Perceptions of Service Quality in a Mixed Audience Environment

by

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Abstract

The gay population has become an increasingly in-demand consumer group in the United States (Iwata, 2006). The rapidly growing awareness of the gay consumer evidences an understanding that the preferences and purchasing behavior of this group may provide significant benefits to organizations seeking to reach gay individuals. Major areas of advertising currently targeted toward gay consumers include real estate, non-medical services, arts and entertainment, and travel; however, the largest category by far is *eat and drink*, which includes gay bars (Prime Access Inc. & Rivendell Media, 2006). There appears to be a weakness in the literature as it relates to mixed audiences (gay and straight customers) with regards to the factors that relate to their overall satisfaction, and the satisfaction of the majority group (homosexuals) in regards to the presence of the "mixing" group (heterosexuals) within a gay bar.

This study details an exploratory factor analysis which revealed three components (Responsiveness, Reliability and Tangibles) that explain 63.9% of the variance. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results indicate a statistically significant difference between men and women, regardless of sexual orientation. An additional MANOVA procedure demonstrated a statistically significant difference between gay males and gay females. An ANOVA procedure with a Bonferroni post hoc test showed that gay males in their 20's are more satisfied with a mixed audience environment than gay males in their 30's and 40's.

This study concludes that more research is needed in the area of mixed audience environments, and between gay and straight customers.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this research was to determine if the adaptation of the service quality survey instrument (SERVQUAL) would provide a confirmable quantitative satisfaction scale when applied to a mixed audience. Additionally, this study was to ascertain if differences exist between homosexual (gay) and heterosexual (straight) customers within a gay bar setting. This chapter presents background information and the theoretical framework for research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature and research utilized. Chapter 3 outlines research questions and plan, data collection procedures, research tools, and the ethics utilized in the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of data analysis. Chapter 5 provides a brief conclusion to summarize the study as a whole.

Background

What do record stores, pay phones, newspapers and gay bars have in common? According to Entrepreneur magazine these businesses are facing extinction (Ten Businesses Facing Extinction in Ten Years, 2007). Record stores have given way to iTunes; mobile phone carriers such as Verizon and T-Mobile have caused the demise of the pay phone.

> Location-based apps, such as Grindr and Scruff, have become increasingly popular among the LGBT communities since they were first introduced several

years ago. The apps allow the users to find potential sexual partners currently nearby who are using the same programs (Abrams, 2014).

Location-based apps for a smartphone or tablet, also known as location-based services (LBS), are computer program level services that use location data to control features. LBS are information services and have numerous uses in social networking and entertainment (Pascale, 2014). The gay bar has been referred by some researchers to be as the *social institution* within the gay community, suggesting it not only provides a physical space for individuals to come together, but it also achieves a higher level of meaning by satisfying needs (Achilles, 1967). However, between 2005 and 2011, the number of gay and lesbian bars and clubs in gay travel guide publisher Damron's database decreased by 12.5 percent, from 1,605 to 1,405 (Thomas, 2011). Based on the relative lack of empirical research on the gay consumer and their interactions within the gay bar, this current research project may offer insight into the cause of this decline and how to reverse it.

Gay tourism and gay bars have been synonymous since the nineteenth century, when homosexual men living in Northern Europe would make pilgrimages to Italy and Greece to accommodate and sustain their homosexual desires (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the travel and tourism industry in the United States generated more than $1.4 trillion in economic output in 2011. In 2011 gay tourism was estimated to be a $70 billion industry within the United States (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013) and continued growth is expected as more cities and destinations adopt and promote gay tourism marketing (Iwata, 2006).

The gay population has become an increasingly in-demand consumer group in the United States (Iwata, 2006). Understanding the preferences and purchasing behavior of this group may provide significant benefits to organizations seeking to reach gay individuals, as evidenced by the rapidly growing awareness of the gay consumer. Major areas of advertising currently targeted toward gay consumers include real estate, non-medical services, arts and entertainment, and travel; however, the largest category by far is *eat and drink*, which includes gay bars (Prime Access Inc. & Rivendell Media, 2006). *Eat and drink* includes food, beverages, restaurants, and bars, with a particular focus on gay bars (Prime Access Inc. & Rivendell Media, 2006). With *eat and drink*, to include gay bars, representing such a large marketing category for gay consumers, it is evident that it is important to better understand the preferences of consumers, both gay and straight, who patronize gay bars.

Problem Statement and Significance

Since 1988, the use of SERVQUAL as a means for measuring customers' perceptions of service quality has been extensive. Similarly, researches have also studied gay bars, specifically in regards to public health issues such as drug abuse, alcoholism and HIV/AIDS. Weaknesses in the literature as it relates to a comparison of service quality perceptions between gay (homosexual) patrons and straight (heterosexual) patrons of a gay bar appear to exist. Previous research has documented that "gay" service environments win by offering an experience superior to that available through traditional (straight) alternatives (Haslop, Hill, & Schmidt, 1998). This provides explanation why straight customers might patronize a gay bar; however, straight customers seeking a "superior" service offering might be dissatisfying to the core gay-customer base. The concept of "gay space" (Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, & Jenkins, 1998) is determined to be the source of this dissatisfaction. Gay spaces provide homosexuals with a strong sense of safety and are arenas in which behavior does not have to be edited to conform to a heterosexual norm (Pritchard et al., 1998). With an influx of heterosexual customers, many gay patrons may no longer feel "safe" within this arena, thus leading to a level of dissatisfaction.

Purpose of the Research

Adding a quantitative study comparing these two groups will provide greater depth and understanding of this increasing market segment. The original contribution of this research is to determine if the service quality survey instrument (SERVQUAL) will provide a confirmable quantitative satisfaction scale when applied to a mixed audience. Additionally, this research seeks to determine if differences exist between homosexual (gay) and heterosexual (straight) customers within a gay bar setting.

Utilization of the SERVQUAL measurements of Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness are tested in the subject group to ascertain perception differences of patrons based on sexuality, gender, and age demographics. The use of these dimensions throughout this study provides possible insight into the effectiveness of this tool as an evaluating instrument for this environment.

The current investigation into service quality perception within a gay bar is both timely and compelling. The United States Supreme Court has recently ruled on two "gay" centered lawsuits and as more and more states and countries pass statutes allowing gay marriage, homosexuals are becoming an even larger, more easily recognizable market demographic. With the increasing decline in the number of gay bars and the rapid social acceptance of homosexuals in the past decade, this research is imperative.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of the population who patronize Missie B's in terms of education level, frequency of visits, amount of money spent per visit, smokes cigarettes, purchase of cigarettes in the bar, day of the week most likely to visit, alcoholic beverage of choice, gender, age group, sexuality, and ethnicity?

RQ2: What underlying structure(s) may exist for the responses to the SERVQUAL-type survey, consisting of 22 variables, such as equipment, interior, neatness, trust in promises, dependability, problem resolution, knowledge of services, service delivery, safety, politeness, personal attention, and operating hours on the Missie B's Customer Service Survey? Specifically, does the principal component matrix reveal the five dimensions of the original SERVQUAL model?

RQ3: If reliable components evolve from an analysis of the data structure, what overall variables may best define these components?

RQ4: To what extent do differences exist on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight)?

The null hypothesis formulated for research question 4 is that no statistically significant difference exists on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are supplied to provide a clear and concise meaning for the terms used in this study:

Bisexual – A person who is sexually attracted to people of both sexes (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.).

Gay (homosexual) – A person who is sexually attracted to people of their own sex or gender (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.).

Gay Space – normally a concentration of bars, clubs, cafes, shops and residences, and public spaces that cater to or are geared toward homosexuals (Bristow, 1989).

Lesbian – A homosexual woman (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.).

Straight (heterosexual) – A person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex or gender (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.).

Mixed Audience – A group consisting of men and women, homosexuals and heterosexuals (Taylor & Rupp, 2004).

Pink Dollar (Pink Pound) – money spent by gays and lesbians on goods and services that appeal to them (QFinance, n.d.).

SERVQUAL – The dominant approach to quantitatively assessing service quality. SERVQUAL uses a survey approach that elicits ratings of the customer's expectations and perceptions for each of five dimensions as well as their associated attributes (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004).

