

AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RECREATIONAL
GOLFERS TO PLAY IN DALLAS-FORT WORTH METROPLEX
GOLF COURSES

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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DEDICATION

To my parents,

Turkiah and Talal,

for their inspiration to greater heights in personal accomplishments through their sacrificial love, gritty support, guidance, hard work, and strong emphasis on the value of academic excellence.

To my grandparents,

Sarah and Saleem,

for their loving memories,

to whom I owe a debt of gratitude; they passed away during my educational journey in America, but nevertheless supported me in every way imaginable.

To my family,

sisters and brothers

for always believing and supporting me.

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ABSTRACT

ABDALLA TALAL ALZOUBI

AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RECREATIONAL
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The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that influence recreational golfers to play a round of golf in Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex golf courses. A round of golf typically consists of playing all 18 holes on a golf course. Additionally, the investigator examined the effect of demographic variables on the factors which influence these golfers to play golf.

The following dissertation presents a quantitative study in which a Recreational Golfer Participation Paired Comparison Instrument (RGPPCI) was developed. A total of 122 correctly completed questionnaires were received, 50 participants were from private golf clubs and 72 participants were from public golf courses.

The results led to the conclusion that “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” were the three major factors influencing recreational golfers to participate in playing golf. Factors also rated more than 50% by the participants were “Affordability”, “Enjoy the competition”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Choice to walk and ride”. The least influential factors were “Business negotiation”, “Prestige

sport”, and “Staff courtesy”. A major discrepancy between private club members and public course golfers was the factor “Affordability” which was noticeably more important to golfers who played on public courses than to private club members.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Golf is one of the largest recreational and leisure sports in the United States and the number of golfers have increased seven-fold since 1950 (Lee, McLean, Strigas, & Bodey, 2006). Golf has changed from a game played by the wealthy to a popular sport enjoyed by all Americans. Golf has become increasingly popular both as a participatory and spectator sport. Golf 20/20 (2012a) reported that there were 25.7 million participants and 111,971,938 fans in the United States in 2011. The popularity of the sport comes from the ability of all ages and both genders to enjoy the game equally.

In addition, golf is a means of attracting other industries; for example, golf is a major tourist destination that attracts golfers to various courses throughout the United States no matter the locale (Hennessey, MacDonald, & MacEachern, 2008). Golf 20/20 (2012b) reported the calculated figures for golf-related trips and expenses at slightly over \$20 billion annually in 2011, because of the money spent by golf participants. Golf supersedes merely being classified as a sport, as it is equally recognized as an entity that attracts tourism as well as a participatory recreational activity for people regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

According to National Golf Foundation's 2010 report (2012a), since 1990, the numbers of golf facilities in the U.S. has increased by 24% and the number of golfers

increased by 17%. However, the number of rounds of golf (18 holes) played per year has decreased from 40,000 rounds of golf played in 1990 to 33,000 rounds of golf played in 2010, and 5 to 10 % of public golf courses are expected to close within the next decade. Golf 20/20 (2012a) publication reported that in 2011 there were 19 course openings and 157.5 closings nationwide. Furthermore, the number of golfers declined from 26.1 million to 25.7 million; and the number of rounds of golf played also fell from 475 million to 463 million between 2010 and 2011.

Conversely, golf participation has declined from 12% in 2000 to 8.5% of the population currently, mostly due to the economic crisis in the United States (Ibsen, 2012; Stulter, 2009). Sport and Leisure Research Group (2013) reported, “Golfers are still bearish on the all over economy” (p.28). The economic downturn’s impact on golf revealed a decrease in spending from \$75.9 billion in 2005 to \$68.8 billion in 2011, representing a decline of 9.4% (Golf 20/20, 2012b). As a result, the economic impact on golf has been huge which has raised concern about the future of the sport in the United States.

In the United States, there are approximately 15,500 public and private golf facilities (National Golf Foundation, 2012a). According to Beditz and Kass (2008) of the National Golf Foundation and Varner and Knottnerus (2010), golf began in the U.S. as a private game and the first golf club in the United States was St. Andrew’s Golf Club, established in Yonkers, New York in 1888 by Scottish merchants who first brought the game of golf to the U.S. The number of private golf clubs in United States in 2011 was

3,919 with an estimated 2.05 million members (NGF, 2012a). Farrally et al. (2003) indicated that, “Unlike many other sports, golf requires large, clearly defined areas of land (100–150 acres for each 18-hole course)” (p. 758). The golf courses in the U.S. occupy a land mass as large as the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined (Napton & Laingen, 2008), an estimated 4 million acres (Santiago & Rodewald, 2005).

Golf courses are classified into the following types: (1) Private clubs (country clubs) which are open for play only to dues-paying members; (2) Public access golf courses include municipal courses that are owned by the government or other tax-supported entity, and are open to anyone for play all the time, and some even offer memberships; daily fee golf courses which are privately owned courses that are open to the public with no restrictions; semi-private courses which require a daily fee, are privately owned, and offer memberships; and military golf courses which are linked to a military base and offer preferred benefits to military members and their families; and (3) Resort golf courses which are private owned and typically associated with a resort, such as a hotel or casino (Golf 20/20, 2002).

Golf 20/20 (2012b) reported that golf facilities operational revenues are nearly \$30.0 billion annually in 2011 and compares favorably to four major professional sports in the United States: baseball, basketball, football, and hockey that generated revenues of \$33.1 billion, and fitness and recreational sports centers had returns of \$23.0 billion in 2011. Golf has primarily become a major contributor to charity; for example, Golf 20/20 (2012b) revealed that the golfing industry raised \$3.9 billion from local golf tournaments

for charity in 2011. Golf has a major impact on local economies as a significant employer which generates approximately 2 million U. S. jobs as well (Boozman, 2010).

The golf market is growing worldwide and golf is played on 32,000 golf courses in 140 countries (Hudson, 2009), and there are more than 60 million golfers (Readman, 2003). Readman also noted:

Golf can now be played anywhere in the world. Golf courses exist in the mountain ranges of Himalayas and in the deserts of Arabia where Emirate Golf Course is watered by desalinated water from the Arabian Gulf. Golf can be included as part of safari travel in Africa or played in the searing heat of Death Valley where an aptly named Furnace Creek golf course exists. (Readman, 2003, p.180)

Europe with United Kingdom and Ireland owns 6,740 golf courses and 4.4 million registered players out of a population of 600 million in 2011, and the biggest portion of European golf market is in United Kingdom and Ireland (KPMG, 2011). Europe has less than 1% of its population actually plays the sport regularly; Asia has 17-18 million golfers on the continent which includes Japan that has 2300 golf courses and more than 11 million golfers (10% of its population) which is second only to the U.S.; Australia has 1 million golfers and 1500 golf courses; China has only approximately 300 golf courses; India has 186 golf courses; and Dubai has become a popular destination for playing golf and is known to have tournaments hosting golf luminaries on the best golf courses in the Middle East (Hudson, 2009).

As a result of golf's increasing global popularity, the sport will be once again played to the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro after an absence of more than 100 years ("Forgotten Olympic Sports," 2012), which will progressively situate golf as a global phenomenon. Additionally, Readman (2003) reported, golf has become the largest sports-related travel market due to the high demand of travel for the purpose of playing the sport, as well as mass media exposure related to televising international championships. In 1998, the percentage of golfers who travel to play golf was at 48.6%, of all golfers in U.S. (Readman, 2003).

Campbell (2007) stated, "Golf is the perfect blend of sportsmanship, etiquette, and mental challenge. But more than that, it's a business tool skillfully wielded by deal makers, corporate executives, and entrepreneurs" (p.120). Consequently, golf is distinctive in that and it offers a social and business interaction environment not found in many other sports. Golf brings people together. Stoddart (1990) stated that "golf is clearly the major sport in terms of socioeconomic impact" (p.379). According to Stoddart (1990), golf is the most socially predominant sport on a worldwide scale.

Consequently, playing golf has come to be an important means to network with other people for social relationships or business discussions. Golf can be an important tool for developing and establishing valuable connections in the business world as well as personally (Thompson, 1990). Ramsay (2012) stated, "Golf holds a multitude of benefits and opportunities for players, on an individual and business level. Not only is it a great

sport that combines fitness, coordination and focus, it also fosters personal skill development, and engagement and interaction” (p.88).

Golf offers the challenge of friendly competition while allowing participants to reap the benefits of leisure and recreation. Golf is a recreational activity that can help participants to alleviate stress and forget their problems (Frankly Group, 2005; Lee, et al., 2006; Zhang, 2007), develop a healthier lifestyle (Beditz & Kass,2008; Parkkari et al., 2000; Petrick, Backman, Bixler, & Norman, 2001; Zhang, 2007) become more self-disciplined (Lee et al., 2006), enjoy a feeling of achievement and challenge (Frankly Group, 2005; Kim & Ritchie, 2012; Lee, et al. 2006) and provide social interaction (Beditz & Kass,2008; Kim & Ritchie, 2010; Krohn 2008; Li, 2011; Petrick, et al., 2001; Zhang, 2007) .

Furthermore, golf is not overly vigorous and a golfer does not have to be in perfect physical condition to play; therefore, it is a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime no matter the age of the player. In addition, golf is a sport that is commonly embraced by retirees because once they retire there is more time for leisure activities and a need for active socialization and belonging. Beatty and Wolf (1996) ascertained that retirees have more time on their hands and therefore, have a need to remain socially active and to feel like they belong.

The basis of this research is to focus on the participation aspect of golf since the majority of the previous studies concentrated on fan consumption behavior rather than the behavior of the sport participants. According to Lera-Lopez and Rapun-Garate (2005),

previous research has focused mainly on spectator sports in North America, but in Europe, participatory sports encompasses a notable portion of investigators' highlighting, since there is a difference in sports intensity and sports expenditures along with whether participation is active or passive.

Conceptual Framework

The Theory of Planned Behavior is one of the most prominent theoretical models that explicate informational and motivational influences on behavior. Intention is viewed as arresting the motivational factors that mark a behavior and it is the most proximal predictor of behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

The human action is directed by three major connotations: Behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. Ajzen (1991) directed that this theory was designed to predict how attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can influence a person's intention to participate in an activity. Theory of Planned Behavior was used to predict behavioral intention to engage in a recreational activity (Ajzen & Driver, 1992).

Attitude toward behavior is the individual's personal internal motivation and a contributory factor of performing the behavior. Subjective norms consider the social approval or social pressures on the individual to execute or not execute a particular behavior. Perceived behavioral control is the individuals' perspective of the difficulty and ease of executing a behavior and is the extent of the availability of the means and the opportunities for individuals to take an action (Ajzen, 1991). Understanding golfers'

behavior helps in investigating the factors that influence golfers to participate in the sport. For example, Latta, Tylor, Mitchell, and Thrash (2007) used the attitudes toward behavior and subjective norms from the Theory of Reasoned Action, which is the precursor to the Theory of Planned Behavior, to determine what PGA Class A professionals who operate golf course enterprises do to increase the rounds of golf played at their clubs.

This researcher used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a conceptual framework to investigate how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence the intention to play golf and continue to participate in playing. This model served to evaluate and select the important factors to include in the instrument that measures the importance of those factors that influence recreational golfers' decision to participate in playing golf.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence recreational golfers to play a round of golf on Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex golf courses. A round of golf typically consists of playing all 18 holes on a golf course. Additionally, the investigator will examine the effect of demographic variables on the factors which influence these golfers to play golf.

Research Questions

1. What are the important factors that influence recreational golfers to participate in playing golf on courses in the D/FW area?
2. How do demographic variables, such as age, gender, annual household income, employment status, ethnicity, and number of rounds played influence the participation in recreational golf in the D/FW Metroplex?
3. What factors influence golfers to participate in private clubs only?
4. What factors influence golfers to play on public courses?

Definition of Terms

Recreational Golfer: Does not play in professional or organized amateur association golf tournaments.

D/FW Metroplex: For the purpose of this study the golf courses will be limited to those in Tarrant, Collin, and Denton Counties.

Avid Golfer: A golfer who plays 25 regulation rounds or more in a year (Professional Golf Association Marketing Center, 2001).

Core (moderate) Golfer: A golfer who plays eight to 24 regulation rounds in a year (Professional Golf Association Marketing Center, 2001).

Occasional Golfer: A golfer who plays less than eight regulation rounds in a year (Professional Golf Association Marketing Center, 2001).

Course Amenities: Availability of facilities, such as pro-shops, bars, restaurants, practice facilities, staff members, tee time availability, and pace management.

Course's Physical Attributes: Course condition that consists of the quality of the greens and the quality of fairways.

Green Fees: Fees paid by golfers to the golf course to play one round of golf.

Pace Management:

A service provided by the golf course to make sure that all golfer groups playing on the same course are advancing in the same pace neither too fast nor too slow. The slow play by one group of golfers will delay the groups behind them and will directly affect the capacity of the golf course. One the other hand, if one group of golfers is advancing too fast that might create pressure to the players in front of them. (Zhang, 2007, pp. 9-10)

Tee-Times: Scheduled time when a golfer can start a round of golf.

Golf 20/20: A distinctive alliance of all segments of the golf industry launched in 2000 by the World Golf Foundation. This alliance embraces partners from associations and manufacturers to golf course owner/operators and the mass media, for example United States Golf Association, The PGA of America, Ladies professional Golf Association, National Golf Foundation, National Course Owners Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and others. Its goal is to confirm the future vitality of golf through growing participation in the sport.

Significance of the Study

This study will supplement the literature and broaden the understanding of golfer behavior, since the numbers of golfers in the U.S. are in the millions and the sport is

growing globally. The majority of previous research on golf-related behavior has focused on the consumerism and tourism aspects rather than as a participatory sport (Hennessey, MacDonald & MacEachern, 2008; Perkins, Mincyte, & Cole, 2010; Price, 2012).

The findings of this study will be beneficial for golf course managers to understand and recognize factors that lead golfers to participate at their facilities and to determine effective marketing strategies to maintain and increase recreational golfers' participation at their courses. The findings of this study can assist sport management and marketing professionals in the development and implementation of marketing strategies that focus on maximizing usage and revenues for recreational golf.

Furthermore, the results of the current study will hopefully shed light on the various factors that influence men and women to participate as golfers on public or private golf courses in the D/FW Metroplex. In addition, the findings will enhance understanding of the Theory of Planned Behavior for the selection and classification of factors in conducting research regarding why people become involved in sport and leisure activities. Lastly, the outcomes of the study will create a better understanding of which of the three elements of the TPB (behavioral belief, normative belief, and control belief) has the most persuasive impact on golf participation.

Limitation/ Delimitation

1. The findings of this study may not be able to be generalized to all golf courses and country clubs because of the sample size limitation and different golf environments in the various regions of Texas and the United States.
2. The participants of this study are those who are members of a private golf club and/or annual or monthly pass holders for public golf courses.
3. The study is limited to those golf course managers who are willing to contact potential golfers to participate in this study.
4. The participants of the study are at least 18 years-old.
5. The participants must have access to a computer with internet access.

CHAPTER II
 REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Golf Industry Overview

Golf is a profitable industry and its economic impact is immense in the U.S. Golf 20/20 (2012b) reported that the value of U.S. golf economy was \$68.8 billion of merchandises and services in 2011. When it is compared to other industries, the golf industry is ranked third in generating revenue well ahead of other spectator sports, amusement and recreation industries (i.e. fitness and recreational centers, marinas, bowling allies, skiing facilities, etc.), and performing arts (see Table 1).

Table 1

Size of the U.S. Golf Economy in Comparison to Other Industries in 2011

Type of Industry	Revenues (\$billions)
TV broadcasting, cables and other subscription programming	\$92.4
Motion pictures and videos	\$83.1
Golf	\$68.8
Spectator sports	\$33.1
Amusement and other recreation industries	\$32.3
Performing arts companies	\$15.1

Source: Golf 20/20 (2012b)

Core Industries and Enabled Industries

The golf industry can be divided into two major segments: core industries and enabled industries. The golf industry features the golf facilities themselves along with the manufacturers of goods and services used to operate facilities and to play the game, including golf equipment, apparel designers, golf course architects, golf associations, and club management services (see Figure 1).

Tourism and real states construct the enabled industries of golf (see Figure 2). Golf is a major outdoor activity for tourists that provide income to other industries as well, including hotels, air travel, car rental, food and beverages, and entertainment. All of these industries financially profit from golf tourism. Golf tourism includes attending tournaments to enjoy watching professional golfers play and traveling to play golf on well-known golf courses, such as Pebble Beach or Augusta. For example, there were 115.9 million golf-related trips in 2011, and the average per person travel expense for each stay was \$177 for total expenditures of \$20.55 billion annually (Golf 20/20, 2012b).

In addition, the real estate development is another enterprise provided by the sport including golf related residential construction and realized golf premium. For example, 19,152 new golf community homes built in 2011, whereas there were 63,840 new golf community homes constructed in 2005. This sharp drop in golf real states is due to financial crisis of 2007-09 hit U.S. (Golf 20/20, 2012b).

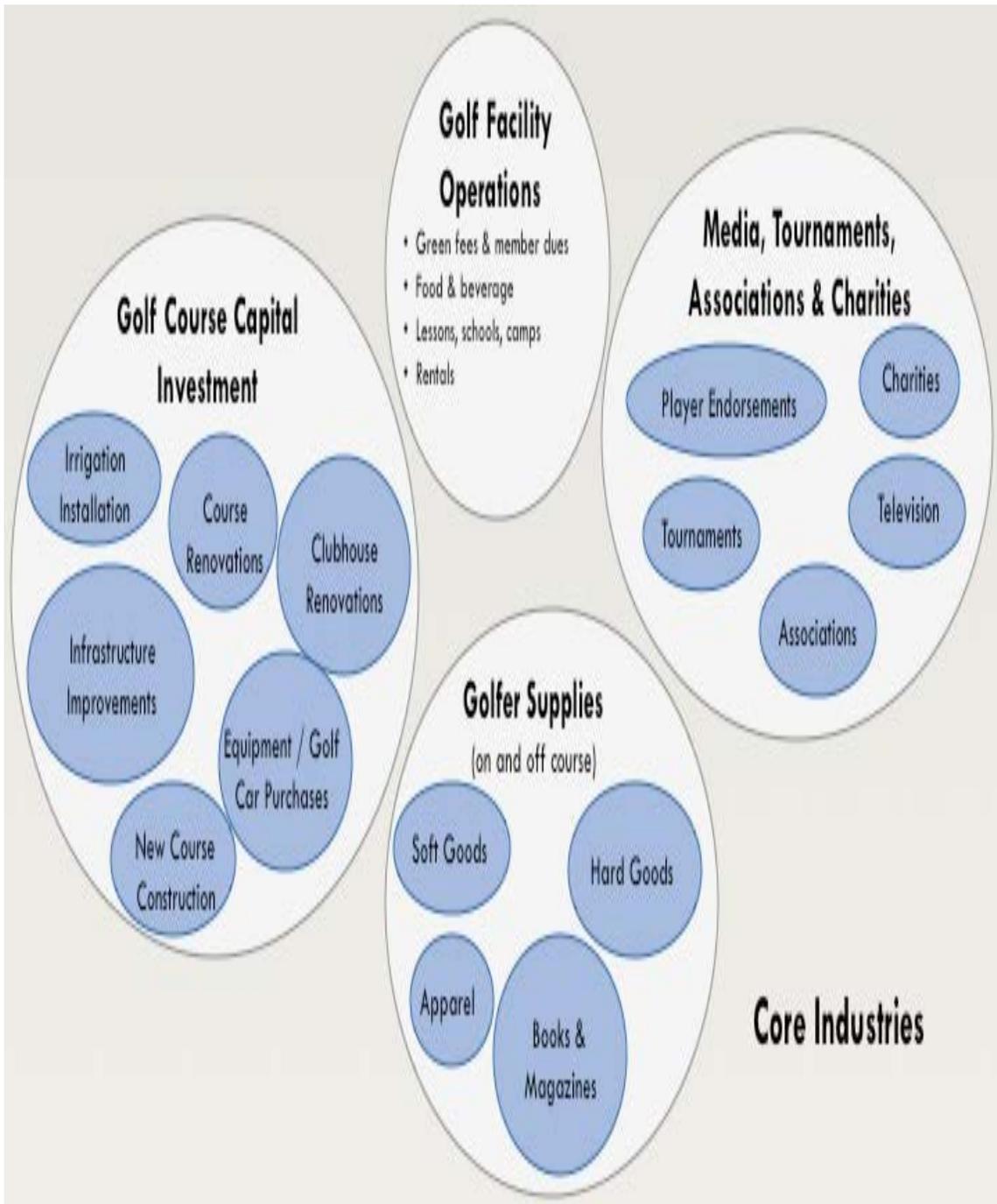


Figure 1: The golf core industries
 Source: Golf 20/20 (2012b).

