

Effects of Sports Tourism on Leisure Satisfaction in College Students

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Leisure, sports, and tourism have been significant economic drivers around the world. Understanding the leisure satisfaction of college students who participate in sports tourism can provide a different perspective on the field. This study examined the effects of demographic characteristics, pre-event research of sports tourism destinations, and visiting of local attractions on the leisure satisfaction subscales in the psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological, and aesthetic categories. The results revealed that female students who participated in sports tourism had a significantly higher level of leisure satisfaction than males on the LSS educational and aesthetic subscales. Those who did research on sports tourism before attending a sports tourism event had a significantly higher level of leisure satisfaction on all subscales except for the physiological category. Lastly, those who experienced additional attractions and amenities had a significantly higher level of leisure satisfaction on the educational. social, relaxation, and aesthetic satisfaction compared with those who did not. Sports commissions and promoters need to make sure online information on additional amenities besides the sporting event can be easily found. The findings of this study should be considered by practitioners to promote of the aesthetic, social, educational, and relaxing aspects of the sports tourism locations.

Keywords: Ancillary activities; College student; Leisure satisfaction; LSS; Sports tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and sports are popular leisure activities throughout the world (Ritchie & Adair, 2004). Sports alone is one of the planet's most significant social trends (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003), and tourism alone is one of the world's largest economic drivers (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006). Sports more accurately can be considered a leisure activity for which people may travel away from their homes to participate in, observe, or admire attractions associated with sports (Gibson, 1998).

The sporting industry is so popular that its economic impact from participation in, observation of, and admiration of sports and amenities is felt on the national and global scales. Eighty billion dollars was spent for sporting events and related events worldwide in 2014, and this figure is expected to grow at a faster pace than the global gross domestic product (GDP). In North America, the revenue from sports has grown 1.6 times faster than the GDP (Collignon & Sultan, 2014). The National Association of Sports Commissions has estimated that 26 million tourists spent 8.96 billion dollars on sports tourism in 2014 (Schumacher, 2015). The industry is so important that almost every American city has some form of sporting agency or commission for the sole purpose of generating revenue from sporting initiatives (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell, & Shonk, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism, Sports, and Leisure Satisfaction

Due to the popularity and economic influence of sports, the field of sports is often seen as recession-proof (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell, & Shonk, 2014). Although decisions about where to spend tourism dollars may be impacted by economics, the field of leisure, in general, can also be considered as recession-proof (Lai, Chen, & Petrick. 2016). Sports tourism can be correlated with the concept of leisure based on the word's

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definition (Hinch, Jackson, Hudson, & Walker, 2005), which is an autotelic experience with a beneficial outcome that has an intrinsic motivation with the perception of free choices and freedom from perceived obligations (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003). Sports are structured, goal-oriented physical activities that have a sense of competitiveness in their content (McPherson, Curtis, & Loy, 1989). Although players of professional sports might not have a freedom from obligation, the spectators of professional sports do have that freedom and their activities fit the definition of a leisure activity (Hinch et al., 2005). Tourism comprises activities outside one's residence for leisure, education, and other purposes (Smith, 2014). The three areas of sports, tourism, and leisure are not always intertwined, but some aspects of the three may overlap. For example, professional kayakers may visit a river as tourists but are also there to work. They may feel obligated to be at the river at that time and therefore would not be considered as experiencing leisure. However, on the other hand, if the same kayakers made a road trip to a competition for pleasure, they may experience leisure, sports, and tourism all at the same time.

Leisure satisfaction is one variable in the choice to participate in different recreational activities (Searle, Mactavish, & Brayley, 1993). Understanding leisure satisfaction could assist in understanding one's motivations to continue participation in leisure activities such as sports tourism (Beggs, Elkins, & Powers, 2005; Petrick & Backman, 2001). Leisure satisfaction is a positive stance that individuals associate with the engagement in leisure activities (Beard & Ragheb, 1980). Both Iso-Ahola (1980) and Hseih (1998) suggest that when an individual is motivated to participate in a particular leisure activity, fulfilling that motivational desire by participating in the leisure activity will satisfy that individual's motivation. This correlation could suggest that if an individual is satisfied with a particular leisure experience, then that individual must have had a motivation and need for the fulfillment by the experience. For example, if a person is satisfied with a fishing experience, that individual must have been motivated to go fishing to fulfill a need, which could have been relaxation. Fishing was the gateway to relaxation.

