

A MODEL OF PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY, PRICE,  
OVERALL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, AND REVISIT INTENTIONS AND  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CASUAL AND SERIOUS GOLFERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Gwynn M. Powell)

ABSTRACT

The total number of golfers in the U.S. has decreased for the past five years, whereas the total number of golf courses has continually increased. This situation has resulted in a keen competition among golf course managers to market their courses. In spite of the decrease in golfers, the total number of rounds played has steadily increased. This means fewer golfers are playing more golf. The purposes of this study were to explore the relationships among perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the golf context and to investigate the differences in these relationships between casual and serious golfers. A total of 365 golfers participated in this study. Data have been collected from two private and four public golf courses in Georgia. The survey instrument has been revised based on the assessment of a panel of experts and the pilot study conducted with 151 golfers. The primary statistical methods used in this study were structural equation modeling and multiple group analysis of SEM. According to the structural model test with all participants, perceived service quality positively influenced overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. Also, overall customer satisfaction positively affected revisit intentions. However, satisfaction with price did not have significant

relationships with overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. There was only one difference in the relationship between price and overall customer satisfaction: For serious golfers, satisfaction with price did not significantly influence overall customer satisfaction, whereas for casual golfers, satisfaction with price was an important determinant of overall customer satisfaction. This study provides golf course managers and leisure facility managers with managerial information on establishing a more effective marketing strategy to attract more customers. Several managerial implications are presented. First, golf course managers should improve service quality to attract more golfers. Second, interpersonal quality is the most important factor influencing customer satisfaction, followed by physical environment and program quality, respectively. Third, golf course managers should have a specific marketing plan based on the leisure seriousness of their customers. Finally, they have to keep communicating with their customers in order to know what they want and need.

INDEX WORDS: Service Quality, Price, Overall Customer Satisfaction, Revisit Intentions, Casual Leisure, Serious Leisure

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Juhui Lee and my son, Donghyun Hwang with heartfelt gratitude. They have been willing to do everything for me and sacrificed everything for me without any condition. So, I can confidently say that I could not have done anything without their sincere trust and support and that I am nothing without my family. They fully deserve to be extolled. My wife and my son, I love you so much forever.

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Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my wife and son. They rendered distinguished services to this work. They made me a good husband and good father. I am so happy to be the husband of Juhui and the father of Donghyun. I will strive to deserve to earn their respect.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Overview*

This study was driven by the idea that there may be some differences in relationships among perceived service quality of the golf course, the price of playing golf, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions according to the levels of golfers' leisure seriousness. Knowledge of these differences could provide the managers of golf courses with vital information to help them establish more efficient marketing strategies to attract more golfers. This study investigated perceived service quality and the price of playing golf in the relationship to overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions among golfers differing in golf seriousness. This chapter provides (1) an overview of the golf context, (2) theoretical framework for this study, (3) an overview of serious and casual leisure, (4) background of the research problem, (5) the purpose of the study, (6) research questions and hypotheses, (7) definitions of terms, and (8) delimitations.

#### *Golf Context in the United States*

According to the most recent report presented by the National Golf Foundation (NGF, 2006), the total number of rounds played in the United States has steadily increased for the past three years. Compared with the number of rounds, the NGF report shows that the total number of golfers in the United States has been relatively stable for the past two decades, and actually

decreased for the past five years. Nevertheless, the total number of golf courses has continually increased (NGF, 2004). While fewer people are playing more golf, the range of golf course choices from which golfers can select has expanded. Accordingly, this increase has resulted in a keen competition among golf course managers to market their courses. Marketing is regarded as an important management skill for golf course managers. Managers tend to focus more on frequent golfers rather than those who play golf once in a while in order to improve their profit. Therefore, this study of factors influencing patronizing of golf courses may provide golf course managers with the information necessary to improve the quality of service and satisfaction in the relationship to price in order to attract potential golfers and retain their current golfers. Additionally, a comparison with serious and casual golfers may help managers refine their management strategies.

Golf has been a popular sport in the United States for a long time. Golf originated in Scotland, but has now become one of the most popular sports all over the world. The Professional Golf Association (PGA), Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), and United States Golf Association (USGA) are its representative organizations. Researchers in areas such as biomechanics and sport pedagogy have studied the physical skills necessary for improving golf performance. However, few studies have focused on the quality of service and the cost of playing golf in the relationship to the satisfaction of those who play golf more or less seriously. Given the expansion of the golf industry, the levels of satisfaction related to service quality and price could have significant implications for golf management. In turn, satisfaction with service quality and fees will likely impact intentions to revisit. Knowledge of determinants of overall satisfaction of both serious and casual golfers would help leisure managers or persons concerned with leisure activities understand how to promote more interest in golf. Investigating relationships among

service quality, price of playing golf, satisfaction and revisit intentions of golfers who play seriously or casually, or frequently or infrequently, may be an especially important problem from a management perspective. The results of research on such a problem could enable leisure administrators or other administrators or managers concerned with golf to make more beneficial strategic plans for golf courses and leisure management in the future.

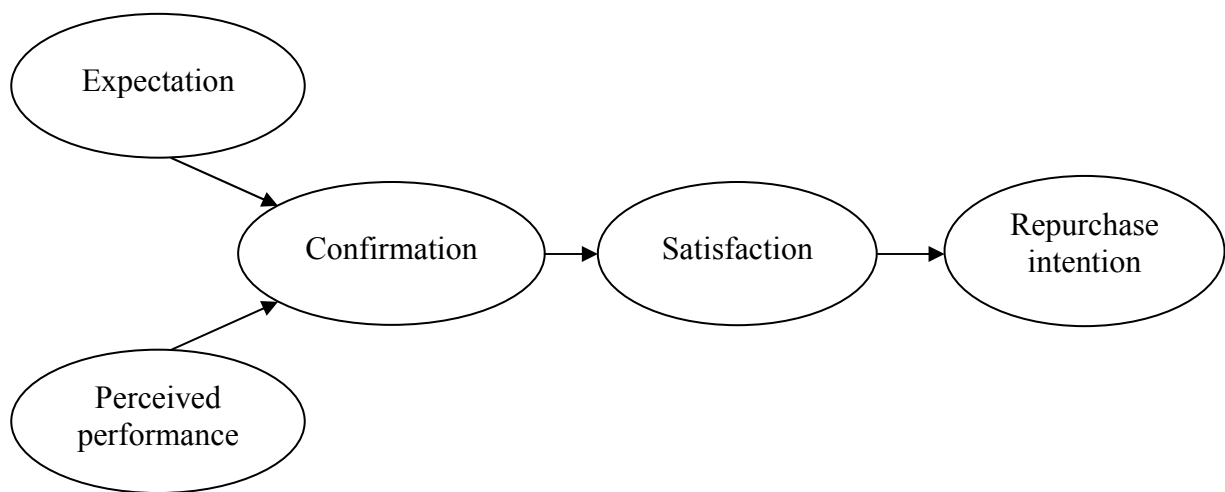
Despite the huge numbers of golfers, good conditions for golf, and positive characteristics of golf as a leisure activity, little research on the purposes, methods, and effectiveness of golf course marketing and management practices has been conducted (Petrick & Backman, 2002a, 2002b). It is reasonable to expect that the study of service quality of golf courses and the cost of playing golf would enable the marketing and management of golf courses to be enhanced. Not only can the study of golf course management including service quality and price be a catalyst for the golf industry but also the study of customer satisfaction of golfers can provide information that maybe need to encourage people to select golf as a their leisure activity. Furthermore, the examination of the differences between participants in terms of perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions can be a good indicator for comparing the nature of serious leisure with that of casual leisure.

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### *Expectation Confirmation Theory*

*Expectation confirmation theory* (ECT) posits that expectations, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post-purchase satisfaction (Oliver, 1993). If perceived performance of a product (a good or service) exceeds expectations, a consumer would be satisfied with post-purchase. In turn, post-purchase satisfaction will result in repurchase. As mentioned above,

service quality and price are referred to as determining factors influencing the choice of a golf course or the retention of existing golfers. At this point, one question should be asked: What is the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and revisit intentions? The problems can be addressed by explaining the expectation confirmation theory. ECT has been widely utilized in the consumer behavior literature in order to investigate consumer satisfaction, post-purchase behavior (repurchase intentions) and service marketing in general (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Dabholkar, Shepard, & Thorpe, 2000; Oliver, 1980, 1993; Patterson, Johnson, & Spreng, 1997; Tse & Wilton, 1988). This theory has been demonstrated in a wide range of consumer behavior contexts, including automobile repurchase (Oliver, 1993), camcorder repurchase (Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996), institutional repurchase of photographic products (Dabholkar et al., 2000), and restaurant services (Swan & Trawick, 1981). The construct of ECT consists of five main components: expectation, perceived performance, confirmation, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. Oliver (1980) reported the processes of ECT from expectation through repurchase intentions. First of all, consumers shape an initial expectation about specific products or services prior to purchase.



*Figure 1.* Expectation confirmation theory

Second, after accepting and using that product or service, they experience initial consumption. In turn, they form perception about first performance. Third, they evaluate its perceived performance compared with their initial expectation. And then, they determine the extent to which their initial expectation is confirmed or disconfirmed. Fourth, they form a satisfaction based on their confirmation level. Finally, satisfied consumers form a repurchase intention, whereas dissatisfied customers stop purchasing the product or using the service.

In the golf context, a golfer forms an initial expectation of golf course's service quality prior to using the course. Initially, the golfer decides to use the golf course. During a period of the first golf experience, he or she forms perception about the course's service. Third, the golfer evaluates its perceived performance vis-à-vis his or her original expectation of service quality and decides if the expectation is confirmed. At this point, service quality is regarded as an important determinant of satisfaction with a golf experience. Next, the golfer accesses satisfaction based on his or her initial expectation and perceived performance from the golf course. Finally, a satisfied golfer is more willing to go to the same golf course again, while a unsatisfied golfer may quit continuously using the golf course.

ECT implies that consumers' satisfaction with previous use of a service or purchase of a product is a primary determinant for their intention to repurchase that product or continue service use (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980, 1993). According to ECT, lower expectation and/or higher performance lead to greater confirmation, in turn positively influence customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. For instance, a golfer who holds lower expectation and/or who perceived higher performance is more likely to be more satisfied with his or her experience, in turn to be a loyal customer of the golf course. Inversely, higher expectation and/or lower performance cause disconfirmation, in turn negatively influence customer

satisfaction and repurchase intentions. With golf experience, a golfer who has higher expectation and/or who perceived lower performance is more inclined to be unsatisfied with his or her experience, in turn to stop using the course and to find more appropriate golf courses. In addition to this, Bhattacharjee (2001) suggested that ECT also posits that expectation is an additional determinant of satisfaction, because expectation provides criteria for consumers to form evaluate judgments about the targeted product or service.

To verify ECT in the context of leisure services, the way to measure service quality should be known. As emphasized before, it is quite difficult to gauge service quality because of its intangibility. There are three different measurements to measure service quality: SERVQUAL measurement (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), SERVPERF measurement (Burns, Graefe, & Absher, 2003; Cronin & Taylor, 1992), and Non-Difference score measurement (Brown, Churchill, & Peter, 1993). These measurements of service quality are explained at part of service quality below.

### *Serious and Casual Leisure*

Stebbins (1982, 1992, 1997, 2001a, 2001b) categorized leisure participants into two different types: *serious leisure* and *casual leisure* participants. In a similar vein, golfers are classified into two types: *serious* and *casual* golfers. The terms serious and casual leisure, coined by Stebbins (1982), are applied in order to more academically categorize golfers. Stebbins (1982, 1992, 1997, 2001a, 2001b) presented the definitions of both terms.

#### *Serious Leisure*

Serious leisure participants are commonly profound and long-lasting devotees of the activity, and invariably possess substantial skill, knowledge, or experience (Stebbins, 1992,

2001a). Stebbins (1992, 1999, 2001a) suggested three basic types of serious leisure participants: *amateur*, *hobbyist*, and *volunteer*. According to Stebbins (1992), amateurs are defined as devotees who like a certain kind of activity in contrast to those who are just superficial participants such as dilettantes or dabblers. However, the former are more likely to be considered as current amateurs who are willing to invest their effort, time, and money. Amateurs are those who are inevitably linked in a variety of ways with their professional counterparts in the field of art, science, sports, and entertainment. Stebbins (1992, pp. 38-40) noted that amateurs are associated with professionals in several ways:

- (1) Amateurs can also be described ideal-typically in terms of professionals' attributes;
- (2) A monetary and organizational relationship is frequently established when professionals educate, train, direct, coach, advise, organize, and even perform with amateurs, and when amateurs come to comprise part of their public;
- (3) There is an intellectual relationship among amateurs, professionals, and publics that springs primarily from the amateur population;
- (4) Amateurs criticize the professionals for overemphasizing technique and stressing superficialities in lieu of meaningful or profound work;
- (5) They insist everywhere on the retention of excellence;
- (6) They furnish professionals with the stimulus to give the public the best they can; and
- (7) The relationship between professionals and amateurs concerns career paths.

In other words, some amateur golfers have a better body of knowledge than some professional golfers and the publics view amateur golfers as professionals. Student golfers belong to and represent their schools or universities while getting scholarships. Amateur and professional golfers often discuss the history and technical skills of the activity. Sometimes amateur golfers

read more books about golf than professionals and have more understanding of techniques.

It is clear that amateur golfers are familiar with the exclusive body of theoretical knowledge and technique associated with golf. Amateur golfers master a widespread cultural tradition of golf and are linked with consistent application of a standard and provision of a service or product within the field of golf even though they do not get involved with actual monetary rewards. In addition, amateur golfers are known for their authority on the basis of their body of knowledge, experiences, and technique of golf. Amateur golfers have opportunities to play golf with professional golfers in “Pro-Am” (professional-amateur) open tournaments. Moreover, amateur golfers can hold an even broader knowledge of golf than professional golfers can. It is possible that some serious golfers are even more skilled at some aspect of the game than professional golfers. According to Stebbins (1992), “pre-professional amateur” (p. 47) golfers are legitimate serious golfers. Serious and non-professional golf fits generally in the amateur category. For the purposes of this study then, a serious (amateur) golfer is defined as one who belongs to a local golf organization, spends considerable money for private golf lessons, has participated in non-professional golf tournaments, plays at least one round per month, and holds more passion for and interest in golf than less serious participants.

According to Stebbins (1992), hobbyists are more serious about and committed to their endeavors and interest than casual golfers, even though there is no social necessity or personal obligation to be involved. Hobbyists have no professional alter ego, even if they sometimes have commercial equivalents. Hobbyists can be classified according to five categories: collectors, makers and tinkerers, activity participants, players of sports and games, and enthusiasts in one of the liberal arts. Field hockey (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986) and competitive swimming (Hastings, Kurth, & Meyer, 1989) are examples of sports and games where players can be hobbyists. The

term *hobbyist* implies being an enthusiast and devotee of some activity rather than one who merely dabbles in the activity in terms of motivation, time, interest, and money. Rojek (2005) concluded that “serious leisure activity is likely to correlate with stability in the domestic arrangements and time allocation of individuals and groups” (p. 179). Therefore, golfers who play golf as a hobby can also be regarded as serious golfers though they fall short of being “amateurs.” Accordingly, golfers who strive to become better golfers, who like the competitive round of golf, who think of golf as their primary leisure activity, and who are willing to sacrifice the time for other activities in order to play golf can also be categorized as serious golfers.

Additionally, Stebbins (1992) delineated the nature of serious leisure by identifying six qualities – (1) need to persevere; (2) leisure careers; (3) significant personal effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skill, or all three; (4) durable benefits; (5) unique ethos; and (6) strong identity with their chosen pursuits – that distinguished serious leisure from casual leisure (1992). The first quality is the participant’s occasional *need to persevere*. It is true that golfers can feel more positive when they overcome their anxiety about the unimproved score and keep practicing golf. The second quality is the tendency for amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers to have leisure “*careers*” in the endeavor. The idea of a career plays a role as a primary bridge between amateur and professional activity to link individual amateurs or professionals with the culture and social structure. Certain hobbyist golfers play golf five times a week in order to participate in the local non-professional tournament, and serious golfers have a sense of how far they have come over time and what they would like to achieve ultimately.

The third quality is *significant personal effort* based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skill, or all three. Amateur and hobbyist golfers subscribe to golf magazines, frequently watch the golf channel, and take private lessons to improve their golf skills. The

fourth quality is related to nine *durable benefits*: self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, recreation or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness, lasting physical products of the activity, and self-gratification or pure fun. Some hobbyist golfers feel the benefits of social interaction by playing golf with their friends or neighbors. Usually, they recognize at least one or more durable benefits when they play golf.

The fifth quality is a *unique ethos*. Serious golfers tend to create their own norms such as being quiet when swinging, and they talk frequently about golf at social events and feel connected with other golfers. Finally, the sixth quality is that participants in serious leisure tend to *identify strongly with their chosen pursuits*. Serious golfers are inclined to believe that golf is the best sport or leisure activity and is self-defining to a great extent. It is a salient “leisure identity” (Shamir, 1992) and, for those who take it seriously, it is what some have called a “central life interest” (Dubin & Champoux, 1977; Esterberg, 1994). For example, if someone is willing to pay for golf lessons in order to elevate his/her golf skills, he/she can be referred to as a golfer who is a serious leisure participant. For this study, serious golfers will be classified by measuring these six distinctions. This may be accomplished through quantitative data analysis with a new scale designed to differentiate serious golfers from casual golfers.

### *Casual Leisure*

On the other hand, the term *casual leisure* was also coined by Stebbins (1982) to distinguish a more popular form of leisure. In contrast to serious leisure, casual leisure is an “immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 18; 2001a, p. 53; 2001b, p. 305). In other words, Rojek (2005) illustrated the nature of casual leisure by claiming that “it is usually

opportunistic and aimless and focuses on hedonism and sensory stimulation as intrinsic sources of satisfaction” (p. 179). For instance, a father who is not interested in golf plans to go to the golf course with all other family members in order to celebrate his son’s birthday. In this case, he would be classified as a casual golfer. While serious leisure activity correlates with stability in the domestic arrangement and time allocation, casual leisure activity is more likely to correlate with contingency in the domestic arrangement and spontaneity in the time allocation (Rojek, 2005). Even though leisure practitioners tend to focus more on serious leisure participants, casual leisure participants must not be negligent because casual leisure participants are significantly important human resources for leisure as much as serious leisure participants.

As participants in a leisure activity, casual leisure golfers have been referred to as recreational golfers. Among the huge number of golf participants, some refer to golf as their primary leisure activity and play both more frequently and more seriously and, therefore, might be called “serious golfers,” whereas others regard golf as one of various leisure activities that they play both less frequently and less seriously and, therefore, can be called “casual golfers.” The former fits with Robert Stebbins’ concept of “serious leisure,” while the latter he would regard as “casual leisure” participants (Stebbins, 1997, 2001a). So far, much research has been associated with serious leisure. Few studies focusing on casual leisure participants and activities have been conducted. With more awareness of the importance of casual leisure, more studies should be implemented to investigate the nature of casual leisure and characteristic traits of casual leisure participants.

Since coining the terms *serious* and *casual leisure*, many researchers have studied serious leisure in the contexts of sports such as kayaking, field hockey, swimming, and bass fishing (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986; Hastings et al., 1989; Kane & Zink, 2004; Yoder, 1997). But,

most researchers have investigated serious leisure by interviewing participants in sporting activities. Additionally, few researchers have empirically tried to compare two types of leisure participation in the sports contexts in terms of motivation, constraints, satisfaction, and loyalty. This study originated from the anticipation that there would be significantly different responses to the same marketing strategy between serious and casual golfers.

Consequently, it is imperative to create a mechanism for differentiating participants in terms of serious and casual leisure. In turn, the procedure should be applied to the golf context. Therefore, this study will be valuable in helping golf course managers investigate the variables that impact each type of golfer and, in turn, establish more feasible marketing strategies for golfers who have different natures. Given their differences, serious and casual golfers likely have different expectations with respect to the conditions of their golfing. More specifically, the effects of the conditions (service quality) of the golf course and fees (price) on serious golfers might be different from those effects on casual golfers in terms of their overall customer satisfaction and intentions to revisit.

### *Background of the Research Problem*

Many studies in sport, recreation, and leisure management settings have focused on the relationships between perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions or revisit intentions (e.g., Berry, Zeithaml, & Parasuraman, 1990; Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991a, 1991b; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Brown & Swartz, 1989; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Davidow, 2000; Kelly & Swindell, 2002; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990), overall customer satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Cann, 1995; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Singh, 1990; Mittal &

Kamakura, 2001; Mittal, Ross, & Baldasare, 1998; Yu, Chang, & Huang, 2006), and repurchase intentions or loyalty (Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Jones, Mothersbaugh, & Beatty, 2000; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal et al., 1998; Rosenbaum, Massiah, & Jackson, 2006; Petrick, Tonner, & Quinn, 2006; Yu et al., 2006). However, these relationships were not examined in the golf context. Only a few studies have tested some part of these relationships in the context of golf (Petrick & Backman, 2002a, 2002b). For this reason, it is necessary to apply these relationships to the context of golf and to examine whether these relationships would be appropriate for the golf context. Also, it would be meaningful to investigate the differences in these relationships based on the levels of golfers' leisure seriousness in terms of leisure management.

In this study, a model of the relationships between perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions presented by Cronin and Taylor (1992) was used as a fundamental framework. They asserted that improved service quality positively influences customer satisfaction, and in turn this satisfaction results in increased repurchase intentions. In addition, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1994) provided the components of global evaluations including product quality and price as well as service quality. Based on these studies, price was added as a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction in the golf context for this study.

Also, numerous studies on serious leisure have been conducted after Stebbins (1982) coined the term *serious leisure* (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986; Hastings et al., 1989; Kane & Zink, 2004; Yoder, 1997). However, most studies concerned the benefits and the nature of activities as serious leisure. Although many studies have examined the relationships between perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the leisure industry and many others have focused on serious leisure, there is no study on the differences in the relationships

between perceived service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions based on leisure seriousness. For this reason, research is needed to reexamine the relationships between perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the golf context, and, furthermore, to investigate the differences in these relationships based on leisure seriousness.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between perceived service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions among golfers. Also, this study investigated the differences in the relationships between perceived service quality, price of playing golf, overall customer satisfaction with the golf course, and revisit intentions for the same golf course based on the magnitude of golfers' seriousness. Clarifying the perceptions of service quality and price on both overall satisfaction and intentions to revisit the same golf course, the effect of customers' overall satisfaction on their revisit intentions based on golfers' seriousness may have implications for attracting, serving, and retaining both serious and casual golfers.

### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

Research questions and hypotheses are as follows:

Q1: How does perceived service quality of the golf course relate to overall customer satisfaction?

Hypothesis 1: Perceived service quality positively relates to overall customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: The relationships between perceived service quality and overall customer satisfaction are different based on leisure seriousness of participants.

Q2: How does satisfaction with price of playing golf relate to overall customer satisfaction?

Hypothesis 3: Satisfaction with price positively relates to overall customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: The relationships between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction are different based on leisure seriousness of participants.

Q3: How does perceived service quality of the golf course relate to revisit intentions?

Hypothesis 5: Perceived service quality positively relates to revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 6: The relationships between perceived service quality and revisit intentions are different based on leisure seriousness of participants.

Q4: How does satisfaction with price of playing golf relate to revisit intentions?

Hypothesis 7: Satisfaction with price positively relates to revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 8: The relationships between satisfaction with price and revisit intentions are different based on leisure seriousness of participants.

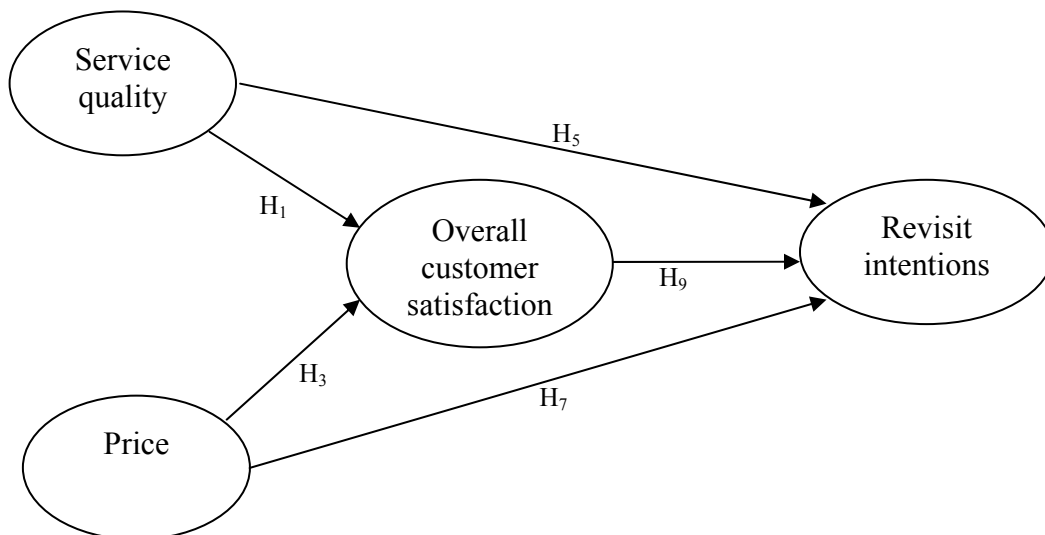


Figure 2. Proposed model relationships among the latent variables

Q5: How does overall customer satisfaction relate to revisit intentions?

Hypothesis 9: Overall customer satisfaction positively relates to revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 10: The relationships between overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions are different based on leisure seriousness of participants.

### *Definition of Terms*

*Serious Leisure* is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1992, 2001a).

*Casual Leisure* is an immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it (Stebbins, 1997, 2001a, 2001b).

*Serious Golfer* is an amateur and hobbyist golfer who refers to golf as their primary leisure activity and plays both more frequently and more seriously.