Limitations

This study was limited to one specific gay bar, Missie B's, located in Kansas City, Missouri. The researcher attempted to gain access to other gay bars in different locations to include Atlanta, San Francisco, Nashville, Houston, and Chicago, without success. This lack of participation and unwillingness to explore the concept of academic research by the other gay bars contacted is potentially the result of the unethical research methods of Laud Humphreys in his 1970 dissertation, *Tearoom Trade*. However, the large customer base at Missie B's and their willingness to participate in this research allowed this project to continue with the Missie B's data alone. Nevertheless, this research did not address all mixed audience environments or even all gay bar patrons, only those who happened to patronize the establishment during the time frame of this research; and the survey was self-administered in a bar. Additionally, the lack of empirical studies involving mixed audiences within gay bars limits comparison of method and results with other research.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this research was to determine if the adaptation of the service quality survey instrument (SERVQUAL) would provide a confirmable quantitative satisfaction scale when applied to a mixed audience. Additionally, this study was to ascertain if differences exist between homosexual (gay) and heterosexual (straight) customers within a gay bar setting.

Tourism is the world's largest industry, with gay tourism contributing a large portion of the total amount spent annually. Gay tourism has played an important role in the development of "Gayborhoods" worldwide. Gay bars, especially those located in "Gayborhoods", provide needed socialization for many homosexuals.

This chapter presents a review of related literature in the development of gay bars and the importance of "safe" areas to both gay residents and tourists. Additionally, this chapter addresses the need of service-oriented businesses to measure the service quality perceptions of patrons to achieve a competitive advantage and create customer loyalty. Two available methods for measuring these perceptions are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The use of a SERVQUAL-type instrument in measuring the impact straight customers might have in the satisfaction level of gay patrons is outlined as part of this research.

Tourism

Charles Kuralt, the ten-time Emmy Award winning journalist and host of the famed CBS Evening News “On the Road” segment once said “Interstate highways allow you to drive coast to coast, without seeing anything” (Kuralt, Perrin, & Fenton, 1990). While the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways (commonly referred to as the Interstate Highway System, Interstate Freeway System, Interstate System, or simply the Interstate) was intended primarily for national defense, it also opened up America to both domestic and international tourists (McNichol, 2005). The project began with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, and took over 35 years to complete (McNichol, 2005). General Eisenhower’s vision for the interstate system started immediately upon his return from World War II (McNichol, 2005), and contemporary literature suggests that modern tourism began after the Second World War with the returning U.S. servicemen relating the many breathtaking sights they had seen while in Europe (Becker, 2013). However, tourism has been around since the beginning of mankind. Didn’t Moses lead the Israelites in the desert for forty years? Weren’t Joseph and Mary required to travel back to Bethlehem? How many children grew up playing “Marco Polo” at the swimming pool? Wasn’t the real Marco Polo a tourist? What about the Crusades? Isn’t a tenant of the Muslim faith to make a pilgrimage to Mecca? Wasn’t Christopher Columbus a tourist as well as an explorer? Weren’t Lewis and Clark tourists of the western portion of the United States? While ancient tourism versus exploration can be debated, it has no direct impact on the stated hypotheses and research. However, it is evident that tourism has been around in various forms for many more years than discussed in academic literature.

Tourism is one of the best success stories of modern times. It rivals the unprecedented dominance of SEC football in the BCS era as well as the election of the first African-American President of the United States. Tourism is defined as a

> composite of activities, services, and industries that deliver a travel experience: transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities, and other hospitality services available for individual or groups that are traveling away from home. It encompasses all providers of visitor and visitor-related services. Tourism is the entire world industry of travel, hotels, transportation and all other components that, including promotion, serve the needs and wants of travelers. Tourism is the sum total of tourist expenditures within the borders of a nation or a political subdivision or a transportation-centered economic area of contiguous states or nations (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009, p. 6).

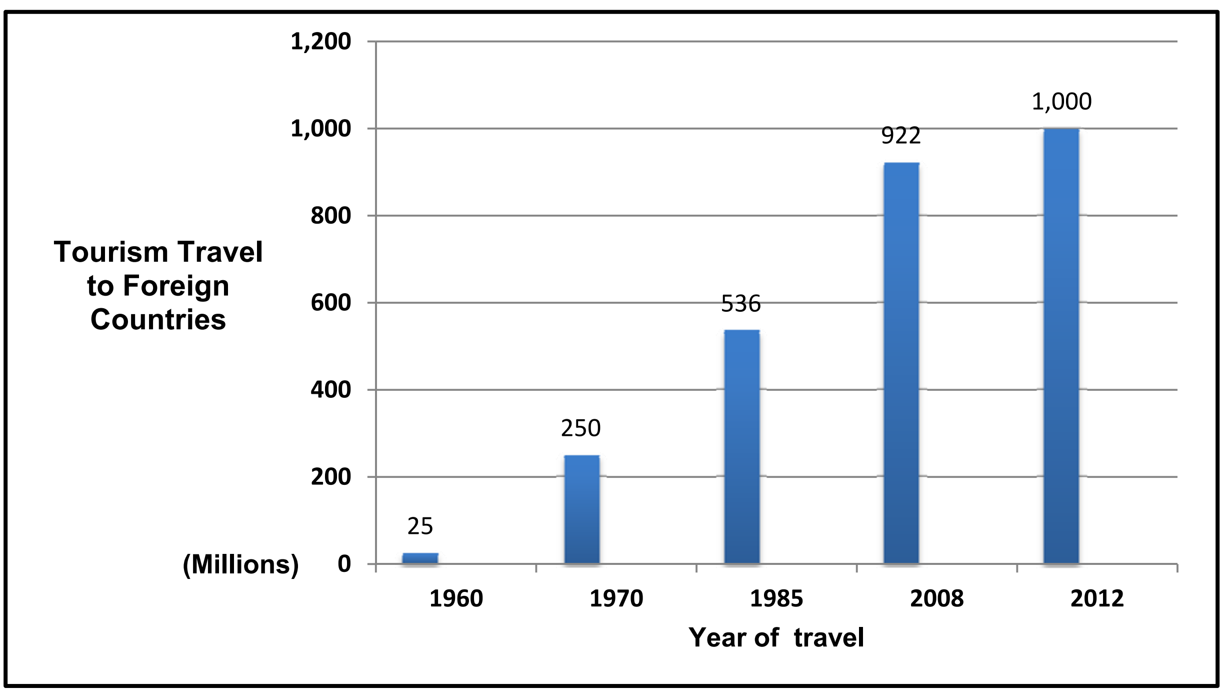
The industry, which began on a massive scale only in the 1960's, has grown rapidly over the past forty years in terms of the income it generates and the number of people who travel abroad (Theobald, 2005). It has proved to be resilient in the face of terrorist events such as the September 11, 2001, bombings; the Arab Spring uprisings, and even the Boston Marathon bombings of 2013. Tourism has not been deterred by new illnesses like SARS and the "bird flu" that have been newsworthy for the past several years. And tourism is poised to grow in the coming decades. According to World Tourism Organization data, by 2020 the tourism industry is expected to see 1.6 billion tourists annually with annual expenditures exceeding $2 trillion, or $5 billion per day (Theobald, 2005). Additionally, tourism has been called the world's largest industry (Theobald, 2005) and with the expected growth, this claim to fame shall continue.

Just as it is hard to deny that Auburn University's two-sport-playing, Heisman-Trophy winning Bo Jackson is the Greatest Athlete of All Time (Brenkus, 2014), it would be hard to deny that tourism is a major global economic force. There is hardly a day that a major media outlet isn't announcing a wider significance about the world's largest industry, tourism (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). Tourism has grown substantially in recent decades with technological improvements, an increase in the standard of living, and broader processes of globalization that have resulted in an increase in the number of tourists (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001).

In 1960 there were 25 million tourist trips to foreign countries, 250 million by 1970, 536 million by 1995, 922 million in 2008 and 1 billion in 2012 (Becker, 2013). These numbers illustrate increases in the tourism industry, and represent a six percent annual growth rate (Theobald, 2005). This dramatic growth throughout the recent decades is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Increase of Tourism Travel to Foreign Countries for Specified Years of Travel



The New Market Segment

With an increasing acceptance of homosexuality worldwide, a new and flourishing market segment within the travel industry has emerged. As with any industry, new and emerging market segments are the keys to growth and sustainability. And while gay tourism is not a new phenomenon, it has only been in recent decades that the gay traveler has been embraced and even courted by the industry. In 1994 American Airlines “came out” when it was a booking partner and advertised for a gay cruise through print ad, *American Airlines Flies First Gay Print Ad* (Adrespect.org, 2013).