Many studies have measured tourist satisfaction (Correia, Kozak, & Ferradeira, 2013; Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 1999; Petrick & Backman, 2001). For example, Petrick and Backman (2001) examined golfing tourists to find their overall satisfaction with their travel experience, and Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal (1999) reviewed the tourist experience associated with the quality of life. Understanding sports tourism has been a topic of discussion and has received the attention of many scholars. Although sports tourism has been studied from the viewpoint of tourist satisfaction, there has been limited research on sports tourism as a leisure activity (Cho & Clemens, 2017). Measuring leisure satisfaction with the leisure satisfaction scale (LSS) can assist in understanding why fans travel to watch or participate in sports tourism. The LSS has subscales of psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological, and aesthetic categories. Hseih (1998) proposed a concept of leisure motivation, participating in the experience, an individual may be motivated to participate in the tourist experience. After participating in the experience, an individual may suggest that the individual was initially motivated to fulfill educational and relaxing needs. The tourist experience was picked for that purpose.

Sports Tourism and College Student

As stated before, leisure is the time spent away from perceived obligations. Today's college student has many responsibilities, including studying for exams, writing papers, preparing for a future career, and even working at a job while in school. These obligations make the opportunity to step away from the daily routine and enjoy leisure an essential part of a student's personal growth. Many enjoy participating in sporting events, including in competitive matches, and being a spectator at events. Some students travel to other schools for sporting events to support their school.

A tourist experience is similar to an outdoor recreational experience in that it is more than just a single activity; there are five phases in the whole experience. The first phase is the planning stage, in which a person decides where to go, when to go, where to stay, and whether to take part in additional activities besides the sporting event. This phase is an essential aspect of the experience because this is when the participant in the experience does research on the location they will visit. The other phases are traveling to the event, participating in the event, traveling home, and recollecting the experience (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Killion, 1992). Traveling to and traveling from the event could include ancillary activities the tourist may experience. With the increasing advances in technology and access to information, average college students have information at their fingertips about a variety of locations and the leisure opportunities they provide. Easy access to information. This includes whether or not the participant does research on ancillary activities besides the main experience. For example, when an individual goes to Washington, DC, to watch a World Series game, is that individual doing additional things other than watching the game, such as going to museums and national monuments? Also, did that individual do research online to find those additional amenities or did the individual wait until arriving at the destination and then make a spontaneous decision to visit them?

Goal of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine college students' leisure satisfaction from sports tourism based on demographics, to aim college students' leisure satisfaction from sports tourism based on whether students spent time doing research on the area they were visiting prior to their trip, and to investigate college students' leisure satisfaction from sports tourism based on whether the students experienced local attractions other than the sports event at the same time.

Methodology

Participants and Procedure

The participants in this study were recruited from a university that had approximately 25,000 students. A convenience sampling was used to gain a better understanding of college students' leisure satisfaction from sports tourism, and the sample was obtained at a public university located in the southwest region of the United States. College students were recruited to participate in the survey in two different ways. The first was the university's online active research system, which contained a direct link to the survey that was sent to the students via email. The other way was by handing out a paper copy of the survey at the college. All of the surveys and research protocols were verified by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects. All participants were assured of anonymity and told that their participation was voluntary and had no known risks either when they clicked on the entry link to the online survey or by the researchers who were handing out the paper surveys.

A total of 331 college students responded to the survey, but 91 of them were removed from the analysis because they did not have any experiences of sports tourism. Thus, a total of 240 college students were analyzed for this study. Of the college students who completed the survey, 137 were female and 103 were male (Table 1). The majority of the respondents were White/Caucasian (76.7%), followed by African American (5.4%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (5.4%). Most were in the age range of 18 to 20 years (50.4%) and 21 to 23 years (33.3%). Most of the participants were undergraduate students (86.7%). Approximately half of the participants did not work at a job (47.1%).