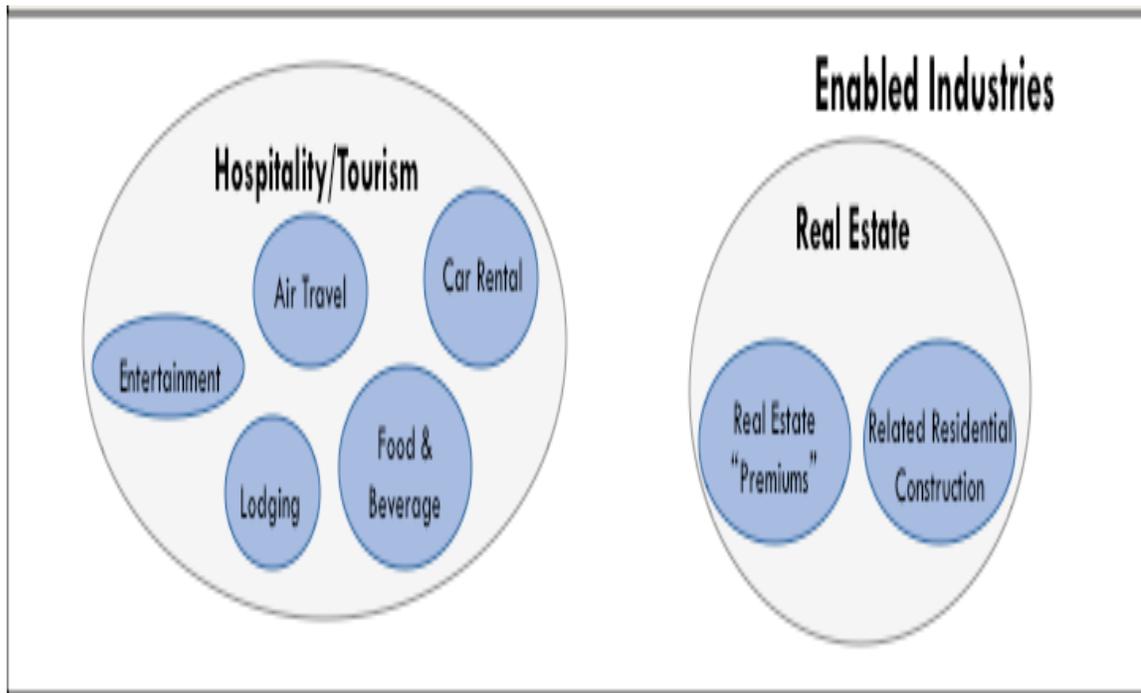


Figure 2: The golf enabled industries
 Source: Golf 20/20 (2012b).

Napton and Laingen (2008) emphasized that, “Property-valuation research has shown that golf is second only to water as an amenity that enhances land value” (p. 35). Prime real estate locations near or on golf courses quickly sell to eager buyers because golf facilities are a way to bring additional monetary value to real estate development (Nicholls & Crompton, 2005). Napton and Laingen (2008) highlighted, “Building residential developments around a golf course is an example of using the amenity value of the golf course to attract potential buyers and boost real estate prices” (p. 35).

However, there was a decline in the golf industry’s direct impact, total economic impact of golf, golf job opportunities, and wage income in 2011 because of recession that hit U.S. economy (Golf 20/20, 2012b, see Table 2).

Table 2

The Size of Golf Industry's Direct and Total Impact on U.S. Economy in 2000, 2005, and 2011

Core and Enabled Industries	2000	2005	2011
Direct Impact (\$ millions)	\$62,167	\$75,939	\$68,809
Total Output Impact (\$ millions)	Not estimated	\$195,115	\$176,829
Total Jobs Impact	Not estimated	2,066,404	1,976,477
Total Wage Income Impact (\$ millions)	Not estimated	\$61,183	\$55,556

Source: Golf 20/20 (2012b).

Nonetheless, golf facilities are the foundation of the golf economy and the prime area of returns on investment. The revenues acquired by golf facility operations are derived principally from green fees, paying-dues memberships, golf cart rentals, and related expenditures on food and beverages. According to Golf 20/20 (2012b), golf courses operations revenue was \$29.9 billion.

Table 3 below provided by Golf 20/20 (2012b) reveals the total dollars spent on golf-related expenses include core industries and enabled industries in the years 2000, 2005, and 2011. This table also shows the outgoing changes in all golf segments.

Table 3

Size of the U.S. Golf Economy by Industry Segment in 2000, 2005, and 2011(\$ millions)

Core Industries	2000	2005	2011
Golf Facility Operations	\$20,496	\$28,052	\$29,852
Golf Course Capital Investment	\$7,812	\$3,578	\$2,073
Golfer Supplies	\$5,982	\$6,151	\$5,639
Endorsements, Tournaments & Associations	\$1,293	\$1,682	\$2,045
Charities	\$3,200	\$3,501	\$3,900
Total Core Industries	\$38,783	\$42,964	\$43,509
Enabled Industries			
Real Estate	\$9,904	\$14,973	\$4,745
Hospitality/Tourism	\$13,480	\$18,001	\$20,555
Total Enabled Industries	\$23,384	\$32,974	\$25,300
TOTAL GOLF ECONOMY	\$62,167	\$75,939	\$68,809

Source: Golf 20/20 (2012b).

Even though golf facility operations revenue in 2011 was higher than in 2005, those figures do not account for inflation. According to Golf 20/20 (2012b), “In nominal terms, facility operations revenue in 2011 was higher than in 2005, but when adjusted for inflation, revenue in 2011 (\$29.9 billion) was actually lower than in 2005 (\$31.8 billion in 2011 dollars) in real terms” (p. 8). Remarkably, a dramatic decline occurred in real estate sales in golf communities that decreased from \$14.973 billion in 2005 to \$4.745 billion in 2011(Ssee Table 3). Due to the economic downturn that hit the real estate market, only 19,152 new golf community homes were constructed in 2011 comparing to 63,840 homes in 2005 (Golf 20/20, 2012b).

Golf Segment Influence

Table 4 shows the segment golf influence by type and number of golfers, rounds played, and money spent. Occasional golfers (44% of the golfing population) who play 1-8 rounds per year, moderate (core) golfers (30%) who play 8-24 rounds per year, and avid (core) golfers (26%) who play 25+ rounds per year. In addition, avid golfers' annual expenditures for golf related costs encompass the largest amount at 71% almost three times that of moderate golfers (23%) and more than 10 times the amount spend by occasional golfers. Avid golfers played 76% of total rounds; moderate golfers played 18% of total rounds; and occasional golfers only played 6% of total rounds.

Table 4

Golf Segment Influence

Type of Golfers	Number of Golfer (million) & (%)	Rounds Played (million) & (%)	Spend (\$ billion) & (%)
<u>Avid</u> (+25 Rounds)	6.8 26%	350 76%	\$18.7 71%
<u>Moderate</u> (8-25 Rounds)	7.6 30%	84 18%	\$6.0 23%
<u>Occasional</u> (1-8 Rounds)	11.3 44%	39 6%	\$1.6 6%
Total	25.7	463	\$26.3(\$B)

Source: National Golf Foundation, (2012b).

Types of Golf Facility

The estimated number of golf facilities, including public and private courses is currently at around 15,500 in the U.S. The number of public golf facilities is three times of private golf clubs. Public golf courses include both daily fee courses (comprise 59%) and municipal courses (comprise 16%). The sum of private clubs is only 25% of total number of golf facilities (see Figure 3). Napton and Laingen (2008) reprised from Fishman's (1987) book that private golf course numbers exceeded public course numbers until 1960s, but today more public golf courses are predominantly offered in the U.S.

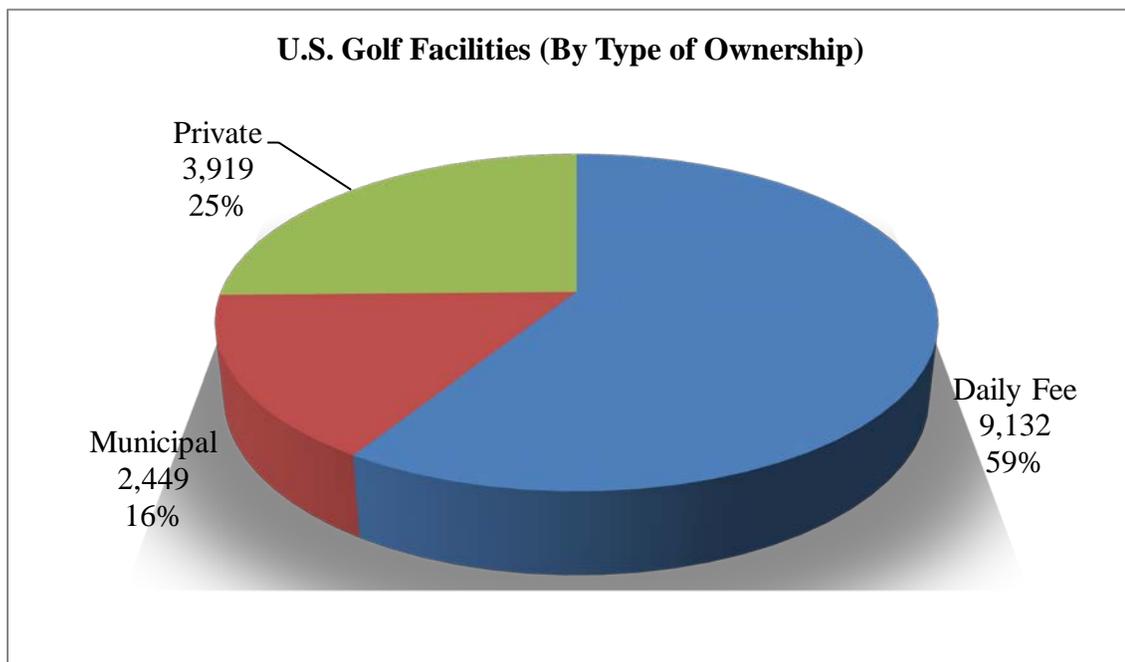


Figure 3: The numbers and percentages of U.S. golf facilities (by type of ownership)
Source: National Golf Foundation (2012a).

About 90% of golfers play at public golf facilities (NGF, 2012a). Approximately 80% of all rounds of golf played were on public courses, while only 20% of the rounds of golf were played on private courses (Sherman & Bolling, 2010).

Texas is the fourth most popular location for golf facilities. The five states with the largest number of golf courses are: Florida has 1,481, California has 1,140, Michigan has 1,047, Texas has 1,041, and New York has 976 (GolfLink, n.d.).

Private golf clubs are divided into equity and nonequity clubs. An equity club is erected for non-profit organizations where a group of members own the club and each member has a portion. The members run the club, pay annual dues, and develop bonds with each other when they join. Since the memberships are exclusive in this type of club, the initial fees and monthly payments are more expensive. For example, in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, the Vaquero Club is the top ranked private club in 2013, with initiation fees of \$195,000 and dues of \$1,346 each month (“Club Life”, 2013). If a member decides to leave the club, the club is under no obligation to refund his/her share until a replacement is found. The new member might pay the same amount, or may be asked to pay more than the member that left the group (Freidkin, 2013; Lee, 2013).

One benefit of an equity private club is that they do not require a reservation for a tee time and the course is always kept in better condition than most public courses because there is more money available for maintenance, fewer players to put wear and tear on the course, and service and amenities are readily available and are of higher quality (Freidkin, 2013). Hirsh (2007) stated that these private clubs provide elements that contribute to their value, including facilities (pool/tennis), a social gathering place and a strong community (events, tournaments), as well as prestige, a friendly staff, and quality equipment.

Conversely, nonequity clubs are owned by corporations that sell memberships to individuals or groups or offer discount memberships as incentives to their own employees. Members have to pay initiation fees which are not refundable when or if the members leave the club (Freidkin, 2013; Lee, 2013). Hirsh (2007) reported that, “In a nonequity club, the members cannot sell the interest but would receive a share of proceeds upon sale of the club” (p. 71).

Golfers by Gender and Ethnicity

Figure 4 shows the number of golfers by gender in the U.S. Despite the fact that 40% of beginning golfers are women (Berkley, 2004), the female lifelong golfer population has only risen to 21%, which means that golf remains a male dominated sport. The beginning of America golf excluded women from membership (Varner & Knottnerus, 2010).

Likewise, once again golf will be included in the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil after eliminating since 1904 (“Forgotten Olympic Sports,” 2012), offering competition for both males and females from over 100 countries. This factor alone will expose millions of new potential female golfers to the sport, which may alter the current gender landscape in golf significantly in the future (Berkley, 2011).

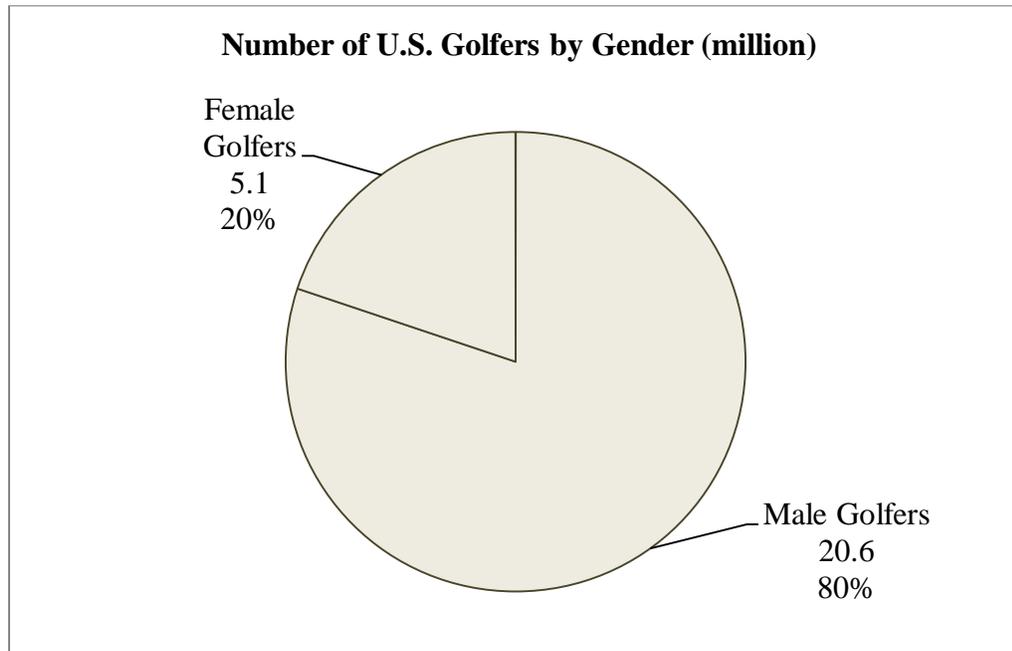


Figure 4: The number of U.S. golfers by gender (million)
 Source: National Golf Foundation (2012c).

In addition, statistics indicate that the majority of golfers are Caucasian, but minorities have become a noticeable dynamism in the game with 5.4 million golfers of total golf population during early 21st century.

Golf superstars and legends, like Lee Trevino, Tiger Woods, and Vijah Singh amongst others, are opening the door to all minority groups to actively participate in golf. As golfers like Tiger Woods experience success at the highest level in America and globally with ranking the top money list, interest from all ethnicities has increased.

Dawkins (2004) declared that Tiger’s success attracts other minority to play golf and brings inclusion of other ethnicities to reach the professional golf which reproduces the diversity in the sport that better emulates the ethnic makeup of America. According to Dawkins (2004), “Despite the longstanding perception that African Americans have not been interested in golf historically, Tiger Woods’ multi-ethnic background has stimulated

both efforts to attract more minority youth to golf and discussions of the past experiences of African Americans in the sport”(p. 327). The popularity of an international well-known golfer, Tiger Woods, has highly influenced golf participation for all ages and ethnicities.

However, Woods’s public image was tarnished due to a very public breakup with his wife in 2009. His individual action jeopardized his association and the sales of his endorsement partners that brought Mr. Woods an estimated \$100 million annually, affected the reputation of his sponsors and the brands he endorsed, and many dropped him as a sponsor of their products with the exception of Nike because of the concern that his actions would diminish the value and integrity of their company and the products they sell (Meng & Pan, 2013; Miller & Laczniak, 2011; Vranica, 2010). Figure 5 shows the ethnic makeup of golfers in the U.S.

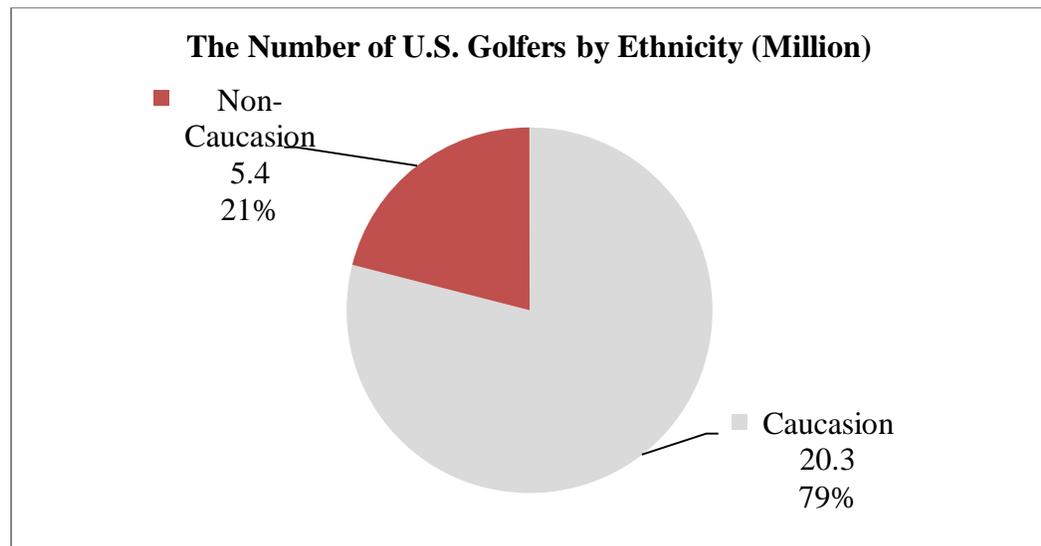


Figure 5: The number of U.S. golfer by ethnicity (million)
Source: National Golf Foundation (2012c).

Golf Population, Round Numbers, and Golf Course (Opening and Closing)

Hueber (2012) provided information obtained from the NGF which stated that the number of golfers gradually rose from 19.7 million in 1986 to 24.7 million in 1995, reaching its peak of 30.6 million in 2003, before dropping down to 25.7 million in 2011. Overall, golf lost 4.9 million players between the years 2003 and 2011. The decline in the number of core golfers was 4.5 million which is very significant because these golfers play more often and spend more money on golf. The decrease in the number of occasional golfers during this same time period was small, 300,000 players, which is of lesser consequence because the golfers in this category are less committed to the sport and regularly leave and are replaced by other golfers who typically only play a round to seven rounds of golf annually.

Golf industry economic reserves which are defined and enhanced only by the number of golfers, the number of golf rounds, and the number of golf courses have experienced significant declines in these three key measurements (Hueber, 2012). Figure 6 reveals the decline in the NGF estimated number of golfers from 30 million in 2005 to 25.7 million in 2011.

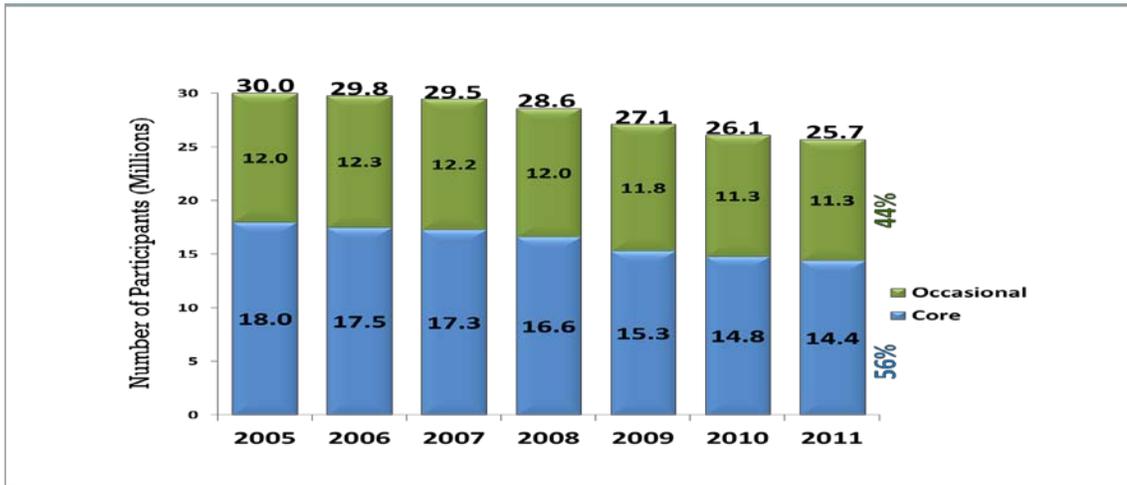


Figure 6: Golfer population trends (occasional vs. core: moderate & avid) 2005-2011
 Source: Hueber (2012) from National Golf Foundation Statistics in 2011.

Figure 7 illustrates the number of rounds that played across the nation departed from 500 million in 2005 to 463 million in 2011, which is a 7% decline. This shrinkage in the number of rounds allied with reduction in the number of golfers between 2005 and 2011.

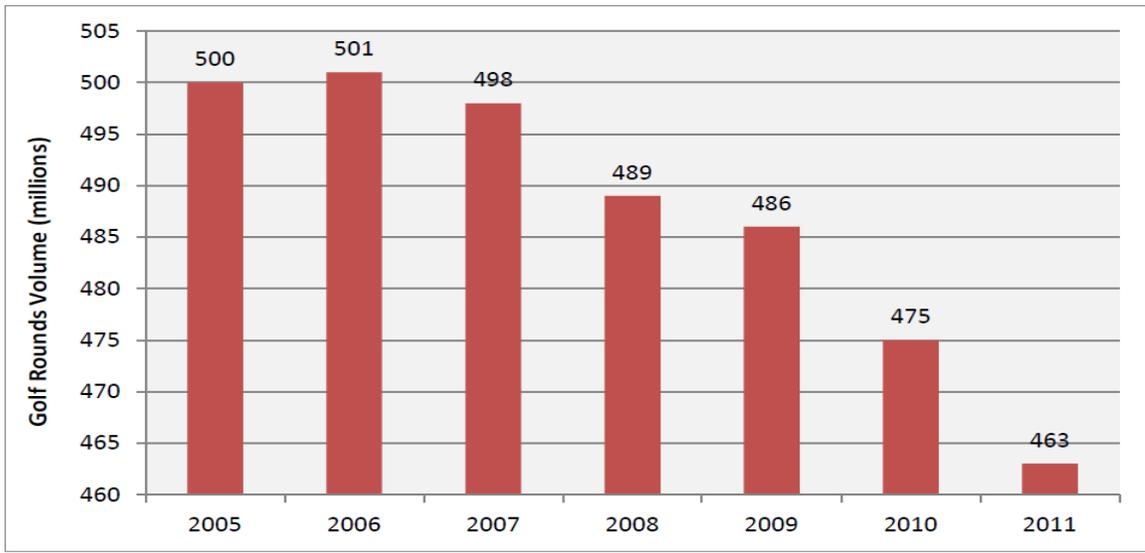


Figure 7: U.S. golf rounds played, 2005-2011
 Source: Hueber (2012) from National Golf Foundation Statistics in 2011.