While American Airlines may be seen as a pioneer in respect to gay tourism and gay rights, gay tourism and gay bars have been synonymous since the nineteenth century. Among the earliest documented examples of what could be referred to as gay tourism are derived from the Victorian period when gay men from northern Europe participated in grand tours of the Mediterranean region. Such men visited Italy and Greece seeking culture and companionship of young men (Clift, Luongo, & Callister, 2002). During this time, only the elite and ultra-wealthy were able to partake in this form of gay tourism. Ironically, while income level may have precluded many homosexual men from traveling during Victorian times, today income level, created by dual income families and fewer familial obligations (children), is very much an advantage to the gay tourist. Today the gay traveler is deemed to have more disposable income and thus becomes a more lucrative tourist to the industry (Clift et al., 2002).

Tourism Demand and Destination Factors

As air travel became more prominent with increased efficiency, the tourism industry reaped the benefits of savings in finance and time. Expansions in technology changed lives, making travel easier and more affordable to the common man. Gone were the days when only the ultra-wealthy traveled, ocean liners the only transportation available from the United States to Europe. By the late 1960’s, thanks to an American G.I. lawyer, many Americans were seeing *Europe on $5 a Day*. This former U.S. service member was Arthur Frommer and his book showed that Europe could be traveled in a few weeks as opposed to the months once thought the norm.

With each increase in technology and innovation, the twentieth century saw the demand for consumer services and products explode. This explosion of products and services also saw the demand for travel and tourism to skyrocket as well (Laws & Thyne, 2004). Western society was characterized by widespread enjoyment of previously unknown standards of living, including higher disposable income allowing a wide choice of luxury goods and services to include tourism (Laws & Thyne, 2004).

The demand for tourism is dependent on significant free time, knowledge of other countries, and the available transportation, accommodations, and ancillary services available in the destination country or location (Laws & Thyne, 2004). Studies have revealed that heterosexual tourists place a high value on comfort, good food, relaxation, and guaranteed sunshine; conversely, homosexual tourists appear to place a high value on gay-friendliness and gay space as illustrated by these holiday destinations (Clift & Forrest, 1999). When planning a holiday, gay men rated rest and relaxation, comfort and good food as the most important factors. These are the same factors seen in responses from heterosexual holiday travelers (Clift & Forrest, 1999). However, gay travelers noted it was important to be able to socialize with other gays in a “gay space” (Clift & Forrest, 1999). The demand for tourism is stimulated by individual interests in travel and a range of activities offered at destinations which appeal to personal self-image and lifestyle concepts. Many people visit locations for activities and events, or locations that may not normally be associated with tourism, as a result of the activities of tourism and other industries. These "non-tourist" events or locations appeal to the traveler (Laws & Thyne, 2004). In today's market-driven economy, consumers are constantly exposed to the combining of marketing and media messages to encourage them to continually adopt more complex and self-determined aspirations for activities and personal possessions (Laws & Thyne, 2004).

If the main purpose of a firm is to attract and retain customers, then a tourist destination could be viewed as a firm; all of the tourism providers in that location working together toward one goal, that of attracting new tourists while retaining existing tourists, attempting to ensure they return during future travels. In 1973 the National Tourism Resources Review Commission defined a tourist as "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 stays overnight or returns the same day" (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). In that same year, John Wayne recorded and released on RCA Records the ballad "America, Why I Love Her" written by Robert Mitchum. In this ballad the Duke (John Wayne) mentions many potential tourist destinations within the United States including natural and picturesque sights located in Kansas, Arizona, Louisiana, San Francisco, Massachusetts, Plymouth Rock, New York, the Rockies, Nevada, Gettysburg, Mississippi, Missouri, Michigan, the Rio Grande, Alaska, and Maine. In a short ballad, recorded by a man known more for his marksmanship and equitation on the silver screen than his singing, Wayne mentions more than twenty tourist destinations. These scenic destinations do not include additional well known entertainment venues such as Walt Disney World and the Kentucky Derby. Yet today, many of these locations are still considered the most popular destinations within the United States (Cooperstein, 2014).

However, tourism is much more than just international and domestic travels. Tourism also involves a relatively new concept called a “staycation” or a stay at home vacation (Odland, 2012). The “staycation” grew in prominence after the financial meltdown of 2008 when families saw disposable income shrink and their vacation and travel budgets going instead for everyday expenses.

Participation in the tourism industry occurs with each travel to a destination, whether from Rome, Georgia, to Rome, Italy; Clinton, South Carolina, to Clinton, Missouri; or from a home in Montgomery, Alabama, to the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Tuskegee for the day. Daily tourism currently generates an estimated $3 billion (Becker, 2013) to the economy. This spending not only occurs while traveling to the destination, but continues upon arrival at the destination.

Contrary to popular beliefs, when planning a holiday or vacation a relatively low proportion of gay men identified opportunities to have sex while on holiday as an important decision in their planning, according to a 1999 study by Clift & Forrest. However, that same study revealed, “survey respondents considered it necessary to socialize with gay men and to access gay culture and venues –‘gay space’ – when planning a holiday” (Clift & Forrest, 1999, pp. 622) an important factor.

Gay Consumers

Research on lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) in the United States has been hindered due to a lack of available data, as few representative surveys ask about sexual orientation. The literature is faced with two challenges: measuring the size of the LGBT population and its characteristics.

> The modern literature based on representative samples in both the United States and other Western countries, for self-identification as LGBT, estimates range from 1.7% of adults (National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, 2004-2005) to 5.7% of adults (National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior, 2009). Identification as gay or lesbian is relatively more stable across surveys (ranging from 1% to 2.5%) than identification as bisexual (0.7% to 3.1%) (Gates, 2011).

Much of the existing literature related to gay consumers is based on gay tourists and many of the dynamics that make gay tourists a "lucrative niche market" can be applied across other markets (Clift & Forrest, 1999, pp. 615). While this research does not attempt to document or examine the gay population, it should be noted that many industries such as clothing (Sha, Aung, Londerville, & Ralston, 2007), magazine publishers (Sender, 2004), hotels (Poria, 2006), and big-box retailers (Tuten, 2005) have all sought to identify, understand, and characterize the size and scope of the gay markets.

The gay population has become an increasing in-demand consumer group in the United States (Iwata, 2006). With the rapidly growing awareness of the gay consumer, it is evident that understanding the preferences and purchasing behavior of this group may provide significant benefits to organizations seeking to reach gay individuals. Major areas of advertising that are currently targeted toward gay consumers include real estate, non-medical services, arts and entertainment, and travel; however, the largest category by far is *eat and drink*, which includes gay bars (Prime Access Inc. & Rivendell Media, 2006). *Eat and drink* includes food, beverages, restaurants, and bars, with a particular focus on gay bars (Prime Access Inc. & Rivendell Media, 2006). As a result of the large marketing category represented by *eat and drink*, it is evident that it is important to understand the preferences of consumers, both gay and straight, who visit gay bars. In the 2013 best seller, *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism*, “the gay and lesbian tourism market is considered potentially among the most lucrative” (Becker, 2013, p. 37).

The Gay Tourist

Gay and lesbian travelers are seen as trendsetters with a high disposable income, of a high or higher socioeconomic class than heterosexuals, and are typically known for conspicuous consumption (Hughes, 2004). Gay tourists are typically more highly educated than the average tourist, and exhibit appreciation for the arts and culture (Wood, 1999). Additionally, a United States study characterized gay tourists as “above-average income, high educational achievement and employment in professional or executive positions, with a high level of passport ownership at 80% compared with about 29% for the rest of the U.S. population; a British study reported 48% and 13% respectively” (Wood, 1999, p. 108). Other research has referred to gay and lesbian tourists as early adopters, hedonists and aesthetes – early innovators of new products and services, trendsetters in fields such as fashion and music who spend their personal disposable incomes differently and appear to maintain a more youthful lifestyle for longer (Hughes, 2004). Gay tourists are also described as being individualistic, self-conscious, flexible thinkers, having leading edge tastes (Wood, 1999). The common views of the gay tourist are that they have more discretionary income and have more free time than comparable heterosexuals (Hughes, 2004). Additionally, they have low family commitments and have a high educational achievement level (Hughes, 2004). These characteristics, combined with attitudinal and behavioral attributes, appear to make gays and lesbians a lucrative market to target - they are “the marketing department’s” dream consumer (Wood, 1999).

