

GOLF IN MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS, EXHIBITIONS (MICE)
TOURISM: PERCEPTIONS OF MEETING PLANNERS

By

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by

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This document is dedicated to my family and friends who have supported me unconditionally.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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GOLF AND MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS, AND EXHIBITIONS
(MICE) TOURISM: PERCEPTIONS OF MEETING PLANNERS

By

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MICE tourism is a term that encompasses four different components of the corporate meeting's market-meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions-which are all separate activities. MICE tourism is an emerging field in tourism literature due to its economic impact. A strategy employed by meeting and convention planners is to include "add on" activities to their events in an attempt to increase attendance and keep the attendee at the destination longer. Many of these "add on" activities can be sport activities such as golf. Those traveling to participate in a sport are considered to be sport tourists. This thesis is an exploratory study, which sought to address the relationship between MICE tourism and sport tourism, more specifically golf tourism. The relationships between the meeting planner's past personal experience with golf, professional characteristics and demographic characteristics with the planner's perception of benefits, challenges and level of support to including golf in his/her programs were

examined. Data were collected via a multi mode method with a total sample of 142 respondents.

The findings suggested there is a positive linear relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and his/her level of support for including golf in his/her planning. The more experience the planners had with golf in their personal life, the higher his/her level of support was for the inclusion of golf in their programs. The findings also indicated that the more experience with golf planners had the greater their perceptions of the socio-cultural benefits accruing from including golf in their planning. The type of meeting planned also influenced the planner's level of support for including golf in meetings. Managerial implications are discussed for each of the relevant findings. Also lessons learned from conducting this exploratory study are discussed and recommendations for future research are made.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The meetings and convention industry has experienced positive consistent growth since the 1950's. Factors such as the increase in disposable income, the greater propensity to travel, increased leisure time and improvements in transportation and technology have all contributed to this growth. MICE tourism is a term that encompasses four different components of the corporate meeting's market-meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions-which are all separate activities (Spiller, 2002). MICE tourism is a sector that is a substantial contributor to the overall economic gains produced by the tourism industry.

Some of the benefits of MICE tourism include employment and income to a region as well as investment in tourism infrastructure. MICE tourism also contributes to relationships between attendees and the hosts of the region. Promotion of a destination for future visitation is frequently a result of hosting a meeting or convention (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997).

MICE stakeholders include facilities, hospitality (accommodation and food and beverage), planners, transportation, technical services, and tour opportunities and entertainment (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999). Planners, or "CMP's" (Certified Meeting Professional), are an integral part of MICE tourism. Meeting planners can be broken down into four categories: corporate, association, government, and independent. Corporate meetings tend to be smaller, generally fewer than one hundred attendees, and are mostly shorter in duration. They are usually held in hotels, conference centers,

training centers or universities. Corporate meetings most often have shorter lead times and require less preparation in planning (Crouch & Weber, 2003). Traveling to attend meetings is the primary reason for business travel. About twenty percent of all business trips are for the purpose of attending corporate meetings or conventions (Mill, 1990). Associations tend to hold the largest meetings and conventions throughout the world (Crouch & Weber). A variety of association meetings exist to promote the interests of their members including training and development programs, networking functions and seminars. Annual conventions can attract thousands of attendees and most often are held in top-tier cities or at resort locations (Crouch & Weber).

Meetings and conventions traditionally include “add on” activities, which can ultimately increase the participation or attendance of an event and hence create repeat attendance for future events while bringing in more economic gains for the host communities. One such “add on” would be golf packages (Green, 2001; Smith & Jenner, 1998). Dwyer and Mistilis (1999) found that travelers prefer varied products and services marketed toward their specific market segment based on demographics, lifestyle and interests. On the supply side, new facilities and amenity developments are providing individuality and specific activity–orientation towards new markets. Additional activities may include pre and post-convention cultural tours, local attractions or theme parks as well as sporting events, activities and shopping (Gunn, 1997).

Neirotti (2003) stated CMP’s find resorts to be great locations that are attractive to attendees. Many activities offered at these resorts are sports such as golf, tennis and swimming. As such these resorts are an important component of an increasingly popular form of tourism, that of sport tourism. For groups, sports activities build team spirit and

camaraderie offer networking opportunities. Some attendees may even feel the relaxed atmosphere of a resort prohibits stress and allows for more open thinking. The variety of activities offered by resorts also takes pressure off the meeting planner in terms of planning free time activities or events for the family members of attendees.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual foundation for this study is based upon three principal components: (1) benefits of sport and tourism as indicated by Standeven and De Knop, (2) MICE tourism, and (3) golf as active sport tourism. In this study the terms meeting and conventions and MICE tourism will be used interchangeably. The framework used to explain the benefits of sport and its contribution to the overall well being of individuals was developed by Standeven and De Knop (1999). They identified four categories of benefits/impacts of sport tourism, which consist of health, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental. The model used in this study is based on Standeven and De Knop's ideas but has been adapted to better fit MICE tourism and golf (see Figure 1).

Standeven and De Knop (1999) identified four types of benefits of sport tourism: health, socio-cultural, economic and environmental. Health benefits exist on two levels, physiological and psychological. These include aerobic exercise, release from stressors of everyday life and enjoyment of a social interaction with others (Segrave, 2000; Standeven & De Knop). Socio-cultural benefits of sport and tourism exist on several levels. Benefits such as community togetherness, "psychic income," local pride, and community empowerment can be generated through participation in sport and hosting sport events (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Long & Sanderson, 1996; Orams & Brons, 1999). While we know there are economic benefits that exist from sport and event sport tourism, these benefits have been difficult to measure (Crompton, 1995; Doshi, Schumacher, &

Snyder, 2001). Some experts believe multipliers have affected the validity of estimates of the economic impact of an event on a host community. Nonetheless, economic benefits are accrued from league sports, professional sports, and more often than not, urban regeneration through sport may result (Gratton & Henry, 2001; Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2001; Orams & Brons).

Environmentally, the literature cites more impact-based information than benefits-based information related to sport and the environment. Typically sports such as golf, skiing and water sports have been ridiculed for their negative impact on the environment (Roberts, 1995). Education of facilities management and employees will help reduce negative impacts through planning. Also posting signage at the facilities regarding how to reduce these impacts is important (Roberts). The other side of the environmental literature focuses on visitor-host interactions and the benefits to the host destination that can be recognized through positive management techniques targeted at the guest/visitor.

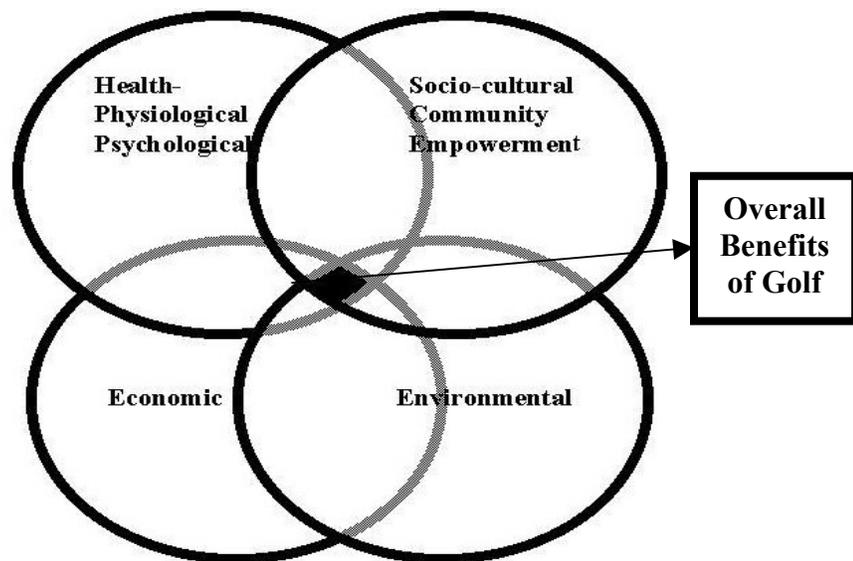


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Benefits of Sport

Therefore, this study was focused on efforts made by sport and tourism management to reduce impacts through facilitating participation by the attendee in sport events within the host community. The hope is that these efforts may encourage the visitor to return to the area as a tourist on a later visit (Mill, 1990; Readman, 2003; Roberts).

The MICE attendee has an avenue in which to mix business with pleasure through sport. Watching professional sporting events, playing a tennis match after a long seminar, playing in a golf tournament or just visiting the local stadium on a pre or post-convention tour are all ways to enhance a meeting and allow for social interaction between participants and the host community (Gunn, 1997; McCord, 1994; Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Economic impacts to the community are also a benefit to both the meeting planner and the community. If the host community benefits from having the meeting or convention, it is likely that the planner will be approached to hold the meeting in that location again or even annually.

One of the most popular extracurricular activities sought by meeting and convention attendees is golf. The benefits of golf participation during meetings parallel the benefits of sport. Gratton and Henry (2001) devised a model to demonstrate the relationship between sport and social and economic benefits in the context of urban regeneration. In their model, which still needs to be tested through empirical research, sport is linked to benefits such as increased work productivity, increased health, increased self-esteem, increased quality of life, and more jobs in the local area. Gratton and Henry seem to embrace health benefits but list them as social benefits (i.e., a healthy population is beneficial for society). The conceptual model developed in this study includes the

benefits mentioned in Gratton and Henry's model but in four basic categories - health, socio-cultural, economic and environmental.

To guide this study the researcher developed a conceptual model, which combines the four categories of the benefits of sport and tourism and its link to the overall benefits of golf. All of these benefits are inter-related which is noted later in this study. The health component influences the socio-cultural and community component, which drive the economic component ultimately. The environmental component is concerned with the influence of all factors affecting the environment and the reduction of impacts and education of management and employees in industries included in MICE tourism.

Benefits of Sport

Loy (1972) explains sport as a game occurrence, an institutional game, a social institution and as a social situation or social system. Standeven and De Knop (1999) define sport as; "the whole range of competitive and noncompetitive active pursuits that involve skill, strategy, and/or chance in which human beings engage, at their own level simply for enjoyment and training or to raise their performance to levels of publicly acclaimed excellence" (p.12).

To understand sport, one must understand the motives of participants and spectators. The benefits derived from sport satisfy many types of motivations through both active participation and passive spectatorship. Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991) define a benefit as "a change that is viewed to be advantageous-an improvement in condition, or a gain to an individual, to a group, to a society, or to another entity" (p.4). Long and Sanderson (2001) summarize different types of benefits that may come to an individual or community through sport. They include: summative (multiple individual benefits such as improved health and better education), reinvestment (individuals gain

skills that are put back into helping the community), shared benefits (e.g. local pride in a winning team), consequential benefits (e.g. health improved and criminal activity diminished), communality (benefit from interaction and sharing experiences), for us by us (having control of community programs), and sum plus (some activities may offer greater benefit as a whole rather than the sum of its parts, e.g. summative). The benefits are divided into four categories from a community-based development perspective. They were labeled: (1) personal development such as self-esteem and confidence; (2) community level benefits such as identity and cohesion, (3) health and crime; empowerment and “community capacity” and (4) economic benefits.

Health

One important reason for participation in sport is the benefit to health and fitness. Sport offers benefits to the participant in that it makes some demands on the body’s physical and psychological capabilities (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Research shows that few Americans are participating in enough exercise in their daily lives to obtain any health benefits. Ross (2001) states that The Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health from July 1996, indicated that fewer than 20% of Americans were significantly active, 60% of Americans were not regularly active and 25% of Americans were not active at all. Thus, there is great potential for health enhancement from spa and activity centered resorts while people are on business or vacation (Standeven & De Knop).

Resorts have realized that people travel to escape deficiencies of sport activities at home, deficits in the enjoyment of outdoor recreation and the urge for action (Neirotti, 2003). A unanimous response from participants after exercise is the “feel good” factor, a sense of feeling physically better and having stress diffused (Standeven & De Knop,

1999). Also physical activity is acknowledged as the most powerful antidote to modern disease. It has been thought that the benefits of exercise on physiological well-being are related to three aspects: 1) Physiological- increased blood flow and reduced muscle tension, 2) Psychological- enhanced perceptions of control and mastery of one's body and 3) Social- increased positive feedback from peers (Standeven & De Knop).

A more health conscious America has prompted a demand for sport on vacations and business trips. The growing popularity of sport/health/fitness/spa resorts is evident in that they provide an outlet for stressors through participation in activities or at a fitness center or relaxing at the spa. People also travel for the sole purpose of sport- as a participant or spectator (Standeven & De Knop, 1999).

Participation in golf can be a great contributor to aerobic health. Golf also burns calories. If a golf cart is used you will not get much exercise, but if the course is walked there is plenty of exercise to be had. The total distance of eighteen holes is at least three miles, but if a pull cart is used or clubs are carried an individual will end up walking about four to five miles to get to the ball. Woo (2002) found that if you weigh 150 pounds, carry your bag and play eighteen holes of golf, you would burn 1,080 calories. That is equivalent to running almost seven miles. Woo also suggested if you could do four hours of medium impact aerobics, then you would burn only slightly more calories than if you played eighteen holes of golf.

Socio-cultural

Sport is a means through which many Americans develop a sense of identity. Identity reinforcement can be accrued through membership in a sports team or being a sport spectator (Weiss, 2001). Americans spend an enormous amount of their free time participating in or watching sport. Sport has been woven throughout the fabric of society

today. It is a social institution that is part of culture around the world (Stevenson & Nixon, 1976). People from all nationalities can identify with their love of sport and tend to have a special bond through a similar compassion and understanding of sport (Chen, Groves, & Lengfelder, 1998; Turner et al. 1987). People long for social interaction and to be a member of a social group, to identify with others who have the same values, beliefs, and assumptions (Long & Sanderson, 2001; Krawczyk, 1996; Segrave, 2000; Tajfel, 1986; Weiss, 2001). Weiss examined the socio-cultural impact of sport through identity reinforcement and social recognition. Social recognition suggests that individuals find social acceptance through others in sport. Weiss suggested that a participant in sport can demonstrate talents respected by others in the social environment. Sport allows for the development and affirmation of identity, which in turn provides social fulfillment. Through sport, society's values and norms can be displayed through the recognition of achievement hence the development and reinforcement of identity.

Another appeal of sport is the idea of escape. Segrave (2000) explained that sport offers a release from everyday stresses. Time and space can also take on different characteristics when associated with sport. A stadium or field becomes a locality identified with our escape from our daily lives. The clock stops as the players enter a state of connectedness in the game in which they have no control over the outcome. The social interaction offered through sport is compelling for both the athlete and the spectator. In Long and Sanderson's (1996) study of sport development officers and leisure center managers, responses about benefits of community-based approaches to the inclusion of sport leaned strongly toward interaction, cohesion and community spirit,

while responses related to urban regeneration leaned more towards civic pride and improving city image.

Taylor and Toohey (2001) spoke of the role of sport in acculturation and assimilation. Sport has been helpful in allowing many minorities and ethnic groups to maintain their unique identities. This same study concluded that all ethnicities and women of all countries should be allowed, even further, invited to participate in sport. Taylor and Toohey suggested that participation in sport is directly related to quality of life and should be available to everyone.

While there are contradictory findings on whether satisfaction with leisure lifestyle influences overall well-being or quality of life, some studies have shown that participation in sports, outdoor and social activities helps those participants feel more positively about themselves (Chiriboga & Pierce, 1993). Burch (1987) suggested communities contribute to the sense of well being of their residents through benefits such as social interaction, social continuity, stability and sense of place. These can be achieved through leisure and recreational activities as well as sport. Some lifetime sports such as golf, bowling and swimming can be carried over from childhood to later life and help sustain satisfaction of leisure lifestyle and individual well-being (Burch).

Many sport-event or convention tourists have a full schedule of activities and are typically kept busy and socially and psychologically separated from the host community. Occasionally the visitor may move from the airport to hotel and back to the airport. Although economic impact to the community may have been generated, visitors have not experienced the local culture (Hiller, 1995). A trip to the local park, tours of the area, a round of golf or a fishing trip can be beneficial socially and psychologically for both the

residents and the visitors. This may also prompt the visitor to come back on vacation another time (Gunn, 1997).

Sport events can contribute significantly to the local pride of a host community. Especially if the local team wins, a psychological boost to the region is generated. Economists refer this to as “psychic income”. Sport has been linked to the quality of life, increased cultural identity, created civic pride, self confidence and a festival atmosphere, multiplied recreational and entertainment opportunities and improved policy and infrastructure (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Orams & Brons, 1999).

Golf can provide a number of socio-cultural benefits both to the participant and the community. Namely, the game can offer networking, teambuilding and motivational opportunities among employees or conference attendees. Stress relief and camaraderie can be a result of participation in the sport (McCord, 1994). Participants may also benefit by being a part of the “in-group” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and demonstrating skills in the activity (Weiss, 2001). As far as benefits to the host community socio-culturally, golf travelers, business travelers or convention attendees who participate in golf while away from home have a chance to interact with the residents of the host community, form a destination image of the host community (Readman, 2003) and contribute to the residents’ local pride in the host community by the travelers’ appreciation the facilities the community (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Orams & Brons, 1999).

Economic

There is substantial evidence that sport and special events bring economic benefits to host communities. Economic regeneration through sport is the topic of Gratton and Henry’s (2001) book. They claim that sport and economic and social regeneration through sport still lacks much empirical support. The impact of professional sports in the

United States has supported the development of professional sports stadia and increased economic activity. The investment in sports facilities can lead to an increase in local jobs and enhance the image of the region to local communities and tourists. Event sport tourists are said to spend more than the average tourist (Orams & Brons, 1999)

Crompton (1995) explained the cycle of spending at sporting events. The funds generated by residents in the form of taxes augment the development of sport infrastructure. This then leads to the attraction of visiting sport tourists who spend money in the local community. These expenditures then create new jobs and income for residents, which then go back into taxes and generates more funding for community investment and tourism development.

Crompton (1995) and Doshi et al. (2001) both explained that the process of estimating economic benefits is calculated differently, due to the inability of organizers to decide on appropriate computational formulae. Several things must be taken into account when calculating impacts. Direct impact, indirect impact and induced impact are the three elements that contribute to the total impact of expenditures by out of town visitors. Studies based on the multiplier concept have proven to be anything but precise. Even though different formulae have been devised to calculate total economic impact to a region from sporting events, debate lingers as to which is correct and which offers the least amount of miscalculation.