Figure 8 below exhibits the number of rounds played per 18-hole golf course has decreased from 36,333 in 2000, to 31,299 in 2011, which reflects a decrease of more than 5,000 rounds per 18-hole golf course. The decrease in the number of rounds of golf played between 2000 and 2011 reflects a 14% diminution in the U.S.

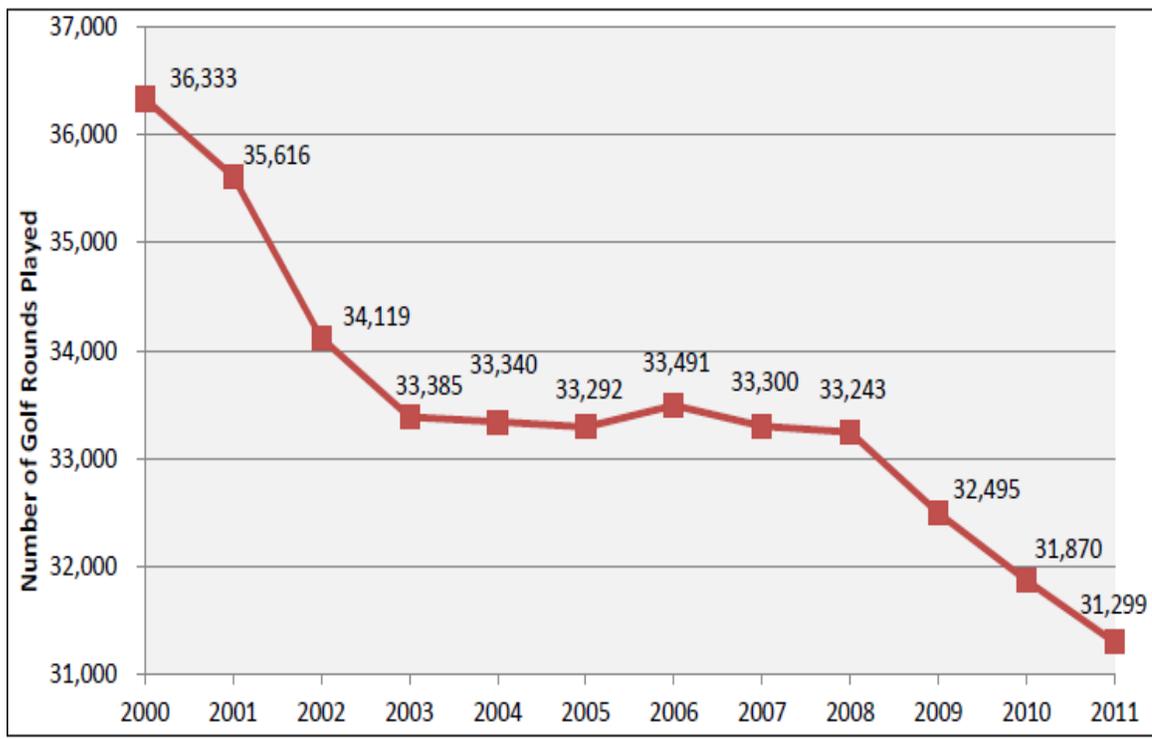


Figure 8: Golf rounds per golf course, 2000-2011

Source: Hueber (2012) from National Golf Foundation Statistics in 2011.

When there is a decrease in the number of golfers and rounds played per year, golf facilities struggle to survive, more facilities are forced to close, and less new courses are opening. For example, in 2011 the number of new golf course openings shrunk to their lowest point this decade (see Figure 9). Hueber (2012) asserted, “With a decrease in demand as reflected by the decrease in the number of golfers and rounds played, there is an adverse impact upon the supply of golf facilities” (p.54). There was decline in purchasing of golfer supplies; for example, golfers spent less on golf equipment, golf

apparel, and golf media in 2011 (which was \$5,639 millions) compared to 2000 (which was \$6,151 millions) and 2005 (which was \$5,982 millions) (Golf 20/20, 2012b).

This coincides with the steady decrease since 2000 in the number of rounds of golf played annually. Inundation of supply and less demand in golf which occurred in last decade caused a decline in the number of rounds played per 18-hole golf courses (Hueber, 2012).

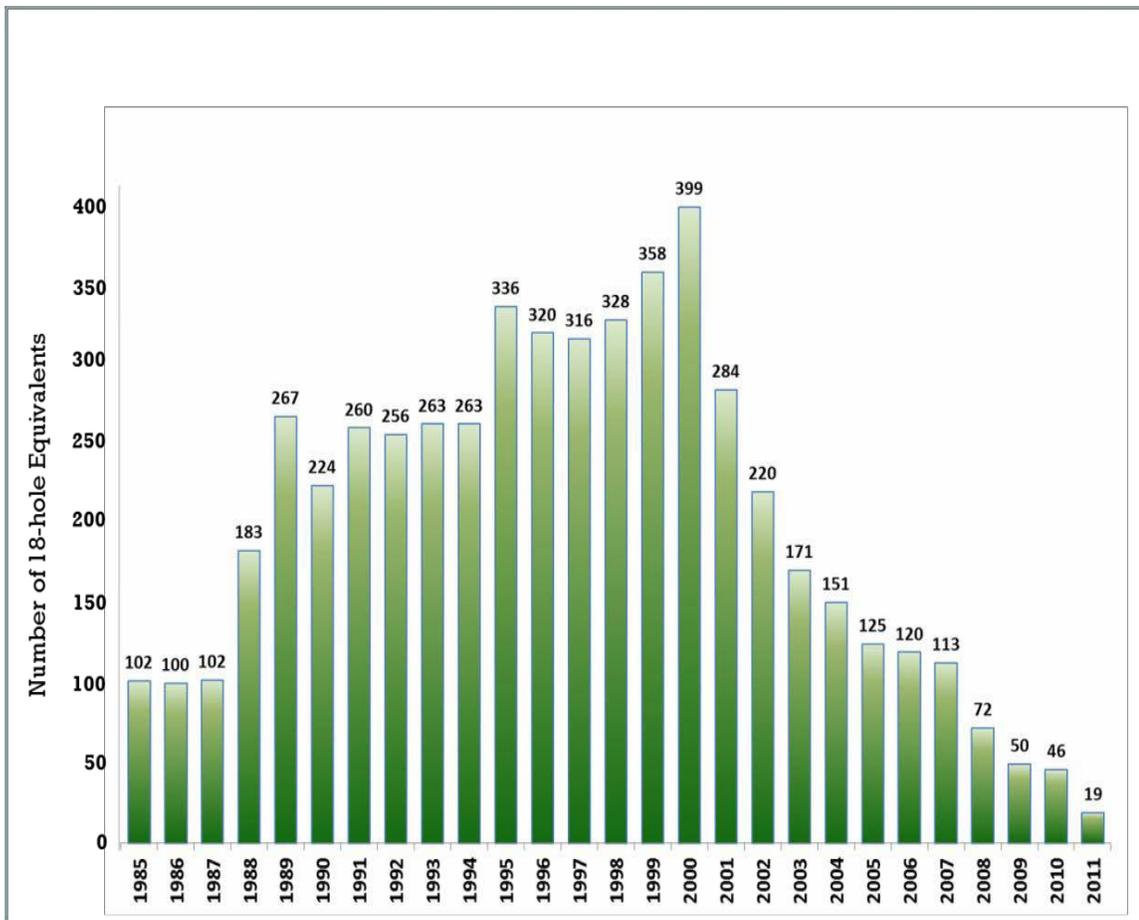


Figure 9: Golf course openings, 1985-2011
 Source: Hueber (2012) from National Golf Foundation Statistics in 2011.

Figure 10 below reveals the number of golf course closures that have occurred since 2001, ranging from a low of 32 in 2001 to a high of 158 in 2011. From 2006

through 2011, a total of 778 courses were closed averaging 130 per year over that time.

Golf course closures were outpacing course opening in the last decade.

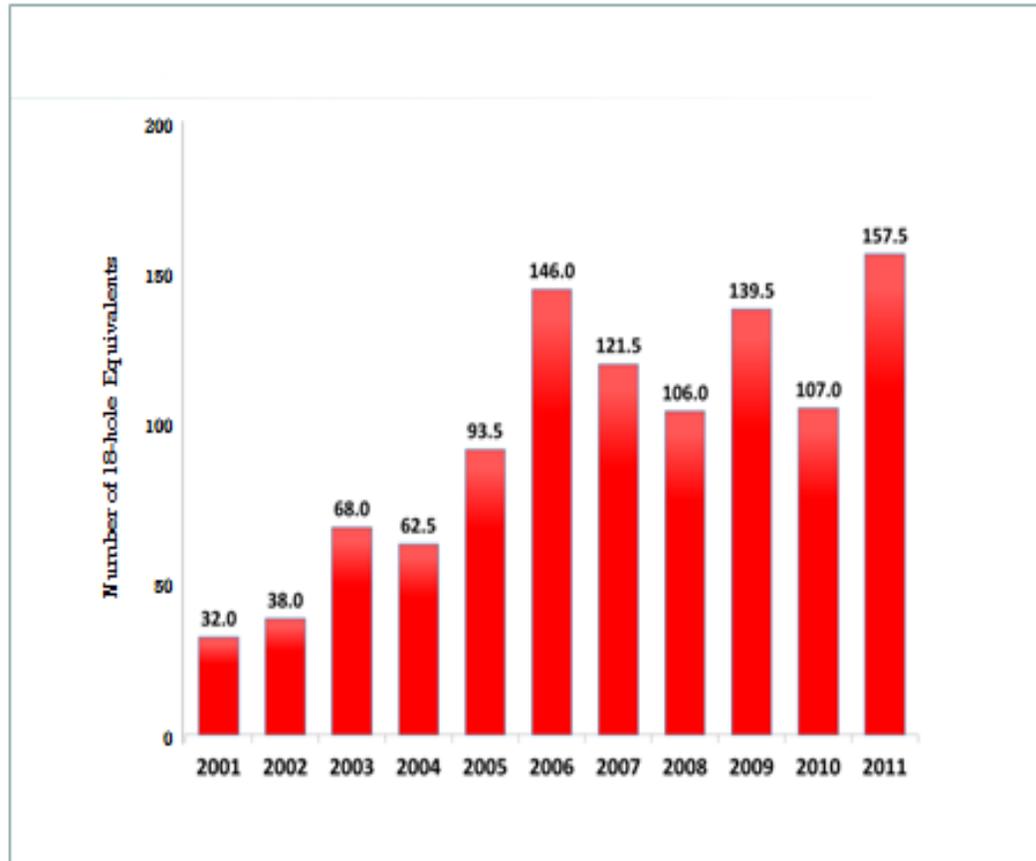


Figure 10: Golf course closures, 2001–2011

Source: Hueber (2012) from National Golf Foundation Statistics in 2011.

Reaction to Golf Participation Decline

Reacting to the progressive decline in golf participation, the entire golf industry implemented several programs designed to help the game survive and attract new golfers into the game to replace those who have left or bring golfers who have stopped playing back into the fold. These programs comprise games, such as Play Golf America, Get Golf Ready, Golf 2.0 program, and Stick for Kids.

Play Golf America, first implemented in 2004, is an innovative growth-of-the-game initiative that continues to play a crucial role in increasing participation industry-wide. Minority golfers are linked with PGA and LPGA professionals to find fun and affordable programs in their area. Also, Play Golf America added the Get Golf Ready program in 2009. This new program is designed to teach beginner golfers in five short lessons and prepare them to get onto golf course with confidence (Professional Golf Association, 2010).

Get Golf Ready not only provides the opportunity for new golfers to learn the sport, the program also supports family golfers, junior golfers, women's golf, individuals with disabilities, as well as corporate golf. These programs help to ensure that golf remains a popular pursuit for all people seeking an active lifestyle (PGA, 2010). The golf industry refers to golfer turnover as the phenomenon of "churning effect". Numerous golf courses have been impacted whereby golf participants leave the sport nearly as quickly as they enter (National Golf Foundation, 1999). Programs, such as these, help to guarantee the sports survival both now and in the future.

According to Adams (2011), Golf 2.0 is another program created by the Professional Golf Association of America offering a pledge to increase accessibility to younger players to rebuff the oftentimes elitist image attached to golf and increase participation amongst all ages, genders, and ethnicities. Golf 2.0 includes programs like Help-A-Kid Play Golf and, Golf in Schools was offered to 300,000 students in Texas. Additionally, Golf 2.0 encourages the idea of making golf practical with affordably accessible courses available for families, as well as the general public. Golf 2.0 initiated a

program entitled, Starting New at Golf (SNAG) that was predominantly adopted by many municipal golf courses to engage the younger generation in golf. SNAG focuses on presenting golf as a fun game for beginners. SNAG utilizes the “IT’S OK” approach which allows learners the flexibility to tee the ball up anywhere, only count swings when contact is made, skip a hole for breaks, talk with friends, among many other benefits (Adams, 2011).

Junior golf has also garnered much consideration for expanding involvement and raising life-long participation in the game. For example, Stick for Kids is a program developed in 1998 by the Golf Course Builders Association of America to expose children to golf during the summertime and provide them with the opportunity to learn the values that the sport teaches (Schmigel, 2010). This program was also adopted by Play Golf America to provide 400 facilities with the opportunity to offer development activities to young people in 2009 (PGA, 2010).

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a continuation of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Icek & Fishbein, 1977) that was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen as an improvement over the Information Integration theory (Icek & Fishbein, 1980). Attitudes and subjective norms, predicting intentions toward behavior, and establishing the Theory of Reasoned Action are the precursor of Theory of Planned Behavior. The individual intention is the preliminary interpreter of behavior. Intention is the function of personal, social, and control perceptions regarding the target behavior. An individual attitude toward behavior reveals his personal tendency toward becoming

involved in the behavior. Subjective norms review an individual's perceptions of social influence, such as the belief that others want them to participate in a particular behavior. Perceived behavioral control reflects the influence of particular abilities and restraints about the intentions toward behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Biddle (2001) stated, "the concept of perceived behavioral control often reflects a person's assessment of the capacities (e.g. skill and abilities) and the limiting or facilitating factors (e.g. barriers and access to facilities) regarding behavioral engagement" (p. 712).

This investigator will use the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine and select the important factors that influence recreational golfers to participate in golf in order to develop the Recreational Golfers Participation Paired Comparison Instrument (RGPPCI). The Theory of Planned Behavior can serve as a model to examine how the attitudes, subjective norms (social influence), and perceived behavioral control impact adults into becoming recreational golfers. The Theory of Planned Behavior is used to predict behavioral intention to engage in a recreational activity (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). This theory emphasizes that there are three major elements can influence an individual's intentional behavior:

The first is *attitude toward behavior* and refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question.

The second predictor is a social factor termed *subjective norm*; it refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior. The third antecedent of intention is the degree of *perceived behavioral control* which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior and it is assumed to

reflect past experience, as well as, anticipated impediments and obstacles. (Ajzen, 1991, p.188)

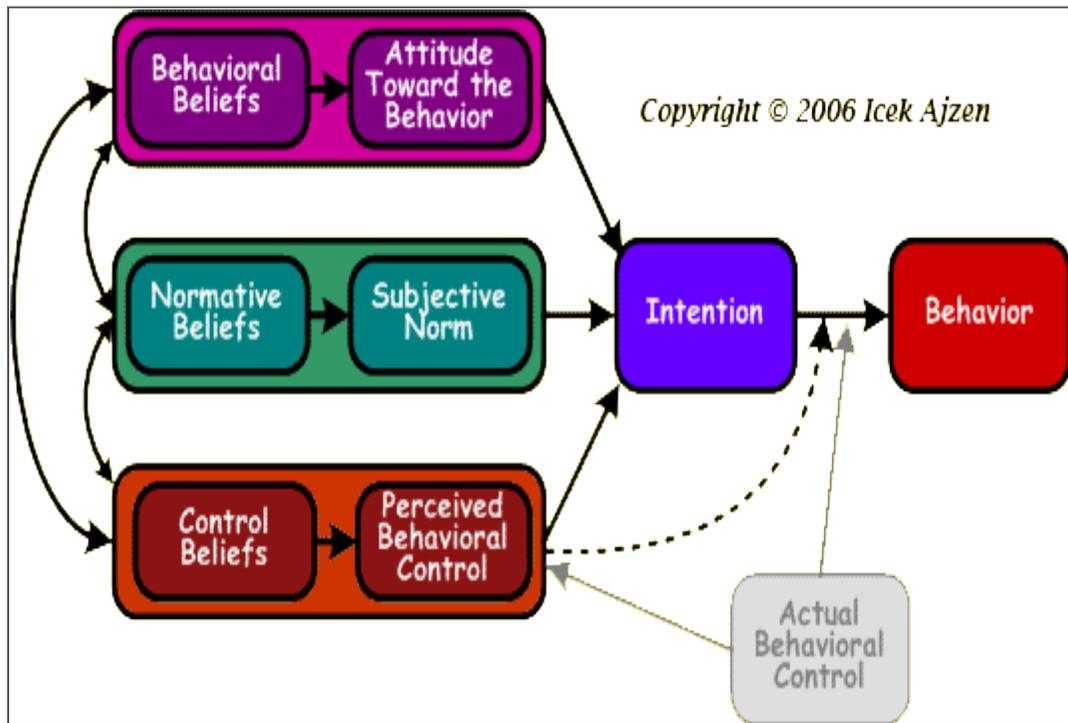


Figure 11: Diagram of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Adapted from the *Theory of Planned Behavior* by Icek Ajzen, 2012.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has been tested and utilized in various fields and professions. The theory has been used to investigate sport consumption. For instance, Cheng, Chen, Chen, and Lu (2012) adopted the Theory of Planned Behavior to investigate fans' baseball game attendance. Cunningham and Kwon (2003) applied this theory to examine intentions to attend a hockey game. This theory has also been applied to explain male soccer fans behavior (Norman, Clark, & Walker, 2005) and volleyball spectator behavior (Lu, Lin, & Cheng, 2011). Additionally, Hagger, et al. (2007) presented a study to test the cross-cultural generalizability of the Theory of Planned

Behavior among young people in a physical activity context. Also, the relation of using the Theory of Planned Behavior to understand participation in sport and exercise activities where attitudes and perceived behavioral control has been found to be the most important predictors toward intentional behaviors (Hagger, Chatzisarantis, & Biddle, 2002). Additionally, one of the variables of Lee, Chung, and Lee's (2012) study adopted the Theory of Planned Behavior. The variable of behavioral intention was proposed as a player's intention to play virtual golf simulators again.

Researchers have used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a theoretical framework for sport sponsorship (Kang, Lee, & Kang-Bon, 2012), adapted physical education (Kudlaeek, Valkova, Sherrill, Myers, & French, 2002), sport psychology (Rhodes, Courney, & Hayduk, 2002), sport market segmentation (Casper, Kanters, Bocarro, Forrester, & Greenwood, 2007), coaching (White, Ullah, Romiti, & Finch, 2010), exercise and health (Guinn, Vincent, Jorgensen, Dugas, & Semper, 2007; Hamilton, Cox, & White, 2012; Steadman & Rutter, 2004), leisure (Hrubes & Daigle, 2001; Walker, Courneya, & Deng, 2006), motivation (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Smith, & Saga, 2006), consumer behavior (Smith, et al., 2008), and marketing (Kalafatis, Pollard, East, & Tsogas, 1999).

Factors Influencing Recreational Golfers' Participation

Understanding what comprises the push and pull forces that provide the motivation to people to become involved in playing golf is important to golf managers and marketers alike. All three categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior which affect the intensity of active golf involvement and continued commitment once the golfers

decide to play the sport on public or private courses are important to understand. This study explores attitude beliefs, social beliefs, and control beliefs that explains participation.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), the reasons that prompt human behavior in an activity can be organized along with a continuum of self-determined behavior. This behavior embraces three psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) and three motivation levels (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation) that are generators for behavior. Deci and Ryan (2000) stated, “the frustration of basic needs was associated with less intrinsic motivation, more controlled regulation and amotivation, and stronger extrinsic aspiration, which in turn lead to diminished experience, performance, and wellness” (p.263). According to Green (2005), the individual level, the family level, and the sport provision system level are the key factors behind the decision of participant involvement or access to the sport.

A recreational sport provides the opportunity for participants to improve both their psychological and physical well-being, and reduce life pressure, and it is entertaining (McLean, Bannon, & Gray, 1999). People participate in outdoor recreational activity because this activity provides social, psychological, and physiological benefits (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996). Recreational sport fulfills the need for social satisfaction and a sense of belonging. A concept of unity develops between participants and becomes a form of self-expression. Recreational sports are adventurous and challenging and can elevate the quality of life. Sports have also been used to help correct

juvenile delinquent behaviors and leads individuals toward the right path (Bammel & Burrus, 1996; Jackson & Burtun, 1999; Mull, Bayless, Ross, & Jamieson, 1997).

Recreational golf consumers have many of the same behavioral traits as other sport participating consumers. All share the most common reasons behind becoming actively involved in sports. McDonald, Milne, & Hong (2002) described 13 broad constructs comprising of 41 factors for nine participatory sports. The motives for sport participation were physical fitness, stress reduction, self-esteem, self-actualization, aggression, affiliation, aesthetics, value development, competition, risk taking, skill mastery, achievement, and social facilitation. According to Ashford, Biddle, and Goudas (1993), there are four major factors that encourage sport participation: health and fitness, achievement, psychological well-being (e.g., affiliation, relaxation, and aesthetics), and sports mastery and performance (e.g., skills and competition). Haskell's (1996) study also revealed that participation in recreational sport is important choice to promote a healthy lifestyle as well as physical and psychological well-being so that participants can experience the fun of sports and realize the mutual relationships that develop with people around them.