*Casual Golfer* is a golfer who regards golf as one of various leisure activities that play both less frequently and less seriously for immediate and intrinsic rewards.

*Service Quality* is the perceived ability of a service to provide satisfaction relative to available alternatives (Monroe & Krishnan, 1985).

*Revisit Intentions* are leisure participants' intentions that want to repeat the use of the same facility.

### *Delimitations*

The following delimitations were identified during the process of the study and may impact the generalization of research results.

1. The instrument to measure service quality was limited specifically in the context of golf. So, the service quality dimensions used for the study may not be applicable to other leisure or sports settings.
2. Participants and golf courses for the survey were selected in one geographic region, Georgia. So, golfers and golf courses may not represent all golfers and golf courses across the United States.
3. The results of the study based on participants' seriousness do not represent all leisure and sports activities. The results of other studies concerning other leisure or sports activities based on participants' seriousness may vary.
4. This study did not track which data were from which golf course, thereby limiting the use of the same data for the future study related to the differences in the relationships among perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions between private and public golf courses.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Overview*

In the business area, the basic model that service quality and price have significant relationships with consumer satisfaction and that consumer satisfaction influences repurchase intentions has been applied to a number of studies. However, just a few models have presented the relationship between service quality and price as major factors of both consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. For this reason, it is vital to demonstrate the basic model in the context of golf and to explore the relationship between service quality and price and repurchase intentions in the same context. This chapter will explain (1) golf as a leisure activity, (2) serious leisure and its similar terms, (3) service quality and price, (4) an overview of leisure satisfaction, and (5) relationships between perceived service quality and price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions.

#### *Golf as a Leisure Activity*

Even though there are constraints to playing golf, such as expensive equipment, greens and cart fees, and the time it takes to play eighteen holes, golf provides an enormous variety of benefits as a leisure activity. For example, adults can continue to play golf into advanced age, and anyone can enjoy playing golf even without a partner. Perhaps the greatest value of golf is that it can be quite an exciting and enjoyable recreational sport.

Golf shows most characteristics of other leisure activities, engaged in, as it is, for sheer enjoyment. And certainly it has much in common with other “ball” games. But it is unique in some respects as well. One characteristic of golf is the instability of the hit ball. Even though golfers hit the steady ball on the grasses, whenever they drop the ball the consequences are always different in comparison with other dynamic sports such as tennis, soccer, and basketball. In other words, what makes golf more interesting is related to the controllability of the golf ball. In comparison with other sports with balls, golfers often confront more difficulty in controlling the ball. It is partly this challenge that makes golfers return to the game. This is one of the reasons why most people enjoy playing golf. Furthermore, to get a better score golf needs elaborate skills for hitting the ball under various conditions. Practice makes golfers better players. In addition to these aspects of golf, playing golf is very beneficial for social behavior. Conversation with other players while playing golf is allowed. So, by talking with one another while on the golf course, they can build great rapport. Therefore, golfers, as leisure activity participants, experience some significant social rewards. These benefits have helped golf become one of the most popular leisure activities.

In the United States, it is true that one of the most popular sports is golf. In other words, golfing has become a crucial part of sport-based leisure activity. In comparison with other sports, the golf industry has increasingly expanded in terms of various equipment, courses, TV coverage, golf travels, and so forth for the past decades. According to the most recent report presented by the National Golf Foundation (2006), the total number of rounds played in the United States has steadily increased for the past three years. This growing number of rounds is indirect evidence that shows that the golf industry has increased. On the other hand, there is widespread interaction among Americans in golf as both a professional and a recreational sport. A significant

characteristic of golf is that it can also be a great recreational sport, accessible to women, children, and older adults, because it does not require great strength or superior health.

Until recently, compared with the number of rounds, the total number of golfers in the United States has been relatively stable for the past two decades. The total number of golfers consists of two types: *occasional golfers* and *core golfers* (Golf 20/20, 2002). An occasional golfer is a golfer who plays less than eight regulation rounds in a year, and a core golfer indicates one who plays at least eight regulation rounds in a year. From the perspective of marketing, managers of golf courses are more likely to focus on core golfers than occasional golfers because even though the former represent 47% of total golfers, they account for 91% of rounds played and 87% of golf-related spending. Recently, while the total number of golfers has decreased slightly for the past five years, the total number of golf courses has continually increased (NGF, 2004). While fewer people are playing more golf, the range of choices of golf courses from which golfers can select has expanded. Accordingly, this increase has resulted in a keen competition among golf course managers to market their courses. So, marketing strategies have been regarded as more important management skills for golf course managers to attract more patrons to their courses. For this reason, managers tend to focus more on frequent golfers rather than those who play golf once in a while in order to improve their profit.

Managers of the golf courses are responsible for marketing their golf courses by attracting more golfers. In spite of focusing only on core golfers, occasional golfers should not be ignored in marketing because they compose a considerable portion of golfers in terms of number, rounds played, and money spent. Managers have to focus on both core and occasional golfers in their marketing strategies. Possibly, golfers who regard golf as their major leisure activity, who spend more money to improve their golf skills, and who recognize the benefits of

golfing are likely to play golf more often than other golfers.

### *Serious Leisure and Analogous Terms*

Stebbins (1982) coined the term *serious leisure* to mean the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1992; 2001a). Serious leisure is further defined by a set of distinctive qualities, including the occasional need to *persevere*, the opportunity to follow a *career*, *personal effort*, *durable benefits*, *a unique ethos*, and *distinctive identity*, and these qualities are uniformly found among its amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers (Stebbins, 1992). Over the last few decades, several terms related to serious leisure have been introduced in the leisure literature, including *recreation specialization*, *leisure involvement*, *leisure identity salience*, *commitment to leisure activity*, *loyalty to leisure activity*, and *flow*. In order to clarify the meanings of serious and casual golfers in my research, it is necessary to explain each of these terms.

#### *Recreation Specialization*

The term *recreation specialization* has been conceived as a process that entails change over time by Bryan (1977), Kuentzel (2001), and McFarlane (2001, 2004). Bryan (1977) refers to specialization as a continuum of behavior from the general to the particular reflected by equipment and skills used in the sport and activity setting preferences. Recently, Scott and Shafer (2001a; 2001b) have defined it as “a process that entails a progression in how recreationists participate in and view the activity over time” (p. 357). Along with recreation, recreation specialization was re-conceptualized by Ditton, Loomis, and Choi (1992) as “a process by which

recreation social worlds and subworlds segment and intersect into new recreation subworlds and the subsequent ordered arrangement of these subworlds and their members along a continuum” (p. 39). Also, Scott and Shafer (2001a) argued their conception of recreation specialization based on the idea that participants’ involvement in leisure activity shifts over time as reflected by the focusing of behavior, the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the tendency to become so committed to the activity that it becomes a central life interest.

Once people participate in certain recreational or leisure activities, their levels of interest in and commitment to the activity change over time according to a variety of factors such as their relationships with other constituents, the acquisition of necessary or advanced skills and knowledge, family support, their physical condition, and so on. Some will remain committed to the activity, whereas others will become less committed and will eventually give up and try to find another activity. In the same vein, Bryan (2001) concluded that recent empirical leisure studies concerning specialization demonstrate that while some participants do progress to more specialized stages of activity, most people probably do not. Recreation specialization is limited at least to the former with respect to golf. They are more likely to seek out new challenges and solutions, such as more advanced skills, more difficulty of spatial distinctions, limited time, new rules, and so forth. Bryan (2000) describes that these challenges and solutions are the bases of specialization. In turn, they would create different types of activity. This movement is known as *segmentation*. Strauss (1984) suggests three segmentation processes: 1) budding off, 2) splitting off, and 3) intersecting. These phenomena are grounded in symbolic interactionism. In this perspective, people generate shared meanings through their interactions and those meanings become in time their reality (Patton, 1990).

Researchers in the area of leisure studies have demonstrated that recreationists along the

specialization continuum vary significantly in terms of environmental attitudes (Dyck, Schneider, Thompson, & Virden, 2003), place attachment (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000), motivations (McFarlane, 1994), attitudes toward depreciative behaviors (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 1992), resource conditions (Shafer & Hammitt, 1995), setting preferences (Scott & Thigpen, 2003), perceptions about crowding (Kuentzel & McDonald, 1992), choice of destinations (McFarlane, Boxall, & Watson, 1998), use of information when planning trips (Martin, 1997), and other aspects of participation. Leisure researchers have considered recreation specialization as a similar concept of serious leisure. To explain the concept of recreation specialization further, several other terms must be identified: *social world*, *subworld*, *commitment*, and *segmentation*.

A *social world* is defined as a universe of regularized mutual response, an arena in which there is a kind of organization, and a culture area, its boundaries being set neither by territory nor formal membership but by the limits of effective communication (Shibutani, 1955) and as an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants (Unruh, 1979). A *subworld* is considered as a specialized field or area of interest within a social world proper (Scott & Shafer, 2001a). For example, a company that possesses a recreational football team can be a social world and the football team can be a subworld. Furthermore, the subworld can have more specified subworlds. Individuals participate in at least one social world; in turn, the social world consists of one or more subworlds. In a similar vein, the social world and subworld could be found in the sphere of leisure activity. A social world encompasses at least one primary activity, places where the activities occur, technology, and organizations that evolve to further one or more aspects of the social world (Strauss, 1978). Unruh (1979, 1980) categorized the subworld into four types: strangers at the low beginning of the continuum, tourists, regulars, and

insiders at the high end of the continuum. These subworlds are classified in terms of their social proximity to knowledge about the social world and the activities therein. Also, he described these subworlds with four characteristics in order: orientation, experience, relationship, and commitment along a theoretical dimension.

Accordingly, the social world can be the general and the subworld can be the particular. In much of the leisure literature, commitment is explained as necessary and antecedent to progress from the general to the particular. In addition, Bryan (2000) argued that specialization is shown at the high end of the continuum. Scott and Shafer (2001a) support Bryan's statement while saying that with increasing skill, knowledge, and commitment related to a complex leisure activity, behavior tends to become ever more focused on a specialized facet (dimension) of it. However, commitment is not necessary for progression. In the perspective of symbolic interactionism, specialization can emerge at any level of the continuum by interactions among social members or those members and social circumstances. Some participants as neophytes would possibly drift toward a subworld specialized at the order of orientation, experience, or relationship. Various internal and external factors would influence this progression. At this point, further empirical studies should be conducted in the future to verify this expectation.

The aforementioned commitment is defined as "personal and behavioral mechanisms that bind individuals to consistent patterns of leisure behavior" by Kim, Scott, and Crompton (1997, p. 323). In other words, commitment is the participant's tendency to maintain consistent behavior in the leisure sphere. Shamir (1988) categorized commitment as two types: external commitment, which is the material and social circumstances of the individual, and internal commitment, which is the participant's internal state. Internal commitment is closely associated with intrinsic motivation related to challenge, competence, stimulation, exploration, and curiosity

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Buchanan (1985) identified three major components of commitment: consistent or focused behavior, a function of side bets, and affective attachment. The first component, consistent or focused behavior, refers to the participant's behavior that tends to reject alternative behaviors. The second, a function of side bets, implies investments of something of value, such as financial and emotional resources, friendships and self-perception. The last component, affective attachment, involves the attraction of the goals and values of a role, activity or organization.

As mentioned above, the process by which an activity changes from the general to the particular, or from social worlds to subworlds, or from subworlds to other subworlds more specialized or developed is called segmentation. Segmentation is the pervasive tendency for worlds to develop specialized concerns and interests within the larger community of common activities, which act to differentiate some members of the world from others (Kling & Gerson, 1978). Moreover, subworlds can segment around several sources or conditions, including spatial distinctions, types of objects, technology and skill, ideology, intersections, and recruitment (Strauss, 1984). Segmentation involves three processes: "budding off," which is the process of a change from A to A1, "splitting off," which is the process of diversification from A to A1, A2, and A3 or B, and "intersection," which is the process of creation of new B or C by intersection of A1 and A2.

In summary, stages of recreation specialization can be explained with McFarlane's (2001) four stages: awareness, adoption, continued involvement, and commitment. When participants reach the stage of commitment with their involvement to the activity, they try to find new challenges or changes. In turn, they have the processes of segmentation – budding off, splitting off, and intersecting – to specialize the activity. Continual involvement in an activity is

fueled by just the right reinforcement schedule of success and recognition of that success by peers having analogous values. But the “push” to specialize comes from a continual seeking new challenges and solutions (Bryan, 2000). These changes, challenges, and solutions are motivation to avoid boredom from doing the activity too well for too long, or frustration from not doing the activity too well for too long (Bryan, 2000). This segmentation results in recreation specialization. However, in a generated new subworld, members of the new subworld may face continual conflict with others over access to resources, public opinion, and so on. This situation is similar to the process of establishment of a new paradigm suggested by Kuhn (1996).

In comparison with Stebbins’ serious leisure, recreation specialization has several similarities. The first is that both recreation specialization and serious leisure are clearly associated with the same subject, which is complex leisure activity. In other words, both occur within the leisure sphere, and the leisure sphere contains not simple leisure activity but complex leisure activity. This activity requires some combination of substantial skill, knowledge, and experience. Second, both recreation specialization and serious leisure help explain leisure motivation. Both explain how participants in the two continue their participation in a complex leisure activity. Third, career and commitment are also important considerations in the two. Many previous research studies show commitment must be reached prior to becoming the two. This indicates an importance of insiders distinguished from strangers, tourists, and regulars within a social world.

On the other hand, they have also several differences. First, serious leisure explains far more completely complex leisure activity and has the broader boundary regarding the rewards, personal identity, and the place, which means the community and society, than recreation specialization does. Second, the serious leisure perspective encompasses a typology of complex

leisure activities, such as amateur, hobbyist, and volunteer. Third, within this typology, six distinctive qualities indicate in more detail what complex leisure activity is. Fourth, from a serious perspective, recreation specialization is considered as part of the leisure career experienced in those complex activities. In short, serious leisure can cover the extent of recreation specialization. Finally, recreation specialization refers to the process of segmentation as an important consideration. Otherwise, serious leisure does not deal with it in most cases of complex leisure activities.

### *Leisure Involvement*

In explanation of recreation specialization, the term *involvement* should be mentioned. As previously mentioned, involvement is antecedent to commitment as an important component of specialization for a certain activity. Involvement is a commonly used word and the various meanings associated with it range from describing explicit behavior to latent social psychological constructs (Havitz & Mannell, 2005). Involvement is defined as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational or leisure activity or associated product, evoked by a particular stimulus or situation, and which has drive properties (Havitz & Dimache, 1997), the degree to which a person devotes him or herself to an activity or associated product (Slama & Tashchian, 1985), and the strength or extent of the cognitive linkage between the self and stimulus object (Kyle & Chick, 2002). According to these definitions, the level of involvement is not stable but variable from low to high. Leisure involvement shows the degree to which participants think about their leisure and recreation, and their behavior varies according to the level of leisure involvement. In other words, with the aforementioned involvement definitions, leisure involvement can be regarded as people's involvement with various recreation activities and associated products, leisure service agencies, or setting (Havitz & Dimache, 1997).

Previous researchers categorized involvement into three types: ego, enduring, and situational involvement. Selin and Howard (1988) defined *ego involvement* as a state of identification existing between an individual and a recreational activity. And, in Havitz and Dimanche's (1997) involvement definition, the first phrase refers to enduring involvement, and the second phrase refers to situational involvement. In the area of business research, ego involvement is conceptually similar to enduring involvement, which is independent of purchase situations and is motivated by the degree to which the product relates to the self and/or the hedonic pleasure received from the product (Richins & Bloch, 1986). Stability is the norm with respect to most facets of enduring involvement (Havitz & Howard, 1995). Richins and Bloch (1986) found that enduring involvement remains consistent or evolves slowly over time. Havitz and Mannell (2005) presented four involvement facets: "attraction, which is a combination of interest in, and pleasure derived from participation; sign, which refers to the symbolism associated with participation; the risk probability, associated with choosing one activity over other opinions; and risk consequences, associated with making a poor choice" (p. 154).

In Havitz and Dimanche's (1997) involvement definition, the second phrase indicates situational involvement. Situational involvement describes temporary feelings of heightened involvement that accompany a particular situation (Houston & Rothschild, 1978). In contrast to enduring involvement, situational involvement varies from context to context. The facets of situational involvement are congruent with those of enduring involvement. In previous leisure literature, a common opinion that leisure involvement is best conceptualized as a multidimensional construct is found. Kyle and Chick (2002) suggested that three dimensions (facets) of leisure – attraction, sign, and centrality to lifestyle – are commonly supported. A construct related to involvement in leisure activities is commitment. Accordingly, involvement is

an antecedent of commitment as aforementioned. Kyle and Chick postulated that “involvement primarily focuses on recreationists’ emotional attachment to leisure activities whereas commitment, in the sociological sense, examines the structural elements external to the individual that bind them to the activity” (2002, p. 428). The relationship between enduring, situational involvement, and flow in leisure participation is that the higher the level of enduring involvement, the more likely participants are to experience the stage of high psychological involvement or flow, and that situational involvement at this connection mediates the relationship between enduring involvement and flow. In other perspectives, high psychological involvement can be considered as psychological or internal commitment, and internal or external commitment to leisure activity is an important antecedent for recreation specialization.

In comparison with serious leisure, leisure involvement is a subordinate concept. Leisure involvement can be considered an important component of serious leisure. Second, leisure involvement uses psychological and sociological approaches to understand commitment, whereas serious leisure can be reached with the two aforementioned approaches, as well as more various approaches, such as economic and time investment, skill, knowledge, and attitude. On the other hand, both leisure involvement and serious leisure are useful to explain motivation to leisure activities. Also, both require some sacrifices in other areas. When participants reached the high level of involvement and serious leisure, they would miss opportunities to see or experience more various social worlds. Furthermore, both have negative sides, such as addiction to involvement and disappointment of serious leisure, known as costs.

### *Leisure Identity Salience*

To explain further Selin and Howard’s (1988) definition of involvement, “a state of identification existing between an individual and a recreational activity,” the term *identification*

needs defining. Shamir (1988) asserted that the essence of personal commitment to leisure pursuits is self-definition in terms of the leisure pursuit. Accordingly, it can be expected that identity is a subordinate concept of both involvement and commitment. *Identification* may be defined as a person's feeling to a certain object or as self-definition in terms of that object (Shamir, 1992). Also, *identity salience* is defined as "the importance of an identity for defining one's self relative to other identities the individual holds" (Shamir, 1992, p. 302) and as the relative importance or centrality of a given identity (Hoelter, 1983). Following the same pattern, leisure identity salience is the identity salience emerging within the leisure sphere. Stryker (1980) premised the identity salience in the identity theory as the degree to which one is committed to the role giving rise to the identity, and Hoelter (1983) supported Stryker's premise by demonstrating that identity salience increases as the degree to which one is committed to the role giving rise to the identity increases. According to Shamir's definitions, it can be inferred that the higher the identity salience, the greater the motivation to perform the identity.

Shamir (1990) argued that a leisure identity may become salient and valued for three reasons: expression and affirmation of the individual's talents or capabilities, providing the person with social recognition, and affirmation of the individual's central values. This leisure identity salience has a considerable influence on forming involvement to the leisure pursuit. However, leisure identity salience can affect involvement both positively and negatively. Therefore, a participant who has the negative leisure identity salience on a certain leisure activity will not get to the stage of involvement with the activity and in time will give up continuing participation in the activity. Otherwise, a participant holding the positive leisure identity salience on a leisure activity will feel involvement to the activity, and the participant experiencing high involvement is likely to develop commitment to the leisure activity.

More specifically, identity salience's major determinant is social commitment, according to Stryker's (1987) identity theory. Social commitment is considered as the degree of participants' relationships to particular others to become part of the social world as being a similar person with others within the social world. According to this relationship between social commitment and identity salience, greater social commitment helps place the identity in the higher position of the salience hierarchy.

Compared with serious leisure, both influence motivation to leisure activity. Leisure identity salience tends to stimulate participants to raise motivation of the activity. Leisure motivation to the activity also positively influences individuals to become serious leisure participants and, inversely, serious leisure motivates participants to continue the activity. Second, the two are positively affected by several factors, including level of perceived social commitment, level of effort, skill, training, and perseverance, and invested time and money. Third, both are influenced by internal (psychological) and external (social) circumstances. However, there are several differences. One difference is the extent of the subject to explain them. Leisure identity salience is limited to only the individuals, whereas serious leisure's subject is a complex leisure activity. Second, commitment considered as an importance is different each. Important commitment to explain leisure identity salience indicates social commitment and to explain serious leisure is commitment to leisure activity pursuit. Finally, serious leisure can cover the extent of leisure identity salience as its antecedent.

In conclusion, a model might be established with all the aforementioned terms, including recreation specialization, leisure involvement, and leisure identity salience. The model starts with social commitment and ends with specialization. A leisure participant experiencing social commitment realizes the importance of one's identity in the social world (activity), which is

leisure identity salience. The participant with leisure identity salience is quite often likely to be involved in the social world (activity), which means involvement. To the social world (activity), high involvement associated with necessary skills, knowledge, and relationships develops to commitment. In this process, the participant who does not have those necessities sometimes stops participating in the activity to find other proper activities, and sometimes jumps to segmentation without the process of commitment. In the stage of commitment, the participant tries to segment the social world (activity) into subworlds (specific or different activities) through the processes called budding off, splitting off, and intersection in order to seek new challenges, changes, and solutions. In this process, the participant is often likely to conflict with resources, public opinion, and perception of identity. Recreation specialization occurs when subworlds become new settings. Subworlds might segment into other subworlds. Perhaps the most important thing is that serious leisure could be located at the significant or high level of commitment.

#### *Csikszentmihalyi's Flow*

Csikszentmihalyi has studied “flow” over three decades. In 1975, in his book *Beyond boredom and anxiety: The experience of play in work and games*, he described flow as “holistic sensation(s) that people feel when they act with total involvement” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 36). As explained in this book, the general perception of flow is that the balance of challenge and skill is the characteristic most central to flow experience focused on activities at work and games. This formula was repeated in Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) later book *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. Surprisingly, other leisure researchers have argued that challenge-skill balance is the condition to foster flow experiences (Voelkl, Ellis, & Walker, 2003). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) has isolated the phenomenological state of flow as six qualities of the

flow experience: concentration of individuals' attention, forgetting personal problems, losing individuals' sense of time and of themselves, feeling competent and in control, having a sense of harmony, and union with their surroundings. This concept of flow emphasizes the individual's internal feeling rather than extrinsic rewards. This is known as the *autotelic* (self-purpose or self-goal) perspective. In his book, *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), *enjoyment* was differentiated from *pleasure* by presenting that enjoyment requires an investment of energy or effort, whereas pleasure can be experienced without any effort. In comparison with serious leisure, significant personal effort – aforementioned as the third quality of serious leisure – is required to involve in a serious leisure activity. Otherwise, it can be said that casual leisure (Stebbins, 1997) tends to experience pleasure without significant efforts.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested the eight major components of enjoyment, elaborated from the six qualities of the flow experience. These major components are as follows: clear goals, concentrating and focusing, a loss of the feeling of self-consciousness, the merging of action and awareness, distorted sense of time, direct and immediate feedback, balance between skills and challenges, and a sense of personal control. However, not all of these eight components are required to experience the flow. At this point, it is logical that to reinforce enjoyment is to experience the flow.

In comparison, serious leisure participants tend to have careers in their endeavors (Stebbins, 1992). When having their careers, they are more likely to have clear goals to endure their pursuits for a long time. To experience the flow, a high degree of concentration is needed on a certain activity or situation at hand, while serious leisure needs a longer time period of involvement, called commitment. Furthermore, the flow requires a balance between skills and challenges, whereas serious leisure more often needs personal effort to acquire necessary skills to

match their skills with challenges. In other words, serious leisure allows the time period of unbalance between skills and challenges. In contrast, the flow does not stay at the same level for a long time in terms of one activity, so the flow should move toward the deeper sense of the flow above personal averages by stretching skills or challenges in order to continue to experience the flow for a long time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990). Both flow and serious leisure show strong identity although during the flow experience the sense of self would disappear. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) categorized these elements into two sets: characteristics of flow and conditions of flow. Characteristics refer to the experiential nature of the flow phenomenon itself and conditions mean circumstances and environments that are assumed to be conducive to flow experiences.

Generally, the flow and serious leisure enhance the quality of life. People can reach optimal experience through flow and find or create secondary goals of their lives through serious leisure participation. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), intrinsically rewarding flow, called autotelic, could be experienced in teaching activity by individuals who already possess high skills for newcomers because they enjoy teaching itself. In a similar vein, leisure career counselors who counsel some delinquent adolescents without any external reward are seen as serious leisure participants. In other words, the intrinsic rewarding structure provides both flow and serious leisure. In addition, both concepts consider involvement and a significant level of commitment as important components. Finally, both concepts are based on the symbolic interactionism perspective.

On the other hand, there are several different aspects between flow and serious leisure. Characteristics of flow express the state of the individual's mind at hand, whereas natures of serious leisure are lasting situations longer than flow. The other concerns subjects. Serious leisure is explained within complex leisure activities requiring skills, knowledge, experiences,

and so on, while flow is appeared within complex societies such as tasks at work, games or plays at leisure, studies at school, and other obligations. Finally, flow can sometimes be experienced within serious leisure activities, and probably sometimes not within them. Moreover, flow can occasionally be experienced through casual leisure activities immediately intrinsically rewarded without any psychological effort. For future research, empirical studies to examine the co-relationships between flow and serious leisure participations have to be conducted.