The economic benefits derived from hosting a major sporting event are not so well defined. The issue of costs to upgrade facilities and other local businesses or attractions as well as bidding on the event can cause more damage financially than originally thought (Gratton & Henry, 2001). Impacts can be seen in the form tourism and

infrastructure development, private investment and multiplier effects (i.e. food, beverage, accommodations, services) (Orams & Brons, 1999).

However, hosting a successful sports event can bring about economic regeneration through the “re-imaging” of a city (Gratton et al, 2001). A significant influx of currency can boost the economy of a region that hosts a sports event. Hallmark events can have profound economic impacts, some positive and some negative. Only if the expenditures for the event are coming from visitors rather than residents of the host city, may income be generated. It is possible for an event to earn less profit than it costs to put on, however, it may at the same time make a positive impact on the economy (Burgan & Mules, 1992).

Leveraging is a form of identifying means by which the local economy can encourage spending by event sport visitors. When hosting a major sporting event, the host city must consider ways to capitalize upon the event (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; Chalip & Green, 2001; Green, 2002). Media attention and convention business are two good ways to get the most out of a major sports event. Destination image through media attention is an excellent marketing tool to gain popularity in the tourism industry. Among the tourist markets, the business convention/meeting market is extremely important. It is suggested that convention participants spend seven times more than the average holiday tourist, and therefore warrant targeting (Chalip & Green).

Chalip and Leyns (2002) found that local businesses sometimes fail to leverage sport events for the following reasons: competitors’ proximity to the event may offer the benefit to the competitor, event goers may not be a relevant market and the event disrupts regular business. They concluded that while some businesses try to leverage during local

sport events, most are not attempting to and hence need guidance and management in order to capitalize on potential revenue. Green (2001) suggested that local businesses try to identify the characteristics associated with a particular sport subculture and market specifically to that subculture. For example, participants of a marathon may have different interests and needs than spectators of a motorcar race.

Some Convention and Visitors Bureaus may offer incentives to the meeting planner to include sport in order to improve policy and infrastructure in the community and increase recreational and entertainment opportunities for both tourists and residents. In a North-Central County in Florida, the Visitor and Convention Bureau started a grant program targeted at the meetings and conventions market to increase participation in the community. They offer grants to support business groups that plan activities in the community (Pennington-Gray, 2003).

Golf is an industry that has contributed dramatically to the economy. The National Golf Foundation (2002) reported that golfers spend about \$15 billion annually on golf related fees or merchandise. The number of golf courses has boomed to over 13,000 in the United States alone and has certainly contributed to the job market in this country (Readman, 2003). Readman also explained the spread of golf tourism has led to the attraction of strong foreign currency and has provided a legitimate reason for golf tourism development.

Environmental

Sport and leisure can have a profound impact on the environment as well. Some tend to be negative while others prove to be positive. Potential impacts are not only found in natural environments, but also in fabricated environments such as golf courses, sport museums, ice rinks and swimming pools (Roberts, 1995).

The Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, were quite successful at minimizing the environmental impacts of the Games. The winter games organizers developed a group called Project Environment Friendly Olympics (PEFO). The goal of this group was:

Any development must conform to the natural and cultural landscape and other regional features. In the long run this will be crucial in preserving and enhancing qualities that are already assets to tourism. For local people it will be most important to construct arenas and other buildings needed for the event in an environmentally friendly way” .(Chernushenko, 1996, p.66)

For some sports a greater challenge exists. Sports that must have one on one contact with the environment such as sport fishing and golf are under great scrutiny from the public (Stubbs, 1998). For a sport such as golf, the challenges are: water resource management, turfgrass (pesticide) management, waste management, and nature conservation (Stubbs). Chernushenko (1994) stated: “the move away from nature as environment has been a principal contributor to the sports community’s diminishing understanding of and concern for the environmental health upon which it is in fact highly dependent” (Stubbs, p.711).

The “Committed to Green” campaign was launched in 1997 at Valderrama Golf Club where the European Commission President Jacques Santer stated:

Sport and recreation, which occupy so much of our leisure are increasingly important in environmental terms, and it is vital to ensure that pressures involved in terms of land use, resource consumption and, sometimes, pollution, be continuously minimized. Respect for the environment goes hand in hand with human well-being and, indeed, sporting excellence. This is certainly true for golf, in which harmony with nature is part of the game’s heritage and its enjoyment. The wise use of natural resources is the proper goal of all responsible managers. Golf has a great opportunity to serve as a role model for good environmental practice .(Stubbs, 1998, p.719)

The greening of sport policy and management strategies have, for example, golf course managers trying to protect exotic, native species, such as birds through the Audubon Society, for ecological and landscape reasons (Roberts, 1995). The EPA offers

grants to community golf courses to help with redevelopment as well as the Department of Natural Resources. There are steps a golf course can take to become more environmentally friendly. Signage is a great way to show that a course is an environmental “steward”. Image is the focus. A course can have a less manicured look and boast that its “wildness” is to reduce impact by cutting down on chemicals and mowing. Golf courses do not have to be used just for golf, they can offer educational opportunities such as “bird day” or allocate a national trail system throughout the course so that hikers can enjoy the wilderness area also. Dotterweich & Walker (2003) suggested that this is one way new golfers (often constrained genXers) can be exposed to other outdoor activities such as birding. Other green policies have the sports industry using empty buildings like churches as a means of economic regeneration and environmental improvement of an area (Roberts).

Characteristics of the meeting planner may influence their perceptions of benefits and challenges for the inclusion of golf in meetings as well as their level of support for including golf in meetings. For instance demographic characteristics of the planner such as age, gender, education level and income could influence what types of activities are included in MICE functions. The demographic make up of those who play golf are primarily white males who are educated with high incomes. The same may be true of meeting planners who support the inclusion of golf in their meetings.

Also those planners who have included golf in their previous planning or who have a high level of involvement may support the inclusion of golf in their programs more or less than those planners who do not. Laurent and Kapferer (1985) suggested there are positive and negative consequences to high or low levels of involvement with an activity

according to the Involvement Profile. The planners level of involvement with golf in their personal or professional past may influence their perceptions and level of support for including golf in meetings.

Therefore, perhaps the meeting planners professional experience such as their years in the business may be an indicator of their perceptions of benefits and challenges to the inclusion of golf in meetings as well as their level of support for the inclusion of golf. If the planner has had a high number of requests from clients to include golf in the past in order to facilitate networking and social interaction among attendees, then perhaps this may influence their decision to include golf as an activity in future meetings.

In summary, due to the fact that four types of benefits are demonstrated through participation (active or passive) in sport, meeting planners should consider including golf or other sports in their programs. The relationship between meeting planner characteristics and the meeting planner's perception of the benefits and challenges of including golf in their meeting programs may be related to their level of support for including this sport.

Justification of the Study

Very rarely is the integration of sport activities in MICE tourism commented upon in the academic literature and much less on the benefits of the inclusion of these sports. While the convention tourism literature has become more developed, the benefits of sport or golf have never been investigated within the area of MICE tourism.

Understanding the benefits of sport in meeting planning is an important area of research for a number of reasons. This understanding can help the planner develop activities, which are valuable to the participant, community, economy and environment. Comprehension of the different benefits of sport may educate the planner on various

aspects related to meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. The balance between work and leisure is essential to the understanding of this phenomenon.

In particular, a study of the benefits of the incorporation of golf in meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions is lacking in the tourism literature. This study will fill a void in both convention tourism literature and sport tourism literature in that a specific niche of golf tourism is being studied. As an underdeveloped part of research in the MICE tourism area, the exploration of including golf in meeting planner's itineraries was the focus of this study. This set a path to find the reasons why or why the planner may not include golf in their planning or if not, why?

In the past, the majority of academic studies on meeting planner's have focused on economic impacts of the industry, site selection, decision making processes of the meeting planner, and growth of the industry internationally (Braun & Rungeling, 1992; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Dwyer, 2003; Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997; Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999; Grado, Strauss, & Lord, 1998; Oppermann, 1996; Weber & Chon, 2002). While such research has resulted in an understanding of the MICE tourism market and the meeting attendees preferences, (Price et al, 1998). A deeper understanding of MICE tourism is warranted.

While we know that golf is being included in meetings currently for networking purposes, social interaction and physical activity, we do not know what factors are contributing to this inclusion. It could be the type of meeting (association, corporate, government, seminar, tradeshow, etc), attendee profile (male professionals, female association members, academic leaders), length of the meeting, location of the meeting,

meeting budget or the personal characteristics of the meeting planner that contributes to the decision to include golf in meeting planning.

If meeting planners choose to incorporate golf in their programs, what are the reasons for this inclusion? More specifically does the meeting planner's past professional experience such as years in the business or their past experience with golf influence their support for the inclusion of golf? Or do meeting planners believe there are benefits (social, health, economic, environmental) to including golf in their programs for the participant? And what are the challenges planners face in their attempt to incorporate golf in their programs?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of meeting planners and the benefits and challenges to including golf in their planning as well as their level of support for including golf. Understanding how the relationship of the dependent variables of perceptions and level of support between the independent variables of the meeting planner's professional experience, past experience with golf and demographic characteristics will contribute to knowledge about the relationship between MICE and sport tourism. A secondary purpose was to determine if there is a relationship between the type of meeting planned and the level of support a planner has for including golf in meetings.

Research Questions

The premise of this study is that there are benefits and challenges perceived by meeting planners to include golf in their program. Therefore, the perceived benefits and challenges as well as the type of meeting planned were examined in relation to past experiences of the planner, their previous experiences with the sport personally, and their

demographic characteristics (See Figure 2). Thus, the research questions addressed in this study were:

- 1a. What does the socio-demographic profile of meeting planners in this study look like?
- 1b. What does the professional profile of meeting planners in this study look like?
- 2a. What are the overall perceived benefits according to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?
- 2b. Are there underlying dimensions of perceived benefits for including golf in meetings?
- 2c. What is the most important benefit to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?
- 3a. What are the overall expressed challenges for including golf in meetings?
- 3b. What is the most expressed challenge by meeting planners for including golf in meetings?
- 4a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?
- 4b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?
- 4c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?
- 5a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?
- 5b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?
- 5c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?
- 6a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the perceived benefits for including golf in meetings?
- 6b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

- 6c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?
7. What is the relationship between the type of meeting planned and the meeting planner's support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

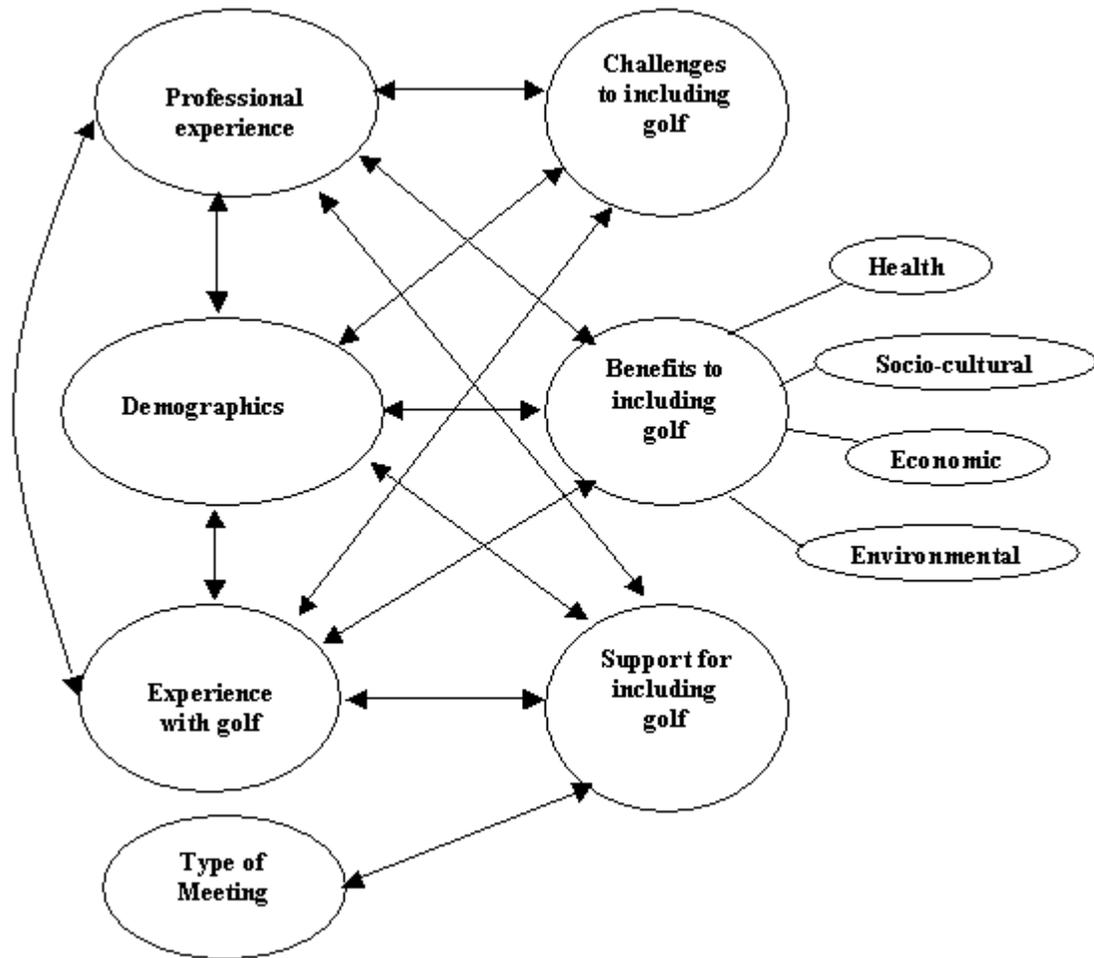


Figure 2: Correlation between MICE Tourism and Sport (Golf)

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a review of the literature in the following areas: MICE tourism, Sport Tourism, Golf Tourism as a form of active sport tourism, Golf and MICE tourism, challenges to Golf Tourism, and the role of the meeting planner in including golf in MICE. An overview of sport tourism is provided in order to introduce active sport tourism and golf tourism as a subcategory. General statistics on MICE tourism and golf tourism are included to demonstrate the importance of the two industries and how they can be combined to make a profound economic impact on a destination/community, as well as increasing attendance at meetings. Connecting these two tourism niches can also boost the awareness of sport and its benefits to participants through a healthier lifestyle and increased networking opportunities. Characteristics of meeting planners and what influences their decision to include golf in their planning are also introduced.

Tourism

Redefined in 1981 (after the definition adopted by the League of Nations in 1937), the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST) stated: “Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities, selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stays away from home” (De Groote, 1995, p.28). In 1973 the National Tourism Resources Review Commission defined a tourist as “A tourist is one who travels away from home for a distance of at least 50 miles (one way) for business, pleasure, personal affairs, or any

other purpose except to commute to work, whether he/she stays overnight or returns the same day” (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1998, pp.11-12).

There are many forms of tourism enjoyed throughout the world from sun, surf and sand (3S) tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, sport tourism, health and spa tourism, cruise tourism, cultural and heritage tourism to festivals, family reunions and business/convention tourism. All forms of tourism have been impacted by changes in the economy and the legacy of the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 (Goodspeed, 2002); environmental concerns and advances in technology (Miller et. al, 2001). Tourism is the world’s largest industry. The cultural understanding generated through heritage and cultural tourism (Herreman, 1998) as well as sport tourism can augment the economy. There is substantial evidence that sporting events bring economic benefits to communities (Gratton et al, 2001; Orams & Brons, 1999; Ross, 2001; Standeven & De Knop, 1999).

According to Mill (1990) tourism is not an industry itself but it contributes to a range of other industries. Tourism is an activity engaged in by people who travel (p.17). For many countries tourism is the number one commodity in the international trade market. In 2001 the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2002) reported that Europe is the leader in overall tourism receipts followed in second place by the Americas. The Travel Industry Association of America found travel expenditures in the United States were \$582.5 billion in the year 2000 (Miller et. al, 2001). Tourism is a phenomenon that warrants investigation due to its impacts economically and socially to a region or country. Certain areas of tourism remain under investigated including the meetings, conventions, expositions and incentives (MICE) tourism.

MICE Tourism

People have been gathering in the form of meetings since the beginning of time. Archaeologists have found primitive ruins that were used for specific gathering places by ancient tribes to discuss many topics including: hunting plans, war-time activities, crop harvesting, or the planning of community celebrations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Today, cities and more specifically hotels and resorts, have become a popular choice for meetings or conventions. Montgomery and Strick explain that the hospitality industry has recognized the importance of meetings, conventions and expositions to their financial well-being and has been soliciting corporations, associations and academic institutions as clients for many years now.

A *meeting* is “a conference, workshop, seminar, or other event designed to bring people together for the purpose of exchanging information” (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). An *exposition* is “an event designed to bring together purveyors of products, equipment, and services in an environment in which they can demonstrate their products and services to a group of attendees at a convention or trade show”(Rutherford, 1990, p.44). When meetings are combined with expositions, the event is called a *convention* (Montgomery & Strick, p.13).

Most often, conferences and conventions are an important component of travel and tourism in a region (Grado et al., 1998). The convention industry used to be regarded as one of the most stable sectors of the tourism industry. However, since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, the MICE tourism has been severely impacted. Americans changed their travel habits by staying closer to home, traveling by car and spending less time away from home. Travel with family, attending reunions, nature, heritage and cultural tourism were all the focus of tourists in the aftermath of these events

(Goodspeed, 2002). Many cities in the United States and abroad reported a sharp decline in convention business. Many hotels experienced layoffs and closures as well as route changes in the airlines. Many scheduled conferences and conventions were cancelled or postponed all together (Goodspeed, 2002; Pateman, 2001) In a recent poll by Meeting Professionals International, as of September 2003, meeting professionals are moderately confident that the economy will recover (www.mpiweb.org/media).

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) sector of tourism is rapidly growing around the world. Once referred to as CEMI by Fenich (1998), the convention, exposition and meetings industry is ever changing. Many benefits from MICE tourism can be recognized, including among others its contribution to: employment and income in a region, the generation of investment in tourism/recreation infrastructure, the support of the formation of relationships between firms, the upholding of national interest and international cooperation, the allowance for training and educational opportunities, the facilitation of the exchange of new ideas and technology, the establishment of valuable scientific, business, professional and social contacts, and the promotion of a country or region as a tourist destination for vacation travel (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997). The meetings market can be separated into two categories: association meetings and corporate meetings. These two types of meetings have subsets that may be grouped as follows: trade shows, reunions organized for social purposes, regional meetings, and special events, which are typically public gatherings with an entertainment focus (Abbey & Link, 1994).