Lee, McLean, Strigas, and Bodey (2006) presented the perceived benefits that people achieve from participation in playing golf for the benefit of sport management professionals in a qualitative study. The questions for their study were developed based in the inquiry of "why do I play golf?" The interviewees were 10 golfers (six males and four female).

The researchers designed a “benefits needs model” in which the motivation for golf participation was categorized under one the following types: (1) satisfaction, (2) achievement, (3) and well-being. Under the category of satisfaction, the most important factors were enjoyment (e.g., fun and entertainment), convenience (e.g., close to home, easy to schedule, and suitable to play), and cost (e.g., economic benefits). The achievement factors included personal growth (e.g., challenge, beating oneself, and controlling oneself), and mental development (e.g., self-motivation, concentration, and self-blame). The most important well-being factors included physical health (e.g., golf is good for exercise and health, golf does not require strong muscles, golf does not require great skill, and golf is good sport to recover from physical condition) and mental health (e.g., relaxation, renewal, and stress relief), and social interaction (e.g., family cohesion and stability, meeting new people, and enjoy playing with friends). The results of the study indicated that golfers participated in playing golf for fun, for personal growth, for being with friends and family, and for mental and physical health.

Petrick, Backman, Bixler, and Norman (2001) developed golf Recreational Experience Preference (REP) scale to measure golfers’ motivation. A total of 1,397 golfers participated in this study and were markedly classified regarding to experience use history (EUH) into the following segments: (a) infrequent, (b) loyal infrequent, (3) collector, (4) local, (5) visitor, and (6) veteran. Four significant motivational categories emerged and were identified by Petrick et al. They were: (1) family togetherness, (2) competing, (3) status, and (4) leisure. Petrick et al. (2001) asserted that the motivation to play golf was uniquely different for groups which were segmented by golfers’ experience

use history (EUH) and examined their past behaviors and experience levels in order to identify distinct motivations and constraints. The questionnaire in this study contained 14 items related to motivation with five different levels of importance (ranging from “not important” to extremely important). Constraints in this study included the cost of playing golf, lack of time to play golf, tee time availability, poor health, finding a partner, responsibility toward work, family, and taking care of the lawn. These constraints were valued using a range of five different levels (not barrier, slight barrier, somewhat of a barrier, an important barrier, and an extreme barrier).

Petrick, Backman, and Bixler (1999) mailed out questionnaires to 1,688 golfers to examine their satisfaction and perceived value toward playing golf. Six golf courses that were categorized into either premier courses (18-hole), quality courses (18-hole), or nine-hole courses were randomly chosen from Cleveland Metroparks. The response rate was very good at 83% with 1,397 questionnaires returned (1,104 male and 293 female). The results indicated that maintenance of the course, staff courtesy, pro shop variety, slow play management, and tee time availability are important factors which influence recreational golfers’ satisfaction.

The important factors that influence recreational golfers’ participation in playing the sport have been the topic of several doctoral dissertations. Zhang (2007) studied recreational golfers’ motivation, constraints, and satisfaction based on including the achievement of mastery level and frequency of rounds played in the golfers’ classification. There were 407 golfers randomly selected from golf courses in southern Mississippi and the Gulf Coast region. Motivational factors were examined and classified

as follows: leisure, social, skill, and family factors; and golf course factors included course quality, course service, and pace management. The results of Zhang's (2007) study revealed that leisure factors, including being with friends, having fun, and enjoying the outdoors were the most important motivational factors for playing golf. The major constraint was the lack of time. Course services, such as staff, pro-shop, practice facility, amenities, and green fees were highly correlated with golfers' satisfaction.

Li (2011) also studied recreational golfers' motivation, constraints, and satisfaction based on including the attainment of a mastery level of play and the frequency of rounds played in the golfers' classification in Taiwan. For this study, he adopted Zhang's instrument (2007) and the findings indicated that the most important motivational factors were leisure, skill, and social sequentially. On the other hand, the most notable constraints to playing golf were cost and tee time availability.

The Richard and Faircloth (1994); Price (2012); and Won, Hwang and Kleiber (2009) studies focused on the factors that influence the decision to play on a particular golf course and found similar results. The factors cited most often were course condition, price/fees, course design and landscape, tee time availability, speed of play, and course location (proximity), or travel distance. Price (2012) was noteworthy because he used a sixteen ordinal scale statements' pertaining to golf course attributes. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements using 5-point Likert-type scale with values ranging from (very important 5, important 4, neutral 3, unimportant 2, and very unimportant 1). Condition of fairway and greens, course ambience, course design, and the price/fees were the highest responses' prominence; whereas the least

responses' prominence were pro shop merchandise, choice to walk or ride, and availability of GPS system on course or cart. However, the factors influence participants who play in private golf clubs are profoundly supplementary than who play in public golf courses. Beditz & Kass (2008) outlined the reasons behind a golfer's desire to join a private club. These important factors that attract golfers were the high-quality of private golf course, less crowded, convenience/proximity to home, social aspects, staying physically active, offered other amenities for family, business and networking, and corporate membership.

Frankly Consulting (2005) executed an online survey named "Growing the Game", and received responses from 32,822 participants: 14,422 from the U.S. and 18,400 from 44 other countries. The results which were reported only for the 14,422 U.S. golfers showed that the top five important factors for playing golf were pleasure from hitting good shots, personal challenge between golfers and the course, and gratification for the outdoors, enjoyment of meeting and playing with other, health benefits from exercise; whereas the least important intentional factors were relief from stress, competition against other golfers, business purposes, and social functions. Moreover, World Golf (2008) issued the results of a survey by the National Golf Foundation of the 10 factors that revealed why golfers enjoy the game. There were 850 core golfers involved in the survey. These factors included course condition (19%), people (19%), course design (17%), ball striking (12%), score (8%), weather (7%), amenities (6%), course aesthetics (6%), exercise (4%), and competition (3%).

Consequently, increasing the popularity of the game by offering a friendly, fun environment is of crucial importance for golf course operators and marketers everywhere. Sport and Leisure Research Group (2013) surveyed over 1,200 golfer respondents online delineated the factors that influence golfers to play more rounds which included more time on their hands, presence of golf partners to play with, progress in playing golf better, less family obligation, more family involvement in playing the game every so often, and golf for business purposes.

Nevertheless, there are often obstacles that force golfers to play less, such as health problems, family/children responsibilities, work pressures, and the affordability of playing golf that still influence both genders to either remain actively participating or quit playing the game altogether (Sport & Leisure Research Group, 2013). The results of Hueber's (2012) study revealed that, "The nature and type of courses built or renovated during the 1990s development boom were more costly, longer, more difficult and took longer to play compared to the golf courses built during the previous golf course development boom periods in the 1920s and 1960s" (p. 98). A major contributing factor to the decline of golf participation that causes the average golfer to play less is the archetypical change in the golf course environment that includes a new design which alters the length, slope, course rating, and pace. According to Johnson (2010) who quoted from Doak (1992), playability is the design of a course that allows all players an equal chance to demonstrate skills no matter their ability. Johnson (2010) also stated that both Pugh's (2003) and Doak's (1992) studies showed that the five design principles of a golf

course that entice golfers to play the sport more often include: aesthetics, naturalness, playability, originality, and strategy that provide an enjoyable round of golf.

Time is often mentioned as the main reason for not participating in golf and 62% of golfers who have left the game do so due to time obligations (Grave, 2005). Golf is a distinct recreational activity that takes approximately four to five hours to complete an 18-hole round; therefore there are some time constraints due to the length of a round. Wilkes (2008) asserted that golf is a game often defined by monetary and non-monetary costs. Fees and other expenses spent on golf are a monetary price, and time commitments, such as job and family responsibilities, are non-monetary examples. Beditz and Kass (2008) stated that money constraints are a main reason for allowing memberships to expire and one-third of the members consider leaving because they cannot pay the expensive annual dues that are a part of many private clubs.

In his research, Krohn (2008) discussed four of the main factors that contribute to golf traveler's satisfaction: access factors; course factors, people factors, and extra factors. Access factors include speed of play that might arise due to poor pace management, reasonable prices, tee time availability, and convenient location. Course factors include the following: course is long enough to be challenging but not too long, course layout is suitable for the players' level, maintenance of the course is excellent, and course difficulty fits the players' skills. People factors are made up of friendly attitude of golfers, well-known designer of the course, golf pro to help players improve their game, and recommendation of the course from other golfers. Extra factors include excellent

dining service, availability of other amenities like a swimming pool and tennis court, pro shop variety, and practice facilities.

Kim and Ritchie (2012) identified five motivational factors that influence tourist golfers, including business opportunities, benefits, learning and being challenged, escape and relaxation, and social interaction and kinship. Correia and Pintassilgo (2006) revealed four motivational factors that influenced golfers to select the international Algraves's Golf Course in Portugal as follows: social environment factors (e.g., events and beaches), leisure opportunities (e.g., bar landscape, restaurants, and accommodation), golf course (e.g., tee times and course difficulty), and logistics factors (e.g., price and accessibility). Additionally, the Sport and Leisure Research Group (2013) outlined that golf travelers are more likely to emphasize the quality of golf courses, weather/climate, tee time availability, value for the money, quality of accommodations, variety of golf courses, accessibility upon arrival, challenge of golf courses, and reputation of the course.

Accordingly, as golf has become a world sport, golf and tourism has become increasingly interconnected. Markwick (2000) reported, "Golf courses have been developed as a part of tourist packages" (p.515). Hennessey, MacDonald and MacEachern (2008) stated, "Golfing is a dynamic and growing activity for tourists globally" (p.5). Traveling to play golf at renowned golf courses, playing golf as a pleasurable secondary activity on a holiday or a business trip, and attending golf tournaments are all major sports tourism attractions (Hudson, 2009).

Attending professional golf tournaments has continually increased in popularity during the 20th century in the U.S. (Robinson & Carpenter, 2003). Golf is different from

other spectator sporting events because of the time involved in playing a round, watching some 150 of the top golfers in the world compete in person in a tournament, being in close proximity to the top athletes in the sport as a spectator, receiving the fitness benefits of walking outside in a large open area, and participating in prestigious charity events. All of these factors make golf unique and unlike what other professional sporting events can offer the spectator. In most sporting events, the spectator is confined to his or her assigned seat and cannot move around to seek a better vantage point for viewing the event in progress, much less being close to the stars of the games (Hansen & Gauthier, 1993; 1994).

A professional golf tournament is comprised of 72 holes which are divided into 18-hole segments over 4 days. Attending and viewing a professional golf tournament that is spread out over four days requires the spectators to travel and stay all four days from start to finish if they decide to watch all of the competition, which in turn, generates a lot of revenue for the golf course, hotels, restaurants, entertainment, etc. For example, the PGA Tour attracted 7,200,000 attendees who followed 46 events; and the organizers generated \$179,000,000 in total purses during 2003 (Robinson, Trail, & Kwon, 2004).

In 2010, Shani, Wang, Hutchinson, and Lai's study found that the overall average expense incurred by a golf traveler was approximately \$ 1,709 per trip. The findings of the study revealed that the expenditures incurred by golf travelers during a trip to a golf destination was divided into three segments: heavy spenders who spend an average of \$2,972.34 per person per trip and 61.1% of the total outlay; medium spenders who spend an average \$1,321.85 per person per trip and 24.6% of the total outlay; and light spenders

who spend an average \$739.73 per person per trip and 14.3% of the total outlay. In 2010, a typical golf traveler's expenses were distributed between accommodation (24.0%), gaming and entertainment (21.3%), golf (20.8%), food and beverages (17.5%), and transportation (16.3%). McDonald, Milne, and Hong (2002) indicated that golf spectators are unique in their consumer behavioral motivations than spectators who attend team sporting events.

Factors Influencing Women Golfers' Participation

Although golf is an ideal sport for gender equity, there is still a disproportion in golf participation between men and women. Simply, only one in five golfers is a woman (McGinnis, Gentry & McQuillan, 2009).

Last (2011a), the President of Sports and Leisure Research Group (SLRG), indicated that women like to pay extra to play courses that accommodate their needs. Satisfying women's golfing experience improves the probability of women embracing the sport. He revealed that women desired something akin to a 19th hole which allows them to socialize, eat and drink with their friends, in addition to finding constant playing partners, having shorter holes, better tee-box placement, signage availability, maps or GPS built into the carts, and a well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing course.

McGinnis and Gentry (2006) also indicated that women's participation in golf faces intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints which are definitely limiting factors that impact women's interest in the sport. Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) indicated that intrapersonal constraints involve internal psychological propensities, such as personality, attitude, or mood; interpersonal constraints include interaction with others,

such as family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors; and structural constraints entail a lack of opportunities, the cost of activities, and from environmental conditions. Intrapersonal (psychological) factors such as knowledge of the game, self-confidence, and anxiety impact whether or not female golfers stick with the game. For example, some women may be made to feel a sense of “not belonging” on the course. Interpersonal barriers also hinder female golfers from playing. For instance, women who experienced difficulty finding playing partners chose not to play if they had to play alone. Structural constraints, such as family obligations, time commitments, the difficulty of a particular course, and course availability were important factors for limiting women’s golf participation (McGinnis & Gentry, 2006).

SLRG (2011) conducted on-line surveys among 1772 female golfers and telephone surveys with 600 public golf facility owners which were in the summer 2009; the SLRG’s research results revealed that cost of golf is the main constraint for regularity of women participation in the sport, followed by time demands. The main factors that influenced sufficiently their golf experience including maintenance of the course, accessibility, tee time availability, people they play with, and available restrooms. On the other hand, the least two important factors that influence women golf involvement were the availability of childcare at the golf course and fitness center or spa at golf facility. SLRG (2011) Indicated that female golfers’ attitudes toward golf is principally a social activity when it compared with other leisure activities, and they are less interested in the competition aspects of the game (SLRG, 2011).

McGinnis, Gentry and McQuillan (2009) stated, “One problem relatively unique to golf (i.e., unlike other more rigorous pursuits like tennis) is the presence of so many older males on the course, who may be harder to convince that the game should be more egalitarian” (p.33). “Women-friendly” facilities are indispensable to keep and please female participants who are new to the sport and actually comprise 40 % of all beginners. Unwelcoming environments include discrimination and sexist attitudes women face at a golf course that shape women’s participation in golf. For example, generating hegemonic masculinity and lack of appreciating femininity at golf courses contribute to women leaving the game (McGinnis et al., 2009).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of the study was (a) to define the important factors that influence recreational golfers to play rounds on Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex golf courses and (b) to examine the effect of demographic variables on the factors which influence these golfers to play golf. Procedures followed in the development of the study were described in this chapter under the following heading: (a) Participants, (b) Instrument, (c) Data Collection, (d) Data Analysis, and (e) Human Subjects Considerations.

Participants

Participants were recruited from the D/FW Metroplex, which includes 12 counties (see Figure 12).

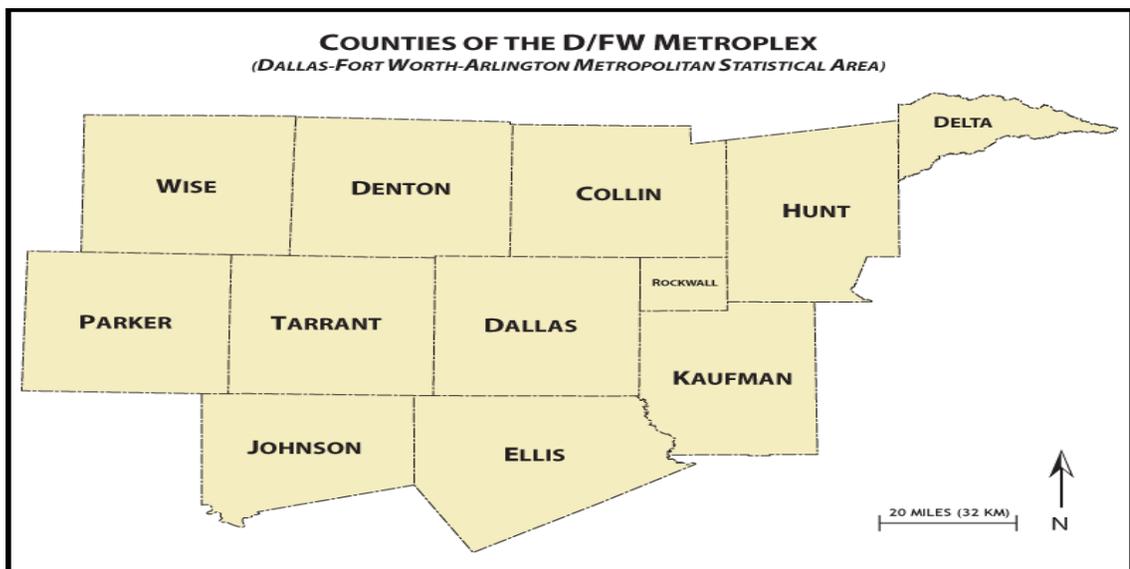


Figure 12: Metroplex Map of DFW Counties
Source: Wikipedia (2013).

Specifically, 4 counties were chosen initially to be involved in this study: Collin, Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant. The researcher communicated with 36 golf course managers in these 4 counties to ask for permission to recruit golfers from their membership willing to participate in the survey (see Appendix B). Only 7 golf course managers gave their approval (see Appendix C). Those 7 managers were provided the link to the survey which they, in turn, forwarded to their membership through e-mail and/or posted the link on their websites.

The golfers who participated in the study came from 2 private clubs and 5 public courses which represented 3 counties in the D/FW Metroplex (see Table 5).

Table 5

Number of Participants and Location of Their Golf Courses

Club/Course Name	Private Number of Members of Each Club	Public Number of Annual /Monthly Pass Holders	Name of County/Location
Denton Country Club	450		Denton/Argyle
Oakmont Country Club	390		Denton/Corinth
Oak Hollow		125	Collin/McKinney
Frisco Lakes		600	Collin/Frisco
Timber Links		62	Denton/Denton
Los Rios		65	Collin/Plano
Willow Spring		400	Tarrant/Haslet

The recreational golfers who participated in this study were 18 years of age or older. They must have played at least one regulation round a year on an 18-hole golf course.

Instrument

The instrument utilized for this study includes a demographic questionnaire and a paired comparison instrument (see Appendix A). The demographic data that were collected from participants include age, gender, household income, ethnicity, number of rounds played, and job status

The RGPPCI (Recreational Golfer Participation Paired Comparison Instrument) was developed using the following procedures:

1. The investigator reviewed the scholarly literature and compiled a list of 171 factors that may influence recreational golfers to play golf.
2. The researcher and dissertation director integrated the similar factors and eliminated duplications and arrived at 35 descriptive factors that influence recreational golfers to play golf. These 35 selected factors were confirmed and approved by the dissertation committee. The important factors were presented to the Delphi panel for the development of the *RGPPCI*:

1. Forget my problems
2. Enjoy the competition
3. Enjoy nature/outdoors
4. Challenging each time

5. Love the sport
6. Satisfy a need
7. Easy access of course/parking
8. Health and Fitness
9. Ambience of club house
10. Maintenance of course
11. Be with friends
12. Share with family
13. 19th hole for business
14. Lifetime sport
15. Prestige sport
16. Availability of lessons/clinics
17. Pro shop variety
18. To have fun
19. Practice facility availability
20. Meet new people
21. Stress relief
22. Choice to walk or ride
23. Business negotiation
24. Sense of achievement
25. Affordability

26. Challenge of the course
27. Tee time availability
28. Speed of play
29. Meet other golfers
30. Staff courtesy
31. Availability of GPS system
32. Doesn't require lots of muscle strength
33. Uncertainty of result
34. Women welcome
35. Self esteem

3. A panel of three experts used the Delphi technique to select the best 12 factors, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, to use in the development of the paired comparison instrument. The criteria used for the selection of the panel (jury) of experts include: (1) they have to be familiar with the Theory of Planned Behavior, (2) they have experience with Delphi technique, and (3) they have to be familiar with golf and sports management. First, the panel of experts used the Delphi technique to locate each of the 35 factors into one of the 3 categories of Theory of Planned Behavior. Second, the panel selected 4 factors for each of the three categories of Theory of Planned Behavior. Row and Wright (1999) indicated that the Delphi technique can be used as a decision-aiding, judgment, or forecasting of the instrument. The researcher communicated with three selected experts via e-mails. The

experts utilized for the Delphi technique were: Mr. Hank Dickenson, Dr. David Rylander, and Dr. Yin-Feng Chen (see Appendix D). The investigator used e-mail to communicate individually with the jury. The group of jurors was unanimous in their choices of location of each of the 35 factors in the three categories: (a) attitude toward behavior, (b) subjective norms, and (c) perceived behavioral control. Their classification was as follows:

Attitude toward behavior:

1. Forget my problems
2. Enjoy the competition
3. Enjoy nature/outdoors
4. Love the sport
5. Satisfy a need
6. To have fun
7. Stress relief
8. Uncertainty of result
9. Self esteem
10. Challenging each time
11. Health and Fitness
12. Sense of achievement
13. Lifetime sport

Subjective Norms:

1. Ambience of club house
2. Women welcome
3. Prestige sport
4. Staff courtesy
5. 19th hole for business
6. Be with friends
7. Share with family
8. Meet new people
9. Meet other golfers
10. Business negotiation

Perceived Behavioral Control:

1. Affordability
2. Easy access of course/parking
3. Maintenance of course
4. Tee time availability
5. Speed of play
6. Availability of lessons/clinics
7. Pro shop variety
8. Practice facility availability

- 9. Choice to walk or ride
- 10. Challenge of the course
- 11. Availability of GPS system
- 12. Doesn't require lots of muscle strength

Finally, the three jury members were unanimous in the selection of the final 4 factors in each of the 3 categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior which (see Table 6).