### *Potential Costs and Benefits of Serious Leisure*

When people participate in certain leisure activities, some people experience enjoyment. On the other hand, some experience not enjoyment but irritation or annoyance because of expensive fees, bad relationships with others, pressure of other obligations, and so forth. As a coin has its two sides, leisure can result in both benefits or rewards and costs. The Benefits Approach to Leisure (BAL) was conceptualized at the 1991 Workshop on Applying Knowledge about the Benefits of Leisure (Driver & Bruns, 1999). Also, benefits-based management (BBM) was applied to leisure industries and leisure services in the 1990s (Dustin, McAvoy, & Goodale, 1999). In contrast, the costs of leisure, referred to as the “dark side” (Bryan, 2000), were overshadowed until the end of the 1990s. Driver (1990) defined a leisure benefit as “a change that is viewed to be advantageous, an improvement in condition, or a gain to an individual, to a group, to society, or even to another entity” (p. 94). Later, Driver and Bruns (1999) defined individual leisure benefits as those positive psychological outcomes people obtain from participating in leisure activities. Bryan (2000) defined a leisure cost as a negative outcome from leisure participation.

Driver (1990) categorized leisure benefits into four general types: *personal, social and cultural, economic, and environmental*. More recently, Driver and Bruns (1999) categorized

leisure benefits as improved condition, prevention of a worse condition, and realization of a specific satisfying psychological experience. In regards to his three types of leisure (casual, project-based, and serious leisure), Stebbins (2001b) suggested that the benefits of casual leisure included creativity and discovery, edutainment, regeneration or re-creation, flow, and well-being and quality of life and Stebbins (1992, 2001a, 2005a, 2005b) also suggested that the benefits of project-based and serious leisure included seven personal benefits and three social benefits. Those personal benefits of serious leisure consist of *personal enrichment, self-actualization, self-expression, self-image, self-gratification, re-creation or generation, and financial return*. The social benefits comprise *social attraction, group accomplishment, and contribution to the maintenance and development of the group*. These benefits are also considered as the fourth quality of serious leisure, namely, durable benefits. This emphasizes that these benefits are enduring only through serious leisure participation. For developing these ideas, Shamir (1988) asserted that benefits (rewards), such as enjoyment and pleasure, can be easily experienced in ordinary leisure activities but only committed leisure can foster a heightened self-image and lead to deep satisfaction. Moreover, Iso-Ahola (1999) postulated that the more serious people become about their leisure, the more they can acquire intrinsic rewards.

In recent research, Gibson, Willming, and Holdnak (2002) demonstrated the self-benefits of serious leisure, including social interaction, sense of belonging, self-enrichment, and re-creation by explaining the benefits of being a gator football fan. Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner (2002), in their research focusing on people who participate in serious leisure involving dogs, revealed that caring dogs tend to develop human social relationships. Also, Jones and Symon (2001) argued that lifelong learning as serious leisure is important as it endows a strong link between the concepts of work and leisure. In this research, they suggested that learning a skill as

serious leisure may occasionally provide future employment opportunities. Also, they suggested benefits of serious leisure activity in terms of time structure, enforced activity, sharing of experiences with others, provision of goals, a sense of status, or social identity, self-actualization and self-expression, the following of a career path, a quest for excitement or re-creation, and the enhancement of social capital, defined as “those community-based resources that reside within a range of social networks” (p. 275). In Jones’ (2000) research, serious leisure provides a strong sense of social identity to the participant, and then as a consequence of this social identification, compensates the negative aspects of such participation. Also, that self-benefits such as enhancement of self-concept and subsequent self-esteem maintenance of enhancement are achieved is demonstrated. Finally, Baldwin and Norris (1999), in their research with American Kennel Club (AKC) activity participants, identified five categories of benefits: dogs as a source of positive affect, the sense of companionship and appreciation, an array of social benefits, benefits associated with living with dogs, and testing skills.

Compared with research about benefits of serious leisure, studies about costs of serious leisure tend to be overshadowed. Stebbins (2001b) identified the following four costs of casual leisure: boredom, absence of a distinctive leisure identity, large blocks for serious leisure, and a limited contribution to self and community. With serious leisure, Stebbins (1992, 2001a, 2005a) subdivided the costs of serious leisure into three types: *disappointments*, defined as the absence of expected rewards and their manifestations; *dislikes*, sprung from the disagreeable behavior of certain people and from the unpleasantness of certain procedure and situation; and *tensions*, such as interpersonal friction. Every serious leisure activity contains each cost or combination of three costs, and these costs sometimes attenuate the benefits of serious leisure. Serious leisure considers commitment as an important component; commitment requires personal and

behavioral investment. Lee and Scott (2006) suggested that behavioral commitments are referred to as side bets and external commitments. As consequences of significant side bets and external commitments, severe penalties may result in such costs as disapproval, loss of friends, or a loss of a strongly held identity (Stebbins, 1992). In other words, side bets and external commitments mean costs of serious leisure, and penalties indicate other costs stemming from those costs.

Gillespie et al. (2002) explained that dog hobbies as serious leisure are expensive and time consuming, and those who have dog hobbies are more likely to be negligent of their families. Bryan (2000) mentioned that “people can be just as strongly addicted to their sports from intermittent reward schedules as they can to a casino’s slot machines” (p. 20). Jones (2000) suggested several negative consequences of serious leisure identification, such as in-group favoritism, out-group derogation, and unrealistic optimism. Additionally, three main types of costs of a dog hobby were identified: monetary, time constraint, and negative emotional experiences caused by dogs (Baldwin & Norris, 1999).

Dustin et al. (1999) presented the benefits equation as subtraction of negative outcomes from positive outcomes of leisure behavior. Along with this equation, the net benefits of serious leisure may arithmetically be subtraction of the costs from the benefits or rewards of serious leisure. Therefore, if we can anticipate a variety of potential benefits and costs of serious leisure, we may enhance the net benefits of serious leisure. For potential benefits, first, serious leisure activity participation may help bind families when the members of family participate in the same serious leisure activity together. Serious leisure seems to be a lasting career. So, families who participate in the same serious leisure activity will have more time to understand other members of the family well. This tendency can be widespread to include groups of friends, small or large organizations, companies, and so on. The second issue involves gender. If husbands encourage

their housewives to participate actively in serious leisure activities, gender equity may be accelerated. Thirdly, serious leisure activity could potentially become a psychological substitute for the lost work career. Participation in serious leisure will help those who lost their jobs find their self-identity. Fourthly, participants in serious leisure requiring advanced skills and knowledge can have more opportunities to get new jobs. Fifthly, serious leisure activity participants who seek out new challenges and changes are possibly great sources for generations of new activities. Moreover, many serious leisure participants strive to preserve the surrounding environment and wildlife. The last potential benefit of serious leisure is the continuum of the benefits. For instance, one who has a certain illness can improve one's physical condition through a sport as serious leisure activity, and he or she can work more to earn money, and then his or her family can go more often to the theater to watch movies, or he or she may have an opportunity to participate in another serious leisure activity.

On the other hand, there may be an equivalent amount of costs of serious leisure with the benefits. First, participating in serious leisure for too long may break the family bond. Second, certain serious leisure activity requiring extreme power and energy may prevent women from accessing the activity, and the situation may result in a gender equity issue. Third, the aforementioned third potential benefit of serious leisure can also keep them from finding a new job. Fourth, several serious leisure activities may destroy the environment and wildlife. Fifth, excessive time for serious leisure leaves little time for casual leisure (because casual leisure is also important for a person's life) or other kinds of serious leisure activity, or other career opportunities. Next, serious leisure from time to time can bring about excessive competitions within a social world or with other social worlds. Finally, as with the benefits, there is the same continuum of costs of serious leisure. According to the benefits equation, as the costs decrease,

the benefits increase. In a similar fashion, if we reduce the potential costs of serious leisure, the benefits of serious leisure may be increased.

### *Service Quality and Price*

#### *Service Quality*

Over the past three decades, growing leisure time and interest in leisure have accelerated leisure studies. Both researchers and practitioners have increasingly focused their attention on leisure. As a result, the leisure industry has become a booming industry all over the world. In accordance with this boom, the competitiveness in the markets of all industries is considered as a primary requirement for the success of the industry. For the leisure industry, one way to enhance the competitiveness among a large number of the same leisure organizations is to improve the quality of the leisure organization. In the same vein, one significant method to boost the quality of the leisure organization is to improve the quality of the leisure products. Thus, it can be said that leisure practitioners have to strive to enhance the quality of the leisure products in order to achieve the success of the leisure industry.

The *products* include goods and services. The *goods* are physical objects including all the equipment, such as golf clubs, baseball bats and gloves, and tennis racquets, as well as promotional materials and merchandise, such as T-shirts, caps, and accessories (Chelladurai, 2005). These goods are defined as tangible or physical products that offer benefits to consumers (Shank, 2004). The quality of a good can somewhat easily be evaluated by the customers or the manufacturers. In contrast, the *services* are defined as intangible occurrences, processes, or performances produced and consumed simultaneously (Chelladurai, 2005), and as intangible or nonphysical products (Shank, 2004). Service quality is more difficult to be evaluated than goods

quality. For these facts, studies on the measurement of service quality can provide leisure providers or practitioners with quite critical information to keep current leisure consumers using their services and to attract more new consumers. In other words, perceived high service quality positively affects consumer satisfaction; in turn, high consumer satisfaction is positively related to repurchase intentions. These relationships were theoretically supported by the previous research of Bitner (1990), Bolton and Drew (1991a, 1991b), Brown and Swartz (1989), Cronin and Taylor (1992), Davidow (2000), Parasuraman et al. (1988), and Zeithaml et al. (1990).

The distinction of services from goods is that service appears through the intangible interactions (trades or exchanges) between employees and clients or providers and consumers. For a full understanding of the concept of *service quality*, the concepts of *service* and *quality*, as well as the attributes (characteristics) of both, must first be clarified. Based on previous definitions, a *service* can be redefined as an intangible occurrence, process, or performance generated by complex personal interactions even with physical objects between providers and consumers during producing and consuming simultaneously. Several researchers have frequently discussed the following four service attributes (characteristics): *intangibility*, *perishability*, *heterogeneity*, and *simultaneity* or *inseparability* of production and consumption (Bateson, 1977; Berry, 1980; Gronroos, 1990; Lovelock, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Shostack, 1977). In the leisure and tourism area, Williams and Buswell (2003) combine all of the aforementioned characteristics into one, intangibility.

A service is intangible in the sense that it is performance that the customer cannot count, judge, measure, evaluate, and test in advance of actually obtaining it. In the context of golf, for instance, golfers have to experience the kindness of the employees on the golf courses before they can evaluate their quality. Second, a service is perishable. A manufacturer can produce and

save goods for future sale, whereas a service cannot be stored for future use. The third attribute of service is heterogeneity. Heterogeneity refers to the fact that services are relatively more variable in quality from producer to producer, from customer to customer, and from day to day (Chelladurai, 2005; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). For example, an employee of the golf course does not provide golfers with the same level of service, so individual golfers may recognize the level of service differently. Fourth, production and consumption of services occur simultaneously. An example is that when a pro-golfer is teaching as the process of production, a client is learning as the process of consumption.

Recently, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) have argued with substantial situations that the service attributes including intangibility, heterogeneity, simultaneity, and perishability are not sufficient to differentiate a service from a good. For example, clients can record the lessons of a pro-golfer by camcorder. Of course, from the perspective of the intangibility, the recorded instruction is acceptable as a service. However, clients utilize the camcorder to record the lessons by attaining permission to record from the pro-golfer. At this time, in order to store the service, the camcorder and permission (which can be considered as goods and additional service) were used, and the recorded lessons can be considered as other goods even though the clients did not pay additionally for the recording. Furthermore, if the clients use the recording later, there is no personal interaction expressed as an essential component of service during that period. Most importantly, the recording is not a service defined as an intangible occurrence, process, or performance but goods, and the recorded lesson is not suitable for service that is produced and consumed simultaneously. Due to the many ideas associated with the service attributes, the researchers did not reach a complete consensus.

To compensate for this insufficiency of the service attributes to distinguish services from

goods, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) introduced the new criterion of *transfer of ownership* as a distinctive characteristic of a service. The assumption of this criterion is that there is no transfer of ownership in the case of a service, whereas ownership in the case of a good can be transferred. So far, this characteristic is more likely to be a logical argument.

Additionally, to fully understand service quality, the concept and the characteristics of *quality* must be acknowledged. Monroe and Krishnan (1985, p. 212) defined perceived product quality as “the perceived ability of a product to provide satisfaction relative to available alternatives.” On the basis of this definition, the assumption of quality can be conceptualized as the quality is the product’s relative congruence with the consumer’s ideal product features to deliver satisfaction. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), the quality is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected level and perceived level. From the perspective of the gap theory, the positive gap indicates a positive quality, while the negative gap represents a negative quality. Darby and Karni (1973), Kurtz and Clow (1998), and Zeithaml (1981) divided the characteristics of the quality into three: *search*, *experience*, and *credence*. *Search* is defined in the sense that consumers can evaluate prior to purchase. For example, most goods such as shoes, jeans, refrigerators, and lawn mowers can be assessed prior to purchase. *Experience* refers to the characteristic that customers can evaluate only after purchase. For instance, food, catering service, entertainment, and cosmetic surgery can be measured only after purchase. *Credence* denotes the difficulty to evaluate even after the service; examples include CPA services, funeral services, and education. Most services are evaluated by the characteristic of credence. Most service include few search properties and many experience and credence properties.

*Service quality* is a difficult concept to define, and as such, for three decades many

researchers tried to conceptualize it. As result, the concept of service quality was developed. The foundation of service quality theory stems from the relationship between the product quality and customer satisfaction; more specifically, quality results from a comparison of perceived with expected performance. Customer service quality has most commonly been understood on the basis of expectancy disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980; Oliver & De Sarbo, 1988; Tse & Wilton, 1988). Disconfirmation appears when there are differences between what one receives and what he or she wanted to receive in an experience.

Similarly, another common concept of service quality was suggested by Czepiel, Solomon, Gutman, and Surprenant (1985) and Parasuraman et al. (1985) as the outcome of a comparison between expectations of a service and what is perceived to be received, which is known as the “SERVQUAL” measurement. This conceptualization of service quality was generated from the *gap theory*. This gap theory is based on a comparison of service expectations (E) and actual performance or perceptions (P). In the services marketing literature, perceptions (P) are defined as consumers’ beliefs concerning the service received (Parasuraman et al., 1985) or experienced service (Brown & Swartz, 1989). And expectations (E) are defined as desires or wants of consumers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The positive gap (P-E) score describes the highly satisfactory quality that occurs when perceived performance exceeds expectations. The zero score (P-E = 0) also indicates the satisfactory quality that results when performance matches expectations. Finally, the negative gap score represents the unsatisfactory quality resulting when perceived performance does not meet or exceed expectations.

A significant limitation of gap theory is that it is difficult to compare service quality between two different items. For example, if the expectation score is 7 and the perception score is 6, the gap score is -1. If the expectation score is 1 and the perception score is 2, then the gap

score is +1. According to the gap theory, the former (-1) implies unsatisfactory quality, while the latter (+1) indicates highly satisfactory quality. However, it is unacceptable that the quality of the latter is greater than that of the former.

Obviously, it is difficult to measure customers' expectation and perception. In various contexts, customers' expectation can be affected and changed by various factors including word of mouth, personal needs, external communications, past experience (Zeithaml, 1990), and the image of the organization (Gummesson & Gronroos, 1987). For this reason of difficulty to evaluate service quality correctly, the measuring methods of service quality have been changed and developed. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) and Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1991) proposed that service quality is concerned with what the service provider *should* provide; later, Brown et al. (1993) suggested that the concept of service quality should be changed from the level of service that *should* be provided to the level that *would* be provided to investigate service quality. Also, Hamilton, Crompton, and More (1991) supported this change by indicating that the desires of the consumers, not their expectations, should be measured against the level of performance. More recently, some researchers have indicated that a consumer's desires or ideal standards should be measured (Fornell, 1992; Spreng et al., 1996).

To compensate for the SERVQUAL measurement's instability, two different assessment scales for service quality were suggested: the "SERVPERF" measurement and the "Non-Difference" score measurement. The SERVPERF assessment was developed from a performance-based (performance-only or satisfaction-only) alternative to the SERVQUAL measure (Burns et al., 2003; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). This SERVPERF assessment is based on the premise that the performance-based assessment is better for measuring service quality than the use of a difference score of expectation and perception. The other type of approach is the

performance of a non-difference score measure of service quality (Brown et al., 1993). In this measure, subjects are asked to indicate how their perceptions matched their expectations instead of using both expectation and perception scores and using the difference scores. Various methods of measuring measure service quality have been presented, with little agreement on each method because of the characteristics of service quality.

Service quality has its origins with measuring customer satisfaction. Basically, this theory delineates the construct that high levels of perceived service quality result in increased consumer satisfaction; in turn, increased consumer satisfaction positively impacts the consumer's repurchase intentions. Along this construct, it is expected that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). However, Bitner (1990) and Bolton and Drew (1991a, 1991b) reversely argued that satisfaction is an antecedent of service quality. Later, Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrated in their empirical study that satisfaction is an outcome of service quality. Furthermore, both satisfaction and service quality are related to each other. In other words, highly perceived service quality makes consumers feel their satisfaction, while satisfaction of experiences also repeatedly results in high service quality perceived.

Customers' subjective judgment on perceived service quality is not simple. According to Parasuraman's (1995) *zone of tolerance theory*, the range of satisfaction varies from "delight," which means high satisfaction, to "unacceptable" service, which means low satisfaction, and between "desirable" and "adequate" service lies what is called the customer's zone of tolerance. The width of the zone of tolerance can also vary from wide to narrow according to the level of the customer's expectation. Johnston (1995) suggested instances in which the width of the zone of tolerance can be changed according to the level of customer's risk. By knowing the customer's zone of tolerance, leisure practitioners and managers can reduce the level of service and their

costs without reducing their customers' satisfaction.

From the management perspective, assessment of service quality can provide managers and practitioners with quite important information for marketing strategies. Quality improvement programs have become an important and powerful tool for organizations, including sports and leisure organizations (Shank, 2004). One of the concepts related to quality is *Total Quality Management* (TQM). Evans and Lindsay (1993) defined TQM as an integrative management concept for continuously improving the quality of goods and services delivered through the participation of all levels and functions of the organization. Additionally, TQM is referred to as “incorporating design, control, and quality improvement, with the customer as the driving force behind the process” (Shank, 2004, p. 453). Moreover, TQM is “a management approach that seeks to achieve quality through the participation of all organizational members, by aiming at long-term success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the organization and society” (De Knop, Van Hoecke, & De Bosscher, 2004, p. 57).

Within the context of golf, TQM of the golf course is a management approach that strives to reach quality through engagement of all members of the golf course, by targeting long-term success through golfers' satisfaction and benefits to all golfers, employees, and managers of the golf course. TQM philosophies are based on aligning the organizational structure to best match the needs of the consumers (Shank, 2004). Both service quality and TQM are approaches to management mostly focused on customers.

The three fundamental components of TQM – focus on customer (satisfaction), continuous improvement (innovation), and total involvement (commitment) (Reagan, 1996) – support a primary focus of TQM on the customer. Shank (2004) proposed four characteristics of TQM: customer-driven quality, visible leadership, data-driven processes, and continuous

improvement philosophy.

Customer-driven quality implies that quality is defined by the customer, and all TQM practices are implemented to satisfy the customer. Visible leadership means that top management is responsible for leading the quality charge. Data-driven processes indicate that all TQM processes are driven by data collection, use of measurement, and the scientific method. Finally, continuous improvement philosophy means it is always possible to do a better job, and continual, small changes in improvement are just as critical as an occasional major breakthrough. To measure TQM, Martinez-Lorente, Sanchez-Rodriguez, and Dewhurst (2004) suggested seven dimensions: top management leadership, customer relationships, supplier relationships, workforce management, product design process, process flow management, and quality data and reporting.

Over the past three decades, the dimensions for measuring service quality have been changed and developed. Regardless of the type of service, customers employed basically similar criteria in judging service quality. Parasuraman et al. (1985) created the criteria encompassing ten key categories related to service quality determinants. These ten determinants of service quality are as follows: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding, and tangibles.

According to the characteristics of quality (Darby & Karni, 1973; Zeithaml, 1981), only two of the ten determinants containing tangibles and credibility are categorized as search properties. Most of the determinants are experience properties: access, courtesy, reliability, responsiveness, understanding/knowing, and communication. The remaining two determinants fall into the category of credence properties: competence and security.

Table 1

*Advanced Models of Service Quality*

Researchers	Dimensions/Subdimensions	Remarks
Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reliability</li> <li>● Responsiveness</li> <li>● Competence</li> <li>● Access</li> <li>● Courtesy involves</li> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Credibility</li> <li>● Security</li> <li>● Understanding/knowing</li> <li>● Tangibles</li> </ul>	American school
Gronroos (1984)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technical quality (What?)</li> <li>● Functional quality (How?)</li> </ul>	Scandinavian school
Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tangibles</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Reliability</li> <li>● Assurance</li> <li>● Responsiveness</li> </ul>	American school
Rust & Oliver (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Service product (technical quality)</li> <li>● Service delivery (functional quality)</li> <li>● Service environment</li> </ul>	
Wisniewski & Donnelly (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tangibles</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Reliability</li> <li>● Assurance</li> <li>● Responsiveness</li> </ul>	Area of recreation and leisure
Dabholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Customers' overall perception of service quality</li> <li>● Primary dimensions</li> <li>● Subdimensions</li> </ul>	Hierarchical dimension
Wakefield & Blodgett (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intangibles: reliability, empathy, assurance, responsiveness</li> <li>● Tangibles: Building design &amp; décor, equipment, ambience</li> </ul>	Hierarchical dimension
Brady & Cronin (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interaction quality: attitude, behavior, expertise</li> <li>● Physical environment quality: ambient conditions, design, social factors</li> <li>● Outcome quality: waiting time, tangibles, valence</li> </ul>	Hierarchical dimension
Sureshchandar, Rajendran, & Kamalanabhan (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core service or service product</li> <li>● Human element of service delivery</li> <li>● Systematization of service delivery – non-human element</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangibles of service (servicescapes)</li> <li>• Social responsibility</li> </ul>	
Burns, Graefe, & Absher (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Recreation experience</li> </ul>	Area of recreation and leisure
Ko & Pastore (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program quality: range of program, operating time, information</li> <li>• Interaction quality: client-employee interaction, inter-client interaction</li> <li>• Outcome quality: physical change, valence, sociability</li> <li>• Environment quality: ambient condition, design, equipment</li> </ul>	Hierarchical dimension. Area of the recreational sport industry
Burns & Graefe (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanitation &amp; cleanliness</li> <li>• Safety &amp; security</li> <li>• Condition of facilities</li> <li>• Responsiveness of staff</li> <li>• Condition of the natural environment</li> <li>• Information services</li> </ul>	Area of leisure and tourism

The Scandinavian school with its main writers, Gronroos and Gummesson, suggested a somewhat different category compared with that of the U.S. school. Gronroos (1984) suggested two dimensions: technical quality and functional quality. The technical quality (what) can be measured by the customers' objective manner, while the functional quality (how) is measured subjectively by the customers. In this model, the image helps the customers to formulate their expectations of the service. Gronroos (1990) also developed the criteria of good perceived service quality. The three key dimensions are outcome-related, process-related, and image-related criteria, while the six subdimensions are professional skills; attitudes, and behavior of contact staff; accessibility and flexibility of the service provider; reliability and trustworthiness for the best interest of the customer; recovery immediately; reputation and credibility, and value for money and good performance. According to this model, Gummesson (1992) proposed the 4Q model, consisting of four dimensions: design, production, delivery, and rational quality.

In the U.S. school, primarily, five dimensions have been employed. The five dimensions

were suggested by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and consist of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy:

- Tangibles: physical facilities, equipment, personnel, communication material.
- Reliability: the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- Responsiveness: the willingness to provide appropriate service and generally to help customers.
- Assurance: the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- Empathy: the caring, individual attention that organizations are able to provide the customer.

This five-dimension model represents the service quality dimensions of the U.S. school.

Wisniewski and Donnelly (1996) employed this model to measure service quality in the public sectors.

Recently, many researchers have tried to develop the best model of service quality. Rust and Oliver (1994) offered a three-component model: service product, service delivery, and service environment. The dimension of service product is analogous to technical quality, and the dimension of service delivery is likely to measure functional quality. Additionally, Sureshchandar, Rajendran, and Kamalanabhan (2001) postulated that service quality is based fundamentally on five dimensions: core service or service product, human element of service delivery, systematization of service delivery (non-human element), tangibles of service (servicescapes), and social responsibility.

Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz (1996) identified a hierarchical conceptualization of retail service quality. This model includes three levels: customer's overall perception of service quality,

primary dimensions, and subdimensions. Wakefield and Blodgett (1999) divided service quality factors into two dimensions: intangibles and tangibles. The dimension of intangibles consists of four subdimensions: reliability, empathy, assurance, and responsiveness. The tangibles contain three subdimensions: building design and décor, equipment, and ambience. Based on these hierarchical models, Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested a new hierarchical model to conceptualize service quality. This model also contains three levels. The primary dimensions consist of three categories: interaction, physical environment, and outcome quality. And each primary dimension contains three subdimensions, so there are total nine subdimensions: attitude, behavior, expertise, ambient conditions, design, social factors, waiting time, tangibles, and valence.

In the contexts of leisure and recreation, Absher, Howat, Crilley, and Milne (1996) and Howat, Absher, Crilley, and Milne (1996) developed a model of recreational service performance with four dimensions: facilities sufficiency, facilities operations, services, and information. These dimensions indicate components of recreation areas that can be manipulated by management to provide a quality recreation experience. Along with these four dimensions, Burns et al. (2003) generated four new dimensions of recreational service quality: facilities, services, information, and recreation experience. The first three dimensions are sprung from the aforementioned Absher et al.'s (1996) four dimensions and their two facilities-related dimensions are condensed into a single dimension (facilities). In addition to these three dimensions, a new dimension associated with recreational experience has been added. Most recently, Burns and Graefe (2006) attempted to examine predictors of service quality within six domains: sanitation and cleanliness, safety and security, condition of facilities, responsiveness of staff, condition of the natural environment, and information services.

