages should be analyzed from two perspectives. First, whenever the significance of the event increases the importance of other factors are minimized. For example, the significance of Access Quality and Venue Quality may be higher in an ordinary league game than in an All-Star Game. Of course, this finding needs to be verified in further research. Second, despite the low variance, event promoters should not overlook Access and Venue Quality. For example, if you analyze this finding from a gestalt perspective, the consequences of alienating fans who cannot access the city or destination could be costly. The costs of alienating 2% of 23,309 fans who would never come back to Columbus could ultimately be the difference between the ability to retain a profit and breaking even on the event. Further, the consequences for the GCSC may be attributed to fans not returning to Columbus and thus negatively impacting the city economically. It is also unknown whether these same fans would also prevent future sport tourists from visiting Columbus due to negative word-of-mouth
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Valued Guest,

Welcome to Columbus! We appreciate your time to fill out the following questionnaire regarding your trip to Columbus. The questionnaire can be returned to Guest Services (located on the Crew Kicker Plaza) or to one of the research associates (wearing a red Ohio State University T-Shirt) as you exit the stadium. The questionnaire is designed in fulfillment of a Ph.D. dissertation by a student at The Ohio State University. Should you have any questions about this study, please contact Dave Shonk via email at shonk.36@osu.edu. No names or confidential information shall be disclosed.

TOURIST PERCEPTIONS OF A COLUMBUS AREA SPORTING EVENT

QUESTONNAIRE
**SECTION I**

**Directions:** The following items are designed to get your opinions on several aspects of the Greater Columbus Area and the 2005 Major League Soccer All-Star Game. For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree with it by circling an appropriate number on the 7-point scale provided. If you strongly agree with the statement, circle 7; if you strongly disagree with the statement, circle 1; and so on. There are no right or wrong answers. Your spontaneous and honest response is important to the success of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The accessibility was very high during my trip</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is in a convenient location</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What makes the MLS All-Star Game great is the wise choice of this stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to purchase tickets for the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The design of Crew Stadium befits the MLS All-Star game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ticket prices for this event at Crew Stadium were worth the money</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The soccer contest was of high quality</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The officiating at the MLS All-Star Game was Fair</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The teams in the MLS All-Star Game were playing their best</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>This was the best trip I have ever taken for sport purposes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to attend the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I plan to attend another MLS All-Star Game in the future if it is held in Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Accessibility has been excellent during my trip</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I experienced no problems in getting to Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is centrally located in Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is well-suited to host the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The concession employees at Crew Stadium are friendly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Crew Stadium has an efficient layout</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Food was priced too high at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was one of the best soccer games I have ever seen</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The public address announcements at the MLS All-Star Game were prompt</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Players made the game exciting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>This trip has been a great sport tourism experience</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I believe I did the right thing by attending this game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another visit in the future</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Travel around the city was easy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Finding ways to get to Columbus was a difficult process</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game should not be held at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ushers are very helpful at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is an attractive stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The souvenir merchandise at Crew Stadium was too expensive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>This was a great soccer game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The scoreboard made it easy to keep track of the score at the MLS All-Star Game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Players were hustling and showing they cared about their performance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was an event worth visiting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Satisfied is a good description of how I feel about my visit to Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another sporting event</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>It was easy for me to go anywhere I wanted to go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Coming to Columbus is so easy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Getting to Crew Stadium was not difficult</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Crew Stadium ranks very high as a sport venue</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I enjoyed interacting with vendors at Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>The landscape of Crew Stadium is lovely to look at</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I have been to other stadiums with better prices than Crew Stadium</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was a high caliber game</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>The crowd made the MLS All-Star Game very exciting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>I was not pleased with my tourism experience in Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>I am so glad that I came to Columbus</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Please rate the following facilities/attributes of Columbus on the 7-point scale provided. If you believe the facility or attribute is excellent, circle 7, if the facility or attribute is very poor circle 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Historical/Cultural Attractions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Night Life</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you like to be entered into a drawing to win a prize from the MLS All-Star Game?

a) Yes (If yes, please provide contact information below, which will be used only for purposes related to contacting you if you win the drawing).

b) No

Name:__________________________________ Email or Phone: _____________________________

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**SECTION II**

**Directions:** Please answer each question about yourself by either circling the appropriate response or filling in the blank with the appropriate response.