The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) in Bethesda, Maryland, reported that 4,781 tradeshow took place in the United States in the year 2000, hosting

140 million attendees. The exhibition industry, until the events of September 11th, 2001, and the downturn in the economy was growing at a rate of ten percent each year, according to a report in *Tradeshow Week*. This growth has been attributed to: the U.S. economy allows unrestricted business expansion, exhibitions are providing attendees with multi-dimensional experiences, including education, networking, travel and entertainment; visitors are demanding experiences not just events, and the availability of inexpensive travel and new niche markets are emerging (Miller, Walker, & Fleming, 2001).

Meeting, conventions, and expositions generate a tremendous amount of revenue within the hospitality industry. Successful Meetings magazine's *State of the Industry* report in 2001 indicated that current spending on meetings totaled \$112.1 billion, broken down into three categories. Corporate meetings comprised of \$45.8 billion (from 1,684,061 total meetings in 2000), incentive travel totaling \$9.8 billion, and association travel totaling \$66.5 billion (results based on survey responses) (Successful Meetings, 2001). The American Society of Association Executives' *Association Meeting Trends* survey in 2000, indicated that associations are conducting more meetings and growing bigger, earning more revenue, expanding internationally and capitalizing on new technology more frequently- this of course was until September 11, 2001. In tourism, the year 2000 is reported as the last year of true statistics for the travel industry until things return to "normal" (WTO, 2003). The industry forecast for 2002 and 2003 according to Spokane VCB (2002), domestic travel expenditures would not reach year 2000 levels until 2004. Business trip volume will not rebound to year 2000 levels until 2003. International inbound volume will not rebound to year 2000 levels until 2004.

Successful Meetings conducts a “State of the industry” survey every two years to examine the meeting planner’s thoughts and opinions on the industry and their own jobs. The 2001 survey indicated a close to equal number of corporate, association and independent planners as respondents, however an equal number of “other” planners were respondents as well. These included government planners and company executives who plan meetings as part of their daily responsibilities.

People who plan meetings may not have the title of “planner” or fit into the neat categories such as: corporate planner, association planner, government planner or independent planner. Sometimes those who plan meetings are administrative or executive assistants or even public relations executives (PCMA, 1996). Most meeting planners work in a planning department of either an association or corporation. This planning department’s function can range from communications, human resources, marketing, planning, and membership to training/education. The State of the Industry report (SOI) indicated planners had an average of thirteen years in meeting planning and eleven years with their current employer. However, most respondents fell within the one to five years with current employer category. The majority of meeting types planned were management, sales and incentive travel (Successful Meetings, 2001).

Traveling to attend meetings is the primary reason for business travel. About twenty percent of all business trips are for the purpose of attending corporate meetings or conventions (Mill, 1990). In February 2000, Yesawich, Pepperdine and Brown, Yankelovich Partners and USA *Today* found that in 1999, business travelers took trips for primarily three different reasons: association meetings (62%), corporate meetings (32%) and individual business trips (42%) (Miller et al, 2001).

The incentive travel market is one that can have a profound economic impact. The Successful Meetings SOI report (2001) indicated that these incentive meetings on average cost \$2,160 per attendee, and nearly 10% of planning organizations anticipated an increase in the number of incentives they would plan for the next year. Some planners' responses to the survey suggest that companies are becoming less cost-conscious because they recognize the value of meetings. An editor of *Successful Meetings* stated that there is a lack of appreciation for the importance of the tourism industry to the US economy: "The meetings industry represents the most important marketing and educational medium for people in business. It is the primary means of retraining Americans, of rethinking how we do business, and of remaining competitive in the world marketplace" (Judd, 1995, p. 176).

The convention industry tends to attract high-spending visitors and those who make repeat visits to a destination. Researchers in Hong Kong have suggested that MICE travelers tend to stay longer at a destination and spend more than the average traveler (Hunt, 1989). A trend that began to develop several years ago is that business travelers are mixing business with pleasure. Spouses and children are accompanying the business traveler domestically and internationally, and with the availability of resort activities this usually means the visitor will stay for one or two days longer, in the hopes of developing a "mini-vacation." (Gunn, 1997; Morse & Lanier, 1992).

Green (2001) points out that special events are including additional activities during the week leading up to or even after the event has taken place, adding value to the event. These additional activities add to the motives of the participants to attend the event. Convention and conference planners have found that pre and post-convention

cultural or scenic tours can be provided in and around the meeting venue. Itineraries may include different attractions in the surrounding area (Gunn, 1997). These “add on” activities can ultimately increase participation in an event and thereby create repeat visitors to an annual event as well as creating more economic revenue for the communities in which they are held (Green, 2001; Smith & Jenner, 1998).

The Perth Convention Bureau in 1994 and the Tasmanian Convention Bureau in 1996 conducted two studies in Australia on the importance of pre and post-convention tours. The findings suggest that pre and post-convention tourism has the potential to disperse economic impacts more widely throughout the host community (Dwyer, 2003). Var, Cesario, and Mauser (1985) conducted a longitudinal study on the factors that influenced conference attendance. Three main factors were identified: accessibility, emissiveness (the tendency of members of the group to attend annual conference- this includes attributes such as income and population) and attractiveness, with attractiveness incorporating the climate, leisure amenities and cultural activities. When including these attractive leisure amenities and cultural activities, it is a good idea for the meeting planner to study the profiles (demographics/cultural) their attendees so as to include activities that will be of interest to those attending the meeting (PCMA, 1996; Price & Becker, 2003).

Researchers for the MPI (Meeting Professionals International) Foundation investigated the reasons why people attend annual association meetings. They found that conference attendees could be grouped into five categories: knowledge seekers, value-based attendees, social networkers, convenience-driven attendees, and creatures of habit. They found that the knowledge seekers and the social networkers were most satisfied

with their experiences at annual association conferences. The knowledge seekers were those who are there to add to their knowledge of the profession. The social networkers were those who are most concerned with meeting colleagues in the industry and want to bring family to mix business with pleasure. Their satisfaction was due to the ideas/tools provided, speaker quality and networking opportunities provided (Trombino et al., 2000).

Oppermann (1996) commented that business aspects are only part of the reasons associated with attending conventions and meetings. Associations tend to place great importance on other factors (Readman, 2003). Activities that are scheduled within any convention or meeting are meant to encourage social interaction. These may include food and beverage gatherings, trade shows and recreational or sports activities such as golf or tennis (Price, Murrmann, & Clark, 1998). Sport has become an important part of the social activities included in MICE tourism (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Standeven & DeKnop, 1999).

Sport Tourism

Sport and tourism have been interrelated throughout history. However, the two phenomena have usually been treated as completely separate fields. Academic studies have either focused on sport or tourism and the two have rarely been joined together until the last decade (Glyptis, 1991, Gibson 1998a, Standeven & De Knop, 1999). However, sport is a special segment of the tourism industry. Standeven and De Knop explained that tourism encompasses *an experience of travel and place* and sport encompasses *an experience of physical activity*. The phenomenon of sport must be analyzed on all levels in order obtain a clearer understanding of the impact it has in relation to the tourism industry (Chen et al., 1998).

Sport tourism has a significant place in our society as well as our economy today. Sport and tourism both have been a source of regeneration strategies for cities and entire regions (Getz, 1997; Gratton et al. 2001, Higham, 1999, Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Sporting events can impact host communities in several ways, socio-culturally, economically, and environmentally (Orams & Brons, 1999; Standeven & De Knop). Travel done for the sole purpose of participation in or attending a sporting event was estimated to be a \$44 billion industry in the United States in 1999 (Ross, 2001). The economic impact of sport tourism has been difficult to measure, largely due to the lack of research and data available (Ross). Past research has shown that impacts on a host community of sporting events can be both positive and negative. The economic significance to the region may be negatively impacted by the costs involved in hosting the event in the form of infrastructure, the displacement of homes and jobs and destination image (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Higham; Orams & Brons; Ross).

Sport tourism is defined as “all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for noncommercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and work locality” (Standeven & De Knop, 1999; p.12). Gibson (1998a) defines sport tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (p. 49). Travelers attending sporting events, actively participating in commercial recreation or non-commercial outdoor recreation activities may all be considered types of sport tourists (Gartner, 1996).

Gibson (1998a) breaks sport tourism down into three separate categories: event sport tourism, nostalgia sport tourism, and active sport tourism. Event sport tourists include travelers who are spectators at hallmark events (e.g., Olympics), small-scale events, or even mega-events (e.g., Superbowl). Nostalgia or celebrity sport tourists are those who travel to visit attractions with specific ties to sport, such as stadia, halls of fame, museums and even sport themed cruises. Active sport tourists are those who actively participate in a sport while traveling away from home. They may travel specifically to participate in the sport or happen to take part in sport as leisure while on vacation or business trip (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Gibson, 1998b; Ross, 2001). In contrast, Standeven and De Knop (1999) simply look at sport tourism as a two-dimensional concept, active or passive.

Gammon and Robinson (1997/2003) developed a consumer classification model that illustrated the difference between “sports tourism” and “tourism sport”. They identified a sport tourist as someone who participates actively or passively in sport while traveling with sport as their primary motivation for travel. Tourism sport is defined as persons traveling and participating in sport either recreationally or competitively but as a secondary activity. For these tourists the primary motivation is travel and sport is a secondary reason for the vacation. Gammon and Robinson pointed out that understanding these differences in Sport and Tourism will help managers in both industry and education realize the diversity of the Sport Tourist.

Holiday tourists, business tourists and other tourists can all be sport tourists. Any of these tourists may engage actively or passively in sport while traveling. Holiday travelers may be passively engaged in sport as a casual observer or a passionate fan. As a

holiday traveler active in sport, individuals may participate in organized or independent holiday sport activities such as beach volleyball games, tennis matches or a round of golf (Standeven & De Knop, 1999). Active holiday tourist may plan a sport activity holiday, which may involve multiple sports or a single sport activity. Multiple sport activity holidays may take place at camps, clubs, hotels or adventure sport outings. Single sport activity holidays for example, focus on one aspect such as, sport, adventure sports, sporting tours or sport festivals (Standeven & De Knop).

One form of active sport tourism is fantasy sport camps (Gammon, 2002). These are a new trend that provide sport tourists with the chance to meet their favorite sport celebrities, while having the chance to actually participate alongside these icons. Stadium tours, hall of fame tours and sport museum tours are gaining in popularity as well (Gibson, 1998a). The development of sport in a region is primarily based on the available tourism resources. Golf and skiing respectively are seasonal and specific resources are needed to participate in these activities. Colder climates and mountainous terrain are conducive to skiing. Although, some winter resorts are capitalizing on the off-season by introducing summer activities such as golf, mountain biking and hiking. In Japan for instance, golf has had a recent boom in popularity however, land resources are limited which therefore drives up the prices of this exclusive sporting activity (Hinch & Higham, 2002; Readman, 2003; Standeven & De Knop, 1999).

Golf as Active Sport Tourism

A golf traveler can be someone who has planned the trip specifically to play golf or someone who happens to play while traveling, for business or leisure (Golf 20/20, 2003). There are about sixty million golfers in the world (Readman, 2003). Just over seventeen million U.S. adults (12%) played golf while on a trip of one hundred miles or

more away from home in the last twelve months, according to the June 1999 TIA Travel Poll. In this poll, 55% percent of the golfing travelers said golf was not a primary or secondary reason for the trip, but just a recreation activity on the trip (Miller et al., 2001). Golf tourism grew by 8% from 1998-1999 and currently brings in about \$10 billion annually. Golf represents the largest sports-related travel market (Pleumarom, 1992; Readman, 2003). Readman suggested golf tourism can include any form of golf participation such as casual participation, business or incentive golf, or simply observation of golf while traveling.

Although the start of golf is unknown, many agree that its origins were in Scotland many years ago, when shepherds used to hit small stones into rabbit holes with their crooks. Today, it is said to be Scotland's unofficial national sport. The sport grew and developed across Europe and America among the elite, upper class (Dobrian, 2002). In recent years golf has become democratized and throughout the 1980's and 1990's experienced tremendous growth in the number of participants (Nixon & Frey, 1996)

Traditionally golf has been dominated by participants from high income earning households, mostly white, affluent, highly educated men. (Gibson, 1998b; Miller et al, 2001; NGF, 2003; Wellner, 1997). In 2000, there were approximately 26.7 million golfers in the United States, up 34% since 1986 (NGF). Golf is very popular among older Americans. Ten percent of people over sixty years old have golfed at least once in the past year (Wellner, 1997). Seniors comprised 25% of all golfers in 2000 (age 50 and older) (NGF). College graduates are two times more likely to play golf than their high school graduate counterparts (Wellner). Women comprise half of the golf market, however, they currently only make up 22% (5.7 million) (NGF). Although golf is a sport

of the elite, it is fast becoming a trend of the young adult and empty-nester population. Golf spectators are the same as those who like to play the sport, while those attending PGA events have much higher incomes than those watching on television (Wellner).

Readman (2003) suggested golf could be used as a destination marketing tool. The expansion of the sport worldwide has increased the desire to travel for the purpose of playing the sport. This is the case with the Japanese, as Japan is a country with a strong economy, but has seasonality issues and facility shortages. The explosion of the interest in golf has led to an increase in golf tourism. Because golf tends to attract tourists from higher socioeconomic groups, Readman suggested that golf tourism has the potential to yield enormous profit.

One of the drawbacks to golf tourism is that golf courses have been under much scrutiny from the public for the impacts to the environment associated with land acquisition from agricultural farmers, land erosion, landslides and soil shifting, turf management, water management, waste management, and nature conservation (Pluemaron, 1992; Stubbs, 1998). For a golf course to be a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System is an attribute the course management can capitalize on. Audubon International provides information to help golf courses with: environmental planning wildlife and habitat management, chemical use and safety, water conservation, water quality management, and outreach and education (Audubon International, 2003).

Golf and MICE Tourism

Corporations have found that a golf outing, at a championship level golf course is an unbeatable way to boost attendance at sales meetings. “There is a direct correlation between golf events and the number of overall meetings held. Corporations feel there must be some type of recreation at their meetings- it can’t just be all learning and then go

home- so the choice isn't between having a meeting with golf or without golf, it's between having a meeting with golf or not having a meeting," according to John McConahy, a Pittsburgh based meeting manager (Davis, 2002). Davis further explained that corporate meetings are against eliminating a golf tournament from their meetings to save money. They would rather just not have the meeting at all. Many times the golf tournament is the highlight of the conference and is the main motivation for attendance at the meeting (Diekmann, 2002).

In recent years hotels and resorts have realized the profit potential in upgrading or enhancing their recreational facilities. Certainly, resorts have become a magnet for the active sport tourist (Gibson, 1998b). Resorts are now known for their recreational facilities, for example, golf courses, spas, tennis courts and fitness gyms (Gee, 1988). Increasingly, corporations and associations prefer to hold group meetings at resort hotels. Convention and meeting planners know that the amenities at a conference are extremely important when looking at a prospective hotel. Hyatt hotels have devoted an entire internet site to the incorporation of golf in meeting planning. In it Hyatt lists ways to match golf with the meeting needs (www.hyatt.com, 2003).

Over the last fifteen years golf and business have become inseparable. Golf has become recognized as a valuable networking tool. Executives from a diverse array of industries would meet at country clubs, play a round of golf together and gradually realized the possibility of doing business right there on the course (Dobrian, 2002). For some, golf is a way to create stronger relationships with clients or coworkers due to the leisurely pace of the sport. For this reason, many people take the time to golf during the weekday or while out of town on meetings (www.hyatt.com, 2003).

Executives eventually began to include their junior colleagues in golf and the game became a more common sport as a way of networking, team building, and motivating employees through camaraderie and stress relief. Golf provides an ideal atmosphere to mix business with pleasure (McCord, 1994). Golf is a great way to entertain clients and keep their attention for a set amount of time. The motivation for employees is to be out of the office the whole day entertaining these clients or teambuilding among themselves (McCann, 2001).

The game of golf has become a very popular tool in business networking today. The Chief Operations Officer of Daniels & Associates said, "Golf is a very social way of strengthening a relationship in a non-meeting fashion. You may not even talk any business during the round of golf, before, or after, but it helps open up the lines of communication" (Macnow, 1996, p.2). Golf entertaining has been emerging in the smaller meetings due to the downsizing of corporate America (Macnow).

Even among women, the links are being used as a business tool. Women are realizing the advantages playing at corporate outings and entertaining clients. Many have decided to take up the game, as well as attending golf clinics to improve their games in order to use it as a networking tool. (Dobrian, 2002; Macnow, 1996; McCord, 1994; Woo, 2002).

Tennis used to be the game of choice among executives. However, tennis is not as conducive to networking. Skiing is another sport among business people that is not as popular due to the constraints to networking. Companies that try skiing trips instead have to deal with different skill levels in the sport and therefore they spend their day on different slopes. In contrast, despite skill levels, a foursome of golfers can stay together

and play the same holes on the same course (Macnow, 1996). Business people agree that golf provides time in a natural setting where people can get to know each other. A lot can be learned about someone's personality and characteristics by sharing time with him or her on the golf course (McCord, 1994).

While it is generally assumed that individuals receive benefits from participating in sport, what exactly are those benefits? The four categories of impacts/benefits of sport and sport tourism as introduced by Standeven and DeKnop (1999) are: health, including both psychological and physiological factors such as self-esteem and aerobic exercise; socio-cultural, including networking opportunities, community empowerment and social identity; economic, including urban regeneration, local business leveraging, tourism and infrastructure development and increased employment; and environmental, including minimizing impacts on natural resources and education of facilities managers on waste management and preservation of native species and ecological areas. Golf is a sport that has the potential to endow its participants with benefits in all four of these areas. Golf tends to be a sport associated with business and especially meetings and conventions. Many people believe that proficiency in golf is the key to achieving success in the corporate world. Jim Frank, editor of *Golf* magazine, says, "Golf is a lifelong sport, it's not hard on you physically, and there's just no such thing as an ugly golf course" (Wellner, 1997, p. 101).