Characteristics	n	%
Sex		
Female	137	57.1
Male	103	42.9
Ethnicity		
White / Caucasian	184	76.7
Hispanic / Latino	10	4.2
African American	13	5.4
Asian / Pacific Islander	13	5.4
Native American / Alaskan Native	9	3.8
Multiple ethnicity	8	3.3
Other	2	.8
Missing	1	.4
Age		
18-20	121	50.4
21-23	80	33.3
24-26	16	6.7
27-29	10	4.2
30+-	13	5.4
Classification		
Freshmen	56	23.3
Sophomore	53	22.1
Junior	56	23.3
Senior	43	17.9
Graduate Student	26	10.8
Professional Student	1	.4
Continuing Education Student	4	1.7
Missing	1	.4
Work hours per week		
None	113	47.1
1 – 10 hours	35	14.6
11 – 20 hours	47	19.6
21 – 30 hours	23	9.6
30+ – hours	22	9.2

Table 1: Research Participant Demographic Characteristics

Research Instrument

The survey measured the experience of sports tourism, the pre-event research about the sports tourism site and local attractions, and the additional experience of visiting local attractions. Participants were asked to complete questions such as "Have you ever traveled on an overnight trip to participate and watch a sporting event?" and

"Do you do research about a sporting event and the additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities online prior to your travels?" Along with these questions, participants also answered the question "While traveling on an overnight trip to participate in and/or watch a sporting event, did you experience other attractions, activities, and/or amenities?" If respondents answered "Yes" to the last question, their answers were rated by a five-point Likert scale as 1 = strongly dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, and 5 = strongly satisfied.

Participants were also asked how satisfied they were with the overall experience of the sports tourism event and the local attractions by the LSS short form (Beard & Ragheb, 1980). It is composed of 24 items on six subscales, psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological, and aesthetic. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The demographic characteristics identified by the survey were sex, ethnicity, age, classification, and hours worked at a job.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 25 (SPSS 25) was utilized to analyze the data reliability and descriptive statistics. Due to the convenience sampling methodology, the Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis nonparametric tests were applied to examine how the demographic characteristics, pre-event research on the sports tourism destination, and experiences of local attractions influenced the six LSS subscales. The data reliability of the six subscales and 24 items of the LSS was confirmed by the Cronbach alpha coefficient measurement as psychological $\alpha = .71$, educational $\alpha = .76$, social $\alpha = .79$, relaxation $\alpha = .79$, physiological $\alpha = .76$, aesthetic $\alpha = .76$, and overall LSS short form $\alpha = .85$.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis of participants was examined that most of the students participated in sports tourism one to three times per year (70%). The results also indicated that approximately 70% of the students did research on the sports tourism destination and other new attractions, activities, and amenities before traveling. More than 90% of the students experienced additional attractions, activities, and amenities while enjoying their sports tourism experience. Of the students who visited other local attractions, 83.1% were either satisfied or strongly satisfied with their experience, 0.9% were dissatisfied, and no one was strongly dissatisfied (Table 2).

additional attractions, activities, and amenities.				
	n	%		
Frequency of participation in sports tourism per year				
1 - 3	168	70.0		
4 - 6	31	12.9		
7 - 9	10	4.2		
10 – 12	16	15.7		
13+ -	11	4.6		
Missing	4	1.7		
Pre-research of a sport event and additional attractions, activities	3	2.8		
and/or amenities				
Yes	165	68.8		
No	75	31.2		
Experience of additional attractions, activities and/or amenities				
Yes	220	91.7		
No	20	8.3		
Satisfaction levels of additional attractions, activities and/or				
amenities				
Strongly dissatisfied	0	0		
Dissatisfied	2	.9		
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	35	16.0		
Satisfied	115	52.2		
Strongly satisfied	68	30.9		

 Table 2: Frequency of participation in sports tourism, pre-event research, and experience/satisfaction levels of additional attractions, activities, and amenities.