The model most relevant to the context of recreation and leisure activities, especially golf as a leisure activity, is Ko and Pastore's (2005) hierarchical model of service quality. They incorporated the past literature associated with the dimensions of service quality and adopted the multidimensional and hierarchical model of these service quality dimensions. This model consists of four primary dimensions (program quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment quality) and eleven subdimensions (range of program, operating time, information, client-employee interaction, inter-client interaction, physical change, valence, sociability, ambient condition, design, and equipment).

For the program quality in this model (Ko & Pastore, 2005), the range of programs is defined as the various and attractive classes and programs provided to participants. Operating time refers to a convenient class schedule focused on customers and operation. Information quality is the feasibility of attaining up-to-date information about the program, the area, safety, and other services.

For the interaction quality, interaction between employees (providers) and customers (clients) refers to how the service is delivered. In the context of the recreation and leisure industry, this interaction includes staff members' attitudes (Howat et al., 1996; Kim & Kim, 1995; Wright, Duray, & Goodale, 1992), expertise (Howat et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1992), and actual behavior (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). The interaction among clients is concerned with how the service is delivered through attitudes and behaviors of other clients.

For the outcome quality, physical change is a distinct dimension in the context of sports and leisure settings. Generally, recreation sport participants usually desire physical benefits as outcomes of recreational sport participation such as improved physical fitness, skill mastery, and thrill (Deighton, 1992; McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002). Also, positive social experiences can

be considered as significant outcomes of quality recreational sports. Family members, friends, and other partners refer to important social factors for recreational participants (Ko & Pastore, 2005). Valance refers to a consumer's after-consumption assessment of whether the service outcome was acceptable or unacceptable (Ko & Pastore, 2005). In other words, this subdimension indicates psychological and emotional change of participants as outcomes after participation in the recreation sports and leisure settings. All three subdimensions of outcome quality consist of the benefits of recreation and leisure participation. However, it is impossible for the providers of this service to control the outcome quality. Actually, the outcome quality indicates the personal results after participating in a certain activity occurring in some place that the provider presented. For this reason, the outcome quality should be reconsidered as service quality.

Physical environment quality is comprised of three subdimensions: ambience, design, and equipment. *Ambience* refers to the non-visual features of the service environment such as scent, noise, and temperature (Bitner, 1992; Brady & Cronin, 2001). *Design* indicates facility design such as the service facility's layout (practical component) and architecture (visual component) (Bitner, 1992; Brady & Cronin, 2001). *Equipment* includes the devices used to enhance the service experience such as racquets, tennis net, and basketballs. Equipment can be considered as both a good and a service. In the recreation sports context, especially the golf context, when an employee sells a golfer balls, the balls are considered as goods because the owner of the balls was transferred from a provider to a consumer (golfer). On the other hand, when a golfer uses a cart, the cart can be considered as a service because the owner of the cart was not transferred. The golfer only rented the cart by paying or purchasing the right to use the cart.

Many researchers have tried to develop the best way to evaluate and measure service quality in a variety of areas, including the leisure and recreation industry, but there has been little consensus. This implies that service quality is an unstable component of management to be evaluated because it depends upon individual subjectivity. Particularly, most service quality in the recreation and leisure area is intangible and subjective compared with that in other areas. Some researchers have tried to measure service quality by means of a quantitative research method; on the other hand, other researchers have attempted to evaluate service quality using a qualitative research method. It is required to employ both quantitative and qualitative research methods for measuring service quality in order to compensate for their respective weak points.

Provision of consistent high quality recreation and leisure service is a major challenge in the leisure industry. In order to maintain service quality, managers have to know what potential and current leisure participants want to do and get within the leisure service settings. The literature on recreation and leisure indicates that leisure participants' motives and needs are relative to their leisure satisfaction. Therefore, researchers and managers have to focus on the customers' motives and needs. Most research associated with service quality has focused on how to measure service quality. However, little research has been conducted on how to continue highly perceived service quality for a long period of time. Studies on consumers' motives and needs might be helpful to maintain a high perception of service quality.

Basically, the fundamental economic theory is to generate maximum profits with minimum costs. The levels of importance of service quality dimensions vary according to consumers and types of service settings in the recreation and leisure area. Understanding and knowing customers' preference of service quality and the characteristics of each service setting are crucial to improve customers' satisfaction and perception of service quality. Therefore,

managers must classify the importance of service quality dimensions in order to reduce the costs and to enhance consumers' perception of service quality. Classification of service quality dimensions in the recreation and leisure settings will provide managers with a direction of the management strategy.

Further, critical comparison with a variety of perceived service quality from many different recreation and leisure service settings such as recreational soccer programs, wilderness experiences, camping, and public and private golf courses is an additional proper way to advance the recreation and leisure industry. In doing so, better ways to improve service quality and to find out and make up for the weak points could be unearthed by researchers and managers.

*Human resource management (HRM)*, an important principle of TQM, is a rather important factor in improving service quality because most services are delivered by frontline employees. The fact that the interaction between employees and consumers is a very important facet to affect service quality has been demonstrated. This supports that staff is a key resource of service quality and that the human resource is quite a significant component of management. In their quality and human resource model, Williams and Buswell (2003) emphasized empowerment and staff development as important elements to increase service quality. Empowerment indicates granting supervisors and workers permission to give the customer priority over other issues in the operation (MacDonald, 1998). In addition to empowerment, the ability of staff or frontline employees to respond and to perform appropriately is also critical in terms of increasing service quality. The staff's ability can be developed by education and training, considered as key factors in service quality. From the TQM perspective, Peters (1998) pointed out a three-level approach to education and training: learning how to do things correctly, learning how to do the right thing, and learning how to learn. Therefore, recreation and leisure researchers

and managers first have to identify the ways in which employees are concerned with service quality, and then have to develop ways to enhance the ability of the employees and empower them.

Finally, there are two important tasks of researchers and managers in the recreation and leisure area. First, they have to clarify what is particularly distinctive about service quality in the recreation and leisure industry. Second, they have to learn and develop ways to design appropriate services for both the customers and the organization's management.

### *Price*

Price is the significant element to impact consumer satisfaction of leisure experiences. Spending some amount of money is inevitable for leisure participants to enjoy their leisure activities. However, the dimensions of price in the leisure activities also have not been specified. Even though much of the previous research on price has been related to the leisure industry, little research has been conducted on price in the physical activities or sports contexts. Matzler, Würtele, and Renzl (2006) explored dimensions of price satisfaction in the retail banking industry. They asserted that price satisfaction consisted of several dimensions: price transparency, price-quality ratio, relative price, price confidence, price reliability, and price fairness. It was suggested that companies should consider these dimensions when companies wanted to monitor customer satisfaction. Grewal, Hardesty, and Iyer (2004) studied price fairness in the vacation industry. Price fairness was found to be significantly positively related to customers' repurchase intentions. Homburg, Hoyer, and Koschate (2005) illustrated customers' reactions to price increase in the restaurant context; in particular, they investigated the effects of price increases at an individual level. As a result, they found that as satisfaction increases, the negative impact of the magnitude of a price increase was waned. Conversely, Cao, Gruca, and Klemz's (2004)

research revealed that as expected, higher prices led to lower price satisfaction, but the effect of price satisfaction on fulfillment satisfaction was negative in on-line shopping. In this study, there were only two dimensions of price: price and shipping and handling charge.

These studies used different dimensions of price. For this reason, the dimensions of price in the leisure industry, especially in the golf context, should be established in order to demonstrate the relationship between price and overall customer satisfaction and, in turn, between those and revisit intentions. Price is composed of four dimensions: green fees, cart fee, concession fee, and merchandise fee. The fundamental model of the relationship between price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions employed most frequently is that price fairness has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, and that as the satisfaction increases, customers' repurchase intentions increase.

### *Leisure Satisfaction*

With regard to marketing, participants' satisfaction is a very important factor for attracting more participants as well as motivating them. Of course, satisfaction is closely related to motivation. Motivation allows potential consumers to fulfill their desires, while satisfaction enables them to participate in the same activity again. The term *satisfaction* has had various meanings and applications in the study of leisure and leisure services. Mannell (1999) categorized conceptualizations of leisure satisfaction into two dimensions: source of satisfaction and level of specificity. Specifically, satisfaction is classified on the basis of motivation, corresponding to leisure needs or motives, and evaluation of the overall quality of leisure. On the other hand, Figure 3 shows that level of specificity is distinguished on the basis of satisfaction of specific needs (referred to as *molecular*) and satisfaction in the total leisure domain of people's

lifestyle or leisure style (referred to as *molar*). To define and study leisure satisfaction, this typology consists of four basic approaches: component and global appraisal-satisfaction, and component and global need-satisfaction. The component appraisal-satisfaction approach is for evaluating the quality of a specific activity or setting, while the global appraisal-satisfaction approach is for evaluating the quality of people's overall leisure, which is concerned with satisfaction in their lives.

		<b>Source of Satisfaction</b>	
		<b>Motivation</b>	
		<b>Component Need-Satisfaction</b>	<b>Global Need-Satisfaction</b>
<b>Level of Specificity</b>	<b>Molecular</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Study of specific needs, motives or expectations as characteristics of a person.</li> <li>* Specific need-satisfactions provided by activities or settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Study how well all of a person's needs are satisfied.</li> </ul>
		<b>Component Appraisal-Satisfaction</b>	<b>Global Appraisal-Satisfaction</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Study of the perceived quality of a specific activity or setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Study of the perceived quality of people's overall leisure experience.</li> </ul>
		<b>Evaluation</b>	

*Figure 3.* Typology of leisure satisfaction constructs and research [Adapted from Mannell (1999, p. 239)].

Particularly, a component of leisure appraisal-satisfaction is an indicator for evaluating the quality of specific leisure activity. The component appraisal-satisfaction approach has been used to measure the satisfaction of specific recreational activities, such as golf, tennis, and outdoor recreation. For example, the perceived satisfaction of the conditions of the greens after finishing a round of golf can be regarded as a primary factor in assessing the level of satisfaction of golf as a specific leisure activity. In addition, there are various other factors that affect golf satisfaction, including partners, weather, distance, and so forth. The current analysis focuses on service quality of golf courses because this is related to satisfaction of golf. In other words, this paper is focused on the molecular level of analysis.

With respect to source of satisfaction, this is on the basis of motivation-based satisfaction in terms of both component need-satisfaction and global need-satisfaction. In the same vein with the level of specificity, the component need-satisfaction approach is related to specific needs, motives, or expectations that would be satisfied by a specific activity, such as golf, while the global need-satisfaction approach is concerned with all people's needs. Particularly, the component need-satisfaction approach implies that specific needs can be satisfied by participating in a specific leisure activity. For example, suppose that there is a person who would like to build good relationships with neighbors while participating in a certain physical activity. It is quite likely that that person would select golf as a physical activity because conversation with partners during a round of golf is permitted. As a result, if the person had a great opportunity to build positive relationships with the neighbors by playing golf with them, the person would be quite satisfied with the sport of golf. This study is focused on the component need-satisfaction approach as the source of satisfaction. Furthermore, this study focuses on golfers' need-satisfaction concerning the service quality of golf courses.

The quality of leisure experience is closely related to leisure satisfaction. More specifically, the quality of leisure can be a crucial component of leisure satisfaction. And leisure satisfaction appears to be positively associated with the quality of life. Many researchers have examined the factors influencing leisure satisfaction, including leisure attitudes, service quality, participation, and awareness. Ragheb (1980) and Ragheb and Tate (1993) examined the relationship between the levels of people's leisure participation, leisure attitudes, and leisure satisfaction. And Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1987) established that boredom in leisure had a negative relationship with leisure satisfaction. One of the most important determinants of leisure satisfaction is service quality in leisure contexts. Geva and Goldman (1991) found that both tour company's services and the tour guide had this relationship with the participants' satisfaction with the quality of 15 guided tours from Israel to Europe and the United States. Therefore, service quality would be considered further here as a very significant factor in understanding leisure satisfaction. The most dominant theory of leisure customer satisfaction is the expectancy-disconfirmation model (Oliver, 1980). According to this theory, satisfaction is the outcome of a function of perceived performance and perceived disconfirmation. In other words, positive perceived disconfirmation depending on perceived performance and standard for comparison leads to higher satisfaction. In the individual perspective, higher leisure satisfaction can be a crucial factor to improve the quality of life. On the other hand, higher customer satisfaction, in the industrial perspective, can allow customers to remain with the same organization.

#### *Relationships among Service Quality, Price, Customer Satisfaction, and Revisit Intentions*

In the business area, the basic model that service quality and price have significant relationships with consumer satisfaction and that consumer satisfaction influences repurchase intentions has

been applied to a number of studies. In other words, positively perceived service quality has a positive relationship with consumers' satisfaction, and positive perceptions of price influence their satisfaction as well. Continually, highly perceived satisfaction can increase consumers' intentions to repurchase. In a similar fashion, this model can be relevant to the leisure industry, especially in the context of golf course management. For instance, Petrick and Backman (2002a) examined the determinants of golf travelers' satisfaction and they (2002b), in the same year, investigated the relationship between perceived value and golf travelers' intentions to revisit. However, just a few models have presented the relationship between service quality and price as major factors of consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. For this reason, it is vital to demonstrate the basic model in the context of golf and to explore the relationship among service quality, price and repurchase intentions in the same context. Moreover, relationships among the dimensions of service quality and price, consumer satisfaction, and intentions to revisit should be explored in the golf context. This study might be beneficial to both golfers and golf course managers.

In the context of business services, the primary variables that impact consumers' behavior are service quality, overall consumer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. Much research has concentrated on service quality (Berry et al., 1990; Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991a, 1991b; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Brown & Swartz, 1989; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Davidow, 2000; Kelly & Swindell, 2002; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 1990), overall customer satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Cann, 1995; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Singh, 1990; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal et al., 1998; Yu et al., 2006), and repurchase intentions or loyalty (Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Jones et al., 2000; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal et al., 1998; Rosenbaum et al., 2006; Petrick et al., 2006;

Yu et al., 2006). As these studies have shown, service quality, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions are primary factors of marketing and management influencing consumer behavior. In addition to these factors, price is a major element impacting consumer behavior as well. Many recent researchers have illustrated that price was significantly relative to consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions in the various contexts such as vacation (Grewal et al., 2004), restaurant (Homburg et al., 2005), internet shopping (Cao et al., 2004), and the retail banking industry (Matzler et al., 2006).

The term *revisit intentions* originates from repurchase intentions, a term usually used when discussing buying something. Repurchase intentions are the customers' intentions to purchase some goods or services from the same organization again. In case of using a facility, the customer is called a patron. The dictionary meaning of *patron* is a regular customer of a shop, attendant at a theatre, etc. For this study, golfers' intentions to go to the same golf course repeatedly are operationalized as revisit intentions. Some research refers to repurchase intentions as loyalty. However, the term *loyalty* has broader meanings including customers' positive word-of-mouth and retention with the same organization as well as repurchase intentions. Since the 1990s, the topic of loyalty has increased in importance, especially in marketing efforts and management applications. Its importance is emerging from decisions of customers regarding goods and services. Establishments that create customer loyalty have a big advantage among their rivals (de Ruyter & Bloemer, 1999). Repurchase intentions are a vital factor to measure customer loyalty.

Many research studies regarding repurchase intentions have explored relationships with other factors: service quality, customer satisfaction, switching barriers, brand trust and commitment, and price. Of these factors, service quality, price, and customer satisfaction are

more likely to be determinants of revisit intentions for customers to utilize the leisure facilities. Particularly, numerous studies have reported a positive relationship between satisfaction and measures of repurchase intentions (Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1998; Jones et al., 2000; Loveman, 1998). However, satisfaction has a qualitatively different construct from repurchase intentions because satisfaction may be evaluated by merely cognitive and affective dimensions, whereas repurchase intentions also have a behavioral component. For this reason, it is required to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in the leisure contexts.

In doing so, one expectation is that perception of service quality and price dimensions could be different depending on the degree of golfers' seriousness. Consequently, relationships among dimensions of service quality and price, golfers' satisfaction, and intentions to revisit the same golf courses might be influenced by the degree of golfers' seriousness. For example, the level of each service quality dimension that serious golfers feel might be different from those that casual golfers feel. Another example is that serious golfers might unlikely feel overall satisfaction in comparison with casual golfers' overall satisfaction

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### *Overview*

This chapter describes the procedures and resources that were used in this study. The major components of the methods consist of (1) a description of study participants, (2) study design, (3) instrumentation, (4) data collection, (5) statistical analyses, (6) exploratory factor analysis, (7) reliability issues, and (8) validity issues.

#### *Study Participants*

This study was conducted at private and public golf courses in Georgia. Golfers who play at these golf courses were eligible to participate in the study. The sample size was based on the expectation of using the structural equation modeling (SEM). In the literature, sample sizes commonly run 200 - 400 for models with 10 -15 indicators. In general, it seems that a sample size of at least 200 observations would be appropriate. Bentler and Chou (1987) recommended that at least five cases per parameter estimate, including error terms as well as path coefficients are required for SEM. This study has 20 indicators and five paths, so the sample size goal was 225. The sample size for this study was 365, which exceeded the minimum required sample size.

The public and private golf courses in Georgia were selected from the list in the *Golf Georgia*. Two private and four public golf courses were randomly chosen. The letters asking for permission to conduct the surveys at these courses were sent to the course managers. The

researcher called these managers directly in order to obtain their permission. In doing so, three of these managers working at one private and two public golf courses accepted the request, while three managers rejected it. Consequently, it was necessary to find three other available golf courses. Three more golf courses were randomly selected from the list in the *Golf Georgia*. After obtaining permission for this study from six golf course managers, the researcher made an appointment to determine study dates. Participants in the clubhouses or waiting rooms were asked to fill out the surveys on a voluntary basis. Approximately 70 participants from each golf course were invited to complete the survey. All participants were 18 years old or older.

### *Study Design*

Survey instruments were used to investigate relationships among perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions based on the golfers' seriousness. Golfers were asked to provide responses resulting in scores on the following scales: four service quality dimensions, price, overall customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and seriousness in golfing.

The questionnaire to measure service quality was developed based on Ko and Pastore's (2005) hierarchical model of service quality for the recreational sport industry. Their initial questionnaire consisted of 4 dimensions and 11 subdimensions. However, the questionnaire was not for the golf context specifically but the general recreational sport industry. For this reason, this questionnaire to measure service quality was modified for this research concerning golf. The questionnaire to measure price, customer satisfaction, revisit intentions, and leisure seriousness was modified based on previous research as well. To refine the instrument, content and face validity was assessed through a panel of experts and a pilot test. A panel of experts consists of 21

mangers of golf courses or professional golfers. All items for service quality were provided to a panel of experts. They were asked to match each item to four primary dimensions and provide researcher with any comments associated with those items. For leisure seriousness, the items were also provided for a panel of experts to verify the feasibility of items for a measure of leisure seriousness. Only items that were correctly identified by 15 experts were kept.

After that, the revised instrument was assessed for internal consistency (the coefficient alpha) using a convenience sample of 151 golfers who have played two different golf courses. These golf courses did not duplicate the six golf courses selected for the formal surveys. To investigate relationships between service quality, price, satisfaction, and revisit intentions based on golfers' seriousness, three statistical techniques were used: Descriptive statistics analysis, SEM, and multiple group analysis of SEM (MGASEM). Descriptive statistics explained the demographic information of participants. In order to investigate the relationships among perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions, SEM was employed. Finally, the difference in the relationships among latent variables between casual and serious golfers groups was examined by MGASEM.

### *Instrumentation*

Many researchers have suggested the measurement model of service quality in the general contexts. However, one model cannot be applied to all contexts. The reason why the measurement model of service quality have been changed and developed is that each service quality measurement model could not cover all areas, as more relevant criteria are needed for each context. For this reason, it is still needed to develop the measurement model of service quality for more specific leisure settings. Then, for this study, the revised measurement model of

service quality should be applied to the golf context. Proper items of service quality regarding golf courses can be beneficial for golf course managers in deciding on which dimension they need to give priority to elevate service quality.

#### *Panel of Experts*

After generating an initial pool of 60 items for service quality, 4 items for price, 2 items for overall customer satisfaction, 4 items for revisit intentions, and 20 items for leisure seriousness, these items were assessed by a panel of experts composed of a total of 21 golf course managers or professional golfers. To have a panel of experts, the researcher contacted by phone one golf course manager whom the researcher already knew. This manager was willing to introduce the researcher to 20 other experts. The experts were asked to group 60 items for service quality into four dimensions and to select items for leisure seriousness from a total of 20 items. Many of the experts gave common feedback regarding outcome quality. Many of them did not agree that outcome quality should be regarded as one dimension of service quality because all of the items for outcome quality were not relevant. Fifteen panelists agreed that all items for leisure seriousness were appropriate. Also, 4 items for price, 2 items for overall customer satisfaction, and 4 items for revisit intentions were considered in the same manner. Many of the experts recommended omitting the fourth item of revisit intentions because it seemed to be redundant. Consequently, the fourth item of revisit intentions was excluded by the researcher.

#### *Pilot Test*

With these items, a pilot test was conducted with 151 golfers who had played at two different golf courses consisted of a private and public golf course. The two golf courses were randomly selected from the list of the *Golf Georgia*. After obtaining permission for administering the survey, the questionnaire was distributed to the golfers. However, a serious problem

involving the data collection occurred. Many golfers refused to complete the survey because it contained too many questions. The high rate of unwillingness to fill out the surveys was attributable to the time to complete the pilot test. With a total 60 of service quality items, at least 800 of sample size are required for the study using SEM. It would take a even longer time. Also, the results of the exploratory factor analysis did not match the dimensions of service quality presented by Ko and Pastore (2005) even though the coefficient alpha value for the reliability was .96, which was quite high. This result implies that the items and dimensions for service quality should be refined for a correct test. In order to solve this problem, the researcher replaced a single item measurement model of service quality presented by Kwon and Ko (2006) to measure each subdimension of service quality to reduce the rejection rate for conducting surveys. Kwon and Ko (2006) utilized the same items presented by Ko and Pastore (2005). Furthermore, the researcher decided to eliminate the dimension of outcome quality from the service quality dimensions as the panel of experts suggested. This alternative model was to improve the efficacy of testing service quality by EFA. Finally, a total of 12 items to measure service quality, four items for satisfaction with price, two items for overall customer satisfaction, three items for revisit intentions, and a total of 20 items to measure leisure seriousness were utilized for this study.

### *Leisure Seriousness*

A scale to directly measure leisure seriousness does not exist yet. But, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the concept of serious leisure is very similar to that of recreation specialization presented by Bryan (1977) and developed by Scott and Shafer (2001a, 2001b). McFarlane (2004) developed recreation specialization variables in order to examine the association between behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions of specialization in accordance with site choice

among vehicle-based campers. Initially, Bryan (1977) emphasized the behavioral and cognitive aspects of specialization, and subsequently the importance of affective attachment such as centrality-to-lifestyle was suggested as an important dimension of specialization (Wellman, Roggenbuck, & Smith, 1982). In 1992, McIntyre and Pigram proposed a model of specialization consisting of a behavioral, a cognitive, and an affective dimension. Items used for this study were developed from the McFarlane's (2004) study through a meeting of a panel of experts.

Table 2

*Items Measuring the Leisure Seriousness*

Dimensions of LS	Items	
Affective	Attraction	When I am playing golf I can really be myself.
		Golf offers me relaxation when life's problems build up.
		Golf says a lot about who I am.
		Golf is one of the most enjoyable things I do.
		Golf is one of the most satisfying things I do.
Affective	Centrality	Golf is very important to me
		Most of my friends are in some way connected with golf.
		You can tell a lot about a person when you see them golfing.
		I find a lot of my life is organized around golf.
Affective	Importance	I enjoy discussing golf with my friends.
		I do particularly like golfing.
		I have much interest in golf.
Cognitive	Cognitive	I am willing to spend money for the golf lesson.
		I think I have good golf skills.
		I think I have a great body of knowledge about golf.
Behavioral	Behavioral	I am good at using all kinds of clubs.
		How long have you played golf?
		How many rounds, on average, do you play a year?
		How many times, on average, do you practice at the driving range a month?
Behavioral	Behavioral	How many hours, on average, do you watch the Golf Channel a month?

This measure consists of three dimensions: affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. The affective dimension contains three subdimensions: attraction (six items),

centrality (four items), and importance (three items). The behavioral dimension consists of four items about golf experience and familiarity. Finally, the cognitive dimension consists of three items about golf expertise or skill (see Table 2).

### *Service Quality*

The model most relevant to the context of recreation and leisure activities, especially golf as a leisure activity, is Ko and Pastore's (2005) hierarchical model of service quality for the recreational sport industry. They incorporated the past literature associated with the dimensions of service quality and adopted the multidimensional and hierarchical model of these service quality dimensions. This model consists of four primary dimensions (program quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and environment quality) and 11 subdimensions (range of program, operating time, information, client-employee interaction, inter-client interaction, physical change, valence, sociability, ambient condition, design, and equipment).

For evaluating the service quality of golf courses, it was necessary to develop the previous models and newly conceptualize the appropriate service quality construct. A new model developed from Ko and Pastore's (2005) model adopts the nature of service quality such as the multidimensional and hierarchical construct. Through the steps of a panel of experts and a pilot study, the items for service quality were reduced to 12 items for three dimensions: program quality, interpersonal quality, and physical environment quality.

*Program quality.* The first dimension, program quality, refers to the golfer's perception about the excellence of the program (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Howat et al., 1996; Ko & Pastore, 2005). Generally, golfers perceive service quality based on their experiences on golf courses. Program quality represents four specific subdimensions: (a) range of programs (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Howat et al., 1996; Kim & Kim, 1995; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Papadimitriou &

Karteroliotis, 2000; Wright et al., 1992), (b) operating time (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Howat et al., 1996; Wright et al., 1992), and (c) information (Burns & Graefe, 2006; Burns et al., 2003; Howat et al., 1996).