However, not all businesses want gay customers despite the potential impact on the bottom line. From 1936 until 1966 *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was published (Green, 1936) to aid the growing number of African American travelers in the United States. This directory was a listing of black-friendly businesses that provided services from gas and oil, vehicle repairs, tires, and restrooms, to places to eat and sleep for the African American tourist (Naimark, 2014). While African American travelers did not have to sit in “the back of the bus” in their own vehicles, they were still excluded from vital services and access to basic necessities. And this discrimination was not only in the southern United States (Naimark, 2014). Green’s guide provided information for much of the United States, Canada, Mexico and some parts of the Caribbean (Green, 1936). Some 60 plus years later, gay travelers in the United States are potentially in need of a similar publication.

Big Earl’s Bait House and Country Store in Pittsburg, Texas, has become famous for refusing to serve “fags” (Naimark, 2014). For the weary traveler on Interstate 20 (I-20), the historic city with a “Main Street City” designation from the Texas Historical Commission (Welcome to Pittsburg, Texas, n.d.) might seem like a logical place to stop, stretch their legs, visit an antique shop or two, and grab a bite to eat at Big Earl’s Bait House. However, Big Earl’s owner, Earl Cheney, is not interested in accepting “pink dollars” (Naimark, 2014). Cheney contends he has a sign on the door that says “Welcome to Big Earl’s where men act like men, women act like ladies, no saggy pants and we reserve the right to refuse service to anyone (LGBTQNATION, 2014).

The rejection of “pink dollars” is not solely from small firms in rural America. Since their purchase by the Sultan of Brunei, the Dorchester Collection of hotels, including the luxury hotels in London, Beverly Hills and Bel-Air (California) have a policy of Sharia Law within the hotels and on hotel property (Naimark, 2014). Sharia Law is the law of Islam, derived from the Quran, the action and words of Muhammad, and the collective reasoning and deductions of Muslim Imams. Topics addressed by secular law including crime, politics, and economics as well as personal matters such as sexual intercourse, hygiene, diet, and prayer are covered (Corbin, 2013). Homosexuality is prohibited under Sharia Law and is punishable by death by stoning, no less (Naimark, 2014). This position by the Dorchester Collection of hotels has sparked protests and outrage from their celebrity guests including Russell Crowe, Kate Middleton, and Rose McGowan (Naimark, 2014). While the average homosexual and heterosexual tourists will probably never stay at the Dorchester Collection hotels; and many tourists will never pass through Pittsburg, Texas, both Big Earl's and the Dorchester Collection illustrate the vast spectrum of service providers who currently or might potentially discriminate against the gay tourist.

Fortunately for gay travelers in the United States and internationally, many firms, both small and large, recognize the value and the power of the "pink dollar". During the summer of 2014, Marriott International attempted to lure in this dream consumer. On June 2, 2014, the #LoveTravels campaign was launched, specifically targeted to the gay and lesbian tourists (Trejos, 2014). The campaign featured five hotels, print advertisements in LGBT media, and used gay celebrity and NBA Player Jason Collins as a spokesperson (Trejos, 2014). Marriott appeared to be following the lead of Kimpton Hotels, who since their inception in the 1980's has targeted gay and lesbian tourists as well as supported the LGBT community; and Preferred Hotel Group, who launched the Preferred Pride program in 2011 with more than 120 gay-welcoming independent hotels and resorts in 20 countries (Trejos, 2014). Similarly to Kimpton Hotels and Preferred Hotel Group, Hilton Worldwide has a gay travel package and a website dedicated to helping gay tourists plan vacations (Hilton Hotels & Resorts - LGBT Travel Ideas Begin Here, 2014). Additionally, OUT NYC has called itself the first gay hotel based in New York City (The OUT NYC Urban Resort, 2014). The vice president of Leisure Sales for Preferred Hotel Group says “hotels have no other choice but to pay attention to the gay and lesbian traveler, given how much they spend. It’s in the billions, and that really has a lot of people paying attention to the market.” (Trejos, 2014). Marriott has estimated that the gay and lesbian travel market has a potential to reach $181 billion this year (Trejos, 2014).

The Importance of Gay Space to Gay Tourism

Gay tourism is viewed as an emerging and growing market and cities never associated as “gay-safe” destinations in the past are embracing this new market segment. For example, in 2004 the City of Philadelphia launched an advertising campaign to attract gay tourists with the tag line “Get your history straight and your nightlife gay” (Waitt & Markwell, 2006).

Just as Frommer and his books exposed Europe to the “middle class American” during the 1960’s and 1970’s, another travel guide was coming into existence. *Spartacus* was targeting the gay tourist. By examining *Spartacus* editions from 1970 – 2000, the rapid growth of gay tourism is evident. In 1970 there were 109 pages, by 1977 there were 584 pages, 722 and 1,057 pages in 1984 and 1991 respectively, and in 2000 there were 1,337 pages. In the span of thirty years, listings in *Spartacus* increased by a factor of ten (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). As gay tourism continued to grow throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s, a need for a professional organization was discovered and in 1983 the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) was formed. This organization exists to facilitate trade fairs and conventions, providing education and training initiatives as well as marketing and networking opportunities, and accreditation of operators (Waitt & Markwell, 2006).

In the United States, gay tourism has been described as “a rapidly growing and profitable sector” (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996, pp. 711) and in the case of the United Kingdom it was described as “an expanding and lucrative niche market” (Clift & Forrest, 1999, pp. 615). It has been estimated that over 10% of the U.S. travel industry in terms of amount spent is gay-related (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013). The gay market was considered to be particularly resistant to the economic downturns of the latest recession and other influences that have a negative impact on the tourism industry (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013). Gays are not only considered more likely than others to take a vacation or holiday, but to take more vacations or holidays each year (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013). In a United Kingdom survey over two-thirds of gays took a vacation or holiday as compared to under half (less than 50%) of the population as a whole (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). Another survey showed that 72% of gays took a holiday compared with 61% for the population as a whole, and 24% took three or more holidays compared with 11% of the whole population in the United Kingdom (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). In the United States, gays were much more likely to take an international vacation in 2003 than were the remainder of the population, 72% compared with 9% (Hughes, 2004).

A study of the most popular vacation destinations for United Kingdom gays identified the United States (40.7% had visited within the previous five years), Amsterdam (46.6% had visited within the previous five years), Gran Canaria (31.5% had visited within the previous five years), Ibiza (23% had visited within the previous five years) and Sitges (14.4% had visited within the previous five years) (Clift & Forrest, 1999). The British Tourist Authority’s research confirmed that U.S. gay travelers wished to experience the United Kingdom’s tourist assets as much as any other U.S. traveler; however, they placed a high premium on gay-friendliness (Wood, 1999).

Gay travelers noted it was important to be able to socialize with other gays in a “gay space” (Clift & Forrest, 1999). “Gay space” is normally described as a concentration of bars, clubs, cafes, shops, residences and public spaces that cater to or are geared toward homosexuals (Bristow, 1989).

As gay tourism has grown, many cities have embraced the economic “boom” and attempted to become the gay tourist “Mecca”. Many larger cities in North America and Europe have established visible commercial gay districts or “gayborhoods” since the mid 1900’s. These “gayborhoods” typically feature gay or gay-friendly cafes, restaurants, nightclubs, and bathhouses.

After visiting as tourists, many gays decided to relocate and permanently reside in these areas. As these “gayborhoods” continued to grow and flourish with more permanent residents, the areas were able to offer more to tourists (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). The residents of these “gayborhoods” began to travel to other locations and countries and gay travel became a significant element in the modern gay lifestyle. Additionally, these new “gayborhood” residents boosted the consumer base in these areas and this increase in potential consumers resulted in an increase in gay and gay-friendly businesses such as retail shops, professional services, bars, and restaurants (Waitt & Markwell, 2006).