Table 6

The 12 Factors Selected by the Jury Members for RGPPCI

Attitude toward behavior	Enjoy the competition Love the sport To have fun Health and fitness
Subjective norms	Be with friends Staff courtesy Business negotiation Prestige sport
Perceived behavioral control	Challenge of the course Affordability Maintenance of the course Choice to walk or ride

The researcher selected the paired comparison technique as a format for the factors that influence the golfers to play recreational golf. The paired comparison technique requires the participants to make a comparative judgment between two items and select one of the two that is the more important to answer the question. The value of the paired comparison technique is that it provides a rank order of items determined by sum scores of times chosen by all participants, as well as the value of the difference in sum scores between ranks. The paired comparison technique has been widely used in many different professional disciplines (Jackson & Fleckenstein, 1957). According to Altaf and Aslam (2012), the paired comparison technique has been frequently used in several fields where the study of choice behavior is concerned, such as marketing research, sports competitions, consumer behavior, environmental science, psychophysical experiments, and sound quality engineering. In addition, this technique is actively used by many statisticians due to its practical and simple use. For many years, researchers have used the paired comparison technique in psychological research (Martignon & Hoffrage, 2002). The paired comparison technique is better than any other method in its ability to reduce bias accompanied by self-rating scales, such as central tendency and the halo effect (Darcy, Lee, & Tracey, 2004). Recent studies related to the sports management field have successfully utilized the paired comparison technique (Chen, 2009; Lin, 2007; Masoudi, 2011; Yu, 2011).

The paired comparison technique was originally developed by Thurstone (1927) to be used with directly measurable stimuli which proved to be more internally

consistent. The technique is frequently used when the object is not openly measurable (Nunnally, 1970). Kerlinger (1967) asserted that the paired comparison is one of the most satisfying of psychometric methods; it is simple and economical for researchers to obtain a large quantity of information from a small quantity of material. Edward (1957) remarked:

The statement of the law of comparative judgment was important because it provided a rationale for the ordering of stimuli along a psychological continuum, even in those cases where there is no known physical continuum to which the values of the stimuli on the psychological continuum might be related. The law of comparative judgment thus made possible the quantitative investigation of all kinds of values and subjective experiences. (Edward, 1957, p.20)

Pilot Study on Paired Comparison Instrument

A pilot test was conducted to analyze the questionnaire and RGPPCI with regard to the respondents' understanding in terms of the clarity of the survey questions. In addition, the test was conducted to measure the approximate amount of time necessary for respondents to complete the survey.

The investigator chose recreational golfers from the Pioneer Golf Course at Texas Woman's University. There were 10 golfer participants. Some of the respondents had the following difficulties with the survey: Some participants mentioned that paired comparison and questions that seemed repetitive were sometimes confusing, but nevertheless, the participants found it easy to answer the questions; others said it was

difficult to choose only one factor because the participant believed that there were sometimes more than one preference that they considered as equal, but he/she could only choose one. However, the amount of time to complete the survey ranged from 5 to 17 minutes which presented no problems for the participants.

Data Collection

The study was conducted by using an online research technique. The web-based survey is gradually being used more to recruit research participants and to distribute and complete questionnaires, and is set to become the predominant method of surveying individuals (Greenlaw & Brown-Welty, 2009). The researchers further revealed that people preferably choose online surveys more often than traditional surveys. The advantages of online data collection include not only the potential of accessing a large and geographically distributed population, but also results in more time and cost effectiveness (Greenlaw and Brown-Welty, 2009; Lefever, Dal & Matthaisdottir, 2007).

The main benefits of e-questionnaires for respondents are the convenience and ease of access (Sue & Ritter, 2007). Additionally, it is easy to send reminder e-mails to nonresponders, easy to send to additional respondents without increasing cost, and more accurate level of data analysis (Greenlaw & Brown-Welty, 2009). However, one of the weaknesses of an online survey is that it yields very low response rates due to the absence of personalized contacts. Furthermore, it does not reach those older golfers that are not familiar with the internet (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). There were 2,092

recreational golfers in the D/FW Metroplex invited to participate in this study through this technique.

Participants responded to the survey on a secure survey website, SurveyMonkey, which can only be accessed by using the researcher's confidential user name and password. SurveyMonkey is an online survey company that provides people or organizations with the opportunity to develop their own surveys and quickly and easily obtain feedback to make more informed decisions. Carter-Pokras, McClellan, and Zambrana (2006) stated that Survey Monkey is one of the most useful instruments for uncomplicated online data collection. Over 80% of the Fortune 100 Companies use this online technology (SurveyMonkey, 2007).

This researcher contacted the managers of both private and public golf courses in the D/FW Metroplex area and requested that they invite "golfers" at their facilities to participate in the survey. Next, the managers who gave their approval sent an email that included the link to the survey for their members, and/or posted that link on their websites. These steps made it easier for members to access the survey and participate in this study.

This researcher's goal was to reach as many participants as possible who could respond to the survey. After 2 weeks of early e-mail invitations asking for participation in the survey, the researcher contacted the managers again who gave their approval to send a second e-mail reminding each participant to please take the survey. This reminder email was sent out every 2 weeks for more than 2 months with the managers' approval.

Data Analysis

The appropriate statistical treatment for paired comparison data was used. Data from the RGPPCI was analyzed by calculating the frequency of choice of each factor by each participant. The sum frequency score and percentages were totaled for each factor. The factors were ranked according to sum scores and percentages of each factor for the instrument.

The reader should be aware that in reading the Tables regarding the data from the paired comparison instruments, the (n =) in the note below of the tables represents the number of participants involved and the (# =) under the *f* represents total number of possible responses (n x 11 factors).

Human Subject Considerations

The rights of the participants will be protected by using the following procedures:

1. Data were collected after receiving approval from the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E) and Graduate School (see Appendix F).
2. Participants were informed that the participation in this research study is completely voluntary and they can discontinue at any time without penalty.
3. Participants were anonymous and their data cannot be identified by the investigator.
4. Participants could request a summary of results by sending an e-mail to the investigator.

5. All data were downloaded and saved in the investigator's computer and only he can access it by the use of his confidential user name and password.
6. The digital file of the data will be deleted in 3 years.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was (a) to define the important factors that influence recreational golfers to play rounds on DFW Metroplex golf courses and (b) to examine the effect of demographic variables on the factors which influence these golfers to play golf. Procedures followed in the development of the study are described in this chapter under the following headings: (a) Participants' Demographics (b) Factors Influencing Recreational Golfers to Participate in the Sport, and (c) Influence of Demographic Variables.

Participant Demographics

The researcher used an online survey technique to garner a sample of recreational golfers from the Dallas/ Fort-Worth Metroplex area. A total of 2,091 recreational golfers were invited to participate in the study. A total of 157 participants responded to the instrument which is only a 7.5% response rate. There were 35 questionnaires that were incomplete, and therefore, excluded from the data analysis, which left 122 (5.8%) out of 2,091(see Table 7).

Table 7

Participants Who Completed the Instrument

Participants	Return	Valid Participants	%
Total Participants from (Private)	69	50	71.2
Total Participants from (Public)	88	72	81.7
Total Participants from (Private and Public)	157	122	77.0

The demographic groups of 122 golf participants included 41.2% private course participants and 59.8% publicly operated course participants; 102 males (83.6%) and 20 females (16.4%); more than half of participants (54.1%) were over the age of 61, and almost one-fourth of participants were between ages of 46-60, and approximately one-tenth of participants were between the ages of 30-45, and 5% of participants were between ages of 18-29. The percentage of respondents who are working was 50%, and the same percentage of respondents was retired. Almost a third of the participants had household incomes between \$60,000 and \$99,999, and one-fourth of participants had income over \$150,000, and only 6.5% of the participants had household incomes under \$30,000. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (90.1%); and more than three fourth of the participants (78.7%) played more than 24 rounds a year and only 8.2% of participants played 1-8 rounds a year (see Table 8).

Table 8

Demographics of Recreational Golfers

Groups	Categories	<i>f</i>	%
Membership	Private	50	41.0
	Public	72	59.0
Gender	Male	102	83.6
	Female	20	16.4
Age	18-29	6	4.9
	30-45	18	14.8
	46-61	32	26.2
	Over 61	66	54.1
Employment Status	Working	61	50.0
	Retired	61	50.0
Annual Household Income	Under \$30,000	8	6.6
	\$30,000-\$59,000	11	9.0
	\$60,000-\$99,999	40	32.8
	\$100,000-\$150,000	32	26.2
	Over \$150,000	31	25.4
Ethnicity	Caucasian	110	90.1
	Asian	4	3.3
	Black	1	0.8
	Hispanic or Latino Origin	3	2.5
	Other	4	3.3
Number of Rounds	1-8	10	8.2
	8-24	16	13.1
	+24	96	78.7

NOTE. N = 122.

The demographic groups of 50 participants from private clubs included 40 males (80%) and 10 females (20%). Exactly 56% were over the age of 61. And no golf memberships were purchased by participants between the ages of 18-29. The percentage of respondents who are working was 48%, and 52% were retired. Almost half of the private memberships had household incomes over \$150,000, and only two members had a household income below \$60,000. All of the members were Caucasian (100%). The majority (86%) played more than 24 rounds a year, and no private club member played just 1-8 rounds a year (see Table 9).

The demographic groups of 72 public golf course participants included 62 males (86.1%) and 10 females (13.9%). More than 50% were over the age of 61, and only 6 participants were between the ages of 18-29. The percentage of respondents who are working was 51.4%, and 48.6% of respondents were retired. Slightly more than a third of the participants had household incomes between \$60,000 and \$99,999, whereas only 12.5% of participants had incomes over \$150,000. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (83.3%). Most of the participants (73.6%) played more than 24 rounds a year, and only 12.5% of participants played just 1-8 rounds a year (see Table 9).

Table 9

Comparison of Demographics of Recreational Golfers between Private and Public Golf Courses

Variables		Private		Public	
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	40	80.0	62	86.1
	Female	10	20.0	10	13.9
Age	18-29	0	0	6	8.3
	30-45	3	6.0	15	20.8
	46-61	19	38.0	13	18.1
	Over 61	28	56.0	38	52.8
Employment Status	Working	24	48.0	37	51.4
	Retired	26	52.0	35	48.6
Annual Household Income	Under \$30,000	1	2.0	7	9.7
	\$30,000-\$59,000	1	2.0	10	13.9
	\$60,000-\$99,999	13	26.0	27	37.5
	\$100,000-\$150,000	13	26.0	19	26.4
	Over \$150,000	22	44.0	9	12.5
Ethnicity	Caucasian	50	100.0	60	83.3
	Asian	0	0.0	4	5.6
	Black	0	0.0	1	1.3
	Hispanic or Latino	0	0.0	3	4.2
	Other	0	0.0	4	5.6
Number of Rounds	1-8	0	0.0	10	13.9
	8-24	7	14.0	9	12.5
	+24	43	86.0	53	73.6

NOTE. N = 50 for private participants and 72 for public participants.

Factors Influencing Recreational Golfers to Participate in the Sport

To answer the first research question, the ranked factors are listed in Table 8.

When comparing “Be with friends” with each of the other 11 factors, recreational golfers chose it 1,063 times out of 1,342 comparisons within 79.2% of the time as the most important influential factor for why they played golf. “To have fun” (74.1%), and “Love the sport” (71.5%) were the other two major factors influencing recreational golfers to participate in playing golf. Participants rated 4 factors within the 50% category:

“Affordability” (55.1%), “Enjoy the competition” (55.1%), “Maintenance of the course” (53.5%), and “Choice to walk or ride” (50%). The least influential factors were “Business negotiation” (8.9%), “Prestige sport” (20.3%), and “Staff courtesy” (38.2%, see Table 10).

Table 10

Factors Chosen by Recreational Golfers

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 1,342)	%
1	Be with friends	1063	79.2
2	To have fun	994	74.1
3	Love the sport	960	71.5
4	Affordability	740	55.1
5	Enjoy the competition	740	55.1
6	Maintenance of the course	718	53.5
7	Choice to walk or ride	671	50.0
8	Challenge of the course	667	49.7
9	Health and fitness	595	44.3
10	Staff courtesy	512	38.2
11	Prestige sport	272	20.3
12	Business negotiation	120	8.9

Note. n = 122.

Influence of Demographic Variables

The selected variables of the RGPPCI included membership, gender, age, working status, household income, ethnicity, and number of rounds played. Also, the comparison between private club golf members and public course golfers in choosing the factors that influence their decision to play golf was measured by the researcher.

Membership

Private club golf members chose “Be with friends” (81%) as the most important factor influencing their participation in playing golf. “To have fun” (75.6%) and “Love the sport” (75.5%) were the second most important factors. Other responses that were rated above 50% as influential factors included, “Enjoy the competition” (57.3%), “Maintenance of the course” (54.9%), “Choice to walk or ride” (51.8%), and “Challenge of the course” (50.5%). The following factors received between 40 and 45% response as meager influential factors: “Health and fitness” (43.6%), “Affordability” (41.6%), and “Staff courtesy” (40.9%). The least important factors were “Business negotiation” (9.6%) and “Prestige sport” (17.8%, see Table 11).

Table 11

Factors Chosen by Recreational Golfers Who Play at Private Clubs

Rank	Factor	f (# = 550)	%
1	Be with friends	446	81.0
2	To have fun	416	75.6
3	Love the sport	415	75.5
4	Enjoy the competition	315	57.3
5	Maintenance of the course	302	54.9
6	Choice to walk or ride	285	51.8
7	Challenge of the course	278	50.5
8	Health and fitness	240	43.6
9	Affordability	229	41.6
10	Staff courtesy	225	40.9
11	Prestige sport	98	17.8
12	Business negotiation	53	9.6

Note. n = 50.

Public membership and/or yearly and monthly pass-holders chose “Be with friend” (77.9%) and “To have fun” (73.7%) as the two most important factors that influence their participation in playing golf. The next two most important influential factors that were chosen by this group included “Love the sport” (68.8%) and “Affordability” (64.5%). Other responses that were valued above 50% included “Enjoy competition” (53.6%) and “Maintenance of the course” (52.5%). Slightly below 50% were the “Challenge of the course” (49.1%) and “Choice to walk or ride” (48.7%). “Business negotiation” (11.6%), “Prestige sport (22.2%) and “Staff courtesy” (36.2%) were the least important factors for this group (see Table 12).

Table 12

Factors Chosen by Recreational Golfers Who Play on Public Courses

Rank	Factor	f (# = 792)	%
1	Be with friends	617	77.9
2	To have fun	578	73.7
3	Love the sport	545	68.8
4	Affordability	511	64.5
5	Enjoy the competition	425	53.6
6	Maintenance of the course	416	52.5
7	Challenge of the course	389	49.1
8	Choice to walk or ride	386	48.7
9	Health and fitness	355	44.8
10	Staff courtesy	287	36.2
11	Prestige sport	176	22.2
12	Business negotiation	92	11.6

Note. n = 72.

Gender

Both males and females chose the same factors: “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as the top three influential factors to participate in playing golf. Male and female recreational golfers also chose the same factors “Affordability” and “Maintenance of the course” as the next influential factors. However, “Enjoy the competition” and “Challenge of the course” were chosen by males more so than females; “Choice to walk or ride” and “Health and fitness” were chosen more so by females than males (see Tables 13 & 14).

Table 13

Recreational Golfers Participants: Male

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 1,122)	%
1	Be with friends	886	79.0
2	To have fun	819	73.0
3	Love the sport	813	72.5
4	Enjoy the competition	642	57.2
5	Affordability	623	55.5
6	Maintenance of the course	603	54.7
7	Challenge of the course	579	51.6
8	Choice to walk or ride	533	47.5
9	Health and fitness	473	42.2
10	Staff courtesy	414	36.9
11	Prestige sport	241	21.5
12	Business negotiation	106	9.5

Note. n = 102.

Table 14

Recreational Golfers Participants: Female

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 220)	%
1	Be with friends	177	80.5
2	To have fun	175	79.5
3	Love the sport	147	66.8
4	Choice to walk or ride	138	62.7
5	Health and fitness	122	55.5
6	Affordability	117	53.2
7	Maintenance of the course	115	52.3
8	Staff courtesy	98	44.5
9	Enjoy the competition	98	44.5
10	Challenge of the course	88	44.0
11	Prestige sport	49	22.3
12	Business negotiation	14	6.4

Note. n = 20.

In a comparison of male golfers at private and public courses, both private and public male golfers chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor influencing their participation in golf; however, male private club members rated it higher (83.4%) than male public course golfers (76.1%). A major discrepancy between male public and private course golfers was the factor, “Affordability”, which was rated as the 4th most important factor for public course golfers (66.1%), while it was rated the 10th factor for private club members (39.1%). Both groups designated “Prestige sport” and “Business negotiation” as the least important factors in why they play golf (see Table 15).

Table 15

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Private Club Males with Public Course Males

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 440)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 682)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	367	83.4	1	519	76.1
To have fun	3	328	74.5	2	491	71.1
Love the sport	2	333	75.7	3	480	70.4
Enjoy the competition	4	270	61.4	5	372	54.4
Affordability	10	172	39.1	4	451	66.1
Maintenance of the course	5	236	53.6	6	367	53.8
Challenge of the course	6	225	51.1	7	354	51.9
Choice to walk or ride	7	214	48.6	8	319	46.8
Health and fitness	8	185	42.0	9	288	42.2
Staff courtesy	9	182	41.4	10	232	34.0
Prestige sport	11	84	19.1	11	157	23.0
Business negotiation	12	44	10.0	12	89	13.0

Note. n = 40 for private participants and 62 for public participants.

Female golfers at private clubs chose clearly “To have fun” (80.0%) as the most important factor that influence their participation in golf. Female golfers at public courses

chose highly “Be with friends” (89.1%) as the most important influential factor. Another discrepancy between female golfers at private and public courses was the factor “Love the sport”. Female golfers at private clubs rated this influencing factor much higher (74.5%) than those female golfers at public courses (59.1%). Both groups of the ladies joined the men in designating “Prestige sport” and “Business negotiation” as the least important factors in why they played golf (see Table 16).

Table 16

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Private Club Females with Public Course Females

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 110)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 110)		
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	3	79	71.8	1	98	89.1
To have fun	1	88	80.0	2	87	79.1
Love the sport	2	82	74.5	5	65	59.1
Choice to walk or ride	4	71	64.5	3	67	60.9
Health and fitness	7	55	50.0	3	67	60.9
Affordability	6	57	51.8	6	60	54.5
Maintenance of the course	5	66	60.0	9	49	44.5
Staff courtesy	10	43	39.1	7	55	50.0
Enjoy the competition	9	45	40.1	8	53	48.2
Challenge of the course	8	53	48.2	10	35	31.8
Prestige sport	11	12	10.9	11	19	17.3
Business negotiation	12	9	8.2	12	5	4.5

Note. n = 10 for private participants and 10 for public participants.

Age

The younger aged group, 18 to 29 years-old, valued “Affordability” (72.7%) and “To have fun” (71.2%) as the two most influential factors for participating in playing golf. “Be with friends” (68.2%) was chosen as the fourth influential factor by this group.

“Business negotiation” was the least important factor for this age group (9.1%, see Table 17).

Table 17

Recreational Golfers Participants: Age 18-29

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 66)	%
1	Affordability	48	72.7
2	To have fun	47	71.2
3	Love the sport	46	69.7
4	Be with friends	45	68.2
5	Enjoy the competition	37	56.1
6	Challenge of the course	36	54.5
7	Maintenance of the course	29	44.0
8	Prestige sport	28	42.4
9	Health and fitness	28	42.4
10	Staff courtesy	27	40.9
11	Choice to walk or ride	19	28.8
12	Business negotiation	6	9.1

Note. n = 6. The researcher was unable to compare age for the 18-29 year-old group because there were no participants from this age group at private golf clubs.

The age group, 30 to 45 years-old, ranked “Love the sport” (73.7%), “To have fun” (71.7%), and “Be with friends” (70.2%) as the three most influential factors that motivated this age groups participation in golf. “Affordability” was designated as the fourth influential factor by this group. “Enjoy competition” was chosen over 50% of time by this group (see Table 18).

Table 18

Recreational Golfers Participants: Age 30-45

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 198)	%
1	Love the sport	146	73.7
2	To have fun	142	71.7
3	Be with friends	139	70.2
4	Affordability	121	61.1
5	Enjoy the competition	112	56.6
6	Challenge of the course	98	49.5
7	Maintenance of the course	91	46.0
8	Choice to walk or ride	89	45.0
9	Health and fitness	78	39.4
10	Staff courtesy	67	33.8
11	Prestige sport	67	33.8
12	Business negotiation	30	15.2

Note. n = 18.

In a comparison between private club golfers and public course golfers for the age group, 30 to 45 years-old; recreational golfers at private clubs chose “Enjoy the competition” (90.1%) as the most important factor, whereas public golf course participants rated this factor much lower (55.8%). Public course golfers chose “To have fun” (72.7%) as the most important factor influencing their decision to participate in golf. “Love the sport” was the second most important factor for golfers at both private (87.9%) and public courses (70.9%). A major discrepancy between the two groups was the choice of “Affordability”. Public course golfers rated this factor as the 3rd most important influential factor (69.1%), whereas private club golfers rated this factor as the 11th influential factor (21.2%, see Table 19).

Table 19

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Age 30-45 between Private Club members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 33)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 165)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Love the sport	2	29	87.9	2	117	70.9
To have fun	5	22	66.7	1	120	72.7
Be with friends	3	28	84.8	4	111	67.3
Affordability	11	7	21.2	3	114	69.1
Enjoy the competition	1	30	90.1	5	92	55.8
Challenge of the course	4	23	69.7	7	75	45.5
Maintenance of the course	9	9	27.3	6	82	49.7
Choice to walk or ride	6	15	45.5	8	74	44.8
Health and fitness	9	9	27.3	9	67	40.6
Staff courtesy	6	15	45.5	10	57	34.5
Prestige sport	8	14	42.4	11	52	31.5
Business negotiation	12	2	0.3	12	28	17.0

Note. n = 3 for private participants and 15 for public participants.