61. Gender:  
   a) Male  
   b) Female

62. Marital Status:  
   a) Married  
   b) Single

63. What is your age? ______________________

64. Ethnic Background:  
   a) Native American  
   b) Black or African American  
   c) Hispanic  
   d) White or Caucasian  
   e) Other (specify) ___________________

65. Annual Household Income:  
   a) $0-$19,999  
   b) $20,000-$39,999  
   c) $40,000-$59,999  
   d) $60,000-$79,999  
   e) $80,000-$99,999  
   f) $100,000+

66. How many times per year do you travel for the purposes of attending a sporting event?  
   a) 1-2 times  
   b) 3-5 times  
   c) 6-12 times  
   d) 12+

67. How many nights will you spend in Columbus? _______________________________

68. Highest Level of Education:  
   a) Some High School  
   b) High School Graduate  
   c) Some College  
   d) College Graduate  
   e) Graduate degree or above

69. What is your zip code? ______________________

70. Are you traveling from a residence 50 miles or more away from Columbus?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

71. Did you drive to Columbus for the MLS All-Star Game and plan to return home later today?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

72. While in the Columbus area are you staying with friends and/or relatives?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

73. While in the Columbus area are you staying at a Hotel or Motel?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No  
   If yes, go to Section III below  
   If no, you’re finished and can return the questionnaire
 SECTION III:

**Directions:** This section should only be completed by guests staying at a Hotel or Motel. First, please indicate the name and city of your hotel. For each statement below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with it by circling an appropriate number on the 7-point scale provided. If you strongly agree with the statement, circle 7; if you strongly disagree with the statement, circle 1; and so on. Once again, there are no right or wrong answers and your spontaneous and honest response is important to the study’s success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to my Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is of high quality</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>I enjoyed interacting with front desk employees at my Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>The Hotel/Motel is one of the best I have ever stayed in</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Costs associated with my Hotel/Motel are very affordable</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is located in a convenient location</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Overall, my Hotel/Motel is excellent</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>My interactions with housekeeping employees were pleasant</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>The design of my Hotel/Motel is what makes it great</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is definitely worth the money</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>I experienced no problems in getting to where I needed to go from my Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>It is hard to find as good a Hotel/Motel as the one I am staying in now</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to make a reservation at my Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is very comfortable</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>You just can’t beat the price of staying in Columbus hotels</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>I enjoyed staying in my Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Foodservice employees at my Hotel/Motel were courteous</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is attractive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Columbus has great Hotels/Motels for the price</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>The Hotel/Motel in which I am staying is close to everywhere I want to go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>I would travel to Columbus just because of the Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Parking at my Hotel/Motel is convenient</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for participating!

*Please return the questionnaire to Guest Services (located on the Crew Kicker Plaza) or to one of the research associates (wearing a red Ohio State University T-Shirt) as you exit the stadium.*
APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER
QUESTIONNAIRE CATEGORIZATION FORM &
COMMENT FORM
FOR PANEL OF EXPERTS
May 31, 2005

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<City>>, <<State>> <<Zip Code>>

Dear <<Name>>,

As you are aware, I am conducting a study on consumer perceptions of service quality within the context of sport tourism. I am particularly interested in learning more about spectator perceptions of their experience upon traveling to a sporting event. My study hypothesizes that the most salient targets of service evaluation for a sport tourist relate to: a) accessibility; b) the accommodation; c) the sport venue; and d) the sporting contest itself.

The main purposes of the current study are to: a) propose a comprehensive set of dimensions of quality in sport tourism services; and b) propose and test a model where perceived quality in selected dimensions is said to lead to tourist satisfaction with the experience. In turn, satisfaction is hypothesized to influence the tourist’s intention to return to attend the event in the future. A secondary purpose is to develop a scale to measure service quality in selected dimensions, tourist satisfaction, and intention to return.