Because travel is important within the gay lifestyle, in 2012 it was estimated that gay tourism was worth $65 billion (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013). Additionally, as more states in the United Stated legalize gay marriage and as more countries worldwide embrace the concept of same sex marriage, gay tourism is expected to continue to grow. More and more cities are attempting to entice the gay tourist to come and spend the “pink dollar” or the “pink pound” in their community. One of the ways that even the most conservative cities in the United

States attract gay tourists is through the annual Gay Pride activities. Atlanta, Georgia's Gay Pride, held annually in October, attracts more than 300,000 people to Peachtree Park during a Friday, Saturday and Sunday and has an estimated economic impact of over $28 million (Atlanta, 2010). Additionally, it is estimated that 500 cities in North America and Europe hosted Gay Pride festivals in 2012 with the largest Gay Pride festival held in San Paulo, Brazil, an estimated three million participants and over $75 million in economic impact (The Economist, 2014).

Bar Industry

The "Great Recession" of 2008 shocked the Bars, Nightclub and Drinking Establishment Industry as it contracted for the first time in over a decade (Industry Outlook 72241 - Bars & Nightclubs in the US). There were major rebounds in both 2012 and 2013; the bar industry rebounded to $22.3 billion (Industry at a Glance - 72241 - Bars & Nightclubs in the US). Sales of spirits, wine and beer in restaurants, bars and other licensed on-premise locations were $93.7 billion in 2012 (Our Industry, n.d.). The entire restaurant and bar industry accounted for $632 billion in sales in the United States. The Bars, Nightclub and Drinking Establishment Industry is broken into four major categories: Taverns, Bars and Lounges, Cocktail Lounges, and Night Clubs (Our Industry, n.d.). The Nightlife & Club Industry Association of America (NCIAA) does not specifically segregate gay bars in their reporting. The sales growth of the Bars, Nightclub and Drinking Establishment Industry is expected to be at 2.0% rate, while the number of nightclubs and bars is expected to decrease by 0.4% per year (Industry at a Glance - 72241 - Bars & Nightclubs in the US).

Restaurants, hotels, and casinos can be considered competitors with bars and nightclubs, as are the local Wal-Mart, Piggly Wiggly, and corner gas station. Especially during economic down times, consumers have less disposable income and tend to forgo the added costs of a club, preferring instead to drink at home (Our Industry, n.d.). Wal-Mart, Piggly Wiggly, the corner gas station, and a host of various other retailers sell alcohol for off-premise consumption. In addition, the growth of “home brewed” and “micro-brew” beers will continue to decrease the revenues for bars and clubs (Industry at a Glance - 72241 - Bars & Nightclubs in the US).

McDonalds, Burger King and Taco Bell are easily recognizable fast food establishments. Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy, and Office Depot are well-known retail venues. The automotive industry includes Fords, Jeeps, Chevys and even Toyotas. However, the Bars, Nightclub and Drinking Establishment Industry is somewhat unique in the United States as there are no “chain” or “name brands”. A bar patron can order a Budweiser in St. Louis, Missouri; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Denver, Colorado. This same customer can order a Jack Daniels “neat” (no ice or mixer) (Graham, 2013) in Lynchburg, Tennessee; Bowling Green, Kentucky; and Anderson, South Carolina. Budweiser is Budweiser and Jack Daniels is Jack Daniels no matter the location consumed. The main difference in locations is the name on the door or the name on the neon-lit marquee.

Historical Development of Gay Bars and Areas

United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered the well-known speech, “A Date Which Will Live in Infamy” on December 8, 1941, resulting in a formal declaration of war that same day. With the United States involved in fighting a war on two fronts (Europe and the Pacific), the ports and associated military installations in New York and San Francisco were flooded with young men from even the remotest corners of the United States. This was the first opportunity to experience and see a gay culture firsthand by many of these young servicemen. “Gay-safe” or “gayborhoods” have existed in the United States since the end of the war of

Northern Aggression in 1865. An 1877 guidebook, *Pictures of New York Life and Character*, depicts an illustration showing a foppishly dressed, limp-wristed man standing under a street sign. He is clearly meant to be gay (Clift et al., 2002). And while New York may have been seen as the gay "Mecca" of the east coast of the United States; San Francisco was the Valhalla of the west coast.

The United States was victorious and as troops from both theaters returned home, additional phenomena occurred - the car culture and white flight. The car culture allowed men to commute to work and thus allowed these families to leave the cities and settle in the suburbs. White flight and the deindustrialization of American cities created an opportunity for gay neighborhoods to spring up. These "gay-safe" areas quickly became tourist destinations for both domestic and international travelers (Clift et al., 2002). Some of the more famous (or infamous) "gayborhoods" include Castro in San Francisco, Greenwich Village in New York, and West Hollywood in Los Angeles. The deindustrialization was not unique to the United States as the United Kingdom paralleled the United States and "gay-safe" areas also emerged in Brighton, Canal Street in Manchester, and in Blackpool (Clift et al., 2002).

While these "gay-safe" areas appeared in metropolitan areas, the homosexual lifestyle was still viewed as a sub-culture or as deviant behavior by the majority population of the United States. During this time the gay bar became known as the *social institution* within the gay community (Achilles, 1967). The 1950's and 1960's gave rise to the Civil Rights movement within the United States - people around the world watched as Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on that December 1955 day in Montgomery, Alabama; followed the tragic news footage from the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, in April 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated; and then just a few days later watched as President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the historic Civil Rights Act of 1968 into law. These events, along with hundreds of others including Bloody Sunday, Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and a football game on September 12, 1970, at Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama, between The University of Alabama and The University of Southern California, illustrated the struggles and discrimination against the African-American population within the United States. However, at the same time a fight for equality was brewing inside another demographic segment within the United States - the gay population. For many Americans, June 29, 1969, was their first "date" with a gay bar.

A riot broke out in the only gay bar in New York, a mafia-controlled bar located in Greenwich Village, in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969. This riot resulted in police observing and arresting gay men dancing with each other. That now famous bar, the Stonewall Inn, and that riot are widely credited with being the motivating force in the transformation of the gay political movement (Carter, 2004). Additionally, through the media coverage of this riot and the aftermath, many Americans heard about a "gay bar" for the first time. Keep in mind that in 1969 homosexuality was illegal in all states except Illinois (Carter, 2004) and the number of visible gay bars was very small nationwide.

From the "Grand Tours" associated with the ultra-wealthy, to blossoming "gayborhoods", to the riots at the Stonewall Inn grew an industry that within the United States was estimated to be worth $65 billion in 2012 (Community Marketing & Insights, 2013).

Just as gay bars have evolved from the dark, poorly lighted Stonewall Inn and the "all important staircase on Washington Street" that lead to the underground gay refuge in Seattle called the Casino (Murakami, 2007), gay markets have evolved and emerged within the United States and globally over the past three decades.

“Gayborhoods”

As gay tourism has grown, many cities have embraced the economic “boom” and attempted to become the gay tourist “Mecca”. Many larger cities in North America and Europe have established visible commercial gay districts or “gayborhoods” since the mid 1900’s. These “gayborhoods” typically feature gay or gay-friendly cafes, restaurants, nightclubs, and bathhouses. In St. Louis, Missouri, for example, The Grove features Manchester Avenue, home of leather bars and the LGBT center; and the Soulard “gayborhood” home of Clementine’s, the oldest gay bar west of the Mississippi River (Breen, 2013). Atlanta, Georgia, features Ansley Park and Grant Park “gayborhoods” (Breen, 2013). And even the hub for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, has a gay-friendly neighborhood called Sugar House (Breen, 2013). Gayborhoods are not unique to the United States, as Toronto, Canada is home to the “Gay Village” located in the Church and Wellesley area that features bustling bars and bistros as well as LGBT-owned restaurants and shops (Advocate.com Editors, 2011). In the Netherlands, Amsterdam features its own “gayborhood” – the Reguliersdwarsstraat which is commonly known as the Rue des Vaseline (Advocate.com Editors, 2011). And Valencia in Spain is home to the “gayborhood” commonly called Barrio del Carmen, which is a cultural powerhouse and the center of the city’s gay nightlife (Advocate.com Editors, 2011).

After visiting as tourists, many gays decided to relocate and permanently reside in these areas. As these “gayborhoods” continued to grow and flourish with more permanent residents, the areas were able to offer more to the tourists (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). The residents of these “gayborhoods” began to travel to other locations and countries and gay travel became a significant element in the modern gay lifestyle.