The age group, 46 to 60 years-old rated “Be with friends” (76.4%), “To have fun” (76.1), and “Love the sport” (73.9%) as the three most important influential factors in choosing to play golf. “Maintenance of the course” (61.1%) was the 4th important factor. Correspondingly, three factors were preferred by golfers in a choice over 50% of the time: “Enjoy the competition”, “Affordability”, and “Choice to walk or ride” (see Table 20).

Table 20

Recreational Golfers Participants: Age 46-60

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 352)	%
1	Be with friends	269	76.4
2	To have fun	268	76.1
3	Love the sport	260	73.9
4	Maintenance of the course	215	61.1
5	Enjoy the competition	192	54.5
6	Affordability	187	53.1
7	Choice to walk or ride	181	51.4
8	Challenge of the course	171	48.6
9	Health and fitness	141	40.1
10	Staff courtesy	126	35.8
11	Prestige sport	56	15.9
12	Business negotiation	41	11.6

Note. n = 32.

In comparing the factors chosen between private club members and public course golfers for the age group, 46 to 61 years-old, recreational golfers at private clubs ranked “Love the sport” (80.4%) as most important influential factor and “Be with friends” (79.9%) as the second most important influential factor, whereas public golf course participants chose “To have fun” (74.1%) and “Affordability” (72.7%) as the two most important influential factors for choosing to play golf. “Affordability” was chosen much less frequently by private club golfers (39.7%, see Table 21).

Table 21

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Age 46-61 between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 209)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 143)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Love the sport	1	168	80.4	4	92	64.3
To have fun	3	159	76.1	1	106	74.1
Be with friends	2	167	79.9	3	102	71.3
Affordability	8	83	39.7	2	104	72.7
Enjoy the competition	5	114	54.5	6	78	54.5
Challenge of the course	7	105	50.2	8	66	46.2
Maintenance of the course	4	129	61.7	5	86	60.2
Choice to walk or ride	6	107	51.2	7	74	51.7
Health and fitness	10	78	37.3	9	63	44.1
Staff courtesy	9	82	39.2	10	44	30.8
Prestige sport	12	29	13.9	11	32	22.4
Business negotiation	11	30	14.4	12	11	8.0

Note. n = 19 for private participants and 13public participants.

The age group, over 61 years-old, chose “Be with friends” (84%) as the most important influential factor, “To have fun” (74.0%) as the second important factor, and “Love the sport” (70.0%) as the third important factor for their participation in playing golf. “Prestige sport” and “Business negotiation” were designated as the least important factors in why this age group played golf (see Table 22).

Table 22

Recreational Golfers Participants: Over Age 61

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 726)	%
1	Be with friends	610	84.0
2	To have fun	537	74.0
3	Love the sport	508	70.0
4	Enjoy the competition	389	53.6
5	Affordability	384	52.9
6	Maintenance of the course	383	52.7
7	Choice to walk or ride	382	52.6
8	Challenge of the course	362	49.9
9	Health and fitness	351	48.3
10	Staff courtesy	292	40.2
11	Prestige sport	115	15.8
12	Business negotiation	43	5.9

Note. n = 66.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers for the age group, over 61 years-old, both groups ranked the same three factors sequentially, “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as the three most important influential factors with varying percentages in choosing to participate in golf. The factor “Choice to walk or ride” was chosen with greater frequency by private club golfers (70.8%) compared to (52.4%) by public course golfers. Another divergence between the two groups was “Affordability” which was designated as the fourth influential factor for public golf courses’ participants, whereas it was adopted as the ninth influential factor by private club members (see Table 23).

Table 23

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Age Over 61 between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 308)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 418)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	251	81.5	1	359	85.9
To have fun	2	232	75.3	2	305	73.0
Love the sport	3	218	70.8	3	290	69.4
Enjoy the competition	5	171	55.5	7	218	52.2
Affordability	9	136	44.2	4	245	58.6
Maintenance of the course	6	164	53.2	5	219	52.4
Choice to walk or ride	4	218	70.8	5	219	52.4
Challenge of the course	8	150	48.7	8	212	50.7
Health and fitness	7	153	49.7	9	198	47.4
Staff courtesy	10	133	43.2	10	159	38.0
Prestige sport	11	53	17.2	11	62	14.8
Business negotiation	12	21	6.8	12	22	5.3

Note. n = 28 for private participants and 38 for public participants.

Employment Status

The working group designated “Love the sport” (75.4%), “Be with the friends” (73.9%), and “To have fun” (72.9%) as the most important factors influencing their decision to participate in golf. This group chose “Enjoy the competition” (60.2%) as the fourth influential factor for participation in golf. Additionally, three other factors were chosen over 50% of the time by this group. “Business negotiation” was insignificant factor in why this group played golf (see Table 24).

Table 24

Recreational Golfers Participants: Working

Rank	Factor	f (# = 671)	%
1	Love the sport	506	75.4
2	Be with friends	496	73.9
3	To have fun	489	72.9
4	Enjoy the competition	404	60.2
5	Affordability	370	55.1
6	Challenge of the course	355	52.9
7	Maintenance of the course	353	52.6
8	Choice to walk or ride	295	44.0
9	Health and fitness	260	38.7
10	Staff courtesy	246	36.7
11	Prestige sport	161	24.0
12	Business negotiation	91	13.6

Note. n = 61.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers who were working; private club golfers chose “Love the sport” (82.2%), “Be with friends” (78.0%), and “To have fun” (74.6%) as the most important influential factors for participation in golf. Public course golfers chose “To have fun” (71.7%), “Be with friends” (71.3%), and “Love the sport” (71%) as the most important influential factors for participating in golf. “Affordability” was of much less importance for private club members (33.7%) which ranked as the 10th influential factor, whereas public course golfers rated it much higher (69%) and ranked it as their fourth influential factor (see Table 25).

Table 25

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Employment Status (Working) between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 264)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 407)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Love the sport	1	217	82.2	3	289	71.0
Be with friends	2	206	78.0	2	290	71.3
To have fun	3	197	74.6	1	292	71.7
Enjoy the competition	4	167	63.3	5	237	58.2
Affordability	10	89	33.7	4	281	69.0
Challenge of the course	6	145	54.9	6	210	51.6
Maintenance of the course	5	148	56.1	7	205	50.4
Choice to walk or ride	7	122	46.2	8	173	42.5
Health and fitness	9	96	36.4	9	167	41.0
Staff courtesy	8	109	41.3	10	137	33.7
Prestige sport	11	48	18.2	11	113	27.8
Business negotiation	12	40	15.2	12	51	12.5

Note. n = 24 for private participants and 37 public participants.

The retired group clearly chose “Be with friends” (84.5%) as the most important influential factor, “To have fun” (75.3%) as the second most important factor, and “Love the sport” (67.7%) as their third influential factor for participating in golf. Other four factors were chosen at least 50% of time: “Choice to walk or ride”, “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Enjoy the competition”. Not surprising, “Business negotiation” was not a valuable factor for retired group (see Table 26).

Table 26

Recreational Golfers Participants: Retired (n = 61)

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 671)	%
1	Be with friends	567	84.5
2	To have fun	505	75.3
3	Love the sport	454	67.7
4	Choice to walk or ride	376	56.0
5	Affordability	370	55.1
6	Maintenance of the course	365	54.4
7	Enjoy the competition	336	50.0
8	Health and fitness	335	49.9
9	Challenge of the course	312	46.5
10	Staff courtesy	226	33.7
11	Prestige sport	111	16.5
12	Business negotiation	28	4.2

Note. n = 61.

In a comparison between retired private club members and retired public course golfers, both groups sequentially chose “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” with varying percentages as the three most important influential factors for participating in golf. Also, both groups picked out “Choice to walk or ride” at least 50% of the time. As with other comparisons, public course golfers rated “Affordability” (59.7%) as the fourth influential factor, whereas private club members chose this factor much less frequently (49%, see Table 27).

Table 27

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Employment Status (Retired) between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 286)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 385)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	240	83.9	1	327	84.9
To have fun	2	219	76.6	2	286	74.3
Love the sport	3	198	69.2	3	256	66.5
Choice to walk or ride	4	163	57.0	5	213	55.3
Affordability	8	140	49.0	4	230	59.7
Maintenance of the course	5	154	53.8	6	211	54.8
Enjoy the competition	6	148	51.7	8	188	48.8
Health and fitness	7	144	50.3	7	191	49.6
Challenge of the course	9	133	46.5	9	179	46.5
Staff courtesy	10	116	40.6	10	150	39.0
Prestige sport	11	48	16.8	11	63	16.4
Business negotiation	12	13	4.5	12	16	4.2

Note. n = 26 for private participants and 35 public participants.

Annual Household Income

Recreational golfers whose annual household income was under \$30,000 chose “Be with friends” (80.7%) as the most important influential factor. “To have fun” (76.1%), and Love the sport” (70.5%) were chosen as the subsequent most important influential factors for participating in golf. Additionally, this group chose “Affordability” (65.9%) and “Choice to walk or ride” (58.0%) as the following influential factors for participating in golf (see Table 28).

Table 28

Recreational Golfers Participants: Annual Household Income under \$30,000

Rank	Factor	f (# = 88)	%
1	Be with friends	71	80.7
2	To have fun	67	76.1
3	Love the sport	62	70.5
4	Affordability	58	65.9
5	Choice to walk or ride	51	58.0
6	Enjoy the competition	39	44.3
7	Challenge of the course	36	40.9
8	Health and fitness	33	37.5
9	Maintenance of the course	33	37.5
10	Prestige sport	31	35.2
11	Staff courtesy	31	35.2
12	Business negotiation	4	4.5

Note. n = 8. The researcher was unable to compare recreational golf participants for the group whose annual household income under \$30,000 because there was only one participant from this group at private golf clubs.

Recreational golfers who earn an annual household income between \$30,000 to \$59,999 chose “To have fun” (79.3%), “Be with friends” (75.2%), and “Affordability” (74.4%) as the most important influential factors for participation in golf. This group of golfers chose “Love the sport” (61.2%) as the next influential factor. Additionally, two other factors were chosen over 50% of time: “Maintenance of the course” and “Choice to walk or ride” (see Table 29).

Table 29

Recreational Golfers Participants: Annual Household Income \$30,000-\$59,999

Rank	Factor	f (# = 121)	%
1	To have fun	96	79.3
2	Be with friends	91	75.2
3	Affordability	90	74.4
4	Love the sport	74	61.2
5	Maintenance of the course	63	52.1
6	Choice to walk or ride	62	51.2
7	Health and fitness	60	49.6
8	Enjoy the competition	57	47.1
9	Challenge of the course	55	45.5
10	Staff courtesy	37	30.6
11	Prestige sport	24	19.8
12	Business negotiation	5	4.1

Note. n = 11. The researcher was unable to compare recreational golf participants for the group whose annual household income from \$30,000 to \$59,000 because there was only one participant from this group at private golf clubs.

Recreational golfers who earn an annual household income from \$60,000 to \$99,999 chose “Be with friends” (75.5%) and “To have fun” (70.2%) as the two most important influential factors for participating in golf; they chose “Love the sport” (68.4%) as the third influential factor. “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Enjoy the competition” were rated in the choice of 50% of the time by this income group. “Prestige sport” (19.8%) and “Business negotiation” (10.5%) were the least significant factors for this income group (see Table 30).

Table 30

Recreational Golfers Participants: Annual Household Income \$60,000-\$99,999

Rank	Factor	f (# = 440)	%
1	Be with friends	332	75.5
2	To have fun	309	70.2
3	Love the sport	301	68.4
4	Affordability	261	59.3
5	Maintenance of the course	251	57.0
6	Enjoy the competition	231	52.5
7	Challenge of the course	213	48.4
8	Choice to walk or ride	211	48.0
9	Health and fitness	209	47.5
10	Staff courtesy	183	41.6
11	Prestige sport	87	19.8
12	Business negotiation	46	10.5

Note. n = 40.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers with an annual household income between \$60,000-\$99,999, both groups chose “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as the most important influential factors with varying percentages between the two groups. “Enjoy the competition” (74.5%) was chosen only by private club members as an important influential factor. Both groups chose “Maintenance of the course” at least 50% of the time. One exception was the choice of “Affordability” which was only an influential factor for public course golfers who preferred it (65.7%) of the time and rated it the fourth important factor (see Table 31).

Table 31

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Annual Household Income of \$60,000-\$99,999 between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 143)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 297)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	112	78.3	1	220	74.1
To have fun	3	99	69.2	2	210	70.7
Love the sport	2	109	76.2	3	200	67.3
Affordability	10	66	46.2	4	195	65.7
Maintenance of the course	5	80	55.9	5	171	57.6
Enjoy the competition	4	82	74.5	6	147	50.2
Challenge of the course	8	67	46.9	7	146	49.2
Choice to walk or ride	7	68	47.6	8	143	48.1
Health and fitness	6	70	49.0	9	139	46.8
Staff courtesy	8	67	46.9	10	116	39.1
Prestige sport	11	25	17.5	11	62	20.9
Business negotiation	12	13	9.1	12	31	10.4

Note. n = 143 for private participants and 297 for public participants.

Golfers whose annual household income was between \$100,000 to \$150,000 chose clearly “Be with friends” (80.1%) as the most important influential factor, “Love the sport” (76.4%) as the second important influential factor, “To have fun” (71.3%) as the third important influential factor. Additionally, other factors were chosen by golfers as influential factors and preferred over 50% of time including “Enjoy the competition”, “Challenge of the course”, and “Maintenance of the course” (see Table 32).

Table 32

Recreational Golfers Participants: Annual Household Income \$100,000-\$150,000

Rank	Factor	f (# = 352)	%
1	Be with friends	282	80.1
2	Love the sport	269	76.4
3	To have fun	251	71.3
4	Enjoy the competition	218	61.9
5	Challenge of the course	202	57.7
6	Maintenance of the course	188	53.4
7	Affordability	172	49.1
8	Choice to walk or ride	163	46.3
9	Health and fitness	152	43.2
10	Staff courtesy	124	35.2
11	Prestige sport	56	15.9
12	Business negotiation	32	9.1

Note. n = 32.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers with an annual incomes between \$100,000-\$150,000, both groups chose “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as the most important influential factors with varying percentages between the two groups. Private club members chose “Enjoy the competition” (67.8%) and “Challenge of the course” (60.8%), whereas public golf course golfers valued these two factors at least 50% of the time. One discrepancy was that public course golfers chose “Affordability” and they rated it fourth as an influential factor while it was chosen much less frequently by private club members who rated it number 10 (see Table 33).

Table 33

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Annual Household Income of \$100,000-\$150,000 between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 143)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 209)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	118	82.5	1	164	78.5
To have fun	3	106	74.1	3	145	69.4
Love the sport	2	114	79.7	2	155	74.2
Enjoy the competition	4	97	67.8	5	121	57.9
Challenge of the course	5	87	60.8	7	116	55.5
Maintenance of the course	6	67	46.9	5	121	57.9
Affordability	10	47	32.9	4	127	60.8
Choice to walk or ride	7	64	44.8	8	99	47.4
Health and fitness	8	59	41.3	9	93	44.5
Staff courtesy	9	55	38.5	10	69	33.0
Prestige sport	11	27	18.9	11	29	13.9
Business negotiation	12	18	12.6	12	15	7.2

Note. n = 13 for private participants and 19 public participants.

Golfers whose annual household income was over \$150,000 chose clearly “Be with friends” (84.2%) as the first important influential factor, “To have fun” (79.2%) was the second important factor, and “Love the sport” (72.1%) was the third important influential factor for participating in golf. Interestingly, this income group included “Enjoy the competition”, “Challenge of the course”, and “Maintenance of the course” at least 50% of the time in their choice of why they played golf. “Business negotiation” (10%) was obviously unimportant factor for this income group (see Table 34).

Table 34

Recreational Golfers Participants: Annual Household Income Over \$150,000

Rank	Factor	f (# = 341)	%
1	Be with friends	287	84.2
2	To have fun	270	79.2
3	Love the sport	246	72.1
4	Enjoy the competition	185	54.3
5	Choice to walk or ride	184	54.0
6	Maintenance of the course	183	53.7
7	Affordability	151	44.3
8	Challenge of the course	151	44.3
9	Health and fitness	140	41.1
10	Staff courtesy	132	38.7
11	Prestige sport	74	21.7
12	Business negotiation	34	10.0

Note. n = 31.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers with an annual income over \$150,000, both groups chose respectively “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as three most important factors in why they played golf with varying percentages between the two groups. Similarly, both groups valued “Enjoy the competition” in the choice of 54% of time. However, the exception between the groups was with “Affordability” which was rated the fourth influential factor for public course golfers. “Choice to walk or ride” was chosen as the fifth influential factor by private club golfers only. Private club members chose “Maintenance of the course” (58.3%), whereas public course golfers chose this factor at a very low response (32.3%, see Table 35).

Table 35

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Annual Household Income Over \$150,000 between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 242)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 99)		
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	203	83.9	1	84	84.8
To have fun	2	194	80.2	2	76	76.8
Love the sport	3	176	72.7	3	70	70.7
Enjoy the competition	6	131	54.1	4	54	54.5
Choice to walk or ride	5	137	56.6	7	47	47.5
Maintenance of the course	4	141	58.3	11	32	32.3
Affordability	10	97	40.1	4	54	54.5
Challenge of the course	7	116	47.9	6	48	48.5
Health and fitness	8	99	40.9	8	41	41.4
Staff courtesy	9	98	40.5	10	34	34.3
Prestige sport	11	39	16.1	9	35	35.4
Business negotiation	12	21	8.7	12	13	13.1

Note. n = 22 for private participants and 9 for public participants.

Ethnicity

Caucasian recreational golfers chose “Be with friend” (80%) as the first important factor to participate in playing golf. “To have fun” (74.5%) and “Love the sport” (72.4%) were chosen sequentially as the next important factors. “Enjoy the competition”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Affordability” were designated at least 50% of time in why this ethnic group played golf. “Business negotiation” and “Prestige sport” were chosen below 20% of time by this ethnic group (see Table 36).

Table 36

Recreational Golfers Participants: Caucasian

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 1,210)	%
1	Be with friends	968	80.0
2	To have fun	901	74.5
3	Love the sport	876	72.4
4	Enjoy the competition	671	55.5
5	Maintenance of the course	655	54.1
6	Affordability	648	53.6
7	Choice to walk or ride	604	49.9
8	Challenge of the course	604	49.9
9	Health and fitness	541	44.7
10	Staff courtesy	460	38.0
11	Prestige sport	226	18.7
12	Business negotiation	104	0.9

Note. n = 110.

In a comparison between Caucasian private club members and public course golfers, both groups chose clearly “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport” as the three most important influential factors to play golf. “Choice to walk or ride” and “Challenge of the course” were also picked as influential factors that received over 50% of time only for golfers who played at private clubs. The exception between the two groups was “Affordability” which was an influential factor only for golfers who played at public courses and they preferred it (63.5%) of time (see Table 37).

Table 37

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Caucasian Golfers between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 550)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 660)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	446	81.1	1	522	79.1
To have fun	2	416	75.6	2	485	73.5
Love the sport	3	415	75.5	3	461	69.8
Enjoy the competition	4	315	57.3	5	356	53.9
Maintenance of the course	5	302	54.9	6	353	53.5
Affordability	9	229	41.6	4	419	63.5
Choice to walk or ride	6	285	51.8	8	319	48.3
Challenge of the course	7	278	50.5	7	326	49.4
Health and fitness	8	240	43.6	9	301	45.6
Staff courtesy	10	225	40.9	10	235	35.6
Prestige sport	11	98	17.8	11	130	19.7
Business negotiation	12	53	9.6	12	53	8.0

Note. n = 50 private participants and 60 public participants.

Non-Caucasian (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and other) recreational golfers chose “Be with friends” (72%), and “To have fun” (70.5%) as the two most important influential factors in why they participated in playing golf. “Love the sport” (63.6%) and “Affordability” (62.1%) were chosen sequentially as the next influential factors in why this group played golf. “Enjoy the competition” and “Choice to walk or ride” were chosen at least 50% of time by this group. “Business negotiation” (10.6%) was evidently unimportant factor for these ethnic groups (see Table 38).

Table 38

*Recreational Golfers Participants: Non - Caucasian (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Other)
Who Were All Public Course Golfers Only*

Rank	Factor	f (# = 132)	%
1	Be with friends	95	72.0
2	To have fun	93	70.5
3	Love the sport	84	63.6
4	Affordability	82	62.1
5	Enjoy the competition	69	52.3
6	Choice to walk or ride	66	50.0
7	Maintenance of the course	63	47.7
8	Challenge of the course	63	47.7
9	Health and fitness	54	41.0
10	Staff courtesy	47	35.6
11	Prestige sport	46	34.8
12	Business negotiation	14	10.6

Note. n = 12. The researcher was unable to compare ethnicity for non-Caucasian group because there were no participants from this ethnic group at private golf clubs.

Number of Rounds Played Annually

Recreational golfers who played 1 to 8 rounds of golf annually chose “To have fun” (77.3%) and “Be with friends” (70.9%) as the most important factors for why they played golf. “Choice to walk or ride” (60%) was chosen as the third influential factor. “Affordability”, “Enjoy the competition”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Love the sport” were chosen at least 50% of time as other influential factors (see Table 39).

Table 39

Recreational Golfers Participants: Rounds Played 1-8

Rank	Factor	f (# = 110)	%
1	To have fun	85	77.3
2	Be with friends	78	70.9
3	Choice to walk or ride	66	60.0
4	Affordability	62	56.4
5	Enjoy the competition	59	53.6
6	Maintenance of the course	58	52.7
7	Love the sport	57	51.8
8	Health and fitness	48	43.6
9	Challenge of the course	42	38.2
10	Staff courtesy	41	37.3
11	Prestige sport	35	31.2
12	Business negotiation	27	24.5

Note. n = 10. The researcher was unable to compare recreational golf participants for the group who played 1-8 rounds annually because there were no participants from this group at private golf clubs.