As shown in table 3, the LSS mean scores indicated that participants were most satisfied with the "opportunities to try new things" (*M*: 4.32) through the sports tourism experience, followed by "engaging in them because I like

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doing them" (M: 4.17) and "increasing my knowledge about things around me" (M: 4.12). The item of physiological leisure satisfaction, described as "are physically challenging" (M: 2.79), had the lowest LSS mean score and the only scores below 3 points. The LSS subscales that had the highest levels of satisfaction were the relaxation (M: 4.02), social (M: 4.01), and educational (M: 4.01) subscales, and the physiological subscale had the lowest level of satisfaction (M: 3.12).

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Items and Subscales of Leisure Satisfaction Scale	Mean	SD
Psychological	3.67	.61
are very interesting to me	4.11	.72
give me self-confidence	3.38	.82
give me a sense of accomplishment	3.60	.85
use many different increase skills and abilities	3.60	.95
Educational	4.01	•59
increase my knowledge about things around me	4.12	.78
provide opportunities to try new things	4.32	.70
help me to learn about myself	3.56	.84
help me to learn about other people	4.04	•77
Social	4.01	.62
have social interaction with others	4.10	.80
have helped me to develop a close relationship with others	3.97	.88
people I meet are friendly	4.00	.78
associated with people in my free time who enjoy doing it a great deal	3.90	.88
Relaxation	4.02	.67
help me to relax	4.05	.81
help relieve stress	4.06	.87
contribute to my emotional well being	3.81	.91
engage in because I like doing them	4.17	.82
Physiological	3.12	.60
are physically challenging	2.79	1.15
develop my physical fitness	3.20	1.09
restore me physically	3.16	1.02
help me to stay healthy	3.32	1.05
Aesthetic	3.85	.60
The areas or places where I engage in are fresh and clean	3.68	.80
The areas or places where I engage in are interesting	4.09	.69
The areas or places where I engage in are beautiful	3.84	.84
The areas or places where I engage in are well designed	3.78	.81

Relationship between Sex and the Leisure Satisfaction in College Students

For a better understanding of the relationship between the participants' demographic characteristics and the subscales of the LSS, the Mann–Whitney U test was used, and it found that there were differences in educational and aesthetic leisure satisfaction between the female and male students. More specifically, female college students had statistically higher leisure satisfaction levels for the educational (U = 5573.5, Z = -.2.83, p = .005) and aesthetic (U = 5560.5, Z = -.2.85, p = .004) items than male college students. There was no statistical difference between the six subscales of leisure satisfaction for the other demographic characteristics of ethnicity, age, classification as undergraduate or graduate student, and hours worked at a job (Table 4).

Table 4: The Mann–Whitney U test and Kruskal–Wallis test results for sex of college students on subscales of the leisure satisfaction scale (LSS)

			Sex		
Subscales of Leisure	<i>M</i> (<u>SD)</u>	TT	7	
Satisfaction Scale	Female	Male	U	Z	p-value
Psychological	3.69(.57)	3.65(.67)	6795.0	49	.622
Educational	4.11(.50)	3.87(.67)	5573.5	-2.83	.005
Social	4.10(.52)	3.91(.72)	6260.5	-1.51	.131
Relaxation	4.08(.52)	3.93(.71)	6050.0	-1.91	.788
Physiological	3.11(.80)	3.13(.86)	7010.0	09	.057
Aesthetic	3.94(.53)	3.73(.68)	5560.5	-2.85	.004

Relationship between pre-event research on a sports event destination, participation in additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities and the leisure satisfaction among college students

The Mann–Whitney U test was used to measure the relationship between doing pre-event research on a sports event destination, participation in additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities, and the scores on the subscales of the LSS. The results revealed that college students who did online research about a sports event and on additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities online prior to their travels had significantly higher leisure

satisfaction levels on the psychological (U = 5025.0, Z = -.2.35, p = .019), educational (U = 4966.5, Z = -.2.49, p = .013), social (U = 4692.5, Z = -.3.04, p = .002), relaxation (U = 5113.5, Z = -.2.18, p = .030), and aesthetic (U = 4934.0, Z = -.2.55, p = .011) items. The Mann–Whitney U test also examined the experience of additional

attractions, activities, and/or amenities and found they were positively associated with the leisure satisfaction subscales of educational (U = 1520.5, Z = -.2.32, p = .020), social (U = 1175.0, Z = -.3.49, p = .000), relaxation (U = 1595.5, Z = -.2.05, p = .040), and aesthetic (U = 1466.5, Z = -.2.50, p = .012) items (Table 5).