The Gay Bar

The gay bar is one of the most visible and accessible gay male leisure sites (Israelstam & Lambert, 1984). Since before the Stonewall riots in 1969, the gay bar has served as a pivotal place for gay male social life by providing a cultural environment where release and enjoyment can occur away from the "heterosexualized" locations of everyday life (Skeggs, 1999). And the gay bar has often risen to the status of a social institution (Achilles, 1967). As observed, "the bar is the primary and necessary loci for the male homosexual community." (Achilles, 1967, p. 69) In addition to providing a physical space for its patrons to gather and socialize, gay bars have also provisioned for the fulfillment of those social needs that are a prerequisite for such an aggregate of people to come together and thus form a subculture that is then replicated (Achilles, 1967).

Several studies have established the gay bar as a social institution and most are at least three decades old and lack any modern documentation as to the clientele and service offerings of a modern gay bar. Some examples of these previous studies are: *The Development of the Homosexual Bar as an Institution* by Nancy Achilles (1967); *The Homosexual Community* by Evelyn Hooker (1967); *Other Voices: The Style of a Male Homosexual Tavern* by K. E. Read (1980), and *Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behavior* by Sherri Cavan (1966). One of the underlying themes in all of these works is how the gay bar has helped what was perceived as a deviant behavior morph into a recognized social category. Studies using gay bars in more recent years seem to focus on the HIV/AIDS health concern, such as *Recreational Drug Use and HIV-Risk Sexual Behavior Among Men Frequenting Gay Social Venues* by Perry Halkitis and Jeffery Parsons (2003); *Randomised, controlled, community-level HIV-prevention intervention for sexual-risk behaviour among homosexual men in US cities* (1997) from Lancet by Jeffrey A.

Kelly; and *HIV Prevalence and Associated Risks in Young Men Who Have Sex With Men* from JAMA by Linda A. Valleroy (2000).

It is important to note that just as various types of "straight" bars exist, so do various types of gay bars. Straight bars may range from strip clubs to sports bars, jazz clubs to dance clubs, country and western bars to biker bars. Gay bars may range from drag bars to leather bars, lesbian bars to piano bars, and sports bars. While both listings are partial and not all-inclusive, vast differences within the "theme" of a bar, both gay and straight, exist.

Gay Space

"If you don't like gay marriage, blame straight people. They're the ones who keep having gay babies." (Ledden, 2013). The majority of young people are born into, and grow up within, heterosexual (straight) families where the expectation is that they, too, will be heterosexual (straight). Because of this, gay adolescents lack any direct contact with gay men and lesbians; they have little knowledge of or experience with alternative sexualities and what it means to live a gay or lesbian lifestyle (Valentine & Skelton, 2003). "This ignorance and uncertainty is often compounded by the lack of acknowledgement of lesbian and gay sexual identities and lifestyles within schools, especially in relation to sex education" (Valentine & Skelton, 2003, pp. 852). This inability to interact with other gay adolescents and mature gays at home or school helped develop the idea of "the scene" or gay space (Weston, 1995).

Despite sharing some common bonds, the homosexual community has a diverse identity and different perception of so called "gay space" (Pritchard, Morgan, & Sledgely, 2002). Gay space can also be viewed based on gender (male and female). For the purpose of this discussion, transgendered individuals are not included. The importance of gender as a variable in leisure experiences has been the subject of considerable research interest (Bell, Cream, & Valentine, 1994). The role of urban space in the growth of gay sexual identities can be traced back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Chauncey, 1995). While gay space and the associated economies may have gone underground during some decades of the twentieth century, they continued none the less and today appear to have emerged from this underground period and continued to flourish (Valentine & Skelton, 2003). Between 1890 and 1940, Chauncey (1995) observed that in New York a network of urban spaces, largely in working-class neighborhoods, from cafes and restaurants to bathhouses and speakeasies, facilitated the development of gay men's relationships and cultures. Towards the end of this period, these networks were less and less visible due to the efforts of the police to crack down on the crime of homosexuality (Chauncey, 1995). Pink economies have created gay consumption enclaves, such as Soho in London. This area does not have a significant gay residential population, but has become an important area for the forging of gay men's social and sexual lifestyles (Valentine & Skelton, 2003). Not surprisingly, urban spaces continue to act as a magnet for "queer migrants (both from rural areas and across the urban hierarchy) fleeing from prejudice and discrimination, or just attracted by the general cosmopolitanism and opportunities to reinvent themselves that urban living offers" (Valentine & Skelton, 2003, pp. 849-850). Thus reiterating that premise of Weston's (1995) article titled – "Get Thee to a Big City".

Gay men seek out areas which offer gay space and the absence of homophobia (Hughes, 2003). There is widespread disapproval of homosexuality in many societies and a high likelihood of abuse, both physical and verbal (Mason & Palmer, 1996). In addition, continuing criminalization of same-sex sexual behavior exists in some parts of the world (Mason & Palmer, 1996). Thus, it is not surprising that gay men frequently seek the reassurance and security in the company of other gay men both at "home" and on holiday or vacation (Hughes, 2003). The opportunity to interact and socialize with other gays typically occurs in the "gay space of bars and clubs" (Hughes, 2003, pp. 154). This space provides social and support networks, and serves as the expression of sexual and cultural identities and empowerment (Mason & Palmer, 1996). This gay space helps create and validate the individual identities of gay men. For the young gays, this is their first foray into the gay lifestyle (Valentine & Skelton, 2003). Gay space is limited and is most frequently found in urban locations and gay tourist destinations (Hughes, 2003). The ability to identify gay space, whether a city or beach destination, reduces risks and is an important decision factor in choosing to patronize a locality or a specific section within that location (Mason & Palmer, 1996).

Gay Space Issues

While the "scene" and gay space may be more prevalent in large metropolitan cities, the need for gay space may be even more critical in small towns and rural areas. "Homosexuals are only allowed to be gay in specific spaces and places" (Bristow, 1989, p. 74). Up until recent years many homosexuals felt the need to hide their true identity and conform to the preconceived "norms" of the heterosexual society in which they lived (Pritchard et al., 1998). Thus, the gay bar became a "safe space", free from the confines of the "outside" world, where gays could be themselves. It has been argued that gay bars have a crucial role to play in the shaping and reflection of the "gay identity". And often times gay bars represent someone's first experience of the gay culture and allow the individual to experiment mentally with what commitment and public expression of a gay identity might mean to them (Haslop et al., 1998). It was not uncommon for many gay individuals to "come out" at the gay bar and to publicly disclose that they are in fact gay (Bristow, 1989).

In previous research it has been established that gender shapes leisure experiences but also space and place (Bell et al., 1994). In addition, research has explored how human status characteristics such as social class, race, sexuality and disability have combined to create points of empowerment, especially in women's leisure experiences (Pritchard et al., 2002). The general consensus in previous research is that gay women have been marginalized in the physical and symbolic realm, including their leisure space (Bell et al., 1994). This does not always appear to be the case, as some recent studies suggest that the homosexual community is becoming more integrated with other groups in what used to be exclusively heterosexual leisure space (Visser, 2008). However, this ignores the fact that the so-called "homosexual community" is a heterogeneous, culturally diverse group of both men and women. Gay space is seen as identifying a gay lifestyle with a particular pattern of consumption, such as alcohol consumption, recreational pharmaceutical consumption, and casual sex (Hughes, 2003). Gay space can, and does, create issues and tensions: "sexual coding of part of a city or beach destination as 'gay' transforms it into a zone of struggle and contradiction and oppositional social movements. A public space that is coded as sexual is counter to the widespread view that sexuality should be confined to private space and that most spaces are heteronormative (Valentine & Skelton, 2003, p. 853)".