Challenges to Golf Tourism

Backman (1991) examined challenges as they pertain to golfers. She found that loyalty toward an activity sways an individual's perception of selected constraints. In other words, loyalty may influence the willingness to acknowledge or even negotiate these challenges. Petrick, Backman, Bixler, and Norman (2001) investigated the

motivations and constraints to golf by experience use history. They listed what seemed to be acknowledged as the most common barriers to golf according to survey participants: work responsibilities, family responsibilities, cost of greens fees and cart rental, lack of time to play golf, and ability to secure tee times.

According to a survey by Golf 20/20, some of the barriers identified for reasons why people do not participate in golf are: “Don’t have time” (62%), “Family obligations” (38%), “Expenses” (29%), “Health reasons” (18%), “No one wants to play with me” (16%), and “Don’t play well enough” (12%). Kreilkamp, Huebner, and Steinbrueck (2002) added to this list of challenges with: no interest, boring, no course to play on, and no opportunity/possibility. In Kreilkamp et al.’s study of the potential of golf in Germany the main reason why non-golfers with some experience refuse to play golf was financial. The next two main reasons were lack of interest and the perception that golf is boring. Following these reasons were, time issues and long distance from home to reach facilities. Image and lack of information were possible causes of these barriers to non-golfers, which were crucial to the decision not to try golf.

Because golfers value the social interaction of the game and place strong importance on it, they report the inability to find a partner often creates a challenge that prevents them from playing (NGF, 2001). Many youth refrain from actually playing golf due to the lack of equipment, training and affordability. Most golfers believe that affordability is one of the top three factors affecting play. Confidence in one’s skill has an effect on the willingness to play. Ball striking is listed as the single most important factor affecting the enjoyment of actually playing golf (Golf 20/20, 2002).

Gender differences may influence the interest in golf and therefore prohibit the inclusion of the sport in planning. Eccles and Harold (1991) suggest that gender differences in expectations and values are imbedded early on in life and are developed through gender role socialization. Gender role socialization could be one of the reasons females may not identify themselves with sport or being an athlete. Due to parental influences regarding appropriate gender-role behavior, females have typically received little reinforcement for participating in physical activity (Greendorfer, 1983). Through this socialization, lack of interest, and experience as well as lower skill level may result and therefore females may not be as motivated to include sport in their everyday lives (Greendorfer).

Higham and Hinch (2002) claim seasonality can dramatically affect golf tourism as well, with summer months generally being a peak time (not in the southern United States however). Institutional factors can also cause seasonality to affect tourism such as religious, cultural, ethnic and school holidays like spring break, Christmas, and national holidays (Hinch & Hickey, 1997). Butler (1994) suggested that there are three additional causes of seasonality: social pressure, sporting season, and inertia on the part of consistent travelers, who travel at the same time every year. Seasonality is a barrier to sport tourism and also golf tourism in that it inhibits development and economic gain. Seasonality in the form of weather can cause challenges to participation in golf. From 2000 to 2001, golf courses around the country experienced considerable losses in total rounds played due to weather related problems (Golf 20/20, 2002). Conventions and meetings can be beneficial when it comes to seasonality in tourism. They may complement the fluctuation in tourism activity (Braun & Rungeling, 1992).

Petick and Backman (2002) in two studies, found that golf travelers' intentions to revisit a destination comes from the perceived value of variables such as golf facilities and the overall golf experience not the golfer's abilities, average score or years of play. In the study the demographic variables of golf travelers indicated younger golf travelers seemed to have greater perceived value with their overall golf experience (which may be due to their fewer experiences as golf travelers) and were therefore more satisfied than their older more experienced counterparts.

Since image and lack of information are two of the main reasons for challenges to including golf, facility managers must build a positive image of golf. In addition, eliminating the lack of information to the market as well as information on golf's benefits is critical (Kreikamp et al., 2002).

There are a number of challenges that face those who wish to participate in the game of golf. These challenges may also present themselves to meeting planners while trying to include golf in their programs. The barriers to this inclusion as stated above may be: budget, weather, facilities, seasonality, no interest, no one to play with, and no time to play. The issue of gender roles and interest in sport may present itself as a challenge to golf participation and to the inclusion of the sport in meetings and conventions.

The Role of the Meeting Planner in Including Golf in MICE Tourism

There are many players in the MICE industry. These players may include: association/society planners, corporate planners, independent planners, consultants, government planners, destination management companies, non-profit planners, university/academic planners, convention centers, conference centers, tour operators, associations, trade shows and expositions, trade show sponsors, exposition or show

managers, service contractors, hotels and convention and visitors bureaus (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; MPI, 2003). The players may represent many different industries such as: hospitality, mass communications, educational institutions, food service, manufacturing companies, business services/research/consulting, financial/legal/real estate and transportation (MPI).

The demographics of the tourist in the MICE tourism industry are shifting. Although much of the workforce is currently composed of the baby boomer generation (which may affect the activities chosen to be included in meetings) generation Xers are a large part of the make up of players in the industry as well. Soon “gen-Xers” will be the most representative cohort in the industry, which may lead to a shift in planning style and decision-making (www.mpiweb.org). Growing globalization is driving greater emphasis on diverse cultural, social and demographic needs of those who plan meetings and their attendees.

The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) suggests that planners always need to keep in mind the objectives of the meeting and plan accommodations and recreational activities that are appropriate for the group, appropriate for the meeting objective and appropriate for the time allotment (PCMA, 1996). Past evaluations that have been done by meeting planners have been very beneficial in preferences of attendees when it comes to accommodations, local attractions, recreational activities and shopping and eating establishments (PCMA).

The time factor is one of the few downsides of incorporating a golf outing into a meeting schedule. There is not always a whole morning or afternoon to share, but the time factor is also one of the main strengths of including golf as part of a meeting

(McCann, 2001; Woo, 2002). Hyatt planners have suggested ways to fit golf into a planner's schedule of events, budgeting for a golf event, ways to select a golf site, planning for inclement weather, running a golf clinic, formats for golf tournaments, as well as accommodating the non-golfer. The attendees of the meeting determine the type of golf game the planner should include. A recreational round is that in which no effort is made by the planner to determine teams or playing format. It is simply a form of leisure that lends to the social aspect of the meeting. A tournament would suggest pairing foursomes according to ability, a specific scoring method such as scramble or best ball, and depending on the size of the tournament, sponsorship (www.hyatt.com, 2003).

Some characteristics of the meeting planner that may influence the decision to include golf in their planning are: age, gender, education level, years of experience in the business, personal experience with golf. In addition, it may be the demand by the participants of the meeting or the need for networking and social interaction among the attendees that influence the decision of the meeting planner to include golf. Golf tournaments sometimes take place at meetings and conventions on behalf of the planning of a participant not the meeting planner himself or herself.

The educational level of meeting planners tends to vary, however, today's meeting professionals are well educated. According to the results of MPI's 2001 Women's Leadership survey, sixty percent of those surveyed had bachelor's degrees, while a significant portion had graduate degrees. The average salary fell between \$50,000 and \$75,000, with many earning more (MPI, 2003).

As mentioned before, the demographic make up of those who participate in golf are primarily white, educated males with high income (Gibson, 1998b; Miller et al, 2001;

NGF, 2003; Wellner, 1997). This could have an effect on the inclusion of golf in meetings and conventions. If the demographic profile of meeting attendees is not typical of that of a golfer, there simply may not be interest in golf as an activity or “add on” event to the meeting or convention. Also the demographic characteristics of the meeting planner may have an influence on their interest of including golf as an activity in their programs. However, by including golf, the opportunity to spread interest in the sport among other profiles would be ideal in broadening the scope of players and reaching those markets that the PGA and LPGA have been targeting for years- the non-golfer (NGF).

Summary

The MICE industry makes up a significant portion of the tourism industry around the world. MICE functions increasingly include additional activities or “add on” events to encourage attendance which often leads to repeat visitation to the destination and a longer stay (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001). Pre and post convention tourism have also been proven to disperse economic impacts more widely through the host community (Dwyer, 2003). Golf tends to be included in a number of different MICE functions to give the attendees the opportunity to network outside of the meeting room and incur some physiological benefits as well (Dobrian, 2002; Woo, 2002). Research has indicated that economic, environmental, health and socio-cultural benefits can be derived from participating in sports and particularly golf.

Therefore, if these benefits can be accrued through participation in golf, meeting planners, if able to negotiate any challenges they may have, should include golf or some type of sport in their programs. This study sought to make a case as to why golf

specifically should be included and what perceptions the meeting planner held of the benefits and challenges to including golf in their MICE functions.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

This chapter describes the research methods used in this study and is divided into five sections: sampling frame, data collection, instrumentation, operationalization of the variables and data analysis and testing of the research questions. The first describes the sample of participants and how they were selected. The second explains the data collection process. The third explains how the survey was administered. The fourth details how the variables were operationalized and the instrument designed. The final section describes the treatment of data and how the research questions were tested.

Sampling Frame

A nonprobability sample of Meeting Professionals International planners across the United States was used. Also meeting planners from the Central Florida Chapter of the Society of Government Meeting Planners (SGMP) and other planners who are not affiliated with either of these organizations responded to the questionnaire during three data collection dates in March 2004 in Central Florida at either a MPI chapter meeting or a Meeting Planner Expo.

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) was founded in 1972 and is a major Association in the industry, which provides networking opportunities, professional development and research. MPI has 61 chapters around the world, with three more in formation, and nearly 20,000 members. This organization offers many content-rich events and educational opportunities for its members, both planners and suppliers.

The Society of Government Meeting Planners (SGMP) is a nonprofit professional organization including government meeting planners as well as suppliers of services to government planners. Represented in SGMP members include employees of federal, state, county and city government, as well as associations of governmental employees and government agencies. The Society of Government Meeting Professionals is the only national organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to improving the knowledge of those who plan and execute government meetings through education, training, and networking. (SGMP, 2003). MPI and SGMP both maintain a 50:50 ratio among planners and suppliers (MPI, 2003; SGMP, 2003).

Data Collection

This study used the “mixed mode” method suggested by Dillman (2000). This involves the use of more than one method such as telephone, mail or internet to collect data within a sample. Dillman’s method for email and web surveys was utilized to design and implement the online survey for this study. However, some of Dillman’s suggestions were not possible for this study due to the email “blast” method used by each of the MPI chapters. The online questionnaire was designed within a software package used by the University of Florida’s College of Health and Human Performance called “HHP Survey System”.

The survey, once approved by the Internal Review Board, was made available via a URL link through the University of Florida for 90 days beginning January 27, 2004 through April 27, 2004. The Internal Review Board’s contact information as well as the study investigators’ contact information was made available to the participants before taking the survey. A small introductory paragraph explaining the usefulness of the survey and the participant’s rights by law were explained before the respondents were

able to click on the survey link. Only those persons 18 years and over were included in the sample. Only planners were asked to participate in the survey. Participation was completely voluntary.

Three different methods were employed to gather the data for this quantitative study. The survey was administered online, presented in paper form at an MPI chapter meeting, and collected at two meeting planner expos in March 2004. A total of 13 MPI chapters across the nation were contacted to participate in the study via an online survey. Five declined participation and eight agreed to different methods of exposing the online survey to their planner members (See Table 1).

A press release was provided to each of the chapters to introduce the survey in electronic newsletters, printed newsletters and chapter websites. All of the MPI chapters were advised to send out the press release in a newsletter to advise planners of the upcoming survey. Then the MPI chapters were asked to display the link on their chapter websites and send out two to three emails containing the link to planner members in the chapter within a week of each other. A message was sent to invite them to participate. After approximately one month of the online survey administration among six MPI chapters, it was decided to contact four more MPI chapters to participate (of which two agreed), visit two meeting planner expos and one chapter meeting in Orlando, Florida to obtain a higher number of completed questionnaires.

A total of 142 surveys were obtained with 84 collected on paper and 58 online and used in data analysis. Of those that responded, 62 indicated that they were members of MPI and 14 indicated they were members of SGMP (Society of Government Meeting Planners). The remaining were either affiliated with other organizations or not affiliated

with any organization. The response rates for each method of data collection were as follows: Online 3.6% (5.1% without Northern California chapter of MPI), Expos 28%, Chapter meeting 5 out of 7 planners available (only 3.5% of the sample was collected using this method). A total overall response rate of 8% was calculated (10.5% without Northern California chapter of MPI).

Table 1 shows the eight MPI chapters who participated in the study online and the three data collection sites visited in March 2004. The table displays the number of planner members in each MPI chapter available to answer the survey online, the response rate of each chapter from the online version of the survey, and the methods agreed upon by each chapter for participation in the online study including the number of times planner members were notified to take the survey. The chapter Presidents chose specifically how their chapter would participate in the data collection process and what would best fit the needs of their chapter members. The table also demonstrates the collection of questionnaires at the Meeting Planner's Expo in Gainesville, Florida, and the response rate from this collection date. In addition, the data collected at an MPI chapter meeting in Orlando, Florida, and the estimated response rate of this method is presented. Lastly, the table below shows data collected at a meeting planner expo in Tampa, Florida (Success 2004 Meeting Marketplace).

Instrumentation

The survey was administered online and in paper format. The paper survey consisted of one page legal size, doubled sided with a total of 48 questions categorized in seven sections. The questions used in the development of the survey instrument for this study and how they were developed from the literature are listed in the tables below (2-7). The independent variables included characteristics of the meeting planner, past

Table 1: Data Collection Methods With Eight Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Chapters Across The United States And At Three Data Collection Sites In Florida.

Geographical Area	Chapter	Number of Planner Members Available	Response Rate	Actual 'n'	Method of Data Collection
Florida					
	North Florida	35	23%	8	Sent two email blasts containing URL to planner members between February 19 and February 26, 2004. Also included press release in January 2004 electronic newsletter
Meeting Planners' Expo	Gainesville, Florida 3/3/04	125	42.4%	53	Planners completed a paper copy of the survey. Note: 2 planners mentioned being a member of MPI but not a specific chapter, the remaining were members of SGMP or other organizations
	Greater Orlando	112	8%*	4	Included URL link in the electronic newsletter on February 4 and March 4, 2004. Press release included in printed newsletter in January 2004, and link on chapter website from March 3 to April 27, 2004
Greater Orlando Area MPI Chapter Meeting	Orlando, Florida 3/18/04	8	62.5%	5	Planners completed a paper copy of the survey at Greater Orlando Chapter of MPI chapter meeting in Orlando, Florida
	Tampa Bay	101	19%	19	Included URL link in the electronic newsletter for January/February 2004. Sent email blast to planners March 18, 2004. Note: 5 of the 19 were members of Tampa Bay MPI collected from the Success 2004 marketplace
Success 2004 Meeting Marketplace	Tampa, Florida 3/31/04	125	17%	21	Planners completed a paper copy of the survey. Some were members of Tampa Bay MPI chapter or organizations (see note above).

Table 1. Continued

Geographical Area	Chapter	Number of Planner Members Available	Response Rate	Actual 'n'	Method of Data Collection
Success 2004 Meeting Marketplace	South Florida	110	3.6%	4	Posted URL link on website from February 1 through April 27, 2004. Included URL link to survey in monthly newsletter for January/February 2004
East					
	Yankee (CT)	59	8.5%	5	Contacted to March 23, 2004 participate in the study. Chapter President sent two email blasts to planners between April 3 and April 12, 2004
South					
	Dallas/Ft. Worth	450	2%	8	Sent one email blast to planners on March 2, 2004
West					
	Arizona	190	3%	6	Contacted March 23, 2004 to participate in the study. Sent two email blasts out to planners between March 25 and April 10 2004. Also posted link on website April 1 through April 15, 2004
	Northern California	500	0.5%	2	Included URL link to survey in one bi-monthly email blast on March 4, 2004 and posted the URL link to the survey on website from February 11 through April 15, 2004**
Total		1832	8%	142	

*Percentage includes those 5 planners surveyed in Orlando, Florida on 3/18/04

**Icon used by Northern California chapter of MPI was not the same as the icon distributed to other chapters

experience of the meeting planner and demographic characteristics of the meeting planner. The dependent variables were perceived benefits (health, economic, socio-cultural, environmental), perceived challenges (time, budget, seasonality, facilities, interest, etc.) and support for including golf.

Operationalization of the Variables

The first part of the survey instrument consisted of six statements on a five point Likert scales ranging from ‘Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree’ (5) all beginning with the words “I believe..”. These statements were used to determine the meeting planners’ overall perception of the benefits of golf in their planning (e.g., the attendees, the host community, and the MICE industry). The second part of the survey was also examined on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Not at all important’ (1) to ‘Very important’ (5) and consisted of 18 questions, the beliefs of planners on each of the four domains of the benefits of golf, health (4 items), socio-cultural (5 items), economic (5 items), and environmental (4 items) (see Table 2). The third segment was designed to determine challenges meeting planners face to including golf in meetings (see Table 3). This segment had two open ended questions and one question on a five point Likert scale ranging from ‘Not a challenge’ at all (1) to ‘Extremely challenging’ (5). The fourth section (see Table 4) of the survey consisted of three questions each on a different 5-point Likert scale. The first question ranged from ‘Do not support’ (1) to ‘Strongly support’ (5). The second question ranged from ‘Not important’ (1) to ‘Extremely important’ (5). The third question ranged from ‘Not at all likely’ (1) to ‘Highly likely’ (5). These questions aimed to identify the level of support planners had for including golf in their programs currently and in the future. The fifth section (see Table 5) examined meeting planner’s personal involvement with golf as well as past experience with including golf in planning. This section contained five questions, three dichotomous (yes, no), one on a five point Likert scale ranging from ‘Not important’ (1) to ‘Extremely important’ (5) and one open-ended question. The sixth section aimed to understand the meeting planner’s professional characteristics with six questions, three closed ended, two open ended and

one dichotomous (yes, no). The final section inquired about demographic characteristics of the meeting planner consisting of seven questions, one dichotomous, 3 closed ended and 3 open ended questions (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis and Testing of the Research Questions

A complete descriptive profile of the participants of the survey was prepared (e.g., frequency distribution, cross-tabulations, mean, median, and standard deviation). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 12.0 was used in data analysis. All relationships in the study were tested for significance at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Question 1a. What does the socio-demographic profile of meeting planners in this study look like?

Question 1b. What does the professional profile of meeting planners in this study look like?

Simple frequencies were run to understand the socio-demographic profile of the sample and the professional profile of the sample.

Question 2a. What are the overall perceived benefits according to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

Question 2c. What is the most perceived benefit to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

Descriptive statistics and simple frequencies, means and standard deviations, were computed for the first six questions of the survey to investigate the overall benefits perceived by the meeting planners in this sample. To answer question 2c, the question with the highest mean score was noted.