Table 5: Mann–Whitney U test results for pre-event research on a sporting event and additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities and experience of additional attractions, activities, and/or amenities on subscales of the leisure satisfaction scale (LSS)

		Pre-	event Research		
Subscales of Leisure Satisfaction Scale	<u> </u>	<u>SD)</u> No	U	Ζ	p-value
Psychological	3.73(.55)	3.55(.72)	5025.0	-2.35	.019
Educational	4.08(.53)	3.85(.68)	4966.5	-2.49	.013
Social	4.09(.56)	3.84(.70)	4692.5	-3.04	.002
Relaxation	4.10(.58)	3.85(.80)	5113.5	-2.18	.030
Physiological	3.17(.83)	3.02(.79)	5521.0	-1.35	.179
Aesthetic	3.91(.55)	3.70(.70)	4934.0	-2.55	.011
	Experien	ce of additional a	ttractions, activ	ities and/or a	menities
	M(SD)		IT	7	n-value
	Yes	No	U	L	p-ourue
Psychological	3.70(.61)	3.41(.59)	1678.5	-1.77	.077
Educational	4.04(.56)	3.64(.75)	1520.5	-2.32	.020
Social	4.05(.62)	3.63(.49)	1175.0	-3.49	.000
Relaxation	4.05(.67)	3.75(.55)	1595.5	-2.05	.040
Physiological	3.12(.84)	3.09(.63)	2184.0	05	.957
Aesthetic	3.88(.60)	3.51(.53)	1466.5	-2.50	.012

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that statistics related to sex are similar but not exactly the same as those for college students enrolled in 2022 provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The percentage of females enrolled in college was 59% and the percentage of males was 44%. The race and ethnicity data collected showed that the majority of participants were white and that only a few minority students participated in the survey; these numbers were also similar to but not the same as the NCES statistics. A convenience sampling was used to collect the data, and this means this study cannot be used to make broad generalizations, but it was considered opportune to have percentages similar to those of the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023).

The United Nations World Tourism Organization suggests that younger adults represent 20% of the world's tourists and that this percentage is continuing to grow (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2012). With the growing impact of sports tourism and a growing number of young tourists, it is understandable to see that a large percentage of college students report traveling at least one to three times a year to participate in some form of sports tourism (Getz, 2018). It is also reasonable to see that a large percentage of the students do research on the location and its amenities ahead of their trips. The research is easily performed with the advances in obtaining information through portable technology.

The high percentage of people who did research before going to the sports event (68.8%) and experienced other amenities (91.7%) also supports the theory that tourism is more than just a single activity but is, rather, an experience with five phases. Doing research is the first phase of planning for the tourism experience, participating in other amenities is another phase, and traveling to and from the event and recollecting the event are other phases (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Killion, 1992). These phases of the tourism experience can be considered very significant because the participants were very satisfied with their experiences with the amenities.

Given the busy and stressful lives of college students today, one can see why relaxation is essential for them and why the relaxation subscale had the highest mean score on the LSS. One can also see why physiological satisfaction had the lowest mean score. Sports tourism included both active participation and spectator participation, and the data collected could very well have included a large portion of college students who travel to spectator sports without participating in a sport.