Gay space evolved out of necessity, a place to interact with others who are similar and a place to feel safe. A gay male explained "it's about fear, it's about being frightened, I certainly don't feel frightened by straight women, but I do feel frightened, threatened by straight men, even in a gay bar" (Moran, Skeggs, Tyrer, & Corteen, 2003, pp.180). However, in recent years, the invisible sign saying "gay space, gays only" has been blurred as straights (heterosexuals) have started infiltrating gay bars and gay space. In 2012, Brian Moylan of "The Vice" wrote an article titled “An Etiquette Guide for Straight People in Gay Bars” to help combat some of the issues that have arisen with straights entering gay space. He offered advice to both straight male and female patrons of gay bars with headings titled “Your Vagina Has No Power Here” for straight women and “When in Rome, Go Greek” for straight males. The issues within gay spaces are not solely related to the influx of heterosexuals; in fact, there were issues within gay spaces long before the heterosexuals paid the cover charge and walked in the door.

Gay identities are directly tied to gender and reflect the significant differences between gay men and gay women. Most current work suggests that a homogeneous “gay community” and “gay space” exist, while obscuring the gay males’ oppression of gay females which has lead to the “norm” within the gay community (Pritchard et al., 2002). The ways in which gay male presence, power, and control dominate gay space and threaten gay women’s space (Bell et al., 1994) is similar to the way college football dominates in the southern United States and diminishes most other sports (Hall, 2013). The lack of a permanent, regular, defined and recognized gay women’s space in many locations has suggested that many gay women organize leisure among friends and acquaintances in their own homes (Bell et al., 1994). And while gay women would choose to have a “public space” of their own, they are comfortable using their own domiciles and thus less likely to feel a strong connection to a particular “public space” such as a gay bar (Pritchard et al., 2002).

Currently, twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation (Korte, 2013). However, in the remaining twenty-nine states, homosexuals may be in fear that their sexual identity could jeopardize employment. These individuals, more than others, may need a true “gay space” in order to feel comfortable enough to be themselves. With the influx of straight patrons into a gay bar, gay individuals may feel as if they have lost their "safe space" and may feel that they once again must conform to the heterosexual societal norms.

Gay-on-Gay Issues

One of the underlying questions of this research is if gays (homosexuals) and straights (heterosexuals) get along in the same space and experience the same level of service quality. However, an even larger, overarching question may be, can gays even get along? Terms such as "bitter old queen" (describing an older gay male typically over the age of 30); "bull dyke" (describing a lesbian); "fag hag" (describing a straight female with a gay male); "hustler boy" (describing a younger gay male); and "size queen" (describing a gay male) are just a few of the derogatory remarks heard uttered by gay patrons toward other gay patrons. In 1979, Willie Stargell and the Pittsburg Pirates adopted the Sister Sledge hit song "We Are Family" (Rogers & Edwards, 1978) as a metaphor to bring the city of Pittsburg together to beat the Baltimore Orioles and win the World Series. Around the same time gay communities across the country started to adopt the song as a rallying cry for equal rights. This was further showcased in the 1996 hit movie, *The Birdcage* (Nichols, Machlis, & Danon, 1996). However, based on those derogatory descriptors, it would appear that the gay "family" is even more dysfunctional than any of the current reality "family" television shows.

> 'Thursday nights are Lesbian Nights' Paul said slurring each "s" in a very stereotypical effeminate way. 'It's just the night THEY took over.' I sit silently thinking about Paul's statement and then ask, 'Well, does the climate change on Thursday nights?' Paul stops what he is doing and walks down to where I sit. He leans over onto the bar and in a serious tone says, 'Yes! And I would say it to anybody. It is the night we have more shit broken; we have more fights, and more

> crazy behavior than any other night of the week.' I raise my eyebrows in astonishment. 'Really?' I say, pondering the interesting relevance his statement might have. 'Seriously,' Paul states, and he returns to the task of setting up the bar. (Johnson & Samdahl, 2005, p. 331).

This conversation is between the authors (Johnson & Samdahl, 2005) and a bartender at "Saddlebags" (a pseudonym) for a country-western gay bar located in the downtown region of a major southern metropolitan city within the United States. It further illustrates the issues within the "gay family".

Even though gay men have become more visible in recent years and have created additional and alternative spaces for their leisure, the gay bar remains a central social institution and leisure context for gay men (Johnson, 2000). In recent years some researchers have begun to examine the leisure activities of gay individuals, but the research is lacking. And when gay men have been examined, their experiences are assumed to be the same as or similar to those of lesbians, bisexuals, and/or people questioning their sexuality (Kivel & Kleiber, 2000). This blending of non-dominate populations highlights oppression and marginalization as the groups' common characteristics, but also creates a framework that overlooks other important differences between these groups (Johnson & Samdahl, 2005).

Gay men have a complex and often contested relationship with masculinity. This relationship was clearly visible in "Saddlebags". Although the safety of the gay bar protected gay men from the normal heterosexual "outside" world, these men clearly claimed and enacted a form of masculinity of male over female (Johnson & Samdahl, 2005). The "Saddlebags" study highlights the oversensitive relationships between gay and straight, male and female.

While this research and the research conducted at “Saddlebags” were performed in the United States, other countries are struggling to deal with gay rights and equality as it relates to gay bars. In 2007, a tribunal in Australia’s southern Victoria state granted Melbourne’s Peel Hotel an exemption to equal rights laws by allowing the gay bar to turn away heterosexual and even lesbian customers. The tribunal’s deputy president stated, “allowing large numbers of straight men and women and lesbians into the bar could ‘undermine or destroy’ the convivial atmosphere that the Peel Hotel sought to create for gay men” (Van Atta, 2007).

Drag Bars

A “drag bar” or “show bar” is a bar that offers regularly scheduled drag shows. Drag shows involve drag queens, men who dress as women for entertainment purposes, “chicks with dicks, sluts with nuts” (Taylor & Rupp, 2004). Not all gay bars are drag bars, neither are gay bars immune to the concept of a “theme” bar. There are gay sports bars such as Crew Bar & Grill in Chicago, Illinois, and Nellie’s Sports Bar in Washington, DC (Villagomez, 2013); gay country and western bars such as The Round Up Saloon in Dallas, Texas, and 3 Legged Cowboy in Atlanta, Georgia (Mulholland, 2009); gay dance clubs such as Akbar in Los Angeles, California, and Metropolitan in New York City (Polly, 2009). There are gay leather bars such as The Eagle in Atlanta, Georgia, and Rip Cord in Houston, Texas (Polly, 2009). And there are “show” bars such as Missie B’s in Kansas City, Missouri (Kavanaugh, 2013) and IBT’s in Tucson, Arizona (Polly, 2009). Show bars typically offer a “drag show” various times throughout the week (Hilbert, 1995). There are essentially two types of drag performers, the more common “drag queen” which is an anatomical male performing as a woman, and “drag king” which is an anatomical female performing as a male (Jones, 2007).

Common thinking is that “drag” is an acronym for “DRessed As a Girl”; however, the term may have originated as early as the 1870’s as theatre slang for a long dress that would “drag” on the stage. Yet others have suggested that the term is a Yiddish slang for “to wear” (trogn) (Hilbert, 1995). No matter the origin of the word, or if it is or is not meant to be a derogatory term, drag is a recognized form of entertainment (Jones, 2007). A drag show is comedy. Performers in drag shows are distinct because they do not try to pass as women; however, many achieve the illusion of femininity as well as any woman can, while audience members understand that the performers are actually men (Jones, 2007). Drag bars are typically where the straight and homosexuals interact in a gay bar setting. Straight women come “to scream at the drag queens’ antics, gawk at the gay men holding hands, steal glances at the smooching lesbians, and not worry about being groped by a horny guy” (Kavanaugh, 2013). The drag shows provide the entertainment that lures the heterosexuals into a gay bar. And each time a straight person visits a gay bar to watch a show, have a drink or even gawk, that is another harmless opportunity for cultures to mix and reduce homophobia (Kavanaugh, 2013).

Service Quality

If prostitution is the world’s oldest profession (Robinson, 1929), then service quality has been around just as long. Unlike a tangible good, a service is “manufactured” by the firm and then “consumed” by the customer on each encounter. Tangible goods have measures of quality such as durability and number of defects or returns. However, service quality is intangible and is specific to each encounter with the service firm. Because of this, service quality is a key tool for a firm to achieve a competitive advantage and create customer loyalty. For decades, service quality has gained a significant amount of attention in the academic literature as well as within the service industries.