Table 3

*Items Measuring Service Quality of the Golf Course*

Service Quality		Items
Dimensions	Subdimensions	
Program Quality	Range of Programs	This course has various classes/programs.
	Operating Time	The operating hours of this golf course are convenient.
	Information	Up-to-date information is available on this course's activities and events.
Interpersonal Quality	Attitude	The staff demonstrates their willingness to help me.
	Behavior	The staff responds quickly to my needs.
	Expertise	I can count on the staff knowing their jobs.
Physical Environment Quality	Ambient Condition	This golf course has excellent ambience.
	Design	I am impressed with the design of this course.
	Physical Condition	This course's greens and fairways are well maintained.
	Security/Safety	This course is very safe from any risk.
	Amenities	The clubhouse/pro-shop of this course is convenient.
	Clients	I am generally impressed with the other golfers of this course.

Range of programs refers to the variety and attractiveness of types of play (9 or 18 holes and twilight plays), lessons, events such as tournaments, and awards presented to golfers for an eagle or a hole in one. Operating time can be evaluated according to whether the operation schedule is focused on the golfers' convenience. It consists of opening and closing time of the course and intervals between tee-off times. The last subdimension, information, refers to up-to-

date information about programs and operating time, promotional and managerial materials, and information about reservation and accessibility (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

*Interpersonal Quality.* The second dimension, interpersonal quality, reflects how providers or employees deliver the service (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Czepial et al., 1985; Gronroos, 1984; Ko & Pastore, 2005). There are three types of reaction of providers or employees as subdimensions of interpersonal quality: (a) attitude, (b) behavior, and (c) expertise (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988; Sureshchandar et al., 2001; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

The first subdimension, attitude, refers to the employee's traits, including friendliness, warmth, politeness, demeanor, concern, openness, and helpfulness (Ko & Pastore, 2005). Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) reliability, responsiveness, courtesy, and credibility can be regarded as attitudes. Behavior refers to the manifest function, which can influence a customer's perception of reaction quality such as service failure and recovery as actual behavior of employees (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). For example, when a golfer complains to a staff member of the golf course about the wrong tee-off time, he or she apologizes and promptly corrects the wrong tee-off time. The last subdimension, expertise (competence), indicates the degree to which the reaction of employees is impacted by their task-oriented skills (Czepial et al., 1985) and knowledge associated with all service (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Reaction quality reflects the personal service of all staff members of the golf course.

*Physical environment quality.* The physical environment is the constructed place and facility in which service delivery occurs. Customers usually evaluate the quality of the facilities where they participate. Many researchers asserted that physical environment is one of the most important aspects in a service quality measurement (Baker, 1986; Bitner, 1990; Howat et al.,

1996; Ko & Pastore, 2005; McDonald, Sutton, & Milne, 1995, Rust & Oliver, 1994; Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan, 1996; Wright et al., 1992). This physical environment dimension consists of six subdimensions: (a) ambient condition, (b) design, (c) physical condition, (d) security/safety, (e) amenities, and (f) clients.

Ambient condition refers to the non-visual aspects of the service environment such as noise, scent, atmosphere, music, and so on (Bitner, 1992; Brady & Cronin, 2001). Examples are

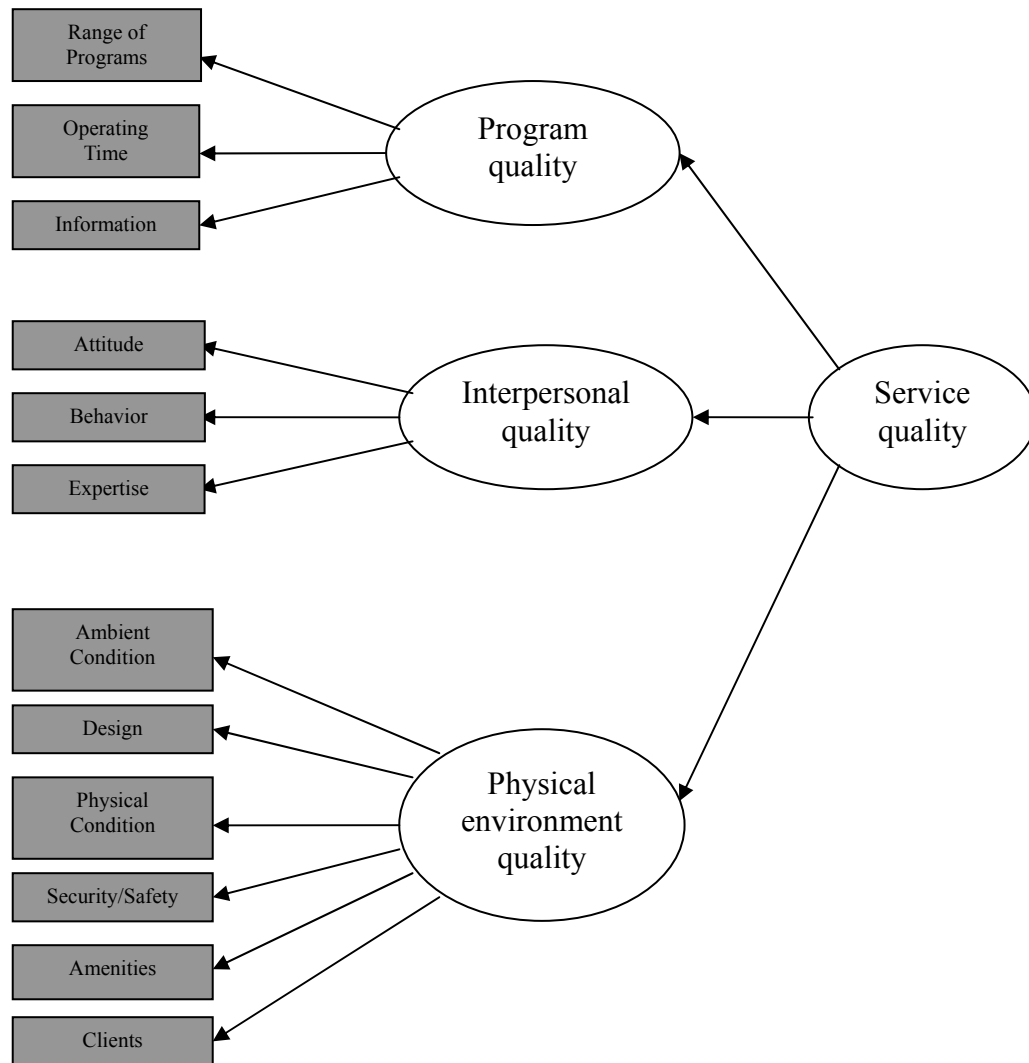


Figure 4. Proposed model of service quality.

the golf course's peaceful atmosphere without any noise and the clubhouse's beautiful decoration with bright and colorful lights. The second subdimension, design, represents the service facility's layout or architecture (Bitner, 1992; Brady & Cronin, 2001). In the context of golf, the facility's layout refers to the golf course's functional (practical) design, and the facility's architecture indicates the course's aesthetic (visual) aspect. The third subdimension, physical condition, is related to the maintenance of facility and equipment. The maintenance of the fairways and greens is considered as an important component of evaluation of the golf course's service quality. Also, the maintenance of equipment, such as cart and rental golf clubs, provided to golfers can be significant elements of the quality even though most equipment for sale can be thought of as goods.

The fourth subdimension, security/safety, refers to the freedom from danger, risk, or doubt (Parasuraman et al., 1985). In the context of golf, safety from creatures such as snakes, safety from the balls flying from the driving range, and safe lockers belong to this subdimension. The fifth subdimension, amenities, represents the secondary facility. The amenity includes such things as the parking lot, the water fountain, the clubhouse, the driving range, and the locker room in the golf course. The last subdimension, clients, refers to other golfers who play at the same golf course. This implies that behavior and attitude of other golfers who play at the same golf course probably influence the perceptions of service quality of the course. Ko and Pastore (2005) and Kwon and Ko (2006) classified this subdimension as inter-client quality and categorized it into the dimension of interpersonal quality. However, to the researcher, interpersonal quality seemed to concern the interaction between customers and providers. Thus, it seemed more reasonable to place the subdimension of clients under the dimension of physical environment quality.

### *Price related to playing golf*

From the customer's perspective, price is "what is given up or sacrificed to obtain a product" (Zeithamal, 1988, p. 10). This definition is consistent with Ahtola's (1984) perception of price that price is a "give" component, rather than a "get" component. Over several decades, many studies have been designed to test the general insight that price and quality are positively related. The body of literature summarized by Olson (1977) is based on the assumption that a general price-perceived quality relationship exists. In addition, many studies have demonstrated that price is a crucial factor for determining satisfaction with goods or service. In this study, price was measured to examine relationships with service quality, satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the context of golf. Four items measured satisfaction with price: (1) I am satisfied with the green fees of the golf course, (2) I am satisfied with the cart fee of the golf course, (3) I am satisfied with the price of merchandise provided by the golf course, and (4) I am satisfied with the price of food provided by the concession at the golf course.

### *Overall Customer Satisfaction and Revisit Intentions*

Many researchers have identified different dimensions of satisfaction in various contexts: in a goods manufacturing setting (Garvin, 1983), in the service delivery system (Norman, 1988), in recreation settings (Crompton & MacKay, 1989), in the context of recreation service delivery (Crompton, Mackay, & Fesenmaier, 1991), and in the context of recreation service (Absher et al., 1996; Howat et al., 1996). Previous studies have shown that multiple items are a better measure of overall satisfaction (Graefe & Fedler, 1986). For this study, two items were developed to examine overall satisfaction of golfers: (1) I am satisfied with a golf experience at this golf course and (2) I am satisfied with this golf course.

Petrick and Backman (2002a) operationalized intentions to revisit with two items in the

golf context. Additionally, two items for revisit intentions were excerpted from Sierra and McQuitty's (2005) study about campers' revisit intentions. Therefore, a total of four items were used: (1) If I were to choose a golf course to play golf, I would choose this golf course again, (2) I would consider choosing this golf course to play golf again, (3) For my next golf experience, I am willing to play golf at this golf course rather than at other golf courses, and (4) I would prefer going to this golf course, rather than trying a new golf course. However, the panel of experts suggested removing the fourth item because it could be represented by three other items. Consequently, a total of three items for revisit intentions were used in this study.

Table 4

*Items Measuring Price, Overall Customer Satisfaction, and Revisit Intentions*

Dimensions	Items
Price	I am satisfied with the greens fee.
	I am satisfied with the cart fee.
	I am satisfied with the price of merchandise.
	I am satisfied with the price of foods provided at the concession.
Customer Satisfaction	I am satisfied with a golf experience at this course.
	I am satisfied with this course.
Revisit Intentions	If I were to choose a golf course to play golf, I would choose this course again.
	I would consider choosing this golf course to play golf again.
	For next round of golf, I am willing to play golf at this golf course rather than other courses.

*Data Collection*

Approval to conduct the study was granted by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Georgia. Six public and private golf courses in Georgia were selected from the list in the *Golf Georgia*. Beginning on April 20, 2007, the managers of the selected golf courses were

contacted via both letters and phone calls in order to obtain permission for conducting the survey. After receiving permission from the golf course managers, the researcher began collecting data for the pilot study. Unfortunately, it took a long time (Jun 12, 2007 through October 15, 2007) to collect enough data for the pilot study because many golfers at the golf courses refused to answer the surveys because it was too long. In order to reduce the risk of refusal from potential participants, the number of questions was reduced by using the single item for each subdimension of service quality presented by Kwon and Ko (2006).

For the primary study, participants were recruited from the clubhouses or waiting rooms on a voluntary basis and were introduced to the purpose of this survey, confidentiality, and the name of the researcher. The instrument consisted of a questionnaire and an information letter explaining information related to the importance of each subject's participation in the study (see Appendices). The first page of the survey explained the purpose of the survey, confidentiality assurances, and the voluntary nature of invited participation in the survey, as well as the researcher's contact numbers and email address. While participants were completing the survey, the researcher stayed with them to help with any questions related to the survey. Data collection at each golf course continued until the number of participants exceeded 60. A total of 376 golfers participated in this study. Of 376 surveys completed by golfers, 11 surveys were not analyzed because of not answering part of demographic information or most of questionnaires. All participants were 18 years old or older. Participants were provided non-alcoholic beverages. Data for the primary study were collected from November 30 to February 14, 2008.

### *Statistical Analyses*

This study consisted of three primary steps: (a) testing the service quality measurement

model, (b) examining relationships between service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions, and (c) comparing these relationships with two groups based on participants' leisure seriousness. The main tool used was the structural equation modeling (SEM). The model in SEM consists of two basic components: *the measurement model* and *the structural model* (Bollen, 1989). The measurement model testing is to determine if the chosen indicators (items) are appropriate for the model. With the revised items through a panel of experts and a pilot test, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.51 tests the validity and reliability of the survey items in order to make sure that scale items reflect their intended underlying constructs in the specific context. On the other hand, the structural model is tested by path analysis in order to investigate relationships among the latent variables by identifying the direct and indirect effects (Tate, 1998).

#### *Service Quality Measurement Model*

According to Joröskog (1993), testing the structural model may be meaningless unless it is first established that the measurement model holds. For this reason, the chosen indicators should be examined whether the items are feasible for the model. Therefore, the survey items for this study were tested by using CFA in LISREL before testing the structural equation models.

The efficacy of the proposed model and psychometric properties of the scale were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 15.0 and LISREL 8.51. The conceptualization can be described as a second-order factor model, which consists of the three dimensions, which define service quality through the customer's perception of the three primary factors which are program, interpersonal, and physical environment quality. The researcher tested the efficacy of the proposed model by conducting (a) a test of the measurement model and (b) a test of the overall measurement model of service quality.

To test a measurement model as a first step, summary statistics and bivariate correlations were computed for all variables included in the measurement model of service quality. Next, the researcher examined the relationship between the observable indicators (items) and their latent constructs (three dimensions) and investigated correlations among dimensions. The results of the measurement model test determine how well the indicators capture their specified constructs (Bollen, 1989; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). If the relations between variables are statistically significant in the measurement model, then the evidence indicates that the measurement scale is valid. For this study, the second-order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted because service quality consists of three dimensions, with three, three, and six items, respectively. If the relations between variables are statistically significant in the structural equation model, then the evidence indicates that the full measurement model of service quality in the context of golf is valid.

Prior to the structural model analysis, the measurement model analysis of service quality was conducted. In order to identify whether the model for service quality fits the sample data, four kinds of fit indices, including the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistics, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the ratio of the chi-square statistic to the degree of freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ) were used. The chi-square statistic and RMSEA are fit indices for a measure of absolute fit, CFI is for a measure of incremental fit, and the ratio of the chi-square statistic to the degree of freedom is for a measure of parsimonious fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The chi-square refers to  $\chi^2 = (n-1)F_{ml}$  in which “ $n$  is sample size, and  $F_{ml}$  is a fitting function minimized by the maximum likelihood estimates” (Tate, 1998, p. 189). According to Tate (1998), the better model fit is determined with the smaller values of the chi-square statistic.

The RMSEA introduced by Steiger (1990) is a standardized measure of the lack of fit of the population data to the model. Values of about .05 are generally considered to indicate a close fit, and values of up to about .08 are considered reasonable. The CFI is defined as the degree of “how much better the model fits compared to an independence model” (Tate, 1998, p. 91), and it is recommended in general but the Maximum Likelihood-based estimate of the CFI is preferred when the sample size is small (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Values of over .90 are regarded as an acceptable fit. Because the chi-square is very sensitive to the sample size (Kline, 1998), the value of the chi-square should be divided by degree of freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ) in order to determine the fit of the model. According to Tate (1998) and Kline (1998), a value of less than 3 refers to a reasonable model fit.

### *Structural Model*

After completing the test of the measurement model by investigating the goodness-of-fit indices, the proposed structural model was tested to investigate relationships among the latent variables: perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions. Path analysis showed the direct and indirect relationships among the latent variables. In addition, the fit of the model was determined.

The structural model test in this study was performed in order to examine the variables in the proposed model related to service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions using SEM with LISREL 8.51. A structural equation model may have two types of latent constructs: *exogenous* and *endogenous*. Exogenous variables are designed as  $\xi$  ( $\xi_i$ ) and endogenous variables are designed as  $\eta$  ( $\eta_i$ ). This study tested two relationships: (a) service quality and price in relationships to customer satisfaction and (b) service quality, price, and customer satisfaction in relationships to revisit intentions. Overall, service quality ( $\xi_1$ ) and price

( $\xi_2$ ) were designed as exogenous variables, whereas customer satisfaction ( $\eta_1$ ) and revisit intentions ( $\eta_2$ ) were designed as endogenous variables. Relationships among the latent variables were examined by path analysis. The path analysis indicated 1) the effects of service quality and price on customer satisfaction and 2) the effects of service quality, price, and overall customer satisfaction on revisit intentions. Total effects can be identified with the direct and indirect effects (Tate, 1998).

#### *Multiple Group Analysis of Structural Equation Modeling*

To compare relationships among the latent variables based on leisure seriousness of participants, MGASEM was applied. Accordingly, the sample size is reduced to half or less but the numbers of parameters which should be identified are not reduced in model testing per group. In this case, the power issue could be a serious problem because many estimates must identify with a small sample (Joröskog & Sörbom, 1996). Thus, the sample size needs to be enlarged or the number of parameters needs to be decreased to maintain eligible power. Using parceled data is useful to reduce the number of parameters which must identify, when the sample size can not be changed.

In the analysis, the entire sample was divided into the two groups: serious and casual golfers. To distinguish serious and casual golfers, cluster analysis was used. The K-means cluster analysis was utilized to split the participants into two groups based on the level of leisure seriousness. With split participants based on the level of leisure seriousness, the structural model was examined using SEM with LISREL 8.51. And then, the structural models for each group were compared in order to investigate the differences in relationships among the latent variables.

According to Kline (1998), the following three steps should be followed for the group-based comparison. First, the path coefficients of each structural model in multiple groups should

be examined. In other words, a separate sample analysis was conducted to obtain the path coefficients of each group. In this case, the unstandardized direct effects should be used because the standardized effects can be utilized only within the same group (Kline, 1998). Second, the factor structure should be examined in order to identify whether the two models have the same pattern. If the two models have the same pattern of the factor structure, the model's five direct effects with the imposition of cross-group equality constraints were tested. Also, the goodness-of-fit indices were attained for the invariant path coefficient. Finally, the chi-square with the imposition of cross-group equality constraint on each direct effect was compared with the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) with the non-constraint. A chi-square change ( $\Delta \chi^2$ ) from the two models greater than 3.84 would mean that there was a statistically significant difference in the direct effect between the seriousness-based models. In turn, the differences in the rest of the direct effects between the two groups were investigated.

### *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

In order to examine how well the observed variables relate to latent factors, EFA was used with the extraction method of the principal component analysis using the varimax rotation method. Twelve items of service quality were extracted from the previous steps. According to Gorsuch (1983), the number of factors is equal to the number of factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. As the result of EFA, three factors were extracted by selecting factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (see Table 5). Item 1 ~ item 3 are to test the dimension of program quality, item 4 ~ item 6 are to assess the dimension of interpersonal quality, and item 7 ~ item 12 are to examine the dimension of physical environment quality. Overall, factor loading values of the 12 items ranged from .517 to .855.

Table 5

*Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis of Service Quality*

Indicators	Factors		
	1	2	3
SQ1	-.038	.180	<b>.786</b>
SQ 2	.270	.156	<b>.517</b>
SQ 3	.237	.146	<b>.715</b>
SQ 4	.229	<b>.817</b>	.185
SQ 5	.165	<b>.855</b>	.162
SQ 6	.305	<b>.589</b>	.216
SQ 7	<b>.580</b>	.318	.217
SQ 8	<b>.771</b>	.067	.201
SQ 9	<b>.758</b>	.191	.079
SQ 10	<b>.668</b>	.261	-.064
SQ 11	<b>.587</b>	.252	.163
SQ 12	<b>.594</b>	.081	.330
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	2.953	2.103	1.738
Total % of Variance	24.604	17.529	14.480
Cumulative %	24.604	42.133	56.613

*Reliability Issues*

After conducting the EFA, the reliability of the concepts was examined with the coefficient alpha. The coefficient alpha values were calculated using SPSS Version 15.0. The coefficient alpha reliability values for perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, revisit intentions, and leisure seriousness were .833, .769, .878, .880, and .898 respectively. Generally, the values over .70 of the coefficient alpha are acceptable (Hair et al., 1998). In addition, the two ways to determine the reliability were computed: the construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). The construct reliability was calculated in order to identify the internal consistency of the measurement model. The construct reliability was computed by following the formula below (Hair et al., 1998):

$$\text{Construct reliability} = \frac{(\sum \text{Standardized loading})^2}{(\sum \text{Standardized loading})^2 + \sum \varepsilon_j} \quad (3.1)$$

According to Hair et al. (1998), values of over .50 can be acceptable. In this study, all reliabilities of the three dimensions of service quality were greater than .50 (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Service Quality: Item Loadings ( $\beta$ ), Standard Errors (SE), t-values (t), and Construct Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

Dimensions	Items	$\beta$	SE	t	CR	AVE
Program	SQ1	.47				
	SQ2	.53	.08	6.06**	.57	.92
	SQ3	.66	.11	6.49**		
Interpersonal	SQ4	.65			.58	.82
	SQ5	.63	.07	8.79**		
Physical Environment	SQ6	.65			.81	.71
	SQ7	.71	.07	10.92**		
	SQ8	.71	.07	10.96**		
	SQ9	.58	.06	9.39**		
	SQ10	.59	.06	9.47**		
Service Quality	SQ11	.59	.06	9.48**	.90	.75
	Program	.79	.12	6.78**		
	Interpersonal	.98	.09	10.72**		
	Physical Environment	.82	.08	10.01**		

Note. SQ = Service Quality. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

The average variance extracted measure indicates the amount of variance in the observed

variables for latent variable. The average variance extracted values were estimated with the below equation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981):

$$\text{Average variance extracted} = \frac{\left(\sum \text{Standardized loading}^2\right)}{\left(\sum \text{Standardized loading}^2\right) + \sum \varepsilon_j} \quad (3.2)$$

According to Hair et al. (1998), average variance extracted values should be more than .50 for a construct. In this study, all average variance extracted values were greater than .50 (see Table 6). Therefore, it was concluded that the proposed constructs of service quality were reliable.

#### *Validity Issues*

In order to test the measurement model of service quality, CFA was utilized. CFA is a method of testing the convergent validity and discriminant validity for the construct validity. Convergent validity refers to “the degrees to which two measure of the same concept are correlated” (Hair et al., 1998, p. 118). It can be verified from the measurement model in which each of the observed indicators’ coefficients is greater than twice its standard error (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In the current study, all items’ loading values in service quality were bigger than twice their standard error (see Table 6).

Discriminant validity indicates “the degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct” (Hair et al., 1998, p. 118). For the discriminant validity, the correlation coefficients between the dimensions should be less than .85 (Kline, 1998). As the results of the CFA, all estimated correlation values for service quality were less than .85. In addition, all estimated correlation values for all latent factors were less than .85. (see Table 7). These support that the

constructs both for service quality and for all latent factors were statistically significant.

Table 7

*Intercorrelations among Latent Variables*

	PQ	IQ	PEQ	PR	OCS	RI
PQ	--					
IQ	.78**	--				
PEQ	.66**	.80**	--			
PR	.48**	.36**	.33**	--		
OCS	.54**	.81**	.80**	.40**	--	
RI	.50**	.61**	.70**	.34**	.70**	--

*Note.* PQ = Program quality; IQ = Interpersonal quality; PEQ = Physical environment quality;

PR = Price; OCS = Overall customer satisfaction; RI = Revisit intentions. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### *Overview*

This chapter describes the results of the quantitative data analysis procedures explained in Chapter 3. The major components of this chapter consist of (1) descriptive statistics, (2) preliminary analyses, (3) measurement model, (4) structural model, and (5) multiple group analysis.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

The average age of the participants was 32.66 years ( $SD = 11.85$ ). Of the 365 participants, the majority were male (73.4%) and Caucasian/White (51.2%). The average annual household income was \$74,790 ( $SD = 43,878$ ) with a median of \$70,000. In terms of golf vacation, about 50% of participants did not take a golf vacation and the mean frequency of a golf vacation was 2.62 times ( $SD = 5.49$ ). In addition, the participants annually spent \$1,106.11 ( $SD = 1,419.84$ ) on the average. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 8.

#### *Preliminary Analyses*

For the data examination, preliminary analyses of the data and correlations were conducted. The raw data had 2.2% missing data for leisure seriousness, 3.5% for service quality, 1.8 % for price, 1.0% for overall customer satisfaction, and 0.7% for revisit intentions.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic	Classification	Frequency ( $N = 365$ )	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	97	26.6
	Male	268	73.4
Age	18 ~ 20	33	9.0
	21 ~ 30	148	40.5
	31 ~ 40	90	24.7
	41 ~ 50	59	16.2
	Older than 50	35	9.6
Race	African-American	7	1.9
	Asian-American	81	22.2
	Caucasian/White	148	51.2
	Latino	2	0.5
	Native American	7	1.9
	Other	81	22.2
Income	10K ~ 25K	26	7.1
	25K ~ 50K	87	23.8
	50K ~ 75K	95	26.0
	75K ~ 100K	105	28.8
	More than 100K	42	11.5
	Missing	10	2.7
Golf Vacation	0 time	179	49.0
	1 time	43	11.8
	2 times	46	12.6
	3 times	28	7.7
	More than 4 times	66	18.1
	Missing	3	0.8
Cost	Less than 100 \$	67	18.4
	100 \$ ~ 500\$	120	32.9
	500\$ ~ 1,000\$	66	18.1
	1,000\$ ~ 1,500\$	18	4.9
	More than 1500 \$	71	19.5
	Missing	23	6.3
Total		365	100

According to Tate (1998), there are two methods to deal with the missing data: deleting and replacing the missing data. It was the preference of the researcher of this study to replace the missing data to keep the power level while not decreasing the sample size.