Women were more satisfied with the educational and aesthetic qualities of sports event tourism, as well as the additional amenities provided. Researchers have suggested that when one is satisfied with a leisure experience, one's leisure needs have been fulfilled (Iso-Ahola, 1989; Kleiber, Mannell, & Walker, 2011). Iso-Ahola (1989) suggested that there are two types of leisure needs: The first is to escape, and the second is to seek. College students have the ability to fulfill educational needs, and a college campus tends to be aesthetically pleasing so it can attract future students and donors. It is not evident why female college students would seek to fulfill further educational needs or aesthetic needs when participating in a tourist experience. It could be that the constant exposure to education and the other pleasing features of a university would motivate students to want more of the same outside of their typical environments. This exposure could explain why female students would desire to seek further educational and aesthetic experiences. If female participants then met those needs, it would be understandable why they had high satisfaction levels in these specific areas. Seeking need fulfillment could also explain why the male students had higher mean scores for physiological needs. Although the scores were only slightly higher in this study, males have tended to find satisfaction in sports and the physical aspects of sports (Kleiber, Mannell, & Walker, 2011). These satisfaction areas could go back to the idea of motivation, participation, and satisfaction (Hseih, 1998; Iso-Ahola, 1980). The females had significantly higher levels of satisfaction on the educational and aesthetic subscales, and for them the sports tourism experience was a channel for fulfilling these aspects of their lives.

College students who did pre-event research had significantly higher levels of satisfaction in all areas except the physiological subscale. This satisfaction could suggest that if college students took time to plan their sports tourism, they would be significantly more satisfied with their experiences. The high levels of satisfaction could be because they had more time to rest and socialize and more opportunities to appreciate the educational and aesthetically pleasing environments. The reason that the physiological aspect was not significant could be due to the definition of sports tourism; sports tourism does include participation in an activity but also includes being a spectator of sports. Those who are going to watch a sporting event may not be seeking the physically active aspects of the tourist experience.

The finding of this study also indicated college students who participated in additional amenities while having a sports tourism experience did have significantly higher levels of satisfaction for the aesthetic, educational, relaxation, and social aspects of the experience. Again, the physiological aspect was not significant, and this could be due to the students' wishes to be spectators rather than participants in physical activity. Psychological satisfaction was not significant either; this could have been due to the lack of research before taking part in the tourist experience. It would be safe to say that psychologically, the students who did not do research before their trips might have felt less confident about themselves in a new place or not very interested in the area they were visiting.

It is important to recognize the current findings' limitations. The survey was designed to consider all types of sports tourism. However, the participants who were given the survey on the college campus might have been focused on spectatorship only because the survey was conducted on the day of a college football game. Even if the online survey might have lessened this limitation, the circumstances of the paper survey still might have influenced the results of the current findings. Future study might be needed to provide a better explanation of the purpose of this research so that participants can reduce misunderstandings about sports tourism. Also, a survey done at a different time and date from the sports event could reduce the limitations of this study.

Another limitation might be the lack of diversity of the sample, which was limited to college students at one university. In addition, using convenience sampling and a small sample size of college students might have prevented the generalization of the sample population, and it might only be considered a representation of the individuals who participated in the survey. Further research is suggested to see whether the findings would be similar in different regions.

In conclusion, it is vital to understand the leisure satisfaction of a tourist experience. If an individual is satisfied with the experience, the individual is more likely to return to the destination and possibly bring additional tourists with them next time (Cho & Clemens, 2020). Many strategies, such as free giveaways and live music, have been contemplated to attract more students. Another strategy might be to understand what college students find satisfying in the leisure experience of sports tourism and translate this knowledge into ways of increasing attendance. Females who participated in the study focused on the aesthetic and educational components of a sports tourism experience. Participants who attended additional ancillary experiences when traveling for sports tourism expressed a higher satisfaction with the relaxing, educational, social, and aesthetically pleasing aspects of the tourism experience. Those who did research before participating in sports tourism also expressed higher psychological satisfaction.

It could be suggested that sports commissions and promoters need to make sure that online information on amenities other than the sporting event should be easily found to attract college tourists. It would even be wise to provide links to additional amenities as individuals buy their tickets to sporting events. It may be good to focus promotions on the aesthetic, social, educational, and relaxing aspects of the location. These features may draw in more college tourists to the locations of sports tourism.

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