Those recreational golfers who played between 8-24 rounds a year chose “To have fun” (80.7%), “Be with friends” (79.5%), and “Love the sport” (71%) as the most important influential factors to participate in playing golf. “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Enjoy the competition” were chosen at least 50% of time as the next influential factors. As a matter of course, “Business negotiation” and “Prestige sport” were the least important factors among the 12 factors for this group (see Table 40).

Table 40

Recreational Golfers Participants: Rounds Played 8-24

Rank	Factor	f (# = 176)	%
1	To have fun	142	80.7
2	Be with friends	140	79.5
3	Love the sport	125	71.0
4	Affordability	100	56.8
5	Enjoy the competition	92	52.3
6	Maintenance of the course	92	52.3
7	Health and fitness	87	49.4
8	Challenge of the course	83	47.2
9	Choice to walk or ride	71	40.3
10	Staff courtesy	71	40.3
11	Prestige sport	38	21.6
12	Business negotiation	15	08.5

Note. n = 16.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers who played between 8-24 rounds annually, both groups chose sequentially “To have fun”, “Be with friends”, and “Love the sport” as the most important influential factors for participating in playing golf. Also, “Enjoy the competition” and “Maintenance of the course” were chosen at least 50% of time by both groups. Essentially, “Business negotiation” and “Prestige sport” were the least valued factors overall 12 factors. However, a major discrepancy between the two groups was “Affordability” which was chosen as an influential factor only by public course golfers who valued at 68.7% of time and ranked it number 4, whereas private club members chose this factor 41.5% of time and ranked it number 9 (see Table 41).

Table 41

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Rounds Played Annually (8-24) between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 77)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 99)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
To have fun	1	65	84.4	1	78	78.8
Be with friends	2	63	81.8	1	78	78.8
Love the sport	3	55	71.4	3	70	70.7
Affordability	9	32	41.5	4	68	68.7
Enjoy the competition	5	40	51.9	5	52	52.5
Maintenance of the course	4	41	53.2	7	51	51.5
Health and fitness	7	35	45.4	5	52	52.5
Challenge of the course	10	29	37.6	8	49	49.5
Choice to walk or ride	6	37	48.1	10	34	34.3
Staff courtesy	8	34	44.1	9	35	35.4
Prestige sport	11	15	19.5	11	23	23.2
Business negotiation	12	11	14.3	12	6	6.1

Note. n = 7 for private participants and 9 public participants.

Recreational golfers who played more than 24 rounds a year chose “Be with friends” (80%), “Love the sport” (73.7%), and “To have fun” (72.6%) as the most important influential factors for their participation in golf. Five other factors were chosen at least 50% of time: “Enjoy the competition”, “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, “Challenge of the course”, and “Choice to walk or ride”. Essentially, “Business negotiation” and “Prestige sport” were the least valued factors of the 12 factors (see Table 42).

Table 42

Recreational Golfers Participants: Rounds Played +24

Rank	Factor	<i>f</i> (# = 1,056)	%
1	Be with friends	845	80.0
2	Love the sport	778	73.7
3	To have fun	767	72.6
4	Enjoy the competition	589	55.8
5	Affordability	578	54.7
6	Maintenance of the course	568	53.8
7	Challenge of the course	540	51.1
8	Choice to walk or ride	534	50.6
9	Health and fitness	460	43.6
10	Staff courtesy	402	38.1
11	Prestige sport	199	18.8
12	Business negotiation	76	7.2

Note. n = 96.

In a comparison between private club members and public course golfers who played over 24 rounds a year, both groups chose clearly the following factors and sequentially ranked, but they preferred them with varying percentages as important factors including “Be with friends”, “Love the sport”, and “To have fun”. Additionally, both groups chose “Maintenance of the course”, “Challenge of the course”, and “Enjoy the competition” at least 50% of time but ranked them differently. “Health and fitness” was preferred at least 43% of time by both groups, whereas “Staff courtesy” preferred 44.5% of time by private club members and 36.2% of time by public course golfers. “Prestige sport” and “Business negotiation” were consistently listed number 11 and 12 overall factors (see Table 43).

Additionally, “Affordability” was another discrepancy between the two groups; this factor was chosen as the fourth important factor for public course golfers who played

over 24 rounds a year. Conversely, private club members who played over 24 rounds annually chose “Choice to walk or ride” at least 50% of time as an influential factor for their participation in golf, whereas public course golfers chose it below of 50% of time (see Table 43).

Table 43

Recreational Golfers Participants: Comparing Rounds Played Annually (+24) between Private Club Members and Public Course Players

<i>Factors</i>	Private <i>f</i> (# = 473)			Public <i>f</i> (# = 583)		
	Rank	<i>f</i>	%	Rank	<i>f</i>	%
Be with friends	1	383	81.0	1	462	79.2
Love the sport	2	360	76.3	2	418	71.7
To have fun	3	351	74.2	3	416	71.4
Enjoy the competition	4	275	58.3	5	314	53.9
Affordability	10	197	41.7	4	381	65.4
Maintenance of the course	5	259	54.9	6	307	52.7
Challenge of the course	7	244	51.7	7	296	50.8
Choice to walk or ride	6	248	52.5	8	286	49.1
Health and fitness	8	205	43.3	9	255	43.7
Staff courtesy	9	210	44.5	10	211	36.2
Prestige sport	11	81	17.2	11	118	20.2
Business negotiation	12	42	8.9	12	34	5.8

Note. n = 43 for private participants and 53 for public participants.

RGPPCI Conceptualized by the Theory of Planned Behavior

The participants selected three out of the four factors over 50% of the time from the category “Attitude Toward Behavior” and were rated as follows: “To have fun,” (74.1%), “Love the sport,” (71.5%), “Enjoy the competition,” (55.1%), and “Health and fitness,” (44.3%). The average response rate was 61.3% for the four factors combined (see Table 44).

The most important influential factor for the DFW recreational golfers was “Be with friends”, (79.2%) from the “Subjective Norm” category. The rest of the factors in this category were chosen by the participants at less than 40% of time: “Staff courtesy”, (38.2%), “Prestige sport”, (20.3%), and “Business negotiation”, (8.9%, see Table 44).

The participants selected three out of four factors over 50% of the time from the category, “Perceived Behavioral Control”: “Affordability”, (55.1), “Maintenance of the course”, (53.5%) and “Choice to walk or ride”, (50%), and “Challenge of the course”, (49.7%). The average response rate for these four factors combined was 52.1% (see Table 44).

Table 44

RGPPCI Conceptualized by the Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior		
<u>Attitude Toward Behavior</u>	Rank	%
To have fun	2	74.1
Love the sport	3	71.5
Enjoy the competition	4	55.1
Health and fitness	9	44.3
<u>Subjective Norm</u>		
Be with friends	1	79.2
Staff courtesy	10	38.2
Prestige sport	11	20.3
Business negotiation	12	08.9
<u>Perceived Behavioral Control</u>		
Affordability	4	55.1
Maintenance of the course	6	53.5
Choice to walk or ride	7	50.0
Challenge of the course	8	49.7

RGPPCI Conceptualized by the Theory of Planned Behavior Comparing Private and Public Course Participants

From the category “Attitude toward Behavior”, both private club members and public course golfers chose “To have fun” and “Love the sport” as important influential factors and ranked them identically, 2 and 3. Additionally, “Enjoy the competition” was chosen at least 50% of time as an influential factor by both groups (see Table 45).

From the category “Subjective Norm”, both private and public participants selected only one factor, “Be with friends” as the most important influential factor of the 12 factors from the three categories of TPB. Correspondingly, participants ranked all the three other factors as not important factors and listed them in the same order under this category (see Table 45).

From the category, “Perceived Behavioral Control”, both private and public participants ranked all of the factors differently. It is interestingly enough to note that public course golfers ranked “Affordability” as their number 4 factor in the importance; whereas, private club members ranked that factor as number 9 (see Table 45).

Table 45

RGPPCI Conceptualized by the Theory of Planned Behavior Comparing Private and Public Course Participants

Theory of Planned Behavior				
Categories	Private Clubs		Public Courses	
	Rank	%	Rank	%
<u>Attitude Toward Behavior</u>				
○ To have fun	2	75.6	2	73.7
○ Love the sport	3	75.5	3	68.8
○ Enjoy the competition	4	57.3	5	53.6
○ Health and fitness	8	43.6	9	44.8
<u>Subjective Norm</u>				
○ Be with friends	1	81.0	1	77.9
○ Staff courtesy	10	40.9	10	36.2
○ Prestige sport	11	17.8	11	22.2
○ Business negotiation	12	08.5	12	11.6
<u>Perceived Behavioral Control</u>				
○ Affordability	9	41.6	4	64.5
○ Maintenance of the course	5	54.9	6	52.5
○ Choice to walk or ride	6	51.8	8	48.7
○ Challenge of the course	7	50.5	7	49.1

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The purpose of the study was (a) to define the important factors that influence recreational golfers to play golf in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area and (b) to examine the effect of demographic variables on the factors which influence these golfers to play golf as outlined in the Theory of Planned Behavior. This chapter presents the following headings: (a) Summary, (b) Discussion, (c) Conclusion, (d) Implications, and (e) Recommendations for Future Studies.

Summary

A paired-comparison instrument was developed for this study. Initially, this researcher used the Theory of Planned Behavior, which includes three elements: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, as a conceptual framework to produce the Recreational Golfer Participation Paired Comparison Instrument (RGPPCI). Three experts used the Delphi technique to locate and select the factors that were included in the instrument. Twelve factors that influenced recreational golfers to play rounds of golf in the DFW Metroplex area were included in the RGPPCI. These factors were: “Enjoy the competition”, “To have fun”, “Love the sport”, “Health and fitness”, “Be with friends”, “Staff courtesy”, “Prestige sport”, “Choice to walk or

ride”, “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Challenge of the course”. An online survey technique was used with a sample of recreational golfers from three counties in the DFW Metroplex area: Denton, Collins, and Tarrant. The data analysis was based on a total of 122 complete questionnaires.

The findings of this study related to each of specific research question were

1. What are the important factors that influence recreational golfers to participate in playing golf on courses in the D/FW area?

The three most important factors influencing the decision to play golf for all respondents in the D/FW Metroplex were “Be with friends”, “To have fun”, and “Love the sport”. Other factors that influence recreational golfers to participate in playing golf in the DFW area chosen over 50% of the time were, “Enjoy the competition” “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course” and “Choice to walk and ride”.

2. How do demographic variables influence the participation in recreational golf in the D/FW Metroplex (i.e. age, gender, annual household income, employment status, number of rounds played)?
 - a. For the younger group of respondents, aged 18-29 years-old, “Affordability” was the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf. The younger middle-aged group chose “Love the sport” as the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf. Those respondents aged 46-60 years-old chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor. The oldest

group of respondents, over 61 years-old, also chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor.

- b. Both male and female respondents chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf. Males and females also agreed by choosing “To have fun” and “Love the sport” as the next two most important factors.
- c. Respondents with annual incomes under \$30,000 chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf. Those respondents whose annual income was \$30,000-59,999 chose “To have fun” as the most important factor. All of the rest of the respondents, including those with an annual income of \$60,000-99,000, those with an annual income of \$100,000-150,000, and those with an annual income in excess of \$150,000, chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf.
- d. Respondents who were retired chose “Be with friends” as the most important factor, while respondents who work chose “Love the sport” as the most important factor influencing their decision to play golf.
- e. All ethnicities (Caucasian, Asian, African-American, Hispanic, and other) chose “Be with friends”, “To have fun” and “Love the sport” as the top three most important factors influencing their decision to play golf.

f. Those respondents who play 1-8 rounds a year, as well as those respondents who play 8-24 rounds per year chose “To have fun” and “Be with friends” as the top two most important factors influencing their participation. However, the group of respondents who play in excess of 24 rounds per year chose “Be with friends” and “Love the sport” as the top two most important factors influencing their decision to play.

3. What factors influence golfers to participate in private clubs only?

The three most important factors chosen by respondents that influence golfers to participate in private clubs only were “Be with Friends”, “To have fun” and “Love the Sport”. Other important factors that were chosen more than 50% included, “Enjoy the competition”, “Maintenance of the course”, “Choice to walk or ride”, and “Challenge of the course”.

4. What factors influence golfers to play on public courses?

The three most important factors chosen by respondents that influence golfers to play on public courses were “Be with Friends”, “To have fun” and “Love the Sport”. Other important factors that were chosen over 50% of time included “Affordability”, “Enjoy the competition” and “Maintenance of the Course”.

Discussion

The general purpose of the study was to define the important factors that influence recreational golfers to participate in playing golf in the DFW Metroplex golf

courses. The following discussion is based on the findings of this study and previous related studies.

Factors Influencing DFW Recreational Golfers' Participation

The results of the survey in regards to question number one for both private and public course players that asked what golfers consider the most important factors influencing their decision to play golf revealed that the most important factor was “Be with friends”, followed by “To have fun”, and “Love the sport”. Other responses with more than 50% of the time that were listed as factors included, “Enjoy the competition”, “Affordability”, “Maintenance of the course”, and “Choice to walk or ride”. The factors that received less than 50% of the respondent preferences included, “Challenge of the course”, “Health and fitness”, “Staff courtesy”, “Prestige sport”, and finally, “Business negotiation”. Since 50% of the respondents were retired, perhaps business negotiations were of minimal importance since retirees are no longer in the workforce. This factor could also influence the number one response “Be with friends” since retired golfers rely on playing golf as an activity designed to allow them to remain socially active and involved. Golf is a sport that is commonly embraced by retirees because once they retire there is more time for leisure activities and a need for active socialization and belonging. Beatty and Wolf (1996) ascertained that retirees have more time on their hands and therefore, have a need to remain socially active and to feel like they belong.

The most important factor that influences recreational golfers in the DFW to participate in playing golf was “Be with friends” and this is a socialization factor.

Participating in playing golf is an option that helps to fulfill a social need. Golfing is a great opportunity for social interaction. Stoddart (1990) stated that golf is the most socially predominant sport on a worldwide scale. One of the recreational golfers' interests from their participation in the sport is to develop and assert friendships that might conserve their continuing participation. The sport provides the opportunity to learn abilities, such as discipline, confidence, sense of control, leadership, and persistence, and it teaches core principles including tolerance, patience, etiquette, cooperation, and respect. All of these factors fall under the "Subjective Norm" category from the Theory of Planned Behavior.

This finding was supported by the results of Zhang's (2007) study which revealed that being with friends is the first reason to play recreational golf. Also, World Golf (2008) concluded that people primarily play golf for social reasons. Similarly, numerous researchers have indicated that being with friends is a main reason to play golf (Lee, et al., 2006; Li, 2011; Petrick, et al., 2001). Golfers form a type of community that is very appealing to others seeking to join in social interaction and fellowship. Golf, therefore, is a social game where retirees, as well as younger golfers, can find a place for companionship because golf is a game in which playing with others is preferred. In 2011, after conducting a survey among 999 female golfers who categorized as current golfers, SLRG's research results confirmed that friends are the likeliest golf partners to play with (94%) compared with other partners, such as parents (26%), business associates (49%), children (39%), and golf professionals (25%).

“To have fun” and “Love the sport” were the second and third most important factors that respondents chose for participating in playing golf in the DFW Metroplex golf courses. Having fun is a major reason to participate in playing the sport. Lee, et al.’s study (2006) confirmed that fun and entertainment were the major reason to play golf. Furthermore, Petrick, et al. (2001) and Zhang (2007) indicated that “To have fun” was the highest response and a very important motivational factor for playing recreational golf.

“Love the sport” refers to the attraction, loyalty, attachment, and commitment of golfers towards this game. Loving the sport leads to sustained participation and durable involvement which is basically caused by an individual’s internal motivation based on psychological demands. Loving a sport reveals commitment and this commitment reflects not only the resistance to change to a different sport, but also the commitment to participate regularly in the sport and invest in buying more sport products (Casper & Stellino, 2008). This factor was a major contributor in the participation in golf second only to “To have fun”. An indicator of one’s commitment to the sport was that all of the participants have memberships and/or either annual or monthly pass-holders at public golf courses. Furthermore, almost 80% of the participants played more than 24 rounds a year which means that they were dedicated to the sport as well.

“Enjoy the competition” and “Affordability” had an equal number of responses (55.1%). “Enjoy the competition” was positively related to golf participation This factor entails the competitive environment created by local leagues or city/town tournaments

that can emerge from any participatory sport. No player intentionally tries to lose, so it is a natural phenomenon that friendly competition becomes an important part of the game. The spirit of competition oftentimes enhances the fun and camaraderie with friends. Additionally, courses offer tournaments and makes leagues that golfers can enter to win prizes or money. Competitive context with others can bring self-evaluation and create social comparison information that “may influence participants’ self-views, emotions, and actions quite easily and spontaneously” (Stapel & Koomen, 2005, p.1029). Competition adds enjoyment to the game; golfers who like competition practice regularly, know the rules, and enhance their own personal performance by building character and concentration and staying more calm and confident. An added bonus is the thrill of winning against friends or other players so that the golfer can measure his/her performance against others. In addition, sometimes golfers make friendly wagers with each other such as the loser has to buy a round of drinks for the other players. Petrick et al. (2001) identified that frequent golfers who played very often are inclined to regular competitive setting such as leagues and/or tournaments.

“Affordability” or cost of playing golf is a major reason influencing golfers to play or not to play the sport (Li, 2011; SLRG, 2011). Zhang’s study (2007) showed that this factor was one of the top three reasons that inhibit golfers to continue playing the sport. These authors agreed that the cost incurred by the golfer may include green fees, cart rental, equipment, golf apparel, and expectantly, refreshments. The present study was done during a difficult economic climate in the U.S., so that it is important for players to

receive the maximum value for their expenditures. Consequently, this study discovered that many golfers who play public or semi-private courses look for the affordability of the course. Our private club members were perhaps not as concerned about affordability because as a club member, the use of the golf course had already been paid for through membership dues which might avoid them paying any “additional cost” to their membership. The difference in evaluation of the factor “Affordability” between the private club members and public course golfers could be related to the fact that 70% of golfers who are private club members had incomes exceeding \$100,000 annually, while approximately 60% of golfers who played on public golf courses had annual incomes below \$100,000. Furthermore, for household incomes below \$100,000 annually, “Affordability” was one of the top four factors that influence participation in the sport, but was not an important factor for annual household incomes over \$100,000.

“Maintenance of the course” was positively received over 50% of time by both private and public course golfers. Private clubs take meticulous care of their courses to ensure that there are no complaints from their members and to entice new members, so this becomes to some extent an important factor for members. It also becomes a moderately important factor for those golfers who play on public courses because these golfers have their choice of a wide variety of courses and can take more time and choose a well-maintained course. The present finding that the maintenance of the course is a contributing factor in playing a round and choosing a course is consistent with other studies that reported similar worth of maintenance of the course as acknowledged factor

in selecting a golf course (Petrick, Backman, & Bixler, 1999; Price, 2012; Richard & Faircloth, 1994; Won, Hwang & Kleiber, 2009).

“Choice to walk or ride” was a positive factor as it was chosen 50% of time when compared with the other factors by the respondents of this study. This study did not determine how frequently the participants played on golf courses that did not permit walking the course. Puterbaugh (2011) stated, “The golf cart originally gained traction because it promised increased revenues for courses and faster play” (p.230). He mentioned an advantage of having access to a cart is that “it also allows the players with medical limitations to still enjoy the game” (p. 230). Puterbaugh (2011) delivered form a National Golf Foundation report (2006) demonstrating that the majority of golf courses now require cart rental, approximately 69% of golf courses do not offer the choice to walk. Only 16% of the courses allow a player to carry their own bag, only 14% can carry their clubs on a handy cart, and only 1% of golfers bring their own caddie. Puterbaugh (2011) similarly related to a NGF report (2007) stating that golfers are more overweight than the general population and the inability to choose to walk the course while playing is one of the inhibiting factors. One major drawback of so many courses that do not allow walking is that any health benefits may be sacrificed due to riding a cart as opposed to walking.

For whatever the reasons, the participants in the DFW area did not value “Health and fitness” as an essential factor for why they play golf. Nonetheless, walking during playing a golf round has a lot of positive health effects, such as pronounced aerobic

performance, trunk muscle endurance, reduction in body fat, intensification in serum high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (Parkkari et al., 2000), and diminution in the risk factors of cardiovascular disease which in turn reduces mortality rates mostly among senior golfers (Farahmand, Broman, Faire, Vagero, & Ahlbom, 2009).

“Challenge of Course” was chosen 49.7% of the time and ranked number 8 when compared with the 11 factors. Golfers who played over 24 rounds a year chose it 51.1% of time and ranked it number 7. This group of golfers might like to play on a golf course that is well-designed so that they can face the challenges and uniqueness of a particular hole. Each of the 18 holes should be unique in their design to help develop their skills and to overcome different challenges since the majority of the golfers who participated in this study play more than 24 rounds a year. Private club golfers chose “Challenge of Course” at least 50% of time. This is perhaps a preference for joining a private club because the challenge of the course is a measure of the course’s quality and design. According to Beditz & Kass (2008), the first reason behind a golfer’s desire to join a private club was the high-quality of a private golf course.

“Staff courtesy” was not a significant factor as had been anticipated. Perhaps this was due to the encounters between employees and golfers were adequate and golfer perception of service experiences might be viewed satisfactorily, yet not an important factor influencing their decision to play golf.

Of the 12 factors, “Business negotiation” was the least important reason the participants chose it and they valued it only 8.9% of time regarding why they decide to

play golf. Perhaps this was due to the high number of respondents who were retirees (50%), as well as that most of the courses in the study were publicly operated, which means that there are no corporate memberships available. “Prestige sport” was also a minimal factor for respondents, perhaps because today many recreational players feel that golf is a much more inclusive sport. Golf used to be considered an exclusive sport, only played by the wealthy. Today municipal and daily fee golf courses allow anyone the opportunity to affordably play a round. Additionally, since the majority of the respondents were over 61 years-old, the prestige of the sport might play less of a role than their enjoyment and the social support derived from the game itself. The results for factors, “Business negotiation” and “Prestige sport” were the least significant reasons to play golf in the DFW Metroplex and were consistent with Zhang’s study (2007).