Question 2b. Are there underlying dimensions of expressed benefits for including golf in meetings?

A factor analysis was run to determine the different components of expressed benefits, however the structure was not clean and therefore the variables were computed

based on reliability analysis due to small sample size and Cronbach alphas were referenced for reliability.

Table 2: Benefits of Golf in Meetings and Conventions

Domain	Item	Reference
Health	1. Physiological health benefits to attendees through aerobic exercise	(Standeven & DeKnop, 1999; Woo, 2002)
	2. Psychological health benefits to attendees such as release from everyday stress and relaxation	(Standeven & DeKnop, 1999)
	3. Attendees experience "feel good" factor due to positive feedback from peers and increased self-esteem	(Standeven & DeKnop, 1999)
	4. Attendees ability to enhance perceptions of control and mastery of skills	(Standeven & DeKnop, 1999)
Socio-cultural	1. Attendees experience sense of identity through participation in golf	(Chen et al, 1998; Weiss, 2001)
	2. Attendees experience social acceptance through participation in golf	(Krawczyk, 1996; Long & Sanderson, 2001; Segreave, 2000; Tajfel, 1986; Weiss, 2001)
	3. Attendees decision to attend your next meeting/convention due to networking opportunities created through golf	(Diekmann, 2002; Macnow, 1996; McCann, 2001; McCord, 1994)
	4. Attendees feel more positively about themselves through participation in golf	(Chiriboga & Pierce, 1983)

Table 2. Continued

Domain	Item	Reference
	5. Host community benefits from pride of having visitors enjoy local facilities	(Gratton & Henry, 2001)
Economic	1. Host community benefits through increased destination image	(Gratton & Henry, 2001)
	2. Host community benefits from enhancement of attendee's decision to revisit	(Gratton & Henry, 2001)
	3. Host community benefits from increased jobs through sport events	(Crompton, 1995)
	4. Host community benefits through increased investment in golf facilities	(Gratton & Henry, 2001; Gratton et al, 2001)
	5. Local businesses in host community benefit by influx of currency through shopping, purchasing or renting equipment, and visiting other golf courses	(Burgan & Mules, 1992; Chalip & Green, 2001)
Environmental	1. Educating participants of wise use of natural resources through golf	(Stubbs, 1998)
	2. Educating participants of environmental health through golf	(Stubbs, 1998)

Table 2. Continued

Domain	Item	Reference
	3. Educating participants on environmental impacts of golf courses	(Roberts, 1995)
	4. Participants' ability to experience local natural environment of host community	(Hiller, 1995)

Table 3. Support For Including Golf In Meetings And Conventions

Question on Support	Reference
1. Do you support the idea of including golf in meetings/conventions?	Exploratory
2. How important is including golf in future meetings to you?	Exploratory
3. How likely is it that you will include golf in future meetings that you plan?	Exploratory

Table 4. Challenges To The Inclusion Of Golf

Challenges	Reference
4. Budget	(Petrick et al, 2001)
5. Weather	(Hinch & Higham, 2001)
6. Site location	(Krielkamp et al, 2002)
7. Facilities available	(Krielkamp et al, 2002)
8. No interest	(Krielkamp et al, 2002; PCMA, 1996)
9. Not consistent with group (group profile)	(Krielkamp et al, 2002; PCMA, 1996)
10. Time factor	(Golf 20/20, 2003; McCann, 2001; PCMA, 1996; Petrick et al, 2001; Woo, 2002)
11. Length of meeting	(Petrick et al, 2001)

Table 5: Meeting Planner's Past Experience With Golf

Question	Reference
1. Have you ever included golf in your planning?	Exploratory
2. Have you ever played golf yourself?	Exploratory
3. Do you currently play golf?	Exploratory
4. How important is the game of golf to you personally?	Exploratory
5. How many times a year do you play golf?	Exploratory

Table 6: Meeting Planner's Characteristics

Question	Reference
1. How many years have you been in the business of meeting/convention planning?	(Successful Meetings, 2001)
2. How many meetings/events per year do you plan?	(MPI, 2003)
3. What types of meetings do you plan?	(MPI, 2003)
4. What is the usual number of attendees in your meetings/events?	(MPI, 2003; PCMA 1996)
5. What is the usual length of meetings/events you plan in days?	(MPI, 2003)
6. Do you work for a DMO? (e.g., CVB, State Tourism Board?)	Exploratory

Table 7: Meeting Planner's Demographics

Question	Reference
1. Gender	(MPI, 2003)
2. What year were you born?	(MPI, 2003)
3. What is your highest level of education completed?	(Successful Meetings, 2001)
4. Are you a certified CMP?	(MPI, 2003)
5. What is your income range?	(MPI, 2003)
6. What state do you live in?	Exploratory
7. What MPI chapter are you a member of?	Exploratory

Question 3a. What are the overall expressed challenges for including golf in meetings?

Question 3b. What is the most expressed challenge by meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

A content analysis was used to examine the open ended responses and ranged according to frequency. The contents were collapsed into nine categories for question 2a and five categories for question 2b.

Question 4a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the expressed benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 5a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the expressed benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 6a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the expressed benefits for including golf in meetings?

To understand the dependent variable of expressed benefits, the 18 questions in the survey on the four domains of benefits were computed into four variables, health, socio-cultural, economic and environmental. To answer questions 3a, 4a, and 5a, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed on these four domains (dependent variable) and the independent variables of meeting planner's past experience with golf, meeting planner's years in the business, and the demographic characteristics (4 items- age, gender, income and education). Independent sample t-tests were used to determine the relationship between expressed benefits and gender.

The variable 'meeting planner's past experience' was taken from the five questions and one score was computed. The answers to each question were given a score and the planner could then rank between one and 12, with one having the least personal experience with golf and twelve having the highest. However, after the frequency was run for the overall score of one to twelve, 60% of the planners had a score ranging from

one to four. Therefore, a new range was created for the variable of past experience with golf. Those with a score of one to two changed to one, three to four changed to two and five and over (up to 12) were changed to three. A post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD was employed to determine the specific difference between the groups.

Question 4b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 5b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 6b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

After the content analysis was run to identify the most expressed challenge by meeting planners to including golf in meetings, the five categories were quantified one through five with the most expressed challenge receiving a score of one and the least five. Crosstabulations were used to examine the relationship between each of the expressed challenges, the new past experience with golf variable, the meeting planner's years in the business, and each of the four demographic variables. The chi-square statistic was noted for significance.

Question 4c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 5c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 6c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 7. What is the relationship between the type of meeting planned and the meeting planner's support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between the three support items (dependent variable) and the meeting planner's past experience with golf variable, the meeting planner's years in the business, the type of meeting planned and

each of the four demographic variables (independent sample t-test was used to determine the relationship between gender and support). Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was also employed to determine the specific differences between the groups.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are illustrated in three major sections of this chapter. First a description and analysis of the key variables used in the study are introduced. Then the results of each research question are addressed.

Description of the Dependent Variables

Perceptions of the Benefits of Golf

The first independent variable was perceived benefits. Six items operationalized the overall perceptions of the benefits of including golf in MICE functions, these included, one item on health, one item on environmental and two items each on economic and socio-cultural benefits. The second part of the second research question, ‘Are there underlying dimensions of perceived benefits for including golf in meetings’ is answered by understanding the responses to these six items.

The four domains of benefits of sports are health, socio-cultural, economic and environmental. An index comprised of these domains was created to understand the perceptions of meeting planners and their beliefs of each of the domains. The health domain contained four items, which addressed physiological and psychological benefits: 1) physiological, 2) psychological, 3) feel good, and 4) mastery of skills. The socio-cultural domain contained five items, which addressed benefits to both the attendees and the host community: 1) attendees experience a sense of identity, 2) attendees experience social acceptance, 3) networking opportunities, 4) attendees feel more positively about themselves, and 5) host community experiences civic pride. The economic domain

contained five items which addressed economic benefits to host community: 1) enhanced destination image, 2) attendee's decision to revisit, 3) increased jobs through sport events, 4) increased investment in golf facilities, and 5) local businesses benefit by expenditures on shopping, purchasing or renting equipment, and visiting other golf courses. The environmental domain contained four items addressing reduced environmental impacts through education of attendees: 1) education of wise use of natural resources, 2) education of environmental impacts, 3) ability to experience local natural environment, and 4) education on environmental health.

A factor analysis was run to determine the different components of perceived benefits, however the structure was not clean due to small sample size and therefore the variables were computed based on reliability analysis which referenced Cronbach alpha statistic. The health domain registered an alpha value of .80 (see Table 8); the socio-cultural domain had an alpha value of .85 (see Table 9); the economic domain had an alpha value of .89 (see Table 10), while the environmental domain registered an alpha value of .89 (see Table 11). The third item in the environmental domain, ability to experience local natural environment, was not used due to the results of the Cronbach

Table 8: Correlation Matrix And Reliability Analysis For Attendee Health Benefits Related To Golf Participation Items

Health	Item Mean	SD	Physiological	Psychological	Feel good	Mastery of skills
Physiological benefits	2.56	1.141	1.000			
Psychological benefits	3.49	1.142	.592	1.000		
Feel good factor	3.39	1.054	.437	5.92	1.000	
Mastery of skills	2.81	1.127	.459	.465	.450	1.000

Alpha = .80

alpha statistic, which revealed a higher alpha if the item was deleted (.93).

Table 9: Correlation Matrix And Reliability Analysis For Attendee Socio-Cultural Benefits Related to Golf Participation Items

Socio-cultural	Item Mean	SD	Sense of identity	Social acceptance	Net-working	Feel positively	Host community pride
Attendees experience a sense of identity	2.96	1.155	1.000				
Attendees experience social acceptance	3.29	1.190	.648	1.000			
Networking Opportunities	3.43	1.255	.456	.566	1.000		
Attendees feel more positively about themselves	3.21	1.102	.657	.686	.569	1.000	
Host community pride	3.11	1.232	.527	.497	.321	.461	1.000

Alpha =.85

Perceived Challenges

The dependent variable, perceived challenges was operationalized with three items. A content analysis was used to examine the open-ended responses. The contents were collapsed into nine categories for the first question, “in your opinion, what challenges do you experience to including golf in your planning?” and five categories for the question, “what is the biggest challenge to including golf in your planning?” The third item was measured on a five-point Likert scale from ‘No challenge at all’ (1) to ‘Extremely challenging’ (5) asking “how challenging is it for you to include golf in your planning” (See Appendix A). The third item was not used in the analysis of the research

Table 10. Correlation Matrix And Reliability Analysis For Host Community Economic Benefits Related To Inclusion Of Golf Items

Economic	Item Mean	SD	Destination image	Attendee's decision to revisit	Increased jobs	Invest golf facilities	Local businesses
Host community benefits through enhanced destination image	3.15	1.158	1.000				
Host community benefits from attendee's decision to revisit	3.18	1.231	.687	1.000			
Host community benefits from increased jobs through sport events	2.93	1.253	.521	.647	1.000		
Host community benefits through increased investment in golf facilities	2.88	1.205	.602	.683	.678	1.000	
Local businesses benefit by expenditures on shopping, purchasing or renting equipment, and visiting other golf courses	3.17	1.142	.519	.634	.588	.668	1.000

Alpha = .89

Table 11: Correlation Matrix And Reliability Analysis For Environmental Education Benefits Related To Inclusion Of Golf Items

Environmental	Item Mean	SD	Natural resources	Impacts of golf course users	Environmental health
Educating participants of wise use of natural resources through golf	2.35	1.172	1.000		
Educating participants of environmental impacts of golf course users	2.39	1.144	.856	1.000	
Educating participants on environmental health through golf	2.43	1.173	.817	.779	1.000

Alpha = .89

Note: One item eliminated due to Cronbach's alpha if item deleted = .93.

questions. Only the five categories from the second item understanding the biggest challenge to including golf in planning were used in the analysis of the research questions.

Support for the Inclusion of Golf

The third dependent variable in the study was support for the inclusion of golf in MICE tourism. This construct was measured with three items on different five point likert scales; agreement of support, importance, and likelihood (see Appendix A). All three of these items were used in the analysis of the research questions.

Results of the Research Questions

Question 1a. What does the socio-demographic profile of meeting planners in this study look like?

Question 1b. What does the professional profile of meeting planners in this study look like?

Table 12 outlines the socio-demographic profile of the study sample. A majority of the respondents were females (79.1%), and the mean age of the respondents was 43.7 years, with two-thirds of the sample being between ages 36 and 55. The majority of the respondents reported an education level of one to four years of college (70.2%) and

another fifth of the sample reported having an education level of graduate school. Half (50.0%) of the participants reported an annual income between \$25,000 and \$49,999, and about one-quarter of the respondents (25.8%) reported an annual income between \$50,000 and \$74,999.

Table 12: Socio-Demographic Profile Of Respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Male	29	20.9
Female	110	79.1
Total	139	100.0
Age		
25 to 35	27	21.4
36 to 45	44	34.9
46 to 55	40	31.7
56 or older	15	11.9
Total	126	100.0
Education		
Less than high school	12	8.6
1-4 yrs college	99	71.2
Graduate school	28	20.1
Total	139	100.0
Income		
\$0 to 24,999	15	11.4
\$25,000 to 49,999	66	50.0
\$50,000 to 74,999	34	25.8
\$75,000 or more	17	12.9
Total	132	100.0

Note: percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 13 illustrates the professional profile of the respondents in this study. The profile indicated that the majority (41.0%) of the planners have only been in the business between one and five years, and just over one-quarter of the respondents have been in the business over 15 years (Table 9). About two-thirds of the sample (65.7%) planned fewer than 25 meetings per year and one-quarter of them planned 26 to 100 meetings per year.

Seminars (68.8)%, conferences (54.6%) and corporate meetings (51.8%) were the most planned adult learning opportunities by the respondents. Only five percent of the sample indicated they worked for a Destination Management Organization (DMO).

Furthermore, about 23% of the respondents reported having a CMP (Certified Meeting Planner) and another 10% indicated having other certifications (CMM, CAE, other).

Table 13: Professional Profile Of Respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Years in the business		
1 to 5 years	57	41.0
6 to 10 years	25	18.0
11 to 15 years	21	15.1
Over 15 years	36	25.9
Total	139	100.0
Number of meetings planned per year		
Less than 25	90	65.7
26 to 100	35	25.5
Over 100	12	8.7
Total	137	100.0
Types of learning opportunities planned¹		
Tradeshows	52	36.9
Seminars	77	54.6
Conventions	46	32.6
Association meetings	48	34.0
Conferences	97	68.8
Incentives	40	28.4
Corporate meetings	73	51.8
Other	31	22.1
Work for Destination Management Org	7	5.0
Certifications²		
CMP	32	22.9
Other (e.g., CMM, CAE,)	14	10.0

Note: The percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

¹ Based on total count: What types of leaning opportunities do you plan? (check all that apply). Items are not mutually exclusive an therefore do not equal 100%

² Based on total count: Do you have a certification? (check all that apply) CMP, CMM, CAE, Other. Items are not mutually exclusive.

Table 14 shows a cross-tabulation of annual income by years in the business. Over half of those who earned over \$75,000 annually had been in the business over 15 years. Over half of those who earned less than \$25,000 annually had been in the business one to five years and almost half of those who earned \$25,000 to \$49,999 had been in the business one to five years also. This table indicates that the more years the planner has been in the business the higher their income tends to be.

Table 14: Cross-Tabulation Of Income By Years In The Business

Meeting Planner's Years in the business	Income			
	\$0 to \$24,999 (n) %	\$25,000 to \$49,999 (n) %	\$50,000 to \$74,000 (n) %	Over \$75,000 (n) %
1 to 5 yrs	57.1 (8)	44.6 (29)	32.4 (11)	17.6 (3)
6 to 10 yrs	14.3 (2)	21.5 (14)	17.6 (6)	17.6 (3)
11 to 15 yrs	7.1 (1)	16.9 (11)	20.6 (7)	5.9 (1)
Over 15 yrs	21.4 (3)	16.9 (11)	29.4 (10)	58.8 (10)
Total	100.0 (14)	100.0 (65)	100.0 (34)	100.0 (17)

Note: The percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Question 2a. What are the overall perceived benefits according to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

Question 2c. What is the most perceived benefit to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

Table 15 shows the six items used to measure overall perception of benefits in the four domains. Simple frequency distributions, means and standard deviations were run to determine the perception of benefits within the sample. The items measured on a five-point Likert scale from 'Strongly disagree' (1) to 'Strongly agree' (5) all had means that measured at least 3.13 or above. Most respondents indicated either "neither" or "agree" with each item. The item with the highest mean score (4.22) was health benefits to MICE attendees. This indicated that respondents tended to agree or strongly agree that there are health benefits to including golf in MICE functions. The item with the next highest mean

score (4.02) was economic benefits to the host community. This indicated that respondents tended to agree that there are economic benefits to the host community. The next three important items were perception of economic benefits to the MICE industry (3.85), socio-cultural benefits to the host community (3.80) and socio-cultural benefits to MICE attendees (3.72). The item that scored the lowest was the environmental benefits item (3.13). This indicated that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that there are environmental benefits to including golf in meeting planning (see “agree” column in Table for explanation).

The overall expressed challenges ranged from cost to alternate activities for non-golfers. The most expressed challenge was cost (n=29). The next most expressed challenge was time in the meeting or conference agenda for including golf (n=28). Lack of interest by attendees including lack of early commitment by attendees to participate and not requested through needs assessment was the third most expressed challenge (n=22) (See Table 16).