To replace missing data, two methods – mean substitution and regression imputation – are usually utilized (Tate, 1998). In this study, mean substitution was used. However, it is necessary to be aware of the weakness of mean substitution. By using mean substitution, the actual distribution of values is biased and the observed correlations are depreciated because of a single constant value (Hair et al., 1998).

Moreover, the assumptions required for the structural equation modeling (SEM) were investigated in a preliminary analysis. The first assumption is that, in this model, true functional form can be identified. By checking the scatterplots of equation residuals versus predicted outcome measures can be evaluated. In the current data, there was no possibility of non-linearities found. For this reason, this assumption was not violated. The next assumption of SEM is the independent of variable residuals. Usually, data collection of repeated measures in research design could results in a violation of this assumption. In the current study, this assumption might not be violated because the current research design did not contain repeated measures. In addition, the last assumption of SEM is in need of the normal distribution of the variables in a multivariate fashion. The way to verify this assumption is to check skewness and kurtosis values. According to Kline (1998), the values of skewness and kurtosis should be ranged from -3.0 to 3.0 in order to demonstrate a normal distribution. In the current data set, all items for this study were in the recommended range (see Table 9). Therefore, the assumption of the normal distribution in this study was not violated.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics of Main Study*

Latent Variable	Indicator	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Program	PQ1	3.11	0.98	-0.08	-0.27
	PQ2	3.81	0.85	-0.58	0.27
	PQ3	3.28	0.94	-0.11	-0.18
Interpersonal	IQ1	3.53	0.91	-0.19	-0.29
	IQ2	3.57	0.89	-0.49	0.40
Physical Environment	PEQ1	3.46	0.92	-0.26	-0.19
	PEQ2	3.52	0.94	-0.39	-0.00
	PEQ3	3.71	0.97	-0.44	-0.24
	PEQ4	3.81	1.00	-0.57	-0.20
	PEQ5	3.62	0.94	-0.26	-0.39
	PEQ6	3.32	0.87	0.13	-0.34
Price	PR1	3.50	1.06	-0.43	-0.38
	PR2	3.29	1.10	-0.27	-0.53
	PR3	3.00	1.05	-0.19	-0.30
	PR4	3.01	1.02	-0.19	-0.28
Overall Customer Satisfaction	OCS1	3.90	0.88	-0.69	0.42
	OCS2	3.86	0.86	-0.55	0.14
Revisit Intentions	RI1	3.74	0.90	-0.56	0.26
	RI2	3.81	0.84	-0.55	0.39
	RI3	3.58	0.93	-0.46	0.11
Leisure Seriousness	LS1	3.56	1.14	-0.43	-0.53
	LS2	3.54	1.05	-0.50	-0.30
	LS3	2.79	1.15	0.10	-0.82
	LS4	3.46	1.16	-0.36	-0.75
	LS5	3.15	1.22	0.00	-0.98
	LS6	3.38	1.17	-0.22	-0.87
	LS7	2.87	1.16	0.04	-0.80
	LS8	2.90	1.09	0.02	-0.80
	LS9	2.87	1.13	0.02	-0.77
	LS10	3.72	1.04	-0.54	-0.32
	LS11	3.68	1.06	-0.44	-0.50
	LS12	2.47	1.15	0.34	-0.85
	LS13	2.79	1.17	0.16	-0.80
	LS14	2.95	1.14	0.05	-0.80
	LS15	2.82	1.15	0.17	-0.82
	LS16	2.89	1.22	-0.06	-1.00
	LS17	1.97	1.29	1.05	-0.01
LS18	3.40	0.81	1.25	0.22	
LS19	2.78	0.60	-0.97	1.09	
LS20	4.26	1.35	-1.36	0.02	

Table 10

*Intercorrelations for All Latent Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. SQ1	--									
2. SQ2	.21**	--								
3. SQ3	.35**	.34**	--							
4. SQ4	.24**	.31**	.31**	--						
5. SQ5	.26**	.24**	.31**	.41**	--					
6. SQ6	.19**	.30**	.31**	.43**	.35**	--				
7. SQ7	.15**	.31**	.30**	.32**	.25**	.47**	--			
8. SQ8	.15**	.26**	.25**	.34**	.35**	.42**	.58**	--		
9. SQ9	.07	.20**	.23**	.29**	.34**	.36**	.39**	.47**	--	
10. SQ10	.13*	.26**	.28**	.34**	.43**	.35**	.40**	.38**	.34**	--
11. SQ11	.28**	.17**	.29**	.31**	.27**	.40**	.41**	.39**	.34**	.39**
12. PR1	.11*	.30**	.13*	.17**	.19**	.08	.17**	.22**	.22**	.18**
13. PR2	.20**	.26**	.15**	.15**	.20**	.09	.18**	.17**	.21**	.13*
14. PR3	.15**	.16**	.19**	.07	.15**	.11*	.08	.12*	.10	.14**
15. PR4	.20**	.19**	.30**	.13*	.26**	.20**	.21**	.17**	.16**	.30**
16. OCS1	.16**	.32**	.25**	.46**	.46**	.43**	.47**	.47**	.46**	.43**
17. OCS2	.17**	.35**	.30**	.45**	.46**	.48**	.49**	.53**	.47**	.45**
18. RI1	.13*	.35**	.21**	.36**	.34**	.40**	.50**	.43**	.34**	.41**
19. RI2	.13*	.35**	.25**	.33**	.35**	.40**	.46**	.43**	.34**	.42**
20. RI3	.11*	.27**	.24**	.33**	.30**	.34**	.41**	.39**	.30**	.36**
Variable	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. SQ1										
2. SQ2										
3. SQ3										
4. SQ4										
5. SQ5										
6. SQ6										
7. SQ7										
8. SQ8										
9. SQ9										
10. SQ10										
11. SQ11	--									
12. PR1	.11*	--								
13. PR2	.10	.67**	--							
14. PR3	.16**	.42**	.41**	--						
15. PR4	.22**	.31**	.34**	.57**	--					
16. OCS1	.38**	.31**	.30**	.20**	.24**	--				
17. OCS2	.40**	.25**	.25**	.19**	.25**	.78**	--			
18. RI1	.30**	.35**	.25**	.15**	.18**	.56**	.56**	--		
19. RI2	.30**	.21**	.17**	.16**	.20**	.52**	.58**	.78**	--	
20. RI3	.27**	.19**	.19**	.10	.20	.42	.47	.65	.70	--

Note.  $N = 365$ . SQ = Service quality; PR = Price; OCS = Overall customer satisfaction; RI =

Revisit intentions. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Next, bivariate multicollinearity was checked by investigating the correlation matrix for all latent variables (see Table 7). According to Kline (1998), the correlation estimates among latent variables should be less than .85 in order to avoid the problem of bivariate multicollinearity in SEM. In the current data set, correlation coefficient estimates ranged from .33 to .81. Therefore, there was no multicollinearity problem in this study. Lastly, intercorrelations among service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions were found to test the measurement model of service quality and the structural model (see Table 10).

### *Measurement Model*

In order to investigate the validation of the proposed constructs of service quality, a second-order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Overall, the result of the measurement model test for service quality showed a good model fit, suggesting that the chosen indicators loaded on the construct in an appropriate manner. With the initial 12 items of service quality, however, the model fit was not good. To solve this problem, the researcher tried to elevate the model fit according to the modification indices. Consequently, item 5, which had a *t*-value less than 1.96, was deleted. CFA was run with the remaining 11 items again. Three types of model fit indexes demonstrated the good model fit (see Table 11).

Table 11

#### *Summary of the Measurement Model Fit Indices*

Model	RMSEA	CFI	$\chi^2/df$
Service Quality	.059	.97	2.28

*Note.* RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; CFI = Comparative fit index;  $\chi^2/df$  = Normed chi-square.

The normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ) for a parsimonious fit measure was 2.28 (93.55/41). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), normed chi-square values less than 3.0 are indicators of an acceptable model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) for a measure of absolute fit was .059. Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggested that RMSEA values less than .08 would indicate a reasonable model fit. Finally, the comparative fit index (CFI) was selected for a comparative fit measure. The CFI was .97. The CFI values greater than .90 refer to an acceptable model fit. Therefore, these goodness-of-fit statistics indicated that the measurement model of service quality was valid.

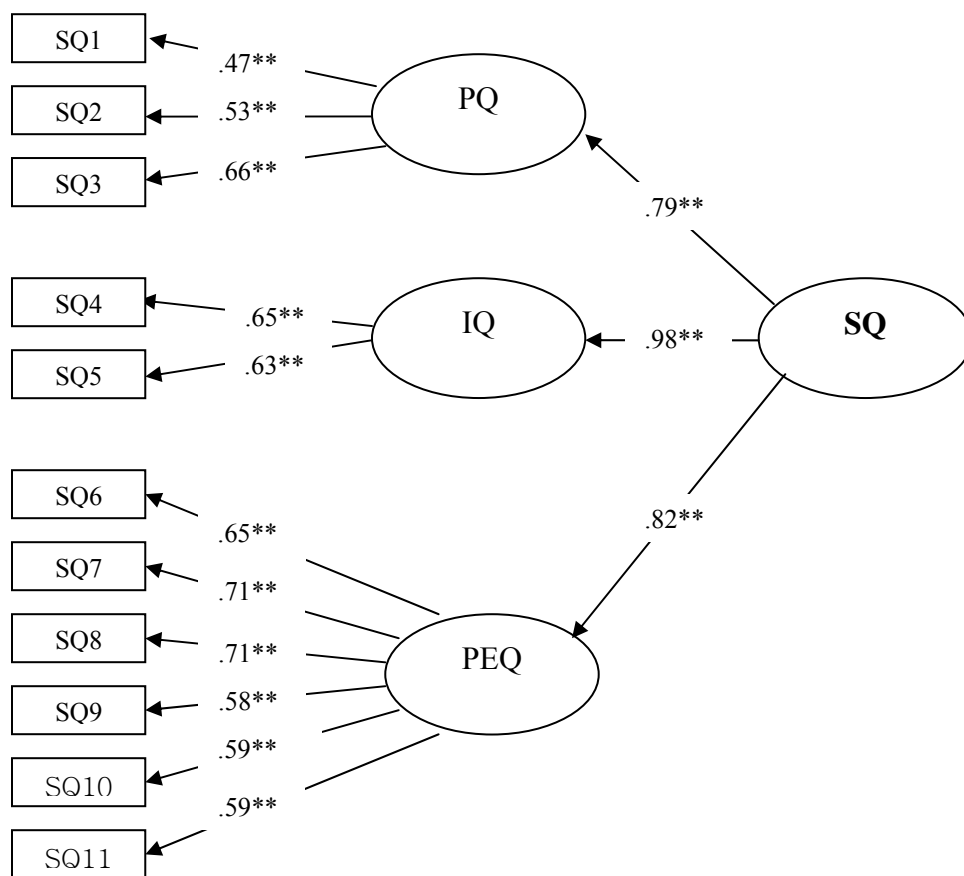


Figure 5. Result of a second-order confirmatory factor analysis of service quality

Note. SQ = Service quality; PQ = Program quality; IQ = Interpersonal quality; PEQ = Physical environment quality. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

### *Structural Model*

The results of the structural equation modeling analysis of the structural model referred to no offending estimates in all factor loadings and an acceptable model fit of the structural model to data. The structural model had adequate goodness-of-fit values (RMSEA = .07; CFI = .91;  $\chi^2/df = 2.77$ ) (see Table 12). These indices overall suggest a good-fitting model.

Table 12

#### *Summary of the Structural Model Fit Indices*

Model	RMSEA	CFI	$\chi^2/df$
Structural Model	.07	.91	2.77

*Note.* RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; CFI = Comparative fit index;  $\chi^2/df$  = Normed chi-square

Given the acceptable fit of the model, direct, indirect, and total effects were investigated according to the study's hypotheses. All path coefficients are provided in Figure 6 and direct, indirect, and total effects for the final model of latent factors are presented in Table 13. 69% of the variance in customer satisfaction was explained by the determinants of service quality and price. In addition, 55% of the variance in revisit intentions was explained by the determinants of service quality, price, and customer satisfaction.

As shown in Figure 2, several direct and indirect effects were hypothesized. Relationships between service quality and overall customer satisfaction ( $H_1$ ), between service quality and revisit intentions ( $H_5$ ), and between overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions ( $H_9$ ) were significant. However, relationships between price and overall customer

Table 13

*Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects for the Revised Model*

Outcome	Determinant	Direct	Indirect	Total
OCS	SQ	.79**	--	.79**
OCS	PR	.09	--	.09
RI	SQ	.40**	.28**	.68**
RI	PR	.04	.03	.08
RI	OCS	.36**	--	.36**

Note. SQ = Service quality; PR = Price; OCS = Overall customer satisfaction; RI = Revisit intentions. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

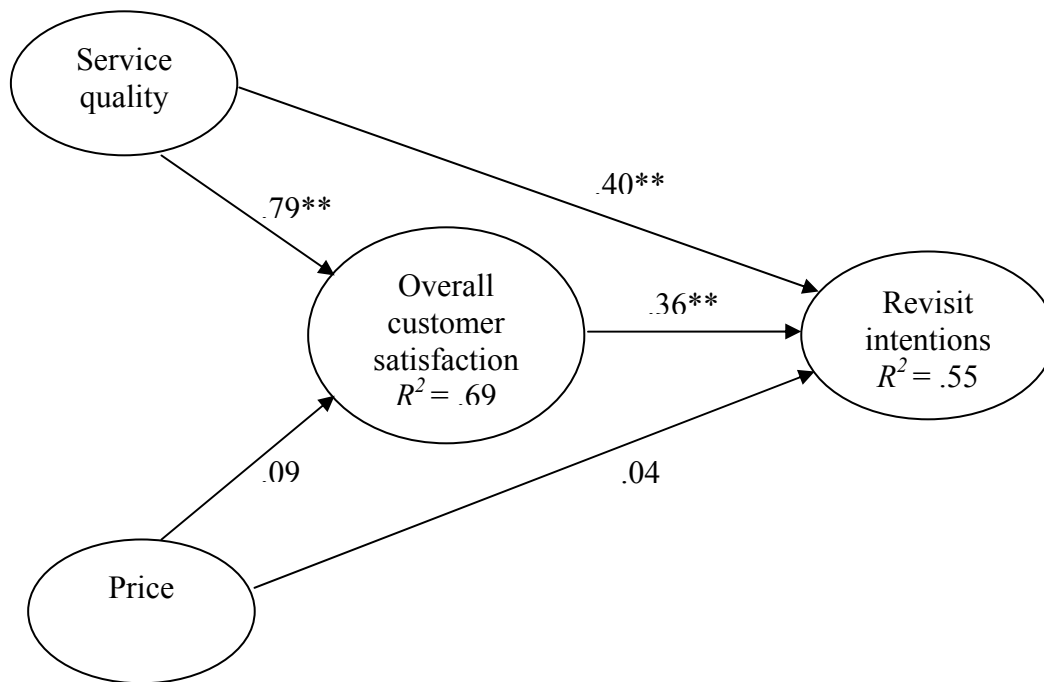


Figure 6. Structural model testing relationship among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions ( $N = 365$ ). \*\*  $p < .01$ .

satisfaction (H<sub>3</sub>) and between price and revisit intentions (H<sub>7</sub>) were not significant.

In detail, hypothesis 1 postulated that perceived service quality would positively influence overall customer satisfaction. This hypothesis was accepted because perceived service quality had the statistically significant positive relationship with overall customer satisfaction at the .05 level ( $z = 9.48$ ). Hypothesis 3 proposed that satisfaction with price would positively influence overall customer satisfaction. This hypothesis was rejected because satisfaction with price had a positive relationship with overall customer satisfaction but it was not statistically significant at the .05 level ( $z = 1.94$ ). Hypothesis 5 posited that perceived service quality would positively influence revisit intentions. This hypothesis was accepted because perceived service quality had the statistically significant positive relationship with revisit intentions at the .05 level ( $z = 3.82$ ). Hypothesis 7 proposed that satisfaction with price would positively influence revisit intentions. This hypothesis was rejected because satisfaction with price had a positive relationship with revisit intentions but it was not statistically significant at the .05 level ( $z = .83$ ). Finally, hypothesis 9 postulated that overall customer satisfaction would positively influence revisit intentions. This hypothesis was accepted because overall customer satisfaction had the statistically significant positive relationship with revisit intentions at the .05 level ( $z = 3.42$ ).

#### *Multiple Group Analysis*

Multiple group analysis was conducted in order to investigate differences in relationships among service quality, price, customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions between split groups based on the level of the leisure seriousness. First, all participants were divided into two groups as casual and serious golfer groups by a cluster analysis using three composite indices including an affective, a cognitive, and a behavioral dimension (see Table 14). All three dimensions were

standardized and combined as a dimension to use a K-means cluster analysis in order to split participants into two groups. The first group included casual golfers ( $n = 184$ ) among the survey participants. Then, the rest of the respondents were classified as serious golfers ( $n = 181$ ) based on a K-means cluster analysis using individual leisure seriousness scores. Table 14 also reported the mean scores and standard deviations of leisure seriousness items for the two groups.

Table 14

*Cluster Analysis for Leisure Seriousness*

Dimension	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	
	Casual golfers ( $n=184$ )	Serious golfers ( $n=181$ )
Affective	2.55 (0.49)	3.80 (0.48)
Cognitive	2.13 (0.65)	3.64 (0.76)
Behavioral	4.52 (4.48)	13.75 (10.05)

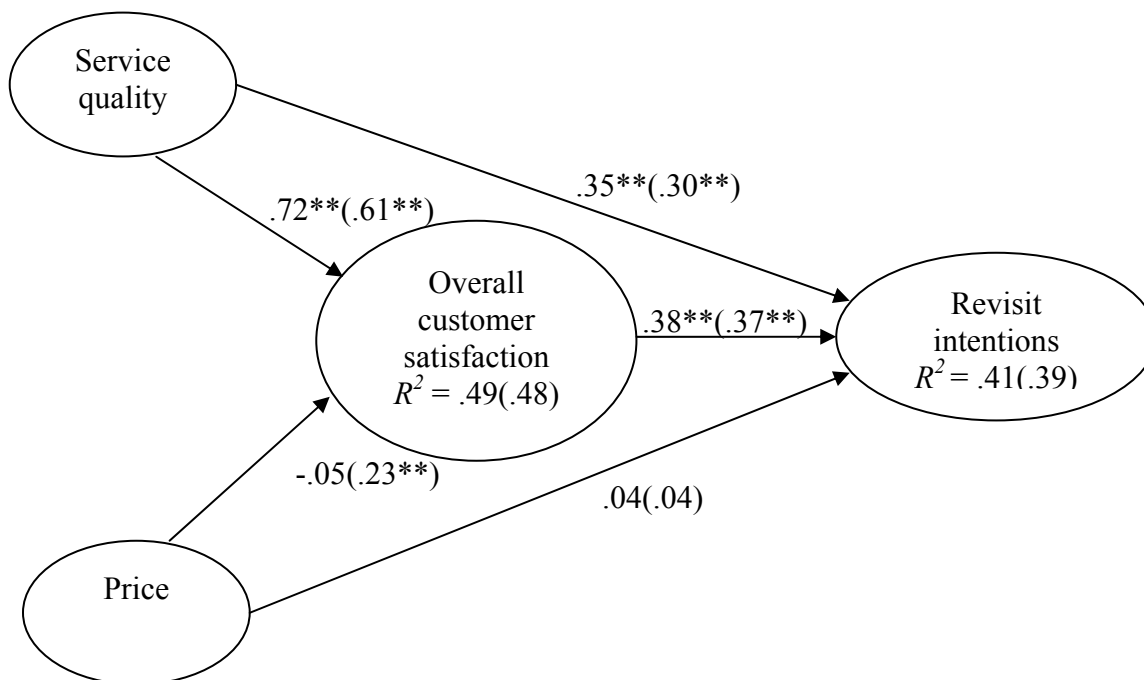
Second, the path coefficients of each structural model in multiple groups were examined with correlations and standard deviations for both groups (see Table 15 and Figure 7). For serious golfers, satisfaction with price did not affect both overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. However, service quality significantly influenced both overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. And then, overall customer satisfaction significantly affected revisit intentions. Whereas, for casual golfers, satisfaction with price did not affect only revisit intentions, however, significantly influenced overall customer satisfaction.

Table 15

*Correlations and Standard Deviations for Analysis of a Path Model*

Variable	1	2	3	4	Serious SD
1. SQ	--	0.46	0.70	0.64	5.86
2. PR	0.19	--	0.28	0.31	3.22
3. OCS	0.65	0.35	--	0.62	1.56
4. RI	0.55	0.23	0.58	--	2.33
Casual SD	6.14	3.17	1.65	2.44	

*Note.* SQ = Service quality; PR = Price; OCS = Overall customer satisfaction; RI = Revisit intentions.  $n_1 = 181$  Serious golfers;  $n_2 = 184$  Casual golfers.



*Figure 7.* Results of structural equation model for two groups testing relationships among latent variables.

*Note.* The parameter estimates in this figure are unstandardized values. The values outside the parenthesis are for serious golfers and the values in the parentheses are for casual golfers.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Third, the factor structure should be examined in order to identify whether the two models have the same pattern. If the two models had the same pattern of the factor structure, the model's five direct effects with the imposition of cross-group equality constraints were tested. Also, the goodness-of-fit indices were attained for the invariant path coefficient. The model fit indices including chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) = 13.763,  $df$  = 5, RMSEA = .097, CFI = .983, NFI = .974, NNFI = .960 supported that this model was acceptable. Finally, the chi-square with the imposition of cross-group equality constraint on each direct effect was compared with the chi-square with the non-constraint (see Table 16). According to Kline (2005), the value of chi-square change ( $\Delta \chi^2$ ) greater than 3.84 means that the difference between two groups was acceptable at the .05 level. One of these indexes,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.191$  for the path Price  $\rightarrow$  Overall Customer Satisfaction, was statistically significant at the .05 level. However, other indexes were not statistically significant. Therefore, there was only the difference in the relationship between service quality and overall customer satisfaction between the two groups.

Table 16

*Results of Multiple Group Analysis Comparisons of Serious and Casual Golfers on Parameter Estimates*

Direct Effects	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$ change	Path Coefficients of Separate Sample Analysis***	
			Serious Golfers	Casual Golfers
SQ $\rightarrow$ OCS	13.727	.036	.72**	.61**
PR $\rightarrow$ OCS	2.572	11.191**	-.05	.23**
SQ $\rightarrow$ RI	13.156	.607	.35**	.30**
PR $\rightarrow$ RI	13.721	.042	.04	.04
OCS $\rightarrow$ RI	13.364	.399	.38**	.37**

Note. SQ = Service quality, PR = Price, OCS = Overall customer satisfaction, RI = Revisit intentions. \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* Unstandardized estimates.

Based on the results of the multiple group analysis of SEM, only hypothesis 4 was accepted at the .05 level with  $\chi^2(1) = 11.191$ . Hypothesis 4 postulated that the relationships between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction would be different based on the leisure seriousness of the participants. The value of  $\chi^2(1) = 11.191$  indicates that there was the significant difference in the relationship between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction between two groups. However, the other hypotheses (2, 6, 8, and 10) were rejected because there was no statistically significant difference in the other direct effects between the two groups.

In detail, hypothesis 2 proposed that the relationship between perceived service quality and overall customer satisfaction would be different based on leisure seriousness of participants. This hypothesis was rejected because the difference on the direct effects of service quality  $\rightarrow$  overall customer satisfaction between two groups was not statistically significant at the .05 level with  $\chi^2(1) = .036$ . Hypothesis 6 posited that the relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intentions would be different based on two groups. This hypothesis was rejected because the difference on the direct effects of perceived service quality  $\rightarrow$  revisit intentions between two groups was not statistically significant at the .05 level with  $\chi^2(1) = .607$ . Hypothesis 8 postulated that the relationship between satisfaction with price and revisit intentions would be different based on two groups. This hypothesis was rejected because the difference on the direct effects of satisfaction with price  $\rightarrow$  revisit intentions between two groups was not statistically significant at the .05 level with  $\chi^2(1) = .042$ . Finally, Hypothesis 10 postulated that the relationship between overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions would be different based on two groups. This hypothesis was rejected because the difference on the direct effects of overall customer satisfaction  $\rightarrow$  revisit intentions between two groups was not statistically significant at the .05 level with  $\chi^2(1) = .399$ .

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### *Overview*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions and to compare these relationships between two groups divided by the level of leisure seriousness of golfers. This chapter presents a summary, interpretation of the results, and discussion. The major components of this chapter are as follows: (1) discussion of results, (2) contributions, (3) managerial implications, (4) future studies, and (5) conclusion.

As the results of the test of the structural model, perceived service quality positively influenced overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. Also, overall customer satisfaction positively affected revisit intentions. It is anticipated that in order for golf course managers to encourage their customers to come to the same course to play golf, they should improve the service quality of the golf courses. These relationships among perceived service quality, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions were consistent with the expectation confirmation theory. However, satisfaction with price did not statistically significantly influence overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. This result explains that satisfaction with price is not an important determinant of overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. According to this study's results of the relationship with price, competing on price in the golf course management context may not be a viable long-term strategy to attract more golfers.

In addition, the difference in the relationships among the above variables between casual and serious golfer groups was investigated by MGASEM. As a result, there was no statistically significant difference in the relationships, with the exception of the relationship between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction. In the serious golfers group, the relationship between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction was not statistically significant. However, this relationship in the casual golfers group was statistically significant. These results imply that satisfaction with price was an important factor of overall customer satisfaction for the casual golfers group, but not for the serious golfers group. In other words, more frequent and serious golfers did not regard the price as a factor influencing choice of golf course. On the other hand, less frequent and casual golfers considered the price as an important factor for them to revisit the same golf course.