In an effort to make improvements, I am requesting that you provide the following feedback. First, please fill out the questionnaire and calculate the time it takes to complete. Further, please verify if the items listed in each category belong to the specified dimensions. If you think of other relevant items and/or dimensions, please write them down in the space provided on the Categorization Form. Finally, please respond to the questions listed on the Comment Form.

You may email me (shonk.36@osu.edu) your feedback or let me know that I can personally stop by your office to pick up the materials. My cell number is (571) 437-6105 should you have any questions. Thanks so much for your assistance! Your valuable time and thoughtful consideration of my project are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dave Shonk
Ph.D. Candidate, Sport Management
The Ohio State University

Enclosures:  Questionnaire
            Categorization Form
            Comment Form
QUESTIONNAIRE CATEGORIZATION FORM

The items for the 4 primary dimensions of sport tourism quality and their sub-dimensions are numbered below. Also listed are the items for ST Quality, Satisfaction and Intent to Return. The last page contains the items pertaining to demographic information. Please use the space provided to make corrections, add additional items, delete items and make any other helpful comments. The numbers indicated to the left correspond to the numbers on the Questionnaire.

1. ACCESS QUALITY
   Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the ease in getting to places he or she wanted to go

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The accessibility was very high during my trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Accessibility has been excellent during my trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Travel around the city was easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>It was easy for me to go anywhere I wanted to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Access to places is not a problem when staying in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1A. DESTINATION
   Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the ease in getting to Columbus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I experienced no problems in getting to Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Finding ways to get to Columbus was a difficult process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Coming to Columbus is so easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1B. SPORT VENUE
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the ease in getting to Crew Stadium*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Getting to Crew Stadium was not difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is in a convenient location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is centrally located in Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Getting to Crew Stadium was a round about and slow process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1C. HOTEL
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the ease in getting to the Hotel or Motel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to get to my Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is located in a convenient location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>I experienced no problems in getting to where I needed to go from my Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>The Hotel/Motel in which I am staying is close to everywhere I want to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Parking at my Hotel/Motel is convenient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. ACCOMMODATION QUALITY
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the quality of service experienced at the Hotel or Motel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is of high quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Overall, my Hotel/Motel is excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>It is hard to find as good a Hotel/Motel as the one I am staying in now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>I enjoyed staying in my Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>I would travel to Columbus just because of the Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2A. INTERACTIONS
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of interactions with Hotel or Motel employees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>I enjoyed interacting with front desk employees at my Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>My interactions with housekeeping employees were pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to make a reservation at my Hotel/Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Foodservice employees at my Hotel/Motel were courteous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2B. ENVIRONMENT
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the physical environment at the Hotel or Motel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>The Hotel/Motel is one of the best I have ever stayed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>The design of my Hotel/Motel is what makes it great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is very comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is attractive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2C. VALUE
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the value received from the Hotel or Motel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Costs associated with my Hotel/Motel are very affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>My Hotel/Motel is definitely worth the money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>You just can’t beat the price of staying in Columbus hotels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Columbus has great Hotels/Motels for the price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **VENUE QUALITY**  
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the quality of service experienced at Crew Stadium*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Crew Stadium ranks very high as a sport venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is well suited to host the MLS All-Star Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game should not be held at Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>What makes the MLS All-Star Game great is the wise choice of this stadium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3A. **INTERACTIONS**  
*Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of interactions with Crew Stadium employees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>It was difficult for me to purchase tickets for the MLS All-Star Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The concession employees at Crew Stadium are friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ushers are very helpful at Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I enjoyed interacting with vendors at Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>My interactions with the merchandise employees at Crew Stadium were pleasant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3B. ENVIRONMENT
Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the physical environment at Crew Stadium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>The design of Crew Stadium befits the MLS All-Star game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Crew Stadium has an efficient layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Crew Stadium is an attractive stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>The landscape of Crew Stadium is lovely to look at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>The parking at Crew Stadium makes it easy to get in and out quickly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3C. VALUE
Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the value received by attending the soccer game at Crew Stadium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Ticket prices for this event at Crew Stadium were worth the money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Food was priced too high at Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>The souvenir merchandise at Crew Stadium was too expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>I have been to other stadiums with better prices than Crew Stadium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. CONTEST QUALITY
Refers to a tourist’s overall perceptions of the quality of the soccer contest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The soccer contest was of high quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was one of the best soccer games I have ever seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>This was a great soccer game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was a high caliber game</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4A. PROCESS
Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the way in which the soccer contest is organized, monitored and controlled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The officiating at the MLS All-Star Game was fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The public address announcements at the MLS All-Star Game were prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The scoreboard made it easy to keep track of the score at the MLS All-Star Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The crowd made the MLS All-Star Game very exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The various ceremonies for this event were well planned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4B. PRODUCT
Refers to a tourist’s perceptions of the quality of the way the game was played