When asking the respondents what the biggest challenge to including golf in their planning was the top five responses are listed in Table 17. Similar to the expressed challenges, cost was indicated as the biggest challenge to including golf in meetings (n=21). However, planning and logistics was listed as the second biggest challenge to incorporating golf in meetings (n=19). This includes setting tee times and whether or not to contract out the planning to separate golf tournament planners. Time then was reported as the third biggest challenge to including golf (n=17) and lack of interest by attendees was the fourth biggest challenge (n=11). Finding facilities, which included

Table 15: Planners' Perceptions Of Overall Benefits Of Including Golf In Their Planning

Perception of Overall Benefits	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	St Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
Health benefits to MICE attendees who participate in golf during MICE functions	0.0	2.1	5.0	61.7	31.2	4.22	0.63
Economic benefits to the host community if golf is an included activity in your planning	0.0	3.6	13.7	59.7	23.0	4.02	.72
Economic benefits to the MICE industry if golf is an included activity in your planning	.70	4.3	20.7	57.9	16.4	3.85	.77
Socio-cultural benefits to the host community if golf is an included activity in you planning (e.g., civic pride, empowerment)	1.4	5.0	20.6	58.2	14.9	3.80	.80
Socio-cultural benefits to MICE attendees if golf is an included activity in your planning (e.g., networking, social interaction)	.70	5.7	26.4	55.0	12.1	3.72	.78
Environmental benefits (reduced environmental impacts) if golf is an included activity in your planning (e.g., informing participants of impacts through golf course signage)	3.5	15.6	48.2	29.1	3.5	3.13	.85

Note: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neither (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)
St Dev (Standard Deviation)

Question 3a. What are the overall expressed challenges for including golf in meetings?

Question 3b. What is the most expressed challenge by meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

finding a course with a good price or one that is challenging enough for skilled players but not too challenging for the beginner was the fifth biggest challenge expressed to including golf in meetings (n=10).

Table 16: Expressed Challenges To Including Golf In Meetings

Expressed Challenges	Frequency
Cost	29
Time	28
Lack of interest (attendees)	22
Planning and Logistics	20
Other*	14
Transportation	9
Finding facility	8
Equipment rental and transport	8
None	5
Alternate activities for Non-golfers	4

Note: Question on survey asked, “In your opinion, what challenges do you experience to including golf in your planning?”

*Other includes: skill level of attendees (n=3), sponsorship (n=3), location (n=3), number of attendees (n=3), and weather (n=2).

Table 17: Biggest Expressed Challenges To Including Golf In Meetings

Biggest Challenge Expressed*	Frequency
Cost	21
Planning and Logistics	19
Time	17
Lack of interest (attendees)	11
Finding Facilities	10

Note: Question on survey asked, “What is the biggest challenge to including golf in your planning?”

*Variable used in analysis of relationships between independent variables.

Question 4a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner’s past experience with golf and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 5a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner’s years in the business and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 6a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner’s demographic characteristics and the perceived benefits for including golf in meetings?

To understand the dependent variable of expressed benefits, the eighteen questions in the survey on the four domains of benefits were computed into four indexes, health, socio-cultural, economic and environmental. To answer research questions 4a, 5a, and 6a, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with post hoc Tukey’s HSD test was utilized to investigate the relationship between the four benefit domains (dependent variable) and

the independent variables of meeting planner's past experience with golf, meeting planner's years in the business, and the meeting planner's demographic characteristics (4 items- age, gender, income and education). An independent sample t-test was used to determine the relationship between expressed benefits and gender. The independent variable, meeting planner's past experience was computed into one overall score which was divided into three categories, novice (1-2), intermediate(3-4) and highly experienced (5-12).

The results revealed that there was a significant relationship between the perception socio-cultural benefits and the meeting planner's past experience with golf at the .05 level. Planners with high experience with golf in their personal lives were significantly more likely to agree there are socio-cultural benefits to including golf in meetings than were planners with low experience with golf. Those planners who were more

Table 18: One-Way Analysis Of Variance For The Relationship Between The Meeting Planner's Past Experience With Golf And Perception Of Benefits

Benefits	Meeting Planner's Past Experience with Golf						F Value	Sig.
	Low experience (scale 1-2)		Intermediate (scale 3-4)		High experience (scale 5 and up)			
	Mean (n=39)	SD ¹	Mean (n=41)	SD ¹	Mean (n=56)	SD ¹		
Health	2.76	0.81	3.11	0.80	3.17	0.95	2.774	.066
Socio-cultural	2.86 ^a	0.95	3.21	0.88	3.35 ^b	0.95	3.320*	.039*
Economic	2.75	0.88	3.09	1.05	3.14	1.03	1.882	.156
Environmental	2.19	0.95	2.42	1.14	2.38	1.14	0.548	.579

* indicates significance at $p \leq .05$

Note: items with different superscripts indicate significant differences. For example, planners with high experience with golf in their personal lives (b) were significantly more likely to agree there are socio-cultural benefits to including golf in meetings than were planners with low experience with golf (a).

¹Standard Deviation

experienced with golf tended to agree more that there were benefits in all domains.

However, it is of interest that the socio-cultural domain had the highest mean scores

across all three categories of planner's golf experience and that the environmental domain had the lowest mean scores (see Table 18).

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with post hoc Tukey's HSD test was utilized to investigate the relationship between the dependent variables and the meeting planner's years in the business. The results identified a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level. However, it is of interest that the health and socio-cultural domains had the highest mean scores among all years in the business categories (see Table 19).

Table 19: Analysis Of Variance For The Relationship Between The Meeting Planner's Years In The Business And Perception Of Benefits

Meeting Planner's Years in the Business										
Benefits	1 to 5 yrs		6 to 10 yrs		11 to 15 yrs		Over 15 yrs		F Value	Sig.
	Mean (n=55)	SD ¹	Mean (n=25)	SD ¹	Mean (n=20)	SD ¹	Mean (n=36)	SD ¹		
Health	2.88	0.81	3.25	0.74	3.35	0.70	2.95	1.10	2.055	.109
Socio-cultural	3.02	0.86	3.41	0.91	3.27	0.80	3.16	1.14	1.094	.354
Economic	3.00	0.82	3.08	1.00	2.99	1.03	2.99	1.24	0.046	.987
Environmental	2.24	0.98	2.57	1.19	2.52	1.14	2.23	1.12	0.845	.472

¹Standard Deviation

Note: Items measured on five-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5)

An analysis of variance was utilized to investigate the relationship the dependent variable and the meeting planner's demographic characteristics (independent sample t-test was used to determine the relationship between gender and benefits). A post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was employed to determine the specific differences between the groups.

The results identified a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level. However, in spite of this, it is worthy to note that females tended to lean slightly more towards

agreeing that there are health, socio-cultural, and economic benefits to golf. While males tended to lean slightly more toward disagreeing that there are benefits in all four domains. Males and females both tended to disagree that there were environmental benefits to including golf in MICE tourism (see Table 20).

Planners across all age groups tended to agree that there were socio-cultural benefits to including golf. Similar to previous findings, all age groups tended to indicate less agreement with environmental benefits of including golf in planning. Interestingly, those planners over age 55 tended to neither agree nor disagree that there were environmental benefits to including golf in meetings (see Table 20).

Planners with lower levels of education (high school or less) tended to agree that there were health, socio-cultural and economic benefits more so than planners with higher education levels. Again, the socio-cultural benefits received the highest mean scores across all education levels and environmental received the lowest mean scores. In addition, those planners with higher levels of education tended to disagree the most that there are environmental benefits to including golf (see Table 20).

It is interesting that those planners with the lowest income range tended to agree more that there were benefits to including golf in meetings. The socio-cultural domain received the highest level of agreement from planners in all income ranges except for those planners earning less than \$25,000 annually, for this group the economic domain received a higher level of agreement. Those planners earning \$75,000 or more annually tended to disagree more that there were benefits (in all four domains) to including golf in meetings than those in other income ranges.

Question 4b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 5b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 6b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Crosstabs were used to examine the relationship between each of the expressed challenges and the meeting planner's past experience with golf, the meeting planner's years in the business, and each of the four demographic variables. The chi-square statistic was noted for significance.

Table 20: One-Way Analysis Of Variance For Demographics On Perceived Benefits (T-Test For Gender)

Demographic Characteristics	Perceived Benefits			
	Health (Mean)	Socio-cultural (Mean)	Economic (Mean)	Environmental (Mean)
Gender				
Male	2.91	2.94	2.68	1.98
Female	3.06	3.21	3.10	2.42
	F=3.110, p=.080	F=.455, p=.501	F=.076, p=.784	F=.369, p=.545
Age				
25 – 35	3.04	3.27	2.85	2.16
36 – 45	3.12	3.18	2.99	2.21
46 – 55	2.80	3.01	2.88	2.36
56 and over	3.07	3.21	3.20	2.79
	F=.986, p=.402	F=.458, p=.712	F=.454, p=.715	F=1.223, p=.304
Education				
Less than high school	3.21	3.32	3.40	2.79
1-4 yrs college	3.05	3.18	3.00	2.34
Graduate school	2.96	3.10	2.97	2.18
	F=.344, p=.709	F=.225, p=.799	F=.910, p=.405	F=1.330, p=.268
Income				
\$0 to 24,999	3.30	3.40	3.56	2.60
\$25,000 to 49,999	3.06	3.22	3.08	2.53
\$50,000 to 74,999	3.06	3.20	2.87	2.15
\$75,000 or more	2.93	3.02	2.80	2.11
	F=.478, p=.698	F=.425, p=.735	F=2.010, p=.116	F=1.487, p=.221

For question 4b, the results indicated a lack of statistical significance at the .05 level. In spite of this, it is interesting to note that the top two expressed challenges were expressed most by those planners who were highly experienced with golf (cost and planning and logistics). The challenge of time was greatest for those planners with intermediate experience with golf. Cost and finding facilities expressed challenges were expressed most by those planners who had low experience with golf (see Table 21).

Table 21: Cross-Tabulation Of Meeting Planner's Past Experience By Most Expressed Challenges

Most Expressed Challenges	Meeting Planner's Past Experience with Golf		
	Low Experience	Intermediate	High Experience
	%	%	%
Cost	27.8	15.0	32.5
Planning and Logistics	16.7	20.0	30.0
Time	5.6	40.0	20.0
Lack of interest*	22.2	20.0	7.5
Finding facilities	27.8	5.0	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

$X^2= 14.832$ $df=8$ $p= .063$

*Indicates Lack of interest by attendees

A crosstab was used to determine the relationship between meeting planner's years in the business and expressed challenges. The results indicated a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level. However, those planners in the business from one to five years (31.8%) and from six to ten years (29.4%) identified cost as the most expressed challenge. Planners in the business from eleven to fifteen years expressed time as being their biggest challenge (41.7%). Those planners in the business over fifteen years identified planning and logistics as their biggest challenge (29.6%) to including golf in meetings (see Table 22).

A crosstab was used to determine the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and expressed challenges. The results indicated a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level. In spite of this, it is worthy to note that more

males indicated that cost (42.1%) was the biggest challenge and more females indicated that time (25.4%) was the biggest challenge. Those planners between the ages of 25 and

Table 22: Cross-Tabulation Of Meeting Planner's Past Experience By Most Expressed Challenges

Most Expressed Challenges	Meeting Planner's Years in the Business			
	1 to 5 yrs	6 to 10 yrs	11 to 15 yrs	Over 15 yrs
	%	%	%	%
Cost	31.8	29.4	25.0	22.2
Planning and Logistics	27.3	11.8	25.0	29.6
Time	9.1	17.6	41.7	25.9
Lack of interest*	18.2	23.5	8.3	7.4
Finding facilities	13.6	17.6	0	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

$X^2= 10.53$ $df=12$ $p= .570$

*Indicates lack of interest by attendees

45 indicated that cost was the biggest challenge. Those planners over 45 years old indicated that both planning and logistics and time were the biggest challenges to including golf in their planning (see Table 23).

The majority of planners with lower education levels (high school or less) expressed time (71.4%) as being their biggest challenge. Those planners with one to four years of college indicated that cost (25.0%) and planning and logistics (28.8%) were their biggest challenges to including golf in meetings. Planners with a graduate education were more divided among the five categories of expressed challenges but indicated that cost was the biggest (33.3%).

Fifty percent of planners with an annual income below \$25,000 indicated cost as their biggest perceived challenge. Those planners with an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999 were evenly distributed throughout the five categories of perceived challenges, as were those planners with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999. One-third of planners with an annual income of \$75,000 or more indicated each cost (33.3%) ,

planning and logistics (33.3%) and time (33.3%) were their biggest perceived challenges (see Table 23).

Table 23: Cross-Tabulation Of Demographics On Perceived Challenges In Percentages

Demographic Characteristics	Perceived Challenges					Total %
	Cost %	Planning and Logistics %	Time %	Lack of Interest* %	Finding Facilities %	
Gender						
Male	42.1	26.3	10.5	15.8	5.3	100.0
Female	22.0	23.7	25.4	13.6	15.3	100.0
$X^2= 4.823$ $df=12$ $p= .306$						
Age						
25 – 35	35.3	11.8	17.6	17.6	17.6	100.0
36 – 45	33.3	22.2	22.2	14.8	7.4	100.0
46 – 55	21.1	26.3	26.3	15.8	10.5	100.0
56 and over	18.2	27.3	27.3	9.1	18.2	100.0
$X^2= 4.443$ $df=12$ $p= .974$						
Education						
Less than high school	28.6	0.0	71.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
1-4 yrs college	25.0	28.8	19.2	15.4	11.5	100.0
Graduate school	33.3	22.2	11.1	16.7	16.7	100.0
$X^2= 13.693$ $df=12$ $p= .090$						
Income						
\$0 to 24,999	50.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
\$25,000 to 49,999	25.7	22.9	22.9	17.1	11.4	100.0
\$50,000 to 74,999	18.2	27.3	22.7	18.2	13.6	100.0
\$75,000 or more	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
$X^2= 7.308$ $df=12$ $p= .837$						

*Indicates lack of interest by attendees

Question 4c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 5c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 6c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between the three support items (dependent variable) and the meeting planner's past experience with golf,

the meeting planner's years in the business, and each of the four demographic variables (independent sample t-test was used to determine the relationship between gender and support). A post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was also employed to determine the specific differences between the groups.

The results indicated a significant relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and all three items of support at the .001 level. There was a significant difference between the planners with low experience and planners with high experience with golf for the item of supporting the idea of including golf in meetings. As experience increased, so did the level of support. There was a significant difference between the planners with low experience and planners with intermediate experience. As well, planners with low experience and planners with high experience were significantly different from one another with regards to the importance of including golf in future meetings. Again as experienced increased, so did the importance of including golf in future meetings. Moreover, there was a significant difference between planners with low experience and planners with high experience with golf for the item of likelihood to include golf in future meetings. As past experience with golf increased, so did the likelihood of including golf in future meetings. Table 24 indicates there is a positive linear relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and support for the inclusion of golf in meetings and conventions.

Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between the three support items and the meeting planner's years in the business. A post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was employed to determine the specific differences between the groups. The results identified a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level.

Planners, regardless of the number of years they have been in the business, tended to support the idea of including golf in meetings. Those planners having one to five years in the business felt it was only somewhat important and were only somewhat likely to

Table 24: One-Way Analysis Of Variance For The Relationship Between The Meeting Planner's Years In The Business And Support For Inclusion Of Golf In Meetings

Support for inclusion of golf	Meeting Planner's Past Experience with Golf						F Value	Sig.
	Low Experience		Intermediate		High Experience			
	Mean (n=39)	SD ¹	Mean (n=41)	SD ¹	Mean (n=57)	SD ¹		
Support idea of golf in meetings ²	2.95 ^a	1.19	3.46	0.90	3.91 ^b	1.02	10.002***	.000***
Important to include golf in future meetings ³	2.23 ^a	1.39	2.98 ^b	1.33	3.44 ^b	1.30	9.519***	.000***
Likely to include golf in future meetings ⁴	2.59 ^a	1.43	3.02	1.31	3.63 ^b	1.28	7.359***	.001***

*** significant at $p \leq .001$

¹Standard Deviation

²Items measured on a five point Likert scale: Do not support (1) to Strongly support (5)

³Items measured on a five point Likert scale: Not important (1) to Extremely important (5)

⁴Items measured on a five point Likert scale: Not at all likely (1) to Highly likely (5)

Note: items with different superscripts indicate significant differences. For example, planners with high experience with golf in their personal lives (b) were significantly more likely to support the idea of including golf, felt it was significantly more important to include golf in future meetings and were more likely to include golf in future meetings than were planners with low experience with golf (a). Planners with intermediate experience (b) were felt it was significantly more important to include golf in future meetings than were planners with low experience with golf (a).

include golf in future meetings. Whereas those planners in the business over fifteen years felt it was to important to include golf and more likely to include golf in future meetings.

Those planners in the business from six to ten years and from eleven to fifteen years found it somewhat important and were somewhat likely to include golf in future meetings (see Table 25).

Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between the three support items and the meeting planner's demographic characteristics (independent sample t-test was used to determine the relationship between gender and support). A post

Table 25: Analysis Of Variance For The Relationship Between The Meeting Planner's Years In The Business And Support For Inclusion Of Golf In Meetings

Support for inclusion of golf	Meeting Planner's Years in the Business								F Value	Sig.
	1 to 5 yrs		6 to 10 yrs		11 to 15 yrs		Over 15 yrs			
	Mean (n=57)	SD ¹ (n=57)	Mean (n=25)	SD ¹ (n=25)	Mean (n=20)	SD ¹ (n=20)	Mean (n=35)	SD ¹ (n=35)		
Support idea of golf in meetings ²	3.26	1.16	3.56	1.08	3.60	1.00	3.80	1.05	1.843	.142
Important to include golf in future meetings ³	2.63	1.46	3.00	1.44	3.20	1.20	3.31	1.37	2.000	.117
Likely to include golf in future meetings ⁴	2.82	1.43	3.24	1.36	3.30	1.30	3.54	1.34	2.129	.099

¹Standard Deviation

²Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Do not support (1) to Strongly support (5)

³Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not important (1) to Extremely important (5)

⁴Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not at all likely (1) to Highly likely (5)

hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was also employed to determine the specific differences between the groups. The results identified a lack of significant relationships at the .05 level. In general, males tended to support the inclusion of golf in their planning (M=3.55) and found it slightly more important and slightly more likely that they would include golf in future meetings than females. Those planners ages 25 to 35 tended to support the idea of including golf in meetings (M=3.67) more than any other age group. However, this age group felt that it was only somewhat important to include golf and they were only somewhat likely to include golf in future meetings. Planners in all age groups felt that it was only somewhat important to include golf in future and were only somewhat likely that they would include golf in future meetings (see Table 26).

It is interesting that those planners with lower education levels tended to strongly support (M=4.18) the idea of including golf, whereas planners with higher education levels were less likely to support including golf. In addition, those with high school or less tended to feel that it was important to include golf and were more likely to include

golf in future meetings than those with higher education levels. Again, those with one to four years of college and graduate educations felt that it was only somewhat important and that they were only somewhat likely to include golf in future meetings (see Table 26).