### *Discussion of Results*

The current study utilized an exploratory research design in order to investigate a set of 10 hypotheses by analyzing the data collected from six different golf courses in the State of Georgia. The main statistical method was the structural equation modeling using LISREL 8.51.

Since the 1980s, many studies have been conducted to investigate reasonable dimensions of service quality in a variety of fields (e.g., Brady & Cronin, 2001; Burns & Graefe, 2006; Burns et al., 2003; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Gronross, 1984; Ko & Pastore, 2005, Kwon & Ko, 2006; Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988; Rust & Oliver, 1994; Sureshchandar et al., 2001; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996). In the recreational sport industry, several researchers have developed the measurement of service quality (e.g., Chelladurai, Scott, & Haywood-Farmer, 1987; Kim & Kim, 1995; Ko & Pastore, 2005; Kwon & Ko, 2006;

Papadimitrous & Karteroliotis, 2000).

According to the results of the second-order confirmatory factor analysis, all three indicators and program quality have a strong and statistically significant relationship. Also, program quality has a strong and statistically significant relationship with overall service quality. These results are consistent with Kwon and Ko's (2006) study suggesting all three indicators for program quality have the relationship with overall service quality.

Second, both indicators have a strong and statistically significant relationship with interpersonal quality. In addition, interpersonal quality has a strong and statistically significant relationship with overall service quality. These results are congruent with Kwon and Ko's (2006) study. Sport and physical activity service can be divided into two services: consumer and human service (Chelladurai, 1992). Interpersonal quality belongs to human service. According to this result, two indicators for interpersonal quality are very important to test overall service quality. Therefore, human service is a critical determinant of overall service quality. Finally, all six indicators of physical environment quality have a strong and statistically significant relationship with physical environment quality.

Furthermore, physical environment quality has a strong and statistically significant relationship with overall service quality. These results support those of Kwon and Ko's (2006) study that physical environment quality is one of the dimensions of service quality. Hypotheses 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were tested with the output of SEM for the revised model. For hypotheses 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, the multiple group analysis of SEM was conducted.

#### *Hypotheses 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9*

A model of the relationships between perceived service quality, overall customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions presented by Cronin and Taylor (1992) was used as a

fundamental framework. They asserted that improved service quality would positively influence customer satisfaction, and in turn this satisfaction would result in increased repurchase intentions. This relationship is very similar to the expectation confirmation theory (ECT). ECT postulates that expectations, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post-purchase satisfaction. If perceived performance of a product (a good or service) exceeds expectations, a consumer would be satisfied with post-purchase. In turn, post-purchase satisfaction will result in repurchase. There have been many studies which investigated ECT (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Dabholkar et al., 2000; Oliver, 1980, 1993; Patterson et al., 1997; Spreng et al., 1996; Swan & Trawick, 1981; Tse, & Wilton, 1988). In the golf context, if a customer were satisfied with service quality and the price, this satisfaction would positively influence revisit intentions. In order to investigate ECT in the golf context, hypotheses 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were postulated.

Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive influence of perceived service quality on overall customer satisfaction. This relationship between two variables was empirically demonstrated by many studies (e.g., Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The results of this dissertation provided further support for this hypothesis, indicating a high level of perceived service quality would boost the level of overall customer satisfaction. In addition, the high path coefficient value (.79) of service quality  $\rightarrow$  overall customer satisfaction ( $t$  value = 13.67) supported an assimilation effect (Anderson, 1973), which is based on ECT. According to Anderson (1973), a customer is motivated to decline the psychological stress by a change of the insight on the product. One of the ways to decrease the strain is to take the perception of the product into the expectation line. In this study, golfers might have taken their perception of service quality into the expectation line. Consequently, this assimilation effect may have promoted the positive impact of the perception of service quality on

overall customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 posited a positive influence of satisfaction with price on overall customer satisfaction. This relationship implying that satisfaction with price is significantly related to customer satisfaction has been examined by many recent studies (e.g., Cao et al., 2004; Grewal et al., 2004; Homburg et al., 2005; Matzler et al., 2006). The result of the current study did not support the significant relationship between price and overall customer satisfaction in the golf context, as the path coefficient value (.09) of price  $\rightarrow$  overall customer satisfaction was not statistically significant ( $t$  value = 1.94) at the .05 level and was quite low as well. Therefore, satisfaction with price did not influence overall customer satisfaction statistically, possibly resulting from the probability that the price was reasonably appropriate based on the quality of service and facility of the golf course. In addition, it is expected that in advance golfers might choose the course to play with a reasonable payment.

Hypothesis 5 suggested a positive effect of perceived service quality on revisit intentions. Many studies have illustrated a positive relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intentions (Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Jones et al., 2000; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal et al., 1998; Rosenbaum et al., 2006; Petrick et al., 2006; Yu et al., 2006). In the current study, this hypothesis was supported because the relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intentions was statistically significant. Although the direct effect value of perceived service quality on revisit intentions was .40 ( $t$  value = 3.92), the total effect was somehow high with .68 ( $t$  value = 9.84). This indicates that the relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intentions is very intimate. Based on ECT, the highly perceived service quality enhanced the level of overall customer satisfaction, and in turn positively influenced revisit intentions in the golf context.

Hypothesis 7 posited a positive influence of satisfaction with price on revisit intentions. Several studies assessed the effect of satisfaction with price on repurchase intentions in several contexts such as vacation (Cao et al., 2004; Grewal et al., 2004; Homburg et al., 2005). This hypothesis was not supported by the results of the current study because the relationship between satisfaction with price and revisit intentions was not statistically significant ( $t$  value = .84) at the .05 level and the path coefficient value was quite low as well (.04). Furthermore, Cao et al. (2004) found that the effect of price satisfaction on fulfillment satisfaction was negative in the internet retail context. This implies that satisfaction with the price is not an important determinant of overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in the golf context.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that overall customer satisfaction would positively influence revisit intentions. Previous studies reported a positive relationship between overall customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998; Jones et al., 2000; Loveman, 1998). In this study, the result of the relationship between overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions supported hypothesis 9 because the direct effect value of overall customer satisfaction on revisit intentions was .36 and statistically significant ( $t$  value = 3.53) at the .05 level. This result was supported by Petrick and Backman's (2002a) study suggesting that a golf traveler's satisfaction is highly correlated with repurchase intentions. In the same manner in other related studies, overall customer satisfaction is an important determinant for revisit intentions in the golf context.

Consequently, the highly perceived service quality is an important determinant for golfers to feel a high level of overall customer satisfaction, in turn feeling a high level of overall customer satisfaction becomes a vital determinant to enhance their revisit intentions for the same golf course. In other words, when golfers perceived high service quality from a golf course, they

would be satisfied with the golf course and would be willing to visit the same golf course again. Also, the highly perceived service quality positively influenced golfers' intentions to visit the same golf course directly.

On the other hand, the price was not a critical determinant for golfers as a whole to experience good customer satisfaction from a golf course. Furthermore, it was not a vital element increasing the intention to visit the same golf course repeatedly. Accordingly, one effective method for golf course managers to retain current golfers and attract more potential customers is to improve service quality of the golf course, whereas increased levels of price satisfaction due to low prices do not positively affect satisfaction with golf experiences. Therefore, competing on price may not be a viable long-term strategy in the golf course context.

#### *Hypotheses 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10*

Among the huge number of golf participants, some refer to golf as their primary leisure activity and play both more frequently and more seriously and, therefore, might be called serious golfers, whereas others regard golf as one of various leisure activities that they play both less frequently and less seriously and, therefore, can be called casual golfers or recreational golfers. Hypotheses 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were postulated in order to investigate the differences on the relationships among perceived service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions between the two groups split according to the magnitude of leisure seriousness. Stebbins (1981, 1982, 1992, 1997) developed a complex conceptual frameworks regarding serious and casual leisure. Investigating these hypotheses would be an exploration of the nature and characteristic traits of casual and serious golfers.

The results of the multiple group analysis of SEM indicated support for hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 suggested the difference in the relationship between price and overall customer

satisfaction based on the levels of leisure seriousness. In the casual golfers group, the direct effect of satisfaction with the price on overall customer satisfaction was .23 and was statistically significant ( $t$  value = 4.29) at the .05 level. On the other hand, in the serious golfers group, the path coefficient value between the two variables was -.05 and was not statistically significant ( $t$  value = -.89). The results of the multiple group analysis of SEM showed the statistically significant difference with  $\chi^2(1) = 11.191$  on the relationship between price and overall customer satisfaction. This result indicates that for casual golfers satisfaction with price is an important determinant for overall customer satisfaction, while for serious golfers, satisfaction with price is not a critical determinant of overall customer satisfaction.

On the other hand, hypotheses 2, 6, 8, and 10 were not accepted. In other words, the relationships between perceived service quality and overall customer satisfaction and between perceived service quality and revisit intentions and between satisfaction with the price and revisit intentions, and between overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions were not significantly different based on the level of leisure seriousness.

According to the difference between the two groups, serious golfers are not likely to consider the price when they choose the golf course to play, whereas casual golfers tend to think about greens fee, cart fee, and so on when they select the golf course to play. This result has important implications for marketing golf courses. For golfers playing more frequently and seriously, reducing the price related to playing golf does not affect overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. Therefore, competing on price may not be a good strategy for serious golfers. For recreational or casual golfers, satisfaction with price significantly affected overall customer satisfaction, but did not significantly influence revisit intentions directly. However, the total effect of satisfaction with price on revisit intentions was .13 and was statistically significant

at the .05 level ( $z = 2.084$ ). This means that high satisfaction of casual golfers with price may encourage them to visit the golf course again. Accordingly, golf course managers need to consider their customers' nature if they have a plan to compete on price.

For the methods to test the differences between the relationships among variables, it is sure that the multiple group analysis of SEM is a good method to examine the effect of leisure seriousness on the relationships of this model. SEM with mediation or moderation could be good way to test the effect of leisure seriousness. However, researcher wanted to test the effect of leisure seriousness on overall relationship of this model. Also, the effects of leisure seriousness on each relationship could be tested by the regression analysis with continuous variables.

### *Contributions*

It is believed that the results of this study will significantly contribute to the field of leisure and sport management. Williams and Buswell (2003) suggested that it should be conducted to synthesize the concepts, theories, and principles of consumer and management-based studies with the consumer process and the experiential properties of the leisure product as the central thrust. This implies that the concepts, theories, and principles should be applied to the leisure industry. In other words, scholars and practitioners should have a close relationship and then they can be helpful to each other. In this perspective, the current study tried to support existing concepts and theories and generate a new concept in the leisure management field. Previous studies asserted the positive effects of highly perceived service quality on customer satisfaction and then the positive effects of increased customer satisfaction on repurchase intentions (e.g., Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Cann, 1995; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Jones et al., 2000; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal et al., 1998; Petrick et al.,

2006; Rosenbaum et al., 2006; Singh, 1990; Yu et al., 2006).

This study supported the relationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. In addition, the results of this study were not consistent with the common concept presented by several studies indicating that satisfaction with price is positively related to customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Grewal et al., 2004; Homburg et al., 2005; Matzler et al., 2006). In the golf context, general golfers' satisfaction with price did not positively affect customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in the overall sample. However, casual golfers' satisfaction with price positively influenced customer satisfaction. In the perspective of practitioners, the results of this study should be applied to their management and marketing. Therefore, this study may make a meaningful contribution to the leisure management field while providing leisure facility managers with better practical managerial guidance.

In addition, it is true that a more feasible measurement model of service quality in the context of golf should be developed. In this perspective, this study contributes to establishing a better measurement model of service quality in the golf context. Over the past 20 years, many researchers have tried to establish a better measurement model of service quality in the management field (e.g., Brady & Cronin, 2001; Burns & Graefe, 2006; Burns et al., 2003; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Gronross, 1984; Ko & Pastore, 2005, Kwon & Ko, 2006; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988; Rust & Oliver, 1994; Sureshchandar et al., 2001; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996). These studies have shown the transition of the model of service quality and have explained the need to figure out a better model for each different context. In this perspective, it is meaningful for this study to present the better service quality measurement model in the golf context. From Kwon and Ko's (2006) measurement model of service quality, three dimensions (program, interpersonal, and physical environment quality), with the exception

of outcome quality, are vital determinants of service quality in the golf context.

Moreover, this study could present empirical evidence to support ECT. Oliver (1980) reported the processes of ECT from expectation through repurchase intentions. The relationships among perceived service quality, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the golf context are consistent with the general principle of ECT. However, the relationships among satisfaction with price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions are partially congruent with ECT. It is highly recommended that ECT should be applied to a variety of situations.

Lastly, most of the previously conducted studies on casual and serious leisure employed the qualitative research method. However, in this study, the quantitative research method was used and substantial data sets were provided. Thus, this study may be a useful guide for future studies that will utilize surveys with casual and serious leisure. Furthermore, this study may be a springboard for studies investigating any difference between casual and serious leisure participants.

### *Managerial Implications*

The results of this dissertation provide golf course managers as well as leisure facility managers with meaningful and practical information. In the management perspective, it is important to be aware of the ways to attract more customers and hold the current consumers. In order for golf course managers and other leisure facility managers to retain their current customers and potential consumers, they should pay more attention to service quality in order to improve the quality of service because perceived service quality has a significantly positive effect on customer satisfaction and revisit intentions.

According to the results of this dissertation, all three dimensions of service quality –

program quality, interpersonal quality, and physical environment quality – had strong and statistically significant relationships with overall service quality. In detail, interpersonal quality had the strongest relationship with overall service quality, followed by physical environment quality and program quality. This result suggests the priority of an investment to managers competing against other golf courses. If they plan to improve service quality of the golf course, it would be more beneficial to enhance interpersonal quality. For example, managers may provide staff members with a special training session for improving their attitudes, expertise, and so forth. Therefore, this dissertation could be useful information for golf course managers in an environment of keen competition with many courses.

This dissertation suggests that golf course managers have to find the ways to improve service quality of their golf courses. From the perspective of total quality management (TQM), improving service quality can be critical for golf course management. De Knop et al. (2004) asserted that TQM is a management approach to achieve quality through the participation of all organizational members and that customer satisfaction is very important for the long-term success of organizations and societies. According to the results of this study, highly perceived service quality of golf courses positively influence overall customer satisfaction. Consequently, it would be beneficial for golf course managers to enhance service quality in order to reach long-term success of management.

Golf course managers should have a specific marketing plan based on the leisure seriousness of their customers. The results of multiple group analysis in SEM present valuable information for leisure management as well as sport management. The results indicated a significant difference in the relationship between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction between casual and serious golfers groups.

In detail, satisfaction with price did not affect overall customer satisfaction in the serious golfers group, whereas satisfaction with price had a statistically significant influence on overall customer satisfaction in the casual golfers group. In addition, the total effect of satisfaction with price on revisit intentions was statistically significant in the casual golfers group. This result implies that satisfaction with price was an important determinant of revisit intentions for casual golfers. In accordance with this implication, if most of the customers at the golf course are golfers playing less frequently (i.e., casual golfers), the golf course managers should provide a reasonable price for playing golf in order to encourage their golfers to come to the golf course repeatedly. For example, providing various payment methods of greens fee such as membership and monthly or yearly payment with some discount would be a great attraction to casual golfers. On the other hand, if most of the customers at the golf course are golfers playing more frequently (i.e., serious golfers), it is not beneficial to compete on price. Therefore, the golf course managers should consider their customers' nature in order to establish a more effective marketing strategy to secure more customers.

In addition, segmentation of users is especially important in the leisure industry. It is a fact that casual golfers represent a minor portion of total rounds played. However, they tend to become serious golfers at any time. Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton's (2000) escalator concept, which is a graphic representation of consumer movement to higher levels of involvement, provides evidence of this tendency. According to this concept, casual golfers who are satisfied with service quality become serious golfers, while serious golfers who are satisfied with service quality of the golf course are likely to be more frequent customers of that golf course. Also, it is important to make casual golfers more involved in golf for the long-term success of golf course management. Therefore, price-oriented promotions, including discounted greens fees, coupons,

and reasonable packages, should be provided for casual golfers because they consider price as a determinant of customer satisfaction with the golf course.

Finally, golf course managers should keep communicating with their customers in order to know what they want and need. This study proposes that service quality is an important relational tool in the golf course's customer relationship management (CRM), presented by Erdem and Swait (1998). According to Erdem and Swait (1998), CRM is an information source that helps an enterprise manage customer relationships in an organized way. In the golf context, managers should have a database on their customers in terms of the priority of service quality based on the levels of leisure seriousness. An awareness of these is a useful tool to help managers establish more effective marketing strategies for customer retention.

#### *Future Studies*

It is believed that this dissertation presented meaningful information for the leisure management field. However, future studies in this area are encouraged in terms of development of serious leisure inventory in the various contexts, factors influencing casual golfers to become serious golfers, development of the measurement model of service quality for specific leisure settings, examination of the differences in the relationships among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in other leisure settings, as well as these differences between private and public golf courses.

First, a better measurement scale of serious leisure is needed. Recently, the serious leisure inventory was developed by Gould, Moore, McGuire, and Stebbins (2008). It will serve as a guide for the future study on serious leisure. However, the target sample was collected in the United States Adventure Racing Association (USARA), the All American Trail Running

Association (AATRA), and Paddling.Net. Although it is true that this inventory will be a great springboard for serious leisure study, there might be some problem to apply this inventory to all leisure activities. So, a more feasible inventory of serious leisure for each leisure activity should be developed and applied. This serious leisure inventory should be examined by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in the context of various leisure settings.

Second, the cutoff point to distinguish serious leisure from casual leisure as well as project-based (Stebbins, 2005b) leisure should be discussed. After people begin participating in a certain leisure activity, some will want to keep doing it, whereas some will discontinue the activity. Therefore, the factors and determinants encouraging these casual golfers to become serious leisure participants should be explored. This study will be very useful for the area of serious leisure.

Third, more suitable inventories of service quality for the specific leisure settings should be developed. The inventory to measure service quality has been developed in a variety of fields for the past 20 years. Yet, in spite of the continuous studies, it is still in need of development because different fields may require different inventories of service quality. For example, Ko and Pastore's (2005) inventory of service quality was not suitable in the golf context because it was too long. Therefore, in order to examine service quality accurately in each context, the best effective inventory to measure specifically for each context should be developed.

Fourth, the relationships among factors including service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions should be tested in a variety of leisure settings. The relationships among these factors in the golf context were investigated in this dissertation. It is assumed that these relationships among those variables in the different leisure contexts would be different from the results reported in this study because the nature of participants in diverse

leisure activities would be differentiated from that of golfers. For example, satisfaction with price would affect overall customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in the summer camp context.

Therefore, the revised model in this study should be applied to various leisure settings.

Fifth, it will be useful to test the priority differences of the service quality dimensions based on the levels of leisure seriousness in the golf course context. In this study, interpersonal quality had the strongest relationship with overall service quality, followed by physical environment quality and program quality. Furthermore, the results of the examination on the relative importance among the service quality dimensions and on the differences in the relative importance between casual and serious golfers will be useful information for golf course managers to put the weight in order to improve the quality of service.

Lastly, the differences in those relationships between private and public golf courses should be investigated. Data for this dissertation were collected from both private and public golf courses. It is difficult to generalize the results from this dissertation for each private and public golf course because it is anticipated that golfers who usually use the private golf courses and those who use the public golf courses have different nature and characteristics. As the difference in the relationships between casual and serious golfers groups was investigated by the multiple group analysis in SEM in this dissertation, the difference in the relationships among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions should be tested based on the ownership style, such as private and public. In addition, the differences in the measurement model of service quality depending on the ownership style should be examined.

### *Conclusion*

The National Golf Foundation (NGF) has recently shown that the total number of golfers

in the United States has been somewhat stable for the past two decades, actually decreasing during the past five years. Nevertheless, the total number of golf courses has continually increased (NGF, 2004). While fewer people are playing more golf, the range of choices of golf courses from which golfers can select has expanded. Consequently, this increase has resulted in a keen competition among golf course managers to market their courses. It was assumed that investigation of the relationships among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions in the golf context between casual and serious golfers groups would be beneficial to golf course managers.

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the relationships among service quality, price, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions and examine the difference in these relationships between casual and serious golfers groups. It was found that perceived service quality, overall customer satisfaction, and revisit intentions had close positive relationships. Furthermore, between the casual and serious golfers groups, the relationship between satisfaction with price and overall customer satisfaction was different; that is, satisfaction with price did not affect overall customer satisfaction in serious golfers, whereas satisfaction with price was an important determinant of overall customer satisfaction in casual golfers.

The results of this dissertation provide golf course managers and leisure facility managers with managerial information on launching a more effective marketing strategy to attract more customers. This study explains that service quality should be ameliorated to enhance customer satisfaction which impacts revisit intentions for customer retention. Furthermore, when establishing a marketing plan, managers should present price-oriented promotions for casual golfers. To do this, managers should first know the characteristics of their customers in terms of

the levels of leisure seriousness of golf. For future research, the revised model of service quality in this dissertation should be applied to other leisure contexts. Doing so would make it possible to measure service quality accurately in various leisure contexts.

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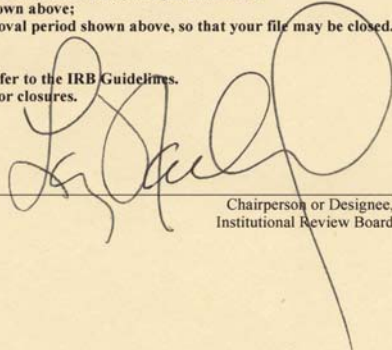
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## APPENDICES


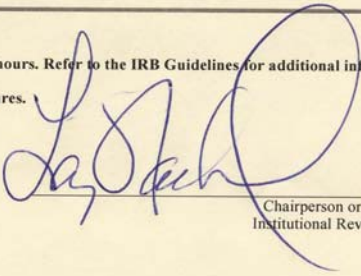
## Appendix A

## Institutional Review Board Approval Form

 <b>The University of Georgia</b>		Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Office 612 Boyd GSRC Athens, Georgia 30602-7411 (706) 542-3199 Fax: (706) 542-3360 www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso	
Office of The Vice President for Research DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901			
<b>APPROVAL FORM</b>			
<b>Date Proposal Received:</b> 2007-05-10		<b>Project Number:</b> 2007-10754-0	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dept/Phone</b>	<b>Address</b> <b>Email</b>
Mr. Sunhwan Hwang	PI	Counseling & Human Development Services 332 Ramsey Student Center + 1690	706-254-1852      shhwang@uga.edu
Dr. Gwynn Powell	CO	Counseling & Human Development Services 345 Ramsey Center +1690 706-542-4332	gpowell@uga.edu
<b>Title of Study:</b> The Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer's Leisure Satisfaction and Re-patron Intentions based on the level of Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry			
<b>45 CFR 46 Category:</b> Administrative 2		<b>Change(s) Required for Approval:</b>	
<b>Parameters:</b> None;		Revised Application; Revised Consent Document(s);	
<b>Approved :</b> 2007-06-11 <b>Begin date :</b> 2007-06-11 <b>Expiration date :</b> 2012-06-10			
<i>NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.</i>			
<b>Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs:</b>		<b>Funding Agency:</b>	
Form 310 Provided: No			
<b>Your human subjects study has been approved.</b>			
<b>Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform the IRB:</b>			
... of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to the subjects or others within 24 to 72 hours;			
... of any significant changes or additions to your study and obtain approval of them before they are put into effect;			
... that you need to extend the approval period beyond the expiration date shown above;			
... that you have completed your data collection as approved, within the approval period shown above, so that your file may be closed.			
For additional information regarding your responsibilities as an investigator refer to the IRB Guidelines. Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures. Keep this original approval form for your records.			
			 _____ Chairperson or Designee, Institutional Review Board

## Appendix B

## Institutional Review Board Approval of Changes

 <b>The University of Georgia</b>		Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Office 612 Boyd GSRC Athens, Georgia 30602-7411 (706) 542-3199 Fax: (706) 542-3360 www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso	
Office of The Vice President for Research DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901			
<b>APPROVAL OF RENEWALS / CHANGES</b>			
<b>Request Date:</b> 2007-11-28		<b>Project Number:</b> 2007-10754-1	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dept/Phone</b>	<b>Address</b> <b>Email</b>
Mr. Sunhwan Hwang	PI	Counseling & Human Development Services 332 Ramsey Student Center + 1690	706-254-1852      shhwang@uga.edu
Dr. Gwynn Powell	CO	Counseling & Human Development Services 345 Ramsey Center +1690 706-542-4332	gpowell@uga.edu
<b>Title of Study:</b> The Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer's Leisure Satisfaction and Re-patron Intentions based on the level of Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry			
<b>45 CFR 46 Category:</b> Continuing Review		<b>Renew :</b> No	<b>Change(s) :</b> Reduced Maximum Number of Subjects; Revised Instrument(s);
<b>Parameters:</b> APPROVAL OF ABOVE NOTED CHANGES.			
<b>Approved :</b> 2007-12-05 <b>Begin date :</b> 2007-12-05 <b>Expiration date :</b> 2012-06-10			
<small>NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.</small>			
<b>Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs:</b>		<b>Funding Agency:</b>	
<p>Your request for approval of renewal and/or changes has been approved.</p> <p>You must report any adverse events or unanticipated risk to the IRB within 24 to 72 hours. Refer to the IRB Guidelines for additional information.</p> <p>Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.          Keep this original approval form for your records.</p>			
			 Chairperson or Designee, Institutional Review Board

## Appendix C

### Copies of the Questionnaire for the Pilot Test

# **Service Quality of the Golf Course**



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**The University of Georgia**

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**Recreation & Leisure Studies Program**

**Department of Counseling & Human Development Services**

**The University of Georgia**

**Dear Participants:**

We are conducting a study on “**the Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer’s Leisure Satisfaction and Re-patron Intentions based on Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry.**” You are invited to participate in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationships among perceived service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions. In addition, we will compare these relationships between serious and casual golfers. The results of the study can benefit managers of the golf courses by better communicating with their (potential) customers. In addition, you can express your desires and needs to managers of the golf courses. Consequently, you might be able to play golf in better conditions.

