

## Active and Passive Sport Participation and Factors Predicting Satisfaction: A Case Study of Golf Spectators

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**Session 30: Tourism  
Presentation (25-minute)**

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Following the popularity of satisfaction studies in other areas (Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Fournier & Mick, 1999; Yi, 1990), sports researchers have also been using this construct to examine behavior. When examining sport, participation can be viewed as an active pursuit, such as direct participation in a sport activity, or a passive pursuit, such as watching a sport or traveling to experience historic or nostalgia sport settings (Gibson, 1998). Sport tourism research also defines participation from a dichotomous view of either active or passive (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Hall (1992) defines sport tourism as direct participation or observation of sport "away from the home range" (pg. 194). Following these definitions sharing the dichotomous view, this study examines these categories of participation and the construct of satisfaction to segment and identify differences in preferences by participation levels.

Satisfaction in active sport participation has been linked to various aspects of the active experience, such as success and perceived ability (Duda & Nicholls, 1992), and goal orientations (Roberts & Ommundsen, 1996). Sport researchers looking at passive sport participation have provided studies of spectator satisfaction or determinants of satisfaction (Lapidus & Schibrowsky, 1996; Madrigal, 1995; VanLeeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002; Wakefield, 1995; Zhang, Smith, Pease, & Lam, 1998) and its effect on attendance frequency (Arnett & Laverie, 2000). These studies, however, have focused primarily on either active or passive participation, but few studies have looked at both.

In a rare studying looking at both active and passive participation in sport, Shamir and Ruskin (1984) considered these as different modes of leisure participation. The goal of the study was to identify relationships between direct participation and playing the role of a spectator, however no correlation was found. Their research focused on identifying levels of participation in active and passive roles of different sports and television, not a live event as the passive form.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are differences in levels of tournament satisfaction among those involved in passive sport participation, in this case spectators at a professional golf tournament, based on (1) levels of active participation away from the tournament site and (2) levels of active participation while visiting the tournament site. A third objective was to (3) identify differences in the predictors of overall satisfaction based on levels of active participation away from the tournament site.

Data was collected as part of an economic impact study of the 2005 Heritage Golf Tournament which is a PGA Tour event held on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. A total of 895 spectators completed the survey which was conducted through personal interviews at 8 different sites on the tournament grounds and at 4 randomly assigned times. Spectators were approached through a proportionate stratified random sample over the 7 days of the event.

Satisfaction of the tournament was measured overall as 1-"Very dissatisfied," to 5-"Very Satisfied." Levels of active participation were measured as number of rounds of golf played in a year, and number of rounds played in the area during the tournament week. The various components of satisfaction were measured on the same scale as overall satisfaction and used tournament specific components (i.e. location to watch play, volunteers, players at tournament, etc.) and site specific components (i.e. parking, accommodations, transportation, etc.)

Frequency of play during the year was categorized as none (27.3% of respondents), low (34.6%) and high (38.1%). To identify the variations of satisfaction levels between play levels, ANOVA was employed. The differences were found to be significant ( $p < .05$ ) and post hoc tests revealed that the persons that reported no rounds of golf played during the year had significantly higher overall satisfaction than did both the low and high frequency groups. Frequency of play during the tournament week was also grouped as none (52.8% of respondents), low (32.6%) and high (14.7%). Similarly, ANOVA was run to identify variations in satisfaction level. Differences were found to be significant ( $p < .10$ ) and post hoc tests show that those that played three or more rounds of golf during the week were significantly more satisfied overall than those that played one or two rounds.

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To address the third objective, a linear regression was run on the whole sample to determine the best predictors of satisfaction. The key factors found in the analysis were "the players at the tournament," "tournament staff," "location to watch play," and "availability of alcoholic beverages." The regression was again run separately on the three levels of play during the year. The best predictors of overall satisfaction for those that didn't actively participate during the year were "the players at the tournament," "food on the island," "island night-life," and "parking at the tournament". For the low level of active participation respondents, "the players at the tournament," "volunteers," "food on the island," and "food at the tournament" were the best predictors. For the high level of active participation the best predictors "the players at the tournament," "tournament staff," "accommodations," and "location to watch play."

The results indicated in the first two objectives were not particularly strong ( $p > .01$ ) so it might be arguable whether or not there is a direct link between active and passive participation. The results do follow those of Shamir and Ruskin (1984) that found no significance between active and passive participation. The results found here suggest that those that have little playing experience have a higher overall satisfaction than those that actively participate during the year. Perhaps this is due to a certain level of novelty that lends itself being more easily satisfied. For objective two, those that played three times or more during the tournament week had a higher satisfaction with the tournament. This could be explained by a carry over of overall satisfaction with the trip, not just the tournament itself. Event managers might target interaction opportunities for a crossover between the active and passive roles to increase the overall satisfaction level.

When looking at the regression results across the three groups, it was found that the players participating in the event are the single most important predictor of satisfaction. Other attributes vary with level of playing experience. Those that don't play relied on non-tournament factors to influence satisfaction, such as food availability/quality and parking. As players increase in active participation levels, tournament specific attributes become better predictors, such as tournament staff/volunteers, and location to watch play. Future studies need to focus more on attributes that are important to various user groups, and to use a better predictor of satisfaction, such as likelihood of recommendation and intention to repurchase. Using this information might help marketing efforts when attempting to cater to golfers of various levels of participation and increase levels of satisfaction and thus improve repeat visitation (Bernhardt, Donthu, & Kennett, 2000; Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987).

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