The Impact of TPB on Golf Participation

The results of this study revealed that “Attitude toward Behavior”, “Perceived Behavioral Control”, and “Subjective Norm” impact golfers’ behavior in DFW area, but that influence varies among the three categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Specifically, “Attitude toward Behavior” was the most influential category that compels golfer participation. “Perceived Behavioral Control” was the second significant category that prompts players to participate in playing golf. “Subjective Norm” was the least significant category from the Theory of Planned Behavior that motivates golfers to play the sport; although the factor, “Be with friends” was considered the single most predictable factor for golf participation among all of the golfers included in the study.

Interestingly, attitude reflects individual enthusiasm, and this eagerness basically motivates a person to decide to become involved in a behavior or in an activity. Consequently, “Attitude toward Behavior” was the most dominant category from the Theory of Planned Behavior that motivates recreational golfers to participate in the sport. Ajzen (2001) indicated that the strength of attitudes as well as their steadiness influences the predictive dynamism of behaviors. “Subjective Norm” refers to the social influence that pulls an individual to behave in specific ways (Ajzen, 1991); for instance, a person may go to play golf because his/her friends or family ask him/her to accompany them and she/he has no other priority.

“Perceived Behavioral Control” refers to the extent of which a specific behavior is exhibited and the behavioral intentions are interrelated with perceived behavioral control (e.g., amenities, availability, money, and time) that induces the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Biddle (2001) stated, “The concept of perceived behavioral control often reflects a person’s assessment of the capacities (e.g. skill and abilities) and the limiting or facilitating factors (e.g. barriers and access to facilities) regarding behavioral engagement” (p. 712). For example, a golfer becomes upset over his/her poor round or performance, and lacks control over the environment which includes time, poor health, location, and money constraints that can inhibit the ability to continue playing.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that “Be with friends”, “To have fun” and “Love the sport” are the most important factors that affect recreational golfers’ decision in the

DFW Metroplex to participate in playing golf regardless of the variables age, income, ethnicity, gender, club membership, employment status, or the number of rounds played annually. “Business negotiation” was the least important factor, consistently ranking last no matter the variable, with only one exception (age group 46-61 years) for private club golfers. The factor “Affordability” was noticeably more important to golfers who played on public courses than on private courses.

Implications

The implications of this study are numerous. Although golf has decreased somewhat in popularity over the past two decades, it still remains a vibrant sport enjoyed by people of all ages in the D/FW Metroplex. Since social interaction is the most important factor for playing golf, this factor helps golf members who belong to private or semi-private clubs and/or monthly or annual pass-holders alike to build a social community that allows golfers to have a place that they can discuss their daily life issues as well as earning trust and building cooperation during the round or afterwards at the clubhouse. Generally, golfers show a preference for participating in the sport as part of being with a companion or a friend. Hence, course managers should design a marketing strategy to encourage golfers to play the sport together in a group and foster the group norms of golfers. For example, managers might build a social community for golfers inside the facility and sell discounted memberships or green fees for groups/couples which might encourage people to come to their facility. Such a strategy could increase memberships and profits for the course.

Golf still remains a game where social interaction and friendships is important, especially to retirees who look at golf as a chance to interact with others and stay involved in life. Findings from this study can help managers of both private and publically operated courses to learn the most important factors that affect golfers who play their courses. Additionally, it is important to understand how and why people remain involved or leave the sport, and how the golf course could be better designed and implemented to attract more golfers and retain those who are currently enjoying the sport. Understanding a golfer's internal motivation, attitude, and social demands is crucial in impacting his/her decision to remain involved in the sport and to attract new members.

The number of rounds played a year is highly related to a golfer's love of the sport. Those golfers who played more than 24 rounds a year rated "Love the sport" much higher than those golfers who only played 1 to 8 rounds a year or those golfers who played 8 to 24 rounds annually. The implication is that the more rounds a golfer plays each year, the higher his/her commitment level is to the sport and the more the golfer actually loves the sport.

Ethnic diversity, as well as increasing the number of women attracted to the sport, still remains a challenge. Consequently, course managers need to work towards attracting more women and ethnic groups to come to their facility by developing a marketing strategy that appeals to all these segments of the population. Last, the president of Sports and Leisure Research Group, (2011b) stated "Marketing segmentation is critical – one size does not fit all" (p.15), and he pointed out the importance of various

techniques that would include ethnic groups, women, families, and the young generation to broaden their golf participation. For example, women golfers in the DFW Metroplex preferred fitness and health benefits more than men as a reason why they play golf. The managers whose golf courses do not contain a facility providing a fitness center should consider adding one as an attraction for women's membership. Moreover, marketers might permit walking the course for women on a particular day if walking is not permitted on their course.

With a situation that 42% of the 90 million people interested in the sport in U.S., but not currently playing golf, are women (SLRG, 2012), golf course managers in the DFW area have to adopt a strategy to increase women participation. For example, they might have a golf program for women only on a particular morning or afternoon during the week. This might appeal to women whose children are in school during these times. Furthermore, some actions that would help increase women participation, such as making golf an enjoyable social occasion, helping women feel a sense of accomplishment, diminishing unnecessary physical and emotional stress, providing childcare at golf facilities, offering practice lessons to a group, offering special rates to beginners from family golf and/or social leagues, proposing discounts, offering the option to play 9-hole all the time, and offering pay-by-the-hole (SLRG, 2011).

The economic climate in the U.S. has affected the number of rounds played each year and has resulted in several courses around the country closing down. Once the economic climate improves, many golfers who had to cut down on the amount of rounds

played each year hopefully get more revenues again. In addition, the DFW golf course managers should not surround their marketing strategy just targeting the high socioeconomic groups, but should also target the middle socioeconomic classes as the economy is sluggish and uncertain to increase revenues and raise overall participation. Since the groups that had household income less than \$100,000 showed that affordability is an influential factor for their golf participation, the DFW golf course managers should offer those reasonably priced rounds or memberships to retain their participation. Due to the high level of competition between golf courses, proposing reasonable price and standing a cost that is an identical reflection of the value and quality are significant to procure golfers' consummation. Likewise, offering a shorter round of 9-holes to golfers would help to solve the problem of time constraints.

What is more, many courses do not allow golfers to walk the course, thereby removing many of the health benefits that golf provides. Perhaps more golf courses could help solve this problem by bringing this option back to the sport. According to Puterbaugh (2011), the majority of golf courses now require cart rental, and approximately 69% of golf courses do not offer the choice to walk. Moreover, golfers use a motorized cart nearly 90% of the time in all games played in the U.S. Walking the course has great health benefits that owners/managers can use to market the sport in posing its health benefits to allure new members and encourage current golfers repeating their golf participation.

Competition was not a major factor in participating in the sport in the DFW Metroplex golf courses. However, the potential of various competitive sponsored events at both private and public courses could meet the needs for this factor of why some people play golf. Petrick, et al. (2001) suggested that marketing efforts need to increase competition setting within a golf course, since competition is an appealing factor to golfers who play frequently.

Recommendations for Future Studies

As a result of the present study, the following recommendations for future studies are suggested.

1. The researcher investigated the factors that influence recreational golfers who are members of private clubs and yearly/monthly pass-holders on public courses. Future study could consider golfers who show up once-in-a while to play on public courses.
2. Future studies could consider junior level golfers to investigate the factors that help to develop and keep interest in the sport for younger players.
3. Future studies could consider factors that influenced professional golfers to play golf and at what age they began playing the sport to determine how their interest in the sport was developed and maintained.
4. The researcher investigated the factors that influence recreational golfers from the DFW Metroplex area in Texas. Future studies could consider recreational golfers from other regions in Texas, other states, and even other countries.

5. Future studies could use mixed quantitative methods (online and paper questionnaires onsite) that might help to increase the number of participants.
6. A qualitative study could provide the “why” on a factor that is more important than another factor for playing golf.

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APPENDIX A

Paired Comparison Instrument (RGPPCI)

Factors Influencing Recreational Golfers to Play Golf

***1. Membership (choose one):**

- I am a member in a Private Golf Club
 I am a member or annual/monthly pass-holder of Public Golf Course

***2. Gender:**

- Male
 Female

***3. Which category below includes your age?**

- 18 - 29
 30 - 45
 46 - 61
 61 Over

***4. Employment Status:**

- Working
 Retired

***5. Which category below includes your annual household income?**

- Under \$30,000
 \$30,000 - \$59,999
 \$60,000 - \$99,999
 \$100,000 - \$150,000
 Over \$150,000

***6. How would you classify yourself?**

- White/Caucasian
 Asian
 Black
 Hispanic or Latino Origin
 Other

***7. Number of rounds:**

- I play 1 - 8 rounds per year
- I play 8 - 24 rounds per year
- I play 24 + rounds per year

Please before you leave the link, answer the following questions regarding why you play golf (click next)! Thank You.

Factors Influencing Recreational Golfers to Play Golf

Check the item in each pair that most nearly answers the question:

Which factor (reason) in each pair is the most important to you to participate in playing golf?

***1. Enjoy the competition or Choice to walk or ride**

- Enjoy the competition
- Choice to walk or ride

***2. Be with friends or Prestige sport**

- Be with friends
- Prestige sport

***3. Challenge of the course or Health and fitness**

- Challenge of the course
- Health and fitness

***4. Love the sport or Maintenance of the course**

- Love the sport
- Maintenance of the course

***5. Staff courtesy or Business negotiation**

- Staff courtesy
- Business negotiation

***6. Affordability or To have fun**

- Affordability
- To have fun

***7. Prestige sport or Enjoy the competition**

- Prestige sport
- Enjoy the competition

***8. Choice to walk and ride or Health and fitness**

- Choice to walk and ride
- Health and fitness

***9. Be with friends or Maintenance of the course**

- Be with friends
- Maintenance of the course

***10. Challenge of the course or Business negotiation**

- Challenge of the course
- Business negotiation

***11. Love the sport or To have fun**

- Love the sport
- To have fun

***12. Staff courtesy or Affordability**

- Staff courtesy
- Affordability

***13. Health and fitness or Enjoy the competition**

- Health and fitness
- Enjoy the competition

***14. Prestige sport or Maintenance of the course**

- Prestige sport
- Maintenance of the course

***15. Choice to walk or ride or Business negotiation**

- Choice to walk or ride
- Business negotiation

***16. Be with friends or To have fun**

- Be with friends
- To have fun

***17. Challenge of the course or Affordability**

- Challenge of the course
- Affordability

***18. Love the sport or Staff courtesy**

- Love the sport
- Staff courtesy

***19. Maintenance of the course or Enjoy the competition**

- Maintenance of the course
- Enjoy the competition

***20. Health and fitness or Business negotiation**

- Health and fitness
- Business negotiation

***21. Prestige sport or To have fun**

- Prestige sport
- To have fun

***22. Choice to walk or ride or Affordability**

- Choice to walk or ride
- Affordability

***23. Be with friends or Staff courtesy**

- Be with friends
- Staff courtesy

***24. Challenge of the course or Love the sport**

- Challenge of the course
- Love the sport

***25. Enjoy the competition or Business negotiation**

- Enjoy the competition
- Business negotiation

***26. Maintenance of the course or To have fun**

- Maintenance of the course
- To have fun

***27. Health and fitness or Affordability**

- Health and fitness
- Affordability

***28. Prestige sport or Staff courtesy**

- Prestige sport
- Staff courtesy

***29. Choice to walk or ride or Love the sport**

- Choice to walk or ride
- Love the sport

***30. Be with friends or Challenge of the course**

- Be with friends
- Challenge of the course

***31. To have fun or Enjoy the competition**

- To have fun
- Enjoy the competition

***32. Business negotiation or Affordability**

- Business negotiation
- Affordability

***33. Maintenance of the course or Staff courtesy**

- Maintenance of the course
- Staff courtesy

***34. Health and fitness or Love the sport**

- Health and fitness
- Love the sport

***35. Prestige sport or Challenge of the course**

- Prestige sport
- Challenge of the course

***36. Choice to walk or ride or Be with friends**

- Choice to walk or ride
- Be with friends

***37. Enjoy the competition or Affordability**

- Enjoy the competition
- Affordability

***38. To have fun or Staff courtesy**

- To have fun
- Staff courtesy

***39. Business negotiation or Love the sport**

- Business negotiation
- Love the sport

***40. Maintenance of the course or Challenge of the course**

- Maintenance of the course
- Challenge of the course

***41. Health and fitness or Be with friends**

- Health and fitness
- Be with friends

***42. Prestige sport or Choice to walk or ride**

- Prestige sport
- Choice to walk or ride

***43. Staff courtesy or Enjoy the competition**

- Staff courtesy
- Enjoy the competition

***44. Affordability or Love the sport**

- Affordability
- Love the sport

***45. To have fun or Challenge of the course**

- To have fun
- Challenge of the course

***46. Business negotiation or Be with friends**

- Business negotiation
- Be with friends

***47. Maintenance of the course or Choice to walk or ride**

- Maintenance of the course
- Choice to walk or ride

***48. Health and fitness or Prestige sport**

- Health and fitness
- Prestige sport

***49. Enjoy the competition or Love the sport**

- Enjoy the competition
- Love the sport

***50. Staff courtesy or Challenge of the course**

- Staff courtesy
- Challenge of the course

***51. Affordability or Be with friends**

- Affordability
- Be with friends

***52. To have fun or Choice to walk or ride**

- To have fun
- Choice to walk or ride

***53. Business negotiation or Prestige sport**

- Business negotiation
- Prestige sport

***54. Maintenance of the course or Health and fitness**

- Maintenance of the course
- Health and fitness

***55. Enjoy the competition or Challenge of the course**

- Enjoy the competition
- Challenge of the course

***56. Love the sport or Be with friends**

- Love the sport
- Be with friends

***57. Staff courtesy or Choice to walk or ride**

- Staff courtesy
- Choice to walk or ride

***58. Affordability or Prestige sport**

- Affordability
- Prestige sport

***59. To have fun or Health and fitness**

- To have fun
- Health and fitness

***60. Business negotiation or Maintenance of the course**

- Business negotiation
- Maintenance of the course

***61. Enjoy the competition or Be with friends**

- Enjoy the competition
- Be with friends

***62. Challenge of the course or Choice to walk or ride**

- Challenge of the course
- Choice to walk or ride

***63. Love the sport or Prestige sport**

- Love the sport
- Prestige sport

***64. Staff courtesy or Health and fitness**

- Staff courtesy
- Health and fitness

***65. Affordability or Maintenance of the course**

- Affordability
- Maintenance of the course

***66. To have fun or Business negotiation**

- To have fun
- Business negotiation

APPENDIX B

Search Announcement (Invitation Letter to the Managers)

Dear Country Clubs/Golf Courses Managers,

Hello,

I am a doctoral candidate under the direction of Professor *Bettye Myers* in the Department of Kinesiology at Texas Woman's University, working on my research study for my dissertation, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Sport Management.

The purpose of this study is to determine the important factors that influence recreational golfers to participate on Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex golf courses. Your golf club can help me by e-mailing/sending the link of the survey to your members and posting the link of the survey on your website inviting them to be participants so that your members can have the opportunity to participate in this study.

The participation in this study is ANONYMOUS and VOLUNTARY. The participants' response to this survey will be saved in a secure file. Individual participants cannot be identified. There is always a potential of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible that is allowed by law. The total time commitment for the participants' involvement will be approximately 20 minutes.

Here is the link you follow: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FNPSXZN>

At the conclusion of the study I will be glad give you a copy of the findings if you wish.

If you have any questions concerning this study, please feel free to contact me or my research advisor, *Dr. Bettye Myers*, at **940-898-2575**.

Thank you very much for consideration my request.

Zoubi, Abdalla, B.A., M.S.
Department of Kinesiology
Texas Woman's University
Denton, TX 76204
Phone, 940-222-7647
E-Mail: aalzoubi@twu.edu

APPENDIX C

The Approval Letters from Managers Who Were Willing to Participate in the Survey



DENTON COUNTRY CLUB

To the Institutional Review Board,

Denton Country Club approves the usage of our club Data and is willing to participate in this survey.

Sincerely,

DENTON COUNTRY CLUB

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stan Becker', written over a horizontal line.

Stan Becker
General Manager



Unique by nature.

To the Institutional Review Board,

Oak Hollow Golf Course approves the usage of our clubs data and is willing to participate in the survey.

Thank you,

Mike Watson, PGA
General Manager
Oak Hollow Golf Course
3005 N. McDonald
McKinney, TX 75071
Ph: 972.562.0670

OAK HOLLOW GOLF COURSE

3005 N. McDonald (Hwy 5) • McKinney, Texas 75071
972-562-0670 • FAX 972-542-1770 • www.oakhollowgolf.com

www.mckinneytexas.org



Willow Springs Golf Course
1714 Avondale-Haslet Rd.
Haslet, Tx. 76052

April 23, 2013

To The Institutional Review Board,

Willow Springs Golf Course approves the usage of our clubs data and is willing to participate in this survey.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dacus Lindsey", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Dacus Lindsey
GM/Owner
(817)439-4653



To the Institutional Review Board,

Timber Links Golf Club approves the usage of our clubs data and is willing to participate in this survey.

Thank you

Ryan Dusenbury
General Manager Golf Operations
Timber Links Golf Club
5201 Par Dr.
Denton, TX 76208
Ph: 940-380-1318



To the Institutional Review Board,

Frisco Lakes Golf Club approves the usage of our clubs data and is willing to participate in this survey.

Thank you,

Travis Foster

Assistant Manager

Frisco Lakes Golf Club

7170 Anthem Dr.

Frisco, TX 75034

972-292-3089

The Golf Club at Frisco Lakes

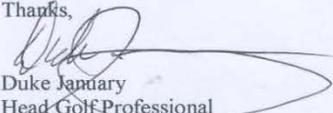
7323 Rose Lane, Frisco, TX 75034 • Phone (972) 292-3089 • Fax (972) 292-3985 • fricolakesgc.com



To the Institutional Review Board,

Los Rios Golf Club approves the usage of our club Data and is willing to participate in this survey.

Thanks,


Duke January
Head Golf Professional
Los Rios Golf Club
1700 Country Club Dr.
Plano, Tx. 75074
972-424-8913

To the Institutional Board,

Oakmont Country Club approves the usage of our club's data
and is willing to participate in this survey.

Sincerely,



Steve Lambert
General Manager
Oakmont Country Club

APPENDIX D

The Panel of Experts

Mr. Hank Dickenson



Hank Dickenson, the longest tenured administrator at North Texas, completed his 18th football season with the Mean Green in 2012. As the Deputy Athletic Director, Dickenson assists the Director of Athletics in sport oversight of football, scheduling, administrative management, personnel management, and holds a leadership position on the senior management team.

He continues to organize the annual "Don January Golf Tournament", the major spring fundraiser for athletic scholarships. He also teaches Sports Broadcasting, as an adjunct professor at UNT.

Dickenson designed the Mean Green Corporate Partner Program that has secured multi-million dollar applications inside Apogee Stadium, as well as previous scoreboard renovations at Fouts Field, the Super Pit, and the Mean Green Village. Under his direction, sponsorship revenues exceed \$1.5 million annually.

He served as the department's point person for the Apogee Stadium naming right project which produced the 20 year, \$20 million contract. His external oversight for the department includes the areas of fundraising, marketing, promotions, media relations and overall public relations within the community.

In addition, he also coordinates the Mean Green Radio Network in terms of advertising, affiliate relations and contract negotiations. Working alongside George Dunham, Dickenson also provides on-air talent as color commentator (football), play-by-play and color (basketball) with over 500 North Texas broadcasts to his credit. He is also the in-house producer of telecasts on TXA21, as well as web productions on Meangreensports.com.

Dickenson got his Bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in 1987; also he holds a Master's degree in Sports Administration from the United States Sports Academy.

Dr. David Rylander



Dr. David Rylander is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Texas Woman's University. His Ph.D. is in Marketing, with a minor in Research Methods.

Dr. Rylander has published papers in journals and conference proceedings on a variety of topics, including green marketing, innovative teaching, gender issues in sales and marketing, sales force socialization, sports marketing and sustainability.

Dr. Rylander holds his Ph.D. in Marketing from University of North Texas in 2001; also his Master's in Business Administration from Texas A&M University in 1991 and a Bachelors' degree in Business Administration-Trinity University 1988.

Dr. Yin-Feng Chen



Dr. Ean Chen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Business Administration at Shih Chien University in Taipei, Taiwan. He completed his Ph.D. in Kinesiology (Sport Management Specialization) under Dr. Bettye Myers from Texas Woman's University in 2009. He received his Master of Business Administration and Master of Science in Organizational Leadership at Southern New Hampshire University, and Bachelor of Laws at Chinese Culture University.

His research interests are sport attendance, international sport organizations, legal issues in sports management, and sports marketing. His research findings have been presented at many professional conferences, including the North America Society for Sport Management, North American Society of the Sociology of Sport, National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association, and the Taiwan Society of Sport Sociology.

As the disciple of Bettye Myers, Dr. Chen also enjoys volunteer work, including student care services, blood donations, and community service.

APPENDIX E

Approval Letter from Institutional Research Board



Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378 FAX 940-898-4416
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

February 19, 2013

Mr. Abdalla Alzoubi
Department of Kinesiology

Dear Mr. Alzoubi:

Re: An Investigation of Factors That Influence Recreational Golfers to Play Golf on Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex Golf Courses (Protocol #: 17234)

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was determined to be exempt from further review.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. Because a signed consent form is not required for exempt studies, the filing of signatures of participants with the TWU IRB is not necessary.

Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rhonda Buckley, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

cc. Dr. Charlotte Sanborn, Department of Kinesiology
Dr. Bettye Myers, Department of Kinesiology
Graduate School