Planners across all income ranges tended to support the idea of including golf in their planning. Those planners with an annual income of \$75,000 or higher tended to support the idea of including golf in meetings more than planners in lower income ranges. In fact, planners in the highest income range felt it was more important and were more likely to include golf in future meetings. Planners in the income range under \$25,000 annually did not feel it was as important and were not as likely to include golf in future meetings, but somewhat supported the idea of including golf in meetings (see Table 26).

Question 7. What is the relationship between the type of meeting planned and the meeting planner's support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between the three support items (dependent variable) and the type of meeting planned. A post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test was employed to determine the specific differences between the groups. Of the eight types of adult learning opportunities listed, tradeshow, incentives and corporate meetings indicated a significant relationship at the .05 level with including. Incentives and corporate meetings had a significant relationship with two items, 1) important to include golf in future meetings and 2) likely to include golf in future meetings. Those who planned incentives supported the idea most, felt it was more important and were more likely to include golf in future meetings than any other

Table 26: Analysis Of Variance For The Relationship Between The Meeting Planner's Years In The Business And Support For Inclusion Of Golf In Meetings

Support for the Inclusion of Golf			
Demographic Characteristics	Support idea²	Important to include³	Likely to include⁴
Gender¹			
Male	3.55	3.14	3.31
Female	3.49	2.89	3.09
	F=1.678, p=.197	F=.331, p=.566	F=.263, p=.609
Age			
25 – 35	3.67	2.96	3.19
36 – 45	3.36	2.91	3.16
46 – 55	3.58	2.93	3.15
56 and over	3.43	3.14	3.00
	F=.517, p=.672	F=.100, p=.960	F=.057, p=.982
Education			
Less than high school	4.18	3.64	3.64
1-4 yrs college	3.46	2.92	3.10
Graduate school	3.39	2.79	3.07
	F=2.334, p=.101	F=1.506, p=.226	F=.753, p=.473
Income			
\$0 to 24,999	3.29	2.71	2.43
\$25,000 to 49,999	3.57	3.03	3.18
\$50,000 to 74,999	3.44	2.85	3.38
\$75,000 or more	3.88	3.47	3.53
	F=.925, p=.431	F=.937, p=.425	F=1.953, p=.124

¹Independent Sample t-test used to test this variable

²Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Do not support (1) to Strongly support (5)

³Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not important (1) to Extremely important (5)

⁴Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not at all likely (1) to Highly likely (5)

type of meeting planned. Overall, planners tended to support the idea of including golf in meetings. Planners also felt that they were likely to include golf in future meetings, especially those who planned incentives and corporate meetings. The majority of planners however, only felt it was somewhat important to include golf in future meetings, except for those who planned incentives and corporate meetings felt it was more important to include golf in future meetings.

Table 27: Analysis Of Variance For Support For The Inclusion Of Golf By Type Of Meeting Planned

	Tradeshows	Seminars	Conventions	Association meetings	Conferences	Incentives	Corporate meetings	Other
Support the idea of including golf ² (Mean) (n)	3.75* a (n= 51)	3.50 (n= 76)	3.57 (n= 46)	3.57 (n= 47)	3.49 (n= 97)	3.90* b (n= 40)	3.78* a (n= 73)	3.61 (n= 31)
Support the idea of including golf ² (Mean) (n)	3.16 (n= 51)	2.91 (n= 76)	3.04 (n= 46)	3.11 (n= 47)	2.96 (n= 97)	3.60* b (n= 40)	3.41* a (n= 73)	2.94 (n= 31)
Support the idea of including golf ² (Mean) (n)	3.44 (n= 50)	3.16 (n= 75)	3.44 (n= 45)	3.32 (n= 47)	3.19 (n= 96)	3.95* b (n= 40)	3.73* a (n= 73)	3.16 (n= 31)

*Indicates significance at $p \leq .05$

²Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Do not support (1) to Strongly support (5)

³Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not important (1) to Extremely important (5)

⁴Item measured on a five point Likert scale: Not at all likely (1) to Highly likely (5)

Note: items with different superscripts indicate significant differences. For example: planners of Incentives (b) are significantly different from planners of Tradeshows and Corporate meetings in that they have higher support for including golf in MICE, feel its more important to include golf in future meetings and are more likely to include golf in future meetings.

Summary

The results of the research are summarized and the relationships between the independent and dependent variables are shown in Table 28. The table shows those significant relationships found between the independent variables and the dependent variables in the study. The check marks indicate that a significant relationship was found at least the .05 level between the independent and dependent variable. The X indicates there was no significant relationship found among any of the items within the variable. Of the research questions which examined a relationship between independent and

dependent variables, question 4a through question 7, three out of the ten questions were found to have significant relationships with at least $p \leq .05$. This is important due to the exploratory nature of the study.

There were significant differences between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their perceptions the benefits derived from including golf in meetings as well as their level of support for including golf in meetings. There were significant differences in type of meeting planned and the meeting planner's level of support for including golf in meetings.

Table 28: Significant Relationships Between Independent And Dependent Variables

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Perceived Benefits	Expressed Challenges	Support for inclusion
Past Experience with Golf	√	X	√
Years in the business	X	X	X
Demographics	X	X	X
Type of meeting planned	-	-	√

Note: (√) indicates significance at least .05 level, (X) indicates no significance was found, (-) indicates not tested

The study did have some relevant findings and significant relationships between the variables. The variables with a check mark above were statistically significant. Given a small sample size, these findings still indicated "true" significance (Sirkin, 1999). Those variables that did not indicate a significant relationship, may have revealed significance if the sample size were larger. This is one recommendation for future research.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to understand the perceptions that meeting planners hold of the benefits and challenges to including golf in meeting planning and their level of support for including golf. Understanding how the relationship between the dependent variables, perceptions and level of support, and the independent variables of the meeting planner's professional experience, past experience with golf and demographic characteristics helped to contribute to the knowledge on the relationship between MICE and sport tourism.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, this chapter focused on conclusions and implications of the relevant findings, lessons learned from conducting this research, and what research still needs to be done in the future to compliment this study. The results and conclusions of the study are presented in four sections of this chapter:

1. Discussion of Relevant Findings
2. Recommendations for Managers
3. Lessons Learned from Conducting This Research
4. Recommendations for Future Research

Discussion of Relevant Findings

Question 2a. What are the overall perceived benefits according to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

Question 2c. What is the most perceived benefit to meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

The findings revealed that health and economic benefits to the host community were the two items that meeting planners agreed with most regarding the overall benefits to including golf in meetings index. This is interesting due to the fact that when comparing benefits with the three independent variables, planners almost always tended to agree more that there were socio-cultural benefits to including golf in meetings.

The most perceived benefit was 'health benefits to MICE attendees who participate in golf during MICE functions'. The overall benefits index did not distinguish between physiological and psychological benefits (Standeven & De Knop, 1999), therefore it is not clear which the meeting planner perceives to be more of a benefit to the attendee. Perhaps this finding supports the literature in that business travelers are demanding sport and activities as an outlet for stressors (Standeven & De Knop). Meeting planners should note that they are aware of these demands and therefore indicate awareness of health benefits to attendees from the inclusion of golf in meetings. Neirotti explained that the some of the most common motivators for participating in outdoor activities such as golf are health and exercise and stress reduction (2003). . Health benefits to participating in golf include aerobic exercise and calorie burning (Magnusson, 1998; Woo, 2002). Kurtzman and Zauhar (1997/2003) suggested that people usually travel for more than one reason such as the physical motivators related to physical rest, sport participation and rest.

Another finding to note is that consistently throughout this study, planners did not perceive any environmental benefits to including golf in their meetings. Dotterweich and Walker (2003) explained that there in fact could be environmental benefits recognized from participation in golf particularly through educating the golfer and thereby reducing

negative impacts to the environment. Therefore in this study, the reduced environmental impacts through educating the participant were translated into an environmental benefit. Including environmental education should be of particular interest to golf course managers and meeting planners both.

Golf course managers who have made an effort to reduce negative environmental impacts through less chemical usage, less grooming of the course, and signage on the course on wildlife and birds should market these improvements to the public, in particular to target meeting planners. Course managers could market how their course is more environmentally “conscious” and that they offer these things in order to educate the participant on how to reduce negative impacts to the environment as a golfer.

Destination Management Organizations should also be aware of the golf courses in the area that offer this type of experience and market them to meeting planners as well.

Question 3a. What are the overall expressed challenges for including golf in meetings?

Question 3b. What is the most expressed challenge by meeting planners for including golf in meetings?

The study revealed that cost was the biggest expressed challenge. When asked to indicate challenges to including golf in meetings, nine categories emerged from a content analysis. These included, cost, time, lack of interest from attendees, planning and logistics, other, transportation, finding facilities, equipment rental and transporting equipment, no challenges, and alternate activities for non-golfers. This is consistent with the challenges indicated in the literature for participating in golf; budget (Petrick et al., 2001), facilities available, no interest (Krielkamp et al., 2002), and time (Golf 20/20, 2003; Petrick et al.). The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA, 1996) suggested that planners always need to keep in mind the objectives of the meeting

and plan accommodations and recreational activities that are appropriate for the group, appropriate for the meeting objective and appropriate for the time allotment (PCMA).

The biggest expressed challenges fit into five categories. Again, cost was indicated as the biggest challenge. Planners found it difficult to include this type of activity without having high fees for the participants. Planning and logistics, which was not commented upon in the literature as being a challenge to including golf in meetings, was the second biggest challenge according to meeting planners. This includes securing tee times and whether or not to contract out the planning for this type of activity. This may suggest that planners lean on those who specialize specifically in golf events to help them plan for the inclusion of this type of activity in MICE. The Hyatt Corporation offers a spot on their website for planners to address and perhaps negotiate these challenges to including golf in meetings. Hyatt planners have suggested ways to fit golf into a planner's schedule of events, budgeting for a golf event, ways to select a facility and planning and logistics for different formats of golf events and tournaments. The suggestions made by Hyatt seem to address many of the challenges expressed by the planners in this sample (www.hyatt.com, 2003).

Question 4a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 5a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings?

Question 6a. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the perceived benefits for including golf in meetings?

The findings showed a significant relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings. The variable of meeting planner's past experience was taken from the five questions and one

score was computed. The planner's responses fell within three categories, low experience, intermediate and high. The significant relationship at the .05 level was between those planners with low experience with golf and those planners with high experience with golf. Planners who are more experienced golfers tended to include golf more often in meetings, and who were more involved in the game of golf in general indicated that they agreed more that there were socio-cultural benefits to including golf in meeting planning. The socio-cultural items that made up the socio-cultural domain were: 1) attendees experience a sense of identity through participation in golf (Chen et al.1998; Weiss, 2001), 2) attendees experience social acceptance through participation in golf (Krawczyk, 1996; Long & Sanderson, 2001; Segrave, 1996; Tajfel, 1986; Weiss, 2001), 3) attendees decision to attend your next meeting/convention due to networking opportunities created through golf (Diekmann, 2002; Macnow, 1996; McCann, 2001; McCord, 1994), 4) attendees feel more positively about themselves through participation in golf (Chiriboga & Pierce, 1993), 5) host community benefits from pride of having visitors enjoy local facilities (Gratton & Henry, 2001).

Planners who had high experience with golf in their own lives and in their planning may have experienced the benefits personally or witnessed attendees who have experienced these benefits. Therefore, those who have low experience with golf may be completely unaware that attendees can experience these benefits as a result of including golf in meetings due to their own lack of knowledge and experience with the sport. Also in the socio-cultural items there are some "buzz" words that planners may have identified with more than the items in the other domains, such as "networking" and "social".

The findings did not indicate a significant relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and perceived benefits. However, planners indicated that they agreed more that there were socio-cultural and health benefits to attendees if golf was included in meetings, which is consistent with the previous research. This part of the research is exploratory and suggests that there is no correlation between the meeting planner's professional experience and their perception of benefits to including golf in meetings.

The results did not indicate a significant relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the perceived benefits of including golf in meetings. However, females indicated they perceived slightly more benefits from including golf than males did. This is interesting because the typical demographic profiles of those who participate in golf are males (Gibson, 1998b; Miller et al., 2001; NGF, 2003; Wellner, 1997). Therefore, it is interesting that the females perceive slightly more benefits to including golf in this sample yet males tended to support the inclusion of golf in meetings more than females. This could be due to the lower number of females who have experience of .

Those ages 36 to 45 and 56 and over in this sample perceived more benefits to including golf in meetings. These could be the young professionals and the older planners in the business over 15 years who have had the experience of playing golf in their lifetime and who have included golf in previous events. This seems to be consistent with the literature in that those who participate in the game of golf more frequently are those with higher incomes (Gibson 1998a; Miller et al., 2001; NGF, 2003; Wellner, 1997). Planners in an older age group may be in the baby boomer population, which

according to previous studies, are the majority of meeting planner's today as well as gen 'X-er's (MPI, 2001; NGF; Wellner). Golf tends to be popular among the aging populations due to it being a "lifetime" sport and less physical in nature (Wellner). So perhaps those planners in this sample who indicated more perceived benefits are those who are more involved in the game of golf according to the literature.

It is interesting also that those planners with lower education levels tended to agree slightly more that there were benefits to including golf than those with higher education. This is contrary to what the literature says about those who actually play golf. Wellner stated that college graduates are two times more likely to play golf than their high school graduate counterparts (1997). Perhaps there is an inverse relationship, where those planners who are less likely to play golf and have lower levels education believe there may be benefits to including golf. Again, similar to education, those planners with the lowest income tended to agree more that there were benefits to including golf in MICE than those in higher income ranges. One reason for this inverse relationship may be that those who don't get to play golf often are those who are less educated and make less income. Therefore, due to the desire to participate in a sport that may be unattainable may influence the perception that there are benefits to participation in the sport that they have been unable to derive. Perhaps further investigation is needed to fully understand this finding.

Question 4b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 5b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

Question 6b. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and the expressed challenges of including golf in meetings?

The findings showed no significant relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf, meeting planner's years in the business, or demographic characteristics and expressed challenges. However, those with low personal experience with golf indicated that finding facilities was a definite challenge for them. This is perhaps due to the lack of knowledge of what makes a great facility for all types of skill levels and what facilities are close to the meeting site. Those planners with high personal experience with golf indicated both cost and planning and logistics were their biggest challenges. Perhaps in their past experience with playing golf or including golf in meetings, it has been difficult to budget for this type of activity. Participants may have complained about high fees to attend the meeting or conference due to the inclusion of this activity. Planning and logistics was not commented upon in the literature and seems to be a challenge more for those who have high personal experience with golf. This could be due to previous difficulties with food and beverage, tee times, lack of early commitment from participants and transportation. More research in the future addressing this specific challenge is needed.

Those planners with one to five years and six to ten years in the business indicated that cost was their biggest challenge to including golf. It could be that these planners who are new in the business are feeling the effects of September 11th, 2001 with budget cuts and less "boon doggles" and has therefore influenced their ability to add this type of activity to the agenda. The MICE tourism industry was severely impacted by these terrorist attacks hence many cities around the world reported a huge decline in convention business (Goodspeed, 2002). Those planners with 11 to 15 years in the

business indicated time was their biggest challenge much like those who are intermediately experienced with golf.

Those in the business over 15 years indicated planning and logistics was the biggest challenge for them to include golf in meetings. Perhaps these planners are just tired of dealing with all of the details that go into the planning of a golf event and have found that other add on activities are easier to plan and included everyone (non-golfers) at the meeting.

Challenges varied some by demographic characteristics of the meeting planners in the sample. Almost half of the males in the sample indicated cost was their biggest challenge whereas females were more divided but indicated time as being the biggest challenge to including golf. It is interesting that those planners with an annual income of \$75,000 or more did not indicate lack of interest by attendees or finding facilities as a challenge at all. Planners with an education level of high school or less overwhelmingly indicated that time was their biggest challenge.

Question 4c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 5c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's years in the business and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Question 6c. What is the relationship between the meeting planner's demographic characteristics and their support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

This part of the research used the concept of support as an exploratory dependent variable. There was a significant relationship between the meeting planner's past experience with golf and their support for the inclusion of golf. In fact all three support items indicated a significant relationship with the independent variable of past experience with golf. The difference lay between those with low experience with golf and those with

high experience with golf in supporting the idea of including golf in meetings and in the likelihood of including golf in future meetings. Those who had more experience with the game in their personal lives and planning tended to support the inclusion of golf more, felt it was more important to include golf in future meetings and said they were more likely to include golf in future meetings than those with less golf experience

This make sense in that those who enjoy playing golf themselves seem to be more likely to support its inclusion, feel it is important to include and are likely to include it in their planning functions. These planners with more experience with golf were those that also felt there were more socio-cultural benefits than planners with less experience with golf.

The questions on the meeting planners past experience with golf could be more directly linked to leisure involvement theory and include contingency questions to weed out those planners who did not currently play golf or use golf in their planning. Laurent and Kapferer (1985) developed the Involvement Profile, which explained that having high involvement with a recreational activity could have positive and negative consequences. The positive consequences include: high levels of participation, intrinsic rewards from participation, social and affiliation benefits, heightened levels of expertise, and recognition from others. The negative consequences include: time priority problems, spending priority problems, and stress. The level of involvement could then be linked to the planner's personal experience with golf and the relationships between perceptions of benefits and challenges and level of support could be examined.

However the planners with more golf experience did indicate that cost and planning and logistics were challenges to including golf in meetings. Therefore even though

planners who said they support the inclusion of golf in meetings, felt that it is important to include golf, and were likely to include it in future meetings, may be discouraged to do so due to cost and the difficulties in the planning and logistics of golf events. This is important for meeting managers, golf course management and destination managers to be aware of.

Some courses offer in-house golf event planners to take care of the planning and logistics of a golf event that is incorporated into a MICE function. As indicated by this research, understanding that the planning and logistics of golf events is a big challenge to meeting planners, golf course managers should be marketing the fact that they have in-house planners to take care of planning and logistical details. To help meeting planners overcome some of the challenges to including golf, course managers should also be marketing amenities are offered at the facility, how the course can accommodate all skills levels or just those golfers with high skill levels, equipment rental and offer transportation to and from the course for MICE attendees. Destination Management Organizations should be familiar with which golf courses offer this type of planning assistance and also independent planners in the area who may be contracted out to do the planning and logistics for golf events to help meeting planners coming to the area. A suggestion for meeting planning companies may be to have someone on staff that specializes in golf events to help plan any golf tournaments added on to MICE functions planned by those companies.