The study’s success and accurate depiction of the relationships among service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions based on leisure seriousness of golfers is highly dependent upon your sincere response.

You as an individual may be assured of complete anonymity. Individual responses will not be identified or reported. The survey will be collected and coded without any distinguishing information. Any published or reported results of this study will not be linked to the name of any individual and golf course. Thus any discussion will be based upon group data. Completing the survey should take only about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Sincerely,

Sunhwan Hwang, Doctoral Student.  
Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
Department of Counseling & Human  
Development Services  
The University of Georgia  
300 River Road.  
Athens, GA 30602  
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Gwynn Powell, PhD.  
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300 River Road.  
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**PART I:** The following statements measure your leisure seriousness on golf. Please circle the number that best represents how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

Your Golf Seriousness	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
1. When I am playing golf I can really be myself.	1	2	3	4	5					
2. Golf offers me relaxation when life's problems build up.	1	2	3	4	5					
3. Golf says a lot about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5					
4. I enjoy discussing golf with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5					
5. Golf is one of the most satisfying things I do.	1	2	3	4	5					
6. Golf is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	1	2	3	4	5					
7. I think I have good golf skills.	1	2	3	4	5					
8. Most of my friends are in some way connected with golf.	1	2	3	4	5					
9. You can tell a lot about a person when you see them golfing.	1	2	3	4	5					
10. I do particularly like golfing.	1	2	3	4	5					
11. I have much interest in golf.	1	2	3	4	5					
12. I find a lot of my life is organized around golf.	1	2	3	4	5					
13. Golf is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5					
14. I think I have a great body of knowledge about golf.	1	2	3	4	5					
15. I am good at using all kinds of clubs.	1	2	3	4	5					
16. I am willing to spend money for the golf lesson.	1	2	3	4	5					
17. How long have you played golf?						_____	Years			
18. How many rounds, on average, do you play a year?						_____	Rounds			
19. How many times, on average, do you practice at the driving range a month?						_____	Times			
20. How many hours, on average, do you watch the Golf Channel a month?						_____	Hours			

**PART II:** The following statements are about service quality of the golf course where you have ever played before or where you are today. Please circle the numbers that best represent both **your perception** of service quality of the golf course and **its importance**.

Service Quality of this golf course	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. The course has various classes/programs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. The operating hours of the golf course are convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. The course staff are easy to contact by email.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can count on the staff being friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can count on the staff to take actions to address my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can count on the staff knowing their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel better enjoyment when playing golf at this golf course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. The golf course offers an opportunity for me to improve muscle strength.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. The golf course has provided me with many opportunities for social interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. The golf course has excellent ambience.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. The golf course is well designed.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. The course's fairways are well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. This course is safe from creatures like snakes.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. This course has convenient & ample parking.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. Other customers here have a positive impact on my perception of this golf course's services.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. The large number of golfers at this course is a sign of its good service.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. I generally think of the golf course as having golfers who feel excellent service.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. The golf course offers a wide range of classes/programs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. Intervals between tee-times are convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. This course has a helpful website.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. The staff demonstrates their willingness to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. The staff respond quickly to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. The staff are able to answer my questions quickly.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. I feel positive change in mood when playing golf at this golf course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. This course helps me reduce physical problems.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Service Quality of this golf course		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important			Very Important		
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
26.	I really enjoyed the social interaction on this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
27.	This course ambience is what I'm looking for.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
28.	This course layout serves my purposes/needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
29.	This course's greens are well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
30.	This course is safe from the balls flying from the driving range.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
31.	The clubhouse/pro-shop of this course is convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
32.	I am generally impressed with the other golfers of this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
33.	Fully reserved tee-off times represent great service at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
34.	I want to play at the golf course where other golfers perceived great service quality.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
35.	This course offers popular classes/programs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
36.	This course offers events/programs at several different times.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
37.	Up-to-date information is available on this course's activities and events.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
38.	The attitude of the staff shows me that they understand my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
39.	The behavior of the staff indicates to me that they understand my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
40.	The staff understand that I rely on their knowledge to meet my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
41.	I escape from stresses when playing golf at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
42.	I feel that my fitness has increased after having played golf at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
43.	I feel a sense of family among this course's customers.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
44.	I am consistently impressed with this course's atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
45.	I am impressed with the design of this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
46.	The equipment (carts and rental clubs) provided by this course is in good usable condition.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
47.	There is no possibility for my stuff to be stolen or damaged at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
48.	This course has the clean locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
49.	This course's customers follow rules and regulations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
50.	I think if this golf course has good service, it will always attract more golfers.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

Service Quality of this golf course	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
51. My golf partners' perception of service quality influences my perception of service quality.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
52. The classes/programs offered by this course are attractive to me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
53. Overall, information about this course is easy to obtain.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
54. This course is easy to contact by phone.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
55. I feel that my skill level has increased after having played golf at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
56. I really enjoy this course's atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
57. This course is aesthetically attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
58. This course is comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
59. The equipment (carts and rental clubs) provided by this course is up-to-date.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
60. I find that this course's other customers consistently leave me with a good impression of its service.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part III:** The following statements are about satisfaction with **price**. Please circle the number that best represents your satisfaction with each price in this golf course and its importance.

Price	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am satisfied with the greens fee.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the cart fee.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with the price of merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am satisfied with the price of foods provided at the concession.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part IV:** The following statements are about **overall satisfaction with your leisure**. Please circle the number that best represents your leisure satisfaction.

Leisure Satisfaction	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am satisfied with a golf experience at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with golfing at this course as my leisure activity.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am satisfied with my leisure.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part V:** The following statements are about your **intention (re-patron intention) to revisit this golf course**. Please circle the number that best represents your intention.

Re-patron Intentions	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
1. If I were to choose a golf course to play golf, I would choose this golf course again.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would consider choosing this golf course to play golf again.	1	2	3	4	5
3. For next round of golf, I am willing to play golf at this golf course rather than other courses.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would prefer going to this golf course, rather than trying a new course.	1	2	3	4	5

**Part VI:** Please answer for the following questions.

1. AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ years old
2. GENDER: a. Male \_\_\_\_\_ b. Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. ETHNICITY:
 

a. African-American _____	d. Hispanic _____
b. Asian-American _____	e. Native Americans _____
c. Caucasian/ White _____	f. Others (including internationals) _____
4. Annual Household Income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many times have you ever taken golf vacations? \_\_\_\_\_ Times
6. How much money do you annually spend for golf? (including equipments, instructions and travels for golf)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!**

Please return your completed questionnaire to:  
 Sunhwan Hwang, Doctoral Candidate.  
 Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
 Department of Counseling & Human Development Services  
 The University of Georgia  
 330 River Road #332 Ramsey Center  
 Athens, GA 30602  
 shhwang@uga.edu

## Appendix D

### Copies of the Questionnaire for the Main Study

# **Service Quality of the Golf Course**



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**The University of Georgia**

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**Sunhwan Hwang**

**Recreation & Leisure Studies Program**

**Department of Counseling & Human Development Services**

**The University of Georgia**

**Dear Participants:**

We are conducting a study on “**the Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer’s Leisure Satisfaction and Re-patron Intentions based on Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry.**” You are invited to participate in the study.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationships among perceived service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions. In addition, we will compare these relationships between serious and casual golfers. The results of the study can benefit managers of the golf courses by better communicating with their (potential) customers. In addition, you can express your desires and needs to managers of the golf courses. Consequently, you might be able to play golf in better conditions.

The study’s success and accurate depiction of the relationships among service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions based on leisure seriousness of golfers is highly dependent upon your sincere response.

You as an individual may be assured of complete anonymity. Individual responses will not be identified or reported. The survey will be collected and coded without any distinguishing information. Any published or reported results of this study will not be linked to the name of any individual and golf course. Thus any discussion will be based upon group data. Completing the survey should take only about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Sincerely,

Sunhwan Hwang, Doctoral Student.  
Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
Department of Counseling & Human  
Development Services  
The University of Georgia  
300 River Road.  
Athens, GA 30602  
shhwangg@uga.edu

Gwynn Powell, Ph.D.  
Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
Department of Counseling & Human  
Development Services  
The University of Georgia  
300 River Road.  
Athens, GA 30602  
gpowell@uga.edu

**PART I:** The following statements measure your leisure seriousness on golf. Please circle the number that best represents how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements.

<b>Your Golf Seriousness</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. When I am playing golf I can really be myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Golf offers me relaxation when life's problems build up.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Golf says a lot about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I enjoy discussing golf with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Golf is one of the most satisfying things I do.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Golf is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think I have good golf skills.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Most of my friends are in some way connected with golf.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You can tell a lot about a person when you see them golfing.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I do particularly like golfing.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I have much interest in golf.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I find a lot of my life is organized around golf.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Golf is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think I have a great body of knowledge about golf.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am good at using all kinds of clubs.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am willing to spend money for the golf lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
17. How long have you played golf?					_____ Years
18. How many rounds, on average, do you play a year?					_____ Rounds
19. How many times, on average, do you practice at the driving range a month?					_____ Times
20. How many hours, on average, do you watch the Golf Channel a month?					_____ Hours

**PART II:** The following statements are about service quality of the golf course where you have ever played before or where you are today. Please circle the numbers that best represent both **your perception** of service quality of the golf course and **its importance**.

Service Quality of this golf course	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. This course has various classes/programs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. The operating hours of this golf course are convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Up-to-date information is available on this course's activities and events.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. The staff demonstrates their willingness to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The staff responds quickly to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can count on the staff knowing their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. This golf course has excellent ambience.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am impressed with the design of this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. This course's greens and fairways are well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. This course is very safe from any risk.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. The clubhouse/pro-shop of this course is convenient.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am generally impressed with the other golfers of this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part III:** The following statements are about satisfaction with **price**. Please circle the number that best represents your satisfaction with each price in this golf course and its importance.

Price	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree					Not Important					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am satisfied with the greens fee.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the cart fee.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with the price of merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am satisfied with the price of foods provided at the concession.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part IV:** The following statements are about **overall satisfaction with your leisure**. Please circle the number that best represents your leisure satisfaction.

<b>Leisure Satisfaction</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>				
1. I am satisfied with a golf experience at this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with this course.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Part V:** The following statements are about your **intention (re-patron intention) to revisit this golf course**. Please circle the number that best represents your intention.

<b>Re-patron Intentions</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>					<b>Strongly Agree</b>				
1. If I were to choose a golf course to play golf, I would choose this golf course again.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would consider choosing this golf course to play golf again.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. For next round of golf, I am willing to play golf at this golf course rather than other courses.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

<p><b>Part VI.</b> Please answer the following questions.</p>
---

1. AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ years old
2. GENDER: a. Male \_\_\_\_\_ b. Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. ETHNICITY:
 

a. African-American _____	d. Hispanic _____
b. Asian-American _____	e. Native Americans _____
c. Caucasian/ White _____	f. Others (including internationals) _____
4. Annual Household Income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many times have you ever taken golf vacations? \_\_\_\_\_ Times
6. How much money do you annually spend for golf? (including equipments, instructions and travels for golf)
 

\$ \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your handicap score? \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!**

Please return your completed questionnaire to:  
 Sunhwan Hwang, Doctoral Candidate.  
 Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
 Department of Counseling & Human Development Services  
 The University of Georgia  
 330 River Road #332 Ramsey Center  
 Athens, GA 30602  
 shhwangg@uga.edu

Appendix E  
Information Letter

## Information Letter

March 20, 2007

Dear Participants:

We invite you to participate in a research study entitled “the Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer’s Leisure Satisfaction, and Re-patron Intentions based on Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry.” The purpose of this study is to understand the relationships among perceived service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions. The other purpose of this study is to compare these relationships with serious and casual golfers.

Your participation will involve completing a survey questionnaire and should only take about 10 to 15 minutes. Your involvement in this study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. All responses will be anonymous.

The findings from this project may provide information on the relationships among service quality, price, satisfaction, and re-patron intentions. The results of this study may also provide managers of the golf courses with the priority to improve the quality of service in order to attract potential golfers and retain their current golfers. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at (706) 542-4148 or send an e-mail to [shhwang@uga.edu](mailto:shhwang@uga.edu). Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address [irb@uga.edu](mailto:irb@uga.edu).

By completing and returning this questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Gwynn Powell  
Associate Professor  
Program of Recreation & Leisure Studies  
Department of Counseling & Human Devel.  
Services  
The University of Georgia  
330 River Road  
Athens, GA 30602

Sunhwan Hwang  
Doctoral Student  
Program of Recreation & Leisure Studies  
Department of Counseling & Human Devel.  
Services  
The University of Georgia  
330 River Road  
Athens, GA 30602

Appendix F

Copies of the Questionnaire for a Panel of Experts

# **Service Quality of the Golf Course**



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**The University of Georgia**

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**Sunhwan Hwang**

**Recreation & Leisure Studies Program**

**in the Department of Counseling & Human Development Services**

**The University of Georgia**

**Dear Member of a panel of experts**

I, Sunhwan Hwang, am conducting a study on **“the Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Price, Customer’s Leisure Satisfaction and Re-patron Intentions based on Leisure Seriousness of Golfers in the Leisure Industry”** as my doctoral dissertation at UGA. You are invited to participate in the study as a panel of experts.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationships among perceived service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions. In addition, I will compare these relationships between serious and casual golfers. The results of the study can benefit managers of the golf courses by better communicating with their (potential) customers.

The study’s success and accurate depiction of the relationships among service quality, price, customer’s leisure satisfaction, and re-patron intentions based on leisure seriousness of golfers is highly dependent upon your sincere response.

You as an individual may be assured of complete anonymity. Individual responses will not be identified or reported. Completing the questions should take only about 10-15 minutes of your time. If you have any question regarding these questions, do not hesitate to contact me via email ([shhwangg@uga.edu](mailto:shhwangg@uga.edu)). Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Sunhwan Hwang, Ph. D Candidate.  
Recreation & Leisure Studies Program  
Department of Counseling & Human Development Services  
The University of Georgia  
300 River Road.  
Athens, GA 30602  
[shhwangg@uga.edu](mailto:shhwangg@uga.edu)

### 1. Service Quality Dimensions and Subdimensions of Golf Course

Service Quality of Golf Course contains five dimensions: program quality, personal quality, outcome quality, physical environment quality, and indirect social quality. If you agree to that each subdimension is under each dimension, please put O on the blank. If you do not agree to that each subdimension is under each dimension, please put X on the blank.

e.g.> **Dimension: Program quality**      **Subdimensions: Range of programs ( O ),  
Operating time ( X )**

	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Subdimensions</b>	<b>O or X</b>
<b>Service Quality of Golf Course</b>	Program Quality	Range of Programs	
		Operating Time	
		Information	
	Personal Quality	Attitude	
		Behavior	
		Expertise	
	Outcome Quality	Psychological Benefits	
		Physiological Benefits	
		Social & Cultural Benefits	
	Physical Environment Quality	Ambient Condition	
		Design	
		Physical condition	
		Security/Safety	
		Amenities	
	Indirect Social Quality	Interaction Among Golfers	
The Number of Golfers			
Other Golfers' Perception of Service Quality			

## 2. Service Quality Items and Dimensions

<b>Service Quality Dimensions</b>	<b>1. Program Quality</b> <b>2. Personal (staff) Quality</b> <b>3. Outcome Quality</b> <b>4. Physical Environment Quality</b> <b>5. Indirect Social Quality</b>
---	---

\* Please put the number of service quality dimension that each item explains on the blank.

**e.g.> I can count on the staff being friendly. ----- ( 2 )**

0. The course has various classes/programs.----- ( )
1. The operating hours of the golf course are convenient.----- ( )
2. The course staff are easy to contact by email.----- ( )
3. I can count on the staff being friendly.----- ( )
4. I can count on the staff to take actions to address my needs.----- ( )
5. I can count on the staff knowing their jobs.----- ( )
6. I feel better enjoyment when playing golf at this golf course.----- ( )
7. The golf course offers an opportunity for me to improve muscle strength.----- ( )
8. The golf course has provided me with many opportunities for social interaction. ( )
9. The golf course has excellent ambience.----- ( )
10. The golf course is well designed.----- ( )
11. The course's fairways are well maintained.----- ( )
12. This course is safe from creatures like snakes.----- ( )
13. This course has convenient & ample parking.----- ( )
14. Other customers here have a positive impact on my perception of this golf  
course's services.----- ( )
15. The large number of golfers at this course is a sign of its good service.----- ( )
16. I generally think of the golf course as having golfers who feel excellent service.-( )
17. The golf course offers a wide range of classes/programs.----- ( )

<b>Service Quality Dimensions</b>	<b>6. Program Quality</b> <b>7. Personal (staff) Quality</b> <b>8. Outcome Quality</b> <b>9. Physical Environment Quality</b> <b>10. Indirect Social Quality</b>
---	--

18. Intervals between tee-times are convenient.----- ( )
19. This course has a helpful website.----- ( )
20. The staff demonstrates their willingness to help me.----- ( )
21. The staff respond quickly to my needs.----- ( )
22. The staff are able to answer my questions quickly.----- ( )
23. I feel positive change in mood when playing golf at this golf course.----- ( )
24. This course helps me reduce physical problems.----- ( )
25. I really enjoyed the social interaction on this course.----- ( )
26. This course ambience is what I'm looking for.----- ( )
27. This course layout serves my purposes/needs.----- ( )
28. This course's greens are well maintained.----- ( )
29. This course is safe from the balls flying from the driving range.----- ( )
30. The clubhouse/pro-shop of this course is convenient.----- ( )
31. I am generally impressed with the other golfers of this course.----- ( )
32. Fully reserved tee-off times represent great service at this course.----- ( )
33. I want to play at the golf course where other golfers perceived great service quality. ( )
34. This course offers popular classes/programs.----- ( )
35. This course offers events/programs at several different times.----- ( )
36. Up-to-date information is available on this course's activities and events.----- ( )
37. The attitude of the staff shows me that they understand my needs. ----- ( )
38. The behavior of the staff indicates to me that they understand my needs.----- ( )
39. The staff understand that I rely on their knowledge to meet my needs.----- ( )
40. I escape from stresses when playing golf at this course.----- ( )
41. I feel that my fitness has increased after having played golf at this course.----- ( )
42. I feel a sense of family among this course's customers.----- ( )

<b>Service Quality Dimensions</b>	<b>11. Program Quality</b> <b>12. Personal (staff) Quality</b> <b>13. Outcome Quality</b> <b>14. Physical Environment Quality</b> <b>15. Indirect Social Quality</b>
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43. I am consistently impressed with this course's atmosphere.------(    )
44. I am impressed with the design of this course.------(    )
45. The equipment (carts and rental clubs) provided by this course is in good  
usable condition.------(    )
46. There is no possibility for my stuff to be stolen or damaged at this course.------(    )
47. This course has the clean locker room.------(    )
48. This course's customers follow rules and regulations.------(    )
49. I think if this golf course has good service, it will always attract more golfers.    -(    )
50. My golf partners' perception of service quality influences my perception of  
service quality.------(    )
51. The classes/programs offered by this course are attractive to me.------(    )
52. Overall, information about this course is easy to obtain.------(    )
53. This course is easy to contact by phone.------(    )
54. I feel that my skill level has increased after having played golf at this course.    ----(    )
55. I really enjoy this course's atmosphere.------(    )
56. This course is aesthetically attractive.------(    )
57. This course is comfortable.------(    )
58. The equipment (carts and rental clubs) provided by this course is up-to-date.    ----(    )
59. I find that this course's other customers consistently leave me with a good  
impression of its service.------(    )

**Any comment:**

## Appendix G

## LISREL Input Files for Full Model

title for HSW full model

observed variables SQ1-SQ3 SQ4-SQ5 SQ6-SQ11 Price1-Price4 SF1-SF2 RI1-RI3

correlation Matrix

```

1.00
0.21 1.00
0.35 0.34 1.00
0.24 0.31 0.31 1.00
0.26 0.24 0.31 0.41 1.00
0.19 0.30 0.31 0.43 0.35 1.00
0.15 0.31 0.30 0.32 0.25 0.47 1.00
0.15 0.26 0.25 0.34 0.35 0.42 0.58 1.00
0.07 0.20 0.23 0.29 0.34 0.36 0.39 0.47 1.00
0.13 0.26 0.28 0.34 0.43 0.35 0.40 0.38 0.34 1.00
0.28 0.17 0.29 0.31 0.27 0.40 0.41 0.39 0.34 0.39 1.00
0.11 0.30 0.13 0.17 0.19 0.08 0.17 0.22 0.22 0.18 0.11 1.00
0.20 0.26 0.15 0.15 0.20 0.09 0.18 0.17 0.21 0.13 0.10 0.67 1.00
0.15 0.16 0.19 0.07 0.15 0.11 0.08 0.12 0.10 0.14 0.16 0.42 0.41 1.00
0.20 0.19 0.30 0.13 0.26 0.20 0.21 0.17 0.16 0.30 0.22 0.31 0.34 0.57 1.00
0.16 0.32 0.25 0.46 0.46 0.43 0.47 0.47 0.46 0.43 0.38 0.31 0.30 0.20 0.24 1.00
0.17 0.35 0.30 0.45 0.46 0.48 0.49 0.53 0.47 0.45 0.40 0.25 0.25 0.19 0.25 0.78 1.00
0.13 0.35 0.21 0.36 0.34 0.40 0.50 0.43 0.34 0.41 0.30 0.35 0.25 0.15 0.18 0.56 0.56 1.00
0.13 0.35 0.25 0.33 0.35 0.40 0.46 0.43 0.34 0.42 0.30 0.21 0.17 0.16 0.20 0.52 0.58 0.78 1.00
0.11 0.27 0.24 0.33 0.30 0.34 0.41 0.39 0.30 0.36 0.27 0.19 0.19 0.10 0.20 0.42 0.47 0.65 0.70 1.00

```

sample size =365

latent variables: SQ Price SF RI

relationships

SQ1-SQ11 = SQ

Price1-Price4 = Price

SF1-SF2 = SF

RI1-RI3 = RI

SF = SQ Price

RI= SQ Price SF

options: rs ss ef

path diagram

End of problem

## Appendix H

## LISREL Input Files for Multiple Group Analysis

group 1: seirous multiple group path analysis

Observed variables: SQ PR OCS RI

sample size: 181

correlation matrix

1.0

.46 1.0

.70 .28 1.0

.64 .31 .64 1.0

standard deviations

5.86 3.22 1.56 2.33

relations

OCS = SQ PR

RI = SQ PR OCS

group 2: casual

sample size: 184

correlation matrix

1.0

.19 1.0

.65 .35 1.0

.55 .23 .58 1.0

standard deviations

6.14 3.17 1.65 2.44

set the error variance of OCS free

set the error variance of RI free

options: nd=3

lisrel output: mi

end of program

## Appendix I

## Cluster Analysis for Casual and Serious Golfer Groups

	Dimensions	Items	Mean (SD)	
			Casual	Serious
A F F E C T I V E	Attraction	When I am playing golf I can really be myself.	3.07 (1.07)	4.06 (0.98)
		Golf offers me relaxation when life's problems build up.	3.04 (1.00)	4.05 (0.85)
		Golf says a lot about who I am.	2.07 (0.86)	3.53 (0.92)
		Golf is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	2.62 (0.93)	4.15 (0.84)
		Golf is one of the most satisfying things I do.	2.31 (0.89)	4.01 (0.87)
		Golf is very important to me	2.02 (0.85)	3.58 (0.88)
	Centrality	Most of my friends are in some way connected with golf.	2.39 (0.96)	3.42 (0.97)
		You can tell a lot about a person when you see them golfing.	2.34 (0.93)	3.40 (1.05)
		I find a lot of my life is organized around golf.	1.76 (0.76)	3.19 (1.00)
		I enjoy discussing golf with my friends.	2.74 (1.05)	4.18 (0.73)
	Importance	I do particularly like golfing.	3.11 (0.99)	4.33 (0.67)
		I have much interest in golf.	2.99 (0.93)	4.38 (0.66)
		I am willing to spend money for the golf lesson.	2.63 (1.20)	3.17 (1.19)
	Cognitive	I think I have good golf skills.	2.10 (0.86)	3.65 (0.86)
		I think I have a great body of knowledge about golf.	2.22 (0.87)	3.70 (0.86)
I am good at using all kinds of clubs.		2.08 (0.83)	3.57 (0.91)	
Behavioral	How long have you played golf?	4.20 (5.23)	9.27 (8.40)	
	How many rounds, on average, do you play a year?	8.68 (13.93)	32.38 (31.06)	
	How many times, on average, do you practice at the driving range a month?	3.18 (5.03)	5.19 (5.70)	
	How many hours, on average, do you watch the Golf Channel a month?	2.02 (4.36)	8.17 (9.52)	

Appendix J  
Missing Data List

	LS			SQ	
	Items	Missing Data ( <i>n</i> )		Items	Missing Data ( <i>n</i> )
	1	0		1	8
	2	0		2	12
	3	0		3	11
	4	4		4	14
	5	9		5	13
	6	2		6	9
	7	3		7	13
	8	10		8	16
	9	9		9	11
	10	7		10	17
	11	3		11	15
	12	8		12	14
	13	6		Percentage	3.5%
	14	4		Items	Missing Data ( <i>n</i> )
	15	7		1	7
	16	6		2	6
	17	21		3	10
	18	28		4	3
	19	19		Percentage	1.8%
	20	17		Items	Missing Data ( <i>n</i> )
	Percentage	2.2%		1	3
				2	4
				Percentage	1.0%
				Items	Missing Data ( <i>n</i> )
				1	2
				2	2
				3	4
				Percentage	0.7%

*Note.*  $N = 365$ . LS = Leisure seriousness; SQ = Service quality; PR = Price; OCS = Overall customer satisfaction; RI = Revisit intentions.