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>The teams in the MLS All-Star Game were playing their best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Players made the game exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Players were hustling and showed they cared about their performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ST QUALITY
Refers to a tourist’s overall judgment regarding the trip to Columbus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>This was the best trip I have ever taken for sport purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>This trip has been a great sport tourism experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>The MLS All-Star Game was an event worth visiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>I was not pleased with my tourism experience in Columbus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SATISFACTION**  
*Refers to a tourist’s judgment on whether the trip provided a pleasurable level of fulfillment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to attend the MLS All-Star Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>I believe I did the right thing by attending this game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Satisfied is a good description of how I feel about my visit to Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>I am so glad that I came to Columbus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTENT TO RETURN**  
*Refers to a tourist’s desire to attend another sporting event in Columbus in the future*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>I plan to attend another MLS All-Star Game in the future if it is held in Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another visit in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>I plan to return to Columbus for another sporting event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>There is no doubt that I will return for another visit to Columbus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

76. Gender:  
   a) Male  
   b) Female

77. Marital Status:  
   a) Married  
   b) Single  
   c) Other  
   (specify) ____________

78. What is your age? ________________

79. Ethnic Background:  
   a) Native American  
   b) Black or African American  
   c) Hispanic  
   d) White or Caucasian  
   e) Other (specify) ________________

81. How many times per year do you travel for the purposes of attending a sporting event?  
   a) 1-2 times  
   b) 3-5 times  
   c) 6-12 times  
   d) 12+

82. How many nights will you spend in Columbus? ________________

83. Highest Level of Education:  
   a) Some High School  
   b) High School Graduate  
   c) Some College  
   d) College Graduate  
   e) Graduate degree or above

84. Where do you live?  
   City _______________________  
   State _______  
   Country _______________

85. Are you traveling from a residence 50 miles or more away from Columbus?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

86. Did you drive to Columbus for the MLS All-Star Game and plan to return home later today?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

87. While in the Columbus area are you staying with friends and/or relatives?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

88. While in the Columbus area are you staying at a Hotel or Motel?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No

   If yes, go to Section III below

   If no, you're finished and can return the questionnaire
QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENT FORM

Please respond to the following questions pertaining to the questionnaire:

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest) please rate the questionnaire. Do you have any suggestions for how the layout and design of the questionnaire may be improved?

2. Do the four quality dimensions in sport tourism (access, accommodation, venue and contest) cover most of the experiences of a sport tourist? If you think of other relevant dimensions, please write them below.
3. Are all of the items listed in the questionnaire clear and concise? Do they belong to the dimensions they are listed under? If you think of other relevant items, please list them below or you can make note of them on the Categorization Form.

4. Are the directions comprehensive, clear, and easy to understand? Are they appropriate for the audience? If no, explain.
5. Is the questionnaire too long or short for the audience of sport spectators? Approximately, how long did it take you to complete?

6. Please provide any comments you may have for improving the questionnaire, if any.
REFERENCES