Question 7. What is the relationship between the type of meeting planned and the meeting planner's support for the inclusion of golf in meetings?

Planners in this study indicated that time in the schedule was often a barrier to including golf in MICE. Petrick et al.(2001) listed the length of a meeting as a challenge

to including golf in meetings. This could definitely explain why different types of meetings support the inclusion of golf more than others. Some planners in the sample indicated the number of attendees at a meeting to be a challenge or reason not to include golf in planning. Certainly incentives and corporate meetings do tend to have less attendees than conferences and conventions. Because of this, it may be easier to understand the needs of the attendees and include activities specified by the group prior to planning the event. Tradeshows were also one type meeting planned that had a significant difference among the other types by tending to support the inclusion of golf more (except for incentives and corporate meetings). This may be due to the dynamics of the attendees at tradeshows where there tends to be a mixture of buyers and suppliers. In order to provide networking opportunities off the tradeshow floor, golf tournaments are an excellent opportunity to engage in building stronger relationships with clients in a non-meeting fashion (Dobrian, 2002; Hyatt, 2003; Macnow, 1996).

This study has furthered the sport tourism literature in that it confirms that MICE tourists can also be sport tourists. According to Gammon and Robinson (1997/2003) an individual can still be a sport tourist even if sport is not their primary motivation for the trip. These MICE tourists are participating in what they defined as tourism sport. Also Nierotti indicated that there are several contributing tourism markets to sport tourism, among them business tourism, health tourism and educational tourism (2003).

Recommendations for Managers

Meeting planners, industry researchers, destination management organizations, golf course managers, and any stakeholders in the MICE tourism industry can benefit from this research. In this section, recommendations for MICE tourism managers are discussed.

Recommendations for Meeting Managers

Meeting managers should continue to include golf in tradeshows and the other types of meetings that did not show a significant difference, such as seminars, conferences and association meetings. Of course this depends on the profile of the attendees as well as their wants and needs if golf is appropriate. However, golf is often appropriate for these types of meetings in order to match up buyers and suppliers off of the tradeshow floor and in an environment where relationships can be built by getting to know each other on a different level.

Meeting managers should also make use of in-house golf event planners at golf resorts to help with the planning and logistical challenges noted in this study. Again, the Hyatt website does offer many ways to negotiate through some of the barriers mentioned in this study. It may be helpful to meeting managers to keep these recommendations close by or perhaps hire someone to the team that is an expert in golf events or sport events in general.

Recommendations for Destination Management Organizations

Destination Management Organizations (DMO) are responsible for being familiar with a destination's amenities and have many contacts in the area. DMO's should also be aware of meeting planners' perceptions of benefits and challenges to including golf noted in this study in order to understand the needs of meeting planners when trying to include this activity while at the destination. DMO's should be aware of which golf courses offer different types of experiences in order to help guide meeting planners in choosing the proper facility to meet their needs. Understanding the skill level required, the environmental regulations imposed, and if there are in-house golf event planners at the destination's golf course would help meeting planners save time in researching this

information and choose the proper facility. Meeting planners work with DMO's for this reason.

Recommendations for Golf Course Managers

Golf is a sport that relies on the natural landscape. However, changing the landscape and using harsh chemicals to make the course aesthetically pleasing and equally challenging to players is harmful to the natural environment (Stubbs, 1998). Besides understanding how to reduce environmental impacts through signage, less chemical usage and grooming, becoming a member of the Audubon Society International, etc., golf course managers should market themselves accordingly. Being "environmentally conscious" can be a great marketing tool in order to draw more people to their "natural" course, especially meeting attendees.

If the golf course manager does not have someone on staff to help planners with the logistical details of a golf event, they may want to consider hiring for this position. Having a golf event planner on site could bring in a lot of business that otherwise would not have been drawn to that facility. Marketing these capabilities as a golf facility to hotels, convention centers, DMO's and CVB's is advisable. Golf managers should put together a marketing pamphlet specifically targeted at meeting planners detailing the facility, amenities, meeting rooms, food and beverage and planning assistance. This could influence the meeting planner to choose one facility over another.

Lessons Learned from Conducting This Research

This study revealed many interesting aspects of research. One revealing finding pertained to the collection of data online. Typically the response rate to online surveys has been around 10% (Babbie, 2001). This study resulted in a 3.6% response rate to the online survey. Multiple methods of data collection helped to raise the response rate to

8% overall. The collection of surveys via intercept interview was a successful type of data collection for this study with a response rate of 28% at expos and five out of seven planners at chapter meetings.

With the ease of email communications in business today, it was thought that this was the easiest, most economical way to reach the population. In addition, because meeting planners use the internet and may be interested in research related to their job, the researcher felt an online survey was an appropriate method of collecting the data. However, because the researcher in this study believed the information was salient does not mean the population targeted did.

The need for top management commitment was also a lesson learned from conducting this research. The support of the national headquarters of MPI would have provided access to a larger sample size and the endorsement of top management for participation in the study. This was attempted but unsuccessful. Therefore, support at the chapter level was sought and led to a variety of different methods of exposing the survey to the population and inconsistency throughout the study, resulting in a lower response rate.

A specified method for data collection that is consistent for all chapters was needed. Four new chapters of MPI were contacted in April 2004 to participate. Of those four two agreed to participate. However, this only gave the two new chapters of MPI limited time to participate in the study. Only eight chapters of MPI participated in this study. The possibility to have all MPI chapters participate would had made the sample more representative overall, however, due to the size of the organization and its own research foundation participation on a national level was not feasible for this study. The

only way to collect the data with MPI via online survey for this study was to give each chapter the control of releasing the survey URL link to the members on their own schedule.

The inability to control the amount of exposure to the survey online was a definite limitation to this study through the data collection method. All of the MPI chapters were advised to send out the press release in a newsletter to advise planners of the upcoming survey, then the MPI chapters were asked to display the link on their chapter websites and send out two to three email blasts to planner members in the chapter within a week of each other including a message to invite participation. However, due to the guidelines of each chapter (i.e., when and how many email blasts and newsletters could go out to members and if they agreed to post the link on their chapter website), these methods varied somewhat.

Table 1 in chapter three explained how each MPI chapter participated and therefore impacted the response rate and overall validity and generalizability of this study. The majority of respondents tended to reside in the state of Florida although this study did not aim to represent Florida over other states in the study. Due to the low response rate and the inconsistency in the method of data collection, this study is not generalizable to all populations of meeting planners in the state of Florida or across the United States.

Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned in some of the relevant findings, future research is necessary to understand why these findings are actually occurring and to insure validity to the study. Retesting some of the same variables with a larger sample size is advisable through different data collection methods as discussed earlier.

Advice to researchers attempting to target a sample of meeting planners is to use an intercept interview method of data collection. Phone surveys or perhaps faxed surveys may also be a more successful method to reach a sample of meeting professionals. However the multi-mode method (Dillman, 2000) is recommended to future researchers for data collection within this population.

Understanding people's behaviors is the perpetual goal of social science. It is difficult to understand why people behave or perceive things differently. Therefore, it may be difficult to precisely measure meeting planners' perceptions of beliefs and challenges with this new instrument. An attempt to ascertain a valid and reliable measure of the perceptions and level of support of meeting planners through the most current methods and through the guidance of the literature was made.

The items in the survey concerning the four benefits of including golf in meetings were considered reliable. However, some changes to the survey instrument are advisable for future researchers. For instance, with one of the research questions, Question 2b. 'Are there underlying dimensions of expressed benefits for including golf in meetings?' a factor analysis was run to determine the different components of expressed benefits. However, the structure was not clean and therefore the variables were computed based on reliability analysis and Cronbach alphas were referenced for reliability. All four benefit domains were considered reliable on the scale. This indicated a high level of internal consistency. However, some of the questions did tend to be highly correlated with each other. This may be due to wording issues. Rewording the survey items may decrease the correlation and help differentiate the items within each of the domains.

For this study it was a good idea to leave the question on challenges open-ended. If the researcher had closed-ended choices, then planning and logistics as a challenge may never have been a finding of this research. Therefore, including planning and logistics as a challenge (not in an open-ended format) in a future study to see if those planners who did not think to indicate it as a challenge in this study would be inclined to check it in a future study.

The correlation between the independent variables was not taken into consideration for this study. It is probable that the meeting planner's years in the business are correlated to demographic characteristics such as age and income. The same may be true with the meeting planner's past experience with golf. This variable may be highly correlated to all four of the demographic characteristics examined in this study: age, gender, education and income. The next step in the research may be to consider or control for this correlation and then look for causal relationships.

Summary

To summarize the overall findings of the study, there are two dimensions: methodological and contributions to the literature. The methodological findings were in the form of recommendations for collecting data for a similar study or with a similar sample. It was concluded that internet surveys are not a recommended form of data collection, that upper level support from the organization was needed in order to secure a consistent data collection method throughout the study. Also a larger sample size and some changes to the survey instrument were recommended.

Several contributions to the MICE tourism literature, and Sport tourism literature can be made as a result of this study. MICE tourists can also be Sport tourists simultaneously and therefore can influence the tourism industry in several ways. The

major factor influencing the meeting planner's support for the inclusion of golf was not their demographic characteristics nor their years in the business, but their past experience with golf personally and professionally. Meeting planners do perceive that there are benefits and challenges to including golf in meetings. The type of meeting planned was a definite indicator for the level of support a planner had for including golf as an activity in MICE tourism.

This study is a step forward in the MICE tourism literature although much future research is needed to expand upon this important part of the tourism industry. Many opportunities exist for future research using the findings from this study.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Golf in Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE)
Tourism: Perceptions of Meeting Planners
University of Florida
Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism**

Thank you for participating in the survey! This study will measure meeting planners' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of including golf in their planning. The study will measure how your demographic and experience characteristics and your past experience with golf relates to your support for the inclusion of golf in your planned programs. The study involves answering this questionnaire that will take about 8 to 10 minutes to complete. The survey is voluntary, but your input is extremely important to make the survey results complete, accurate, and timely. The survey is confidential; your confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers in the survey, so please express your true feelings. There is no penalty for not participating and you are free to withdraw at anytime with out penalty. There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

If you have any questions about his survey, you may contact Brandi Nice at the University of Florida at 352-392-4042 or at PO Box 118208, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by using the scale below. Please respond to each of these items

I believe.....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. there are health benefits to MICE attendees who participate in golf during MICE functions.	1	2	3	4	5
2. there are socio-cultural benefits to MICE attendees if golf is an included activity in your planning (e.g., networking opportunities, social interaction).	1	2	3	4	5
3. there are socio-cultural benefits to the host community if golf is an included activity in your planning (e.g., civic pride, empowerment)	1	2	3	4	5
4. there are economic benefits to the MICE industry if golf is an included activity in your planning.	1	2	3	4	5
5. there are economic benefits to the host community if golf is an included activity in your planning.	1	2	3	4	5
6. there are environmental benefits (reduced environmental impacts) if golf is an included activity in your planning (e.g., informing participants of impacts through golf course signage).	1	2	3	4	5

How important are the following considerations to you in your decisions to include golf In future meetings? Please circle	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
7. Physiological health benefits to attendees (e.g., aerobic exercise)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Attendees experience a sense of identity when participating in golf	1	2	3	4	5
9. Host community benefits through enhanced destination image	1	2	3	4	5
10. Attendees experience social acceptance through participation in golf	1	2	3	4	5
11. Psychological health benefits to attendees (e.g., release from everyday stress and relaxation)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Educating participants of wise use of natural resources through golf	1	2	3	4	5
13. Attendees decision to attend your next meeting/conference due to networking opportunities created through golf	1	2	3	4	5
14. Host community benefits from attendee’s decision to revisit	1	2	3	4	5
15. Educating participants of environmental impacts of golf course users	1	2	3	4	5
16. Attendees experience a “feel good” factor due to positive feedback from peers and increased self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
17. Host community benefits from increased jobs through sport events	1	2	3	4	5
18. Attendees feel more positively about themselves as a result of participating in golf	1	2	3	4	5
19. Participant’s ability to experience local natural environment of host community	1	2	3	4	5
20. Educating participants on environmental health through golf	1	2	3	4	5
21. Host community benefits through increased investment in Golf facilities	1	2	3	4	5
22. Provides attendees with an opportunity to enhance mastery of skills	1	2	3	4	5
23. Host community benefits from pride of having visitors enjoy local facilities	1	2	3	4	5
24. Local businesses benefit by expenditures on shopping, purchasing or renting equipment, and visiting other golf courses	1	2	3	4	5

Challenges to including golf in MICE functions

25. In your opinion, what challenges do you experience to including golf in your planning?

26. What is the biggest challenge to including golf in your planning?

27. Overall, how challenging is it for you to include golf in your planning? (Please circle the number)

No challenge at all Somewhat challenging Extremely challenging

1 2 3 4 5

40. What is the average length of meetings you plan in days? _____

41. Do you work for a DMO (e.g., CVB, State Tourism Bureau)? YES NO

Now tell us a little about yourself.....

42. Gender: Male Female

43. What year were you born? 19_____

44. What is your highest level of education completed?

less than high school

high school

1-4 years of college

graduate school

45. Do you have a certification? Please circle all that apply: CMP CMM CAE

Other

46. What is your income range?

0-\$24,999 _____ \$25,000-\$49,999 _____ \$50,000-\$74,999 _____

Over \$75,000

47. What state do you live in? _____

48. What MPI chapter are you a member of? _____

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

98A Psychology Bldg.
PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
Phone: (352) 392-0433
Fax: (352) 392-9234
E-mail: irb2@ufl.edu
<http://rgp.ufl.edu/irb/irb02>

DATE: 23-Jan-2004

TO: Ms Brandi Nice
320 FL. Gym
Campus,

FROM: Ira Fischler, Chair *IF/TF*
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: **Approval of Protocol #2004-U-33**

TITLE: Benefits and Challenges of Golf in MICE Tourism: Perceptions of Meeting Planners

SPONSOR Unfunded

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants, and based on 45 CFR 46.117(c), authorizes you to administer the informed consent process as specified in the protocol.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, including the need to increase the number of participants authorized, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by , please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you.

It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl/tf

cc: Vice President for Research

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
 COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN PERFORMANCE
 DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & TOURISM

UF-IRB Informed Consent Script

Benefits and Challenges of Golf in MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions)
 Tourism: Perceptions of Meeting Planners

Please read carefully before participating in this study.

This study will measure meeting planners' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of including golf in their planning. The study will measure how your demographic and experience characteristics and your past experience with golf relates to your support for the inclusion of golf in your planned programs. The study involves answering a short online survey that will take about 8 to 10 minutes to complete. The survey is voluntary, but your input is extremely important to make the survey results complete, accurate, and timely. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers in the survey, so please express your true feelings.

Benefits from this study include understanding the planner's perceptions of the benefits and challenges of including golf in their programs. This understanding can then be used to inform planners and managers on the benefits of sport to improve their ability to define clear planning objectives and to encourage the negotiation of such challenges to the inclusion of golf and therefore increase their support for the inclusion of golf in their planned programs. There is no compensation for completing the survey, but your input is important. The survey is confidential; your confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right not to answer any questions. There is no penalty for not participating and you are free to withdraw at anytime with out penalty. There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

Please take this contact information with you. If you have any questions concerning this study:

Brandi Nice, Graduate Student
 The University of Florida
 College of Health and Human Performance
 Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism
 320 Florida Gym, PO Box 118209
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 Fax: (352) 392-7588

APPROVED BY
 University of Florida
 Institutional Review Board (IRB 02)
 Protocol# 2004-11-33
 For Use Through 1-20-05

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in this study:
UFIRB Office
Box 112250
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
Phone: (352) 392-0433

WILL YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?
IF YES: Thank You! [Then continue with survey]
IF NO: Thank You for your time!

APPROVED BY
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board (IRB 02)
Protocol# 2004-U-33
For Use Through 1-20-05

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO MPI CHAPTERS



January 7, 2004

Northern California Chapter of Meeting Professionals International
Board of Directors
2950 Buskirk Ave. Suite 170
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

University of Florida Research – Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism

Hello fellow MPI members. I am an MPI student member in Florida and am currently enrolled at the University of Florida in a Master's program in Recreation, Parks and Tourism. My thesis research focuses on meeting planners and the incorporation of golf in meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE). I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with the Northern California MPI chapter in conjunction with my research. Your participation would be valuable to a growth in the overall body of knowledge in the industry. One of the frequent woes of the meeting planning industry is that there is a lack of respect for and acknowledgment of the profession. This criticism is, in part, due to the lack research coming from this industry. It is my hope that with the participation of Northern California MPI chapter members in this research project we may contribute an important piece of research for the use of Meeting Managers and Planners, both nationally and internationally.

How to Participate!

This research effort will include an online survey via a URL link through the University of Florida. A short introductory paragraph and the survey URL link will be provided which can be included in your monthly membership email communications to encourage participation among the **planner** members in the Northern California Chapter. The URL link will be available for survey participation between January and March 2004.

Why is it important?

Understanding the benefits of golf in meeting planning is an important area of research. This understanding can help the planner to develop activities, which are valuable to the participant, community, economy and environment. Comprehension of the different benefits of golf may educate the planner on several aspects related to meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. The balance between work and leisure is essential to the understanding of this phenomenon. Planners and managers can use information on the benefits of sport to improve their ability to define clear planning objectives and then to establish explicit standards for meeting those objectives. A particular type of activity may increase these benefits, and therefore deserves research.

For any questions concerning this research project, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Brandi Nice

Primary Investigator
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352-281-1525 cellular

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brandi Nice was born August 4, 1977, in Marietta, Ohio. She graduated in the top ten of her high school class in 1995. In 1999, she graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree with "honors" in Spanish and international trade from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Her honor's thesis concentrated on American expatriates in Mexico. After working as an International Account Manager in Marietta, Ohio, for one year, she relocated to Orlando, Florida. During this time, she worked as an Associate Bank Analyst consulting for a banking software company.

Brandi began to pursue a master's degree to further her education in event management. While working on her degree, she worked as a graduate and teaching assistant in the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management. This position gave her the opportunity to work on various research projects with federal agencies, gain grant writing and budgeting experience and instruct an undergraduate course. Brandi graduated magna cum laude with a Master of Science in Recreational Studies in August 2004.