One of the most important advances in business thinking is “the recognition that people, in their purchase decision-making, respond to more than simply the tangible product or service being offered” (Kotler, 1973, p. 48). This way of thinking explains why in today’s business world, particularly in the service industries, increased attention is being paid not only to pricing and merchandise, but also to the provision of a pleasant and exciting, when possible, shopping atmosphere (Turley & Milliman, 2000). This attention may be even more amplified in the hospitality industry. As products are highly intangible in nature (Kotler, 1973), customers often experience a service organization’s facilities and infer service quality from tangible cues in the physical environment (Bitner, 1992). Hospitality service providers strive to ensure that every single detail of the physical atmosphere contributes to the customers’ overall satisfaction (Heung & Gu, 2012).

Service quality and customer satisfaction are considered to be the most important outcomes of all marketing activities in a market-oriented firm (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). The obvious need for satisfying the firm’s customer is to expand the business, gain a higher market share, and acquire repeat and referral business, all of which lead to improved profitability (Barsky, 1992). Customer satisfaction is a fundamental indicator of a firm’s performance due to its links to behavioral and economic consequences beneficial to the firm (Anderson, Fornell, & Rust, 1997).

A service is an act or a performance of an act that one party may offer to another, strictly intangible, and does not result in ownership of anything (Kotler, Armstrong, & Cunningham, 2005). Bars base their businesses primarily on the provision of services; therefore, it is vital the services provided meet the customer’s minimum requirements (Kotler et al., 2005). Services have four unique characteristics which distinguish them from tangible goods: intangible, perishable, variable, and inseparable (McDaniel, Hair, & Lamb, 2012). This view on the four characteristics has been criticized by some authors in recent literature on the basis that the characteristics stated are not applicable to all service sectors (Afthinos, Theodorakis, & Nassis, 2005). Focusing too heavily on these characteristics can result in overlooking the consumer's role in the delivery of the service (Afthinos et al., 2005). A key feature of the services is inseparability, as it clearly highlights consumer-employee interactions as a vital part of the production and consumption of the service (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). Firms dealing with tangible goods are able to measure quality by the number of defects produced; organizations, such as bars, are unable to do this as instead they need to measure the services provided (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). However, bars potentially do have a "defect" that could be measured – the number of mixed drinks made incorrectly. According to customers, in heavy service industries such as restaurants and bars, the importance of customer service and service quality is 60:40 when compared to the product. In product-focused industries, the ratio is 25:75 when customer service and service quality are compared to the product (St. Clair, 2014). There are four quantifiable costs associated with poor service quality. They are: (St. Clair, 2014)

1. Loss of all future revenues from that customer and every referral not received.
2. Redundant cost of replacing a lost customer rather than gaining a new one (advertising, promotion, sales, and marketing expenses).
3. Loss of employee morale from dealing with unhappy customers.
4. Further decline in customer service from discontented employees.

Additionally, there are seven benefits associated with optimal or superior service quality. They are: (St. Clair, 2014)

1. Increased revenues.

2. Increased referrals.
3. Improved reputation.
4. Lower sales and marketing, and operating expenses.
5. Increased time to focus on new products, services and customers.
6. Increased bottom line.
7. Sustainability of business.

Service Models

One way of measuring the service provided is to ask the customer to give feedback through certain tools, such as a customer service satisfaction survey. A variety of past studies has been conducted to assess service quality. Much of the initial work in developing a model to assess service quality came from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), who noticed that discrepancies existed between organizations and customer perceptions of the service quality delivered. Parasuraman et al. (1985) developed the SERVQUAL scale, consisting of 22 expectation and 22 perception questions which were rated on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. They suggested that when the perceived experience is less than the expected experience, it implies less-than-satisfactory service quality. After two stages of purification, the SERVQUAL scale of five dimensions was adapted from a model consisting of ten dimensions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Many scholars agree that service quality can be defined in two major dimensions. The first dimension addresses what the service delivers and is referred to as outcome quality or technical quality. The second dimension focuses on how the service is delivered or the process that the customer went through to get the service outcome. This is referred to as process quality or functional quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Many scholars have interchanged the phrase "service quality" with "service process quality" (Gronroos & Shostack, 1983). Both phrases are used to represent the total service comprised of process and outcome. Likewise, service quality is used to refer to the totality of the process quality and the outcome quality.

Parasuraman and Zeithaml define quality as "the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' service perceptions and expectations" (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004, p. 56). If the perception is higher than expectation, then the service is said to be of high quality. Conversely, if the expectation is higher than the perception, then the service is said to be of low quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Parasuraman et al. (1988) also developed the Gap Model of Service Quality. Other than identifying the gap between expected and perceived service, Parasuraman et al. (1988) also identified four other tributary gaps that originate from the service provider's side:

- GAP 1: This gap is said to occur when the customer's expectations are not .... the same as what management perceives to be the expectations of the customer.
- GAP 2: This gap exists when customer service standards are not aligned with management's findings of the customer's expectations.
- GAP 3: This gap is a result of actual service performance not meeting set performance standards.
- GAP 4: This gap occurs when the organization's external communication about service quality does not match the actual service performance.

While Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry appear to be the frontrunners in the service quality arena, they and their model, SERVQUAL, have rivals. Cronin & Taylor (1992) proposed a tool to measure only the perceived service process performance and disregard the expected service process level. The rationale for doing so is twofold. Measuring a customer's expected service level before the service is rendered is not always possible, leaving the firm to measure it instead at the end of the service. Secondly, measuring the expected service level after the service has been performed is inaccurate as the customer's expectation, by that point, has already been biased by the service rendered (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Apart from removing the distortions caused by measuring expectations, Cronin & Taylor (1992) shortened the questionnaire, thus reducing the likelihood of respondent fatigue. This model is referred to as SERVPERF. SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are discussed in greater detail in the following section of this literature review.

For most service providers, customer retention is a key to the organization's profitability (Canny & Hidayat, 2012). The theory of reasoned action suggests that behavior is determined by a customer's intention to perform or not perform a subjective behavior (Canny & Hidayat, 2012). A future behavioral intention is defined as a person's subjective probability that he or she will perform some behavior in the future (Canny & Hidayat, 2012). Moreover, in some marketing literature, future behavioral intentions are also defined as the customers' willingness to recommend the service to others and their intent to repurchase (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2006). These behavioral intentions can be viewed as a positive or a negative consequence of service quality.

It is important to comprehend both service quality and satisfaction as these variables are considered to be predictors for consumer behavior (Crompton, Lee, & Shuster, 2001). As a result, many researchers have inspected the link between service quality and customer satisfaction in determining future behavioral intentions (Bigne, Mattila, & Andrey, 2008). Previous empirical research has also confirmed that both service quality and customer satisfaction affect behavioral intentions (Cole, Crompton, & Willson, 2002). Several studies have examined the facilitating role of satisfaction in the relationship between service quality and behavioral intentions (Cole et al., 2002). The degree of future behavioral intentions in certain tourist destinations is frequently reflected in tourist intentions to revisit the destination and the willingness to recommend the destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

One widely accepted theory to explain customer satisfaction is the Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory proposed by Lewin (1938). This theory suggested that consumers have expectations about products or services before consumption. As the product is consumed or the service rendered, customers compare their perceptions of consuming the product or service to their expectations (Lewin, 1938). Perceptions that exceed a customer's expectations result in a state of satisfaction, leading to a positive attitude towards the product or service, and influencing positive future behavioral intentions (Carpenter, 2008). However, based on the performance-based approach, other scholars have asserted that customer satisfaction incorporates cognitive judgments and affective reactions during consumption (Mano & Oliver, 1993). Additionally, some researchers have argued that satisfaction includes an evaluation of the consumption emotions elicited by using or consuming the product or service (Westbrook, 1987). Customer satisfaction is also considered the degree to which the level fulfillment is pleasant or unpleasant, which suggests that satisfaction reflects the impact of the performance of a customer's emotional state (Rosenberg, 1960).

To further understand customer satisfaction, previous research has identified both antecedents to, and consequences of, satisfaction (Ha & Jang, 2010). Marketing researchers have examined perceived value as an antecedent of satisfaction (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). In particular, a strong link between hedonic/utilitarian values and satisfaction has been identified, suggesting that both values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Babin et al., 1994). Hedonic value is related to revisit-intention because perceiving value through emotions and effective experiences can be antecedents of approach or avoidance behavior (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Utilitarian value is also related to revisit-intention. Customers who have previous experiences they perceive as highly valuable in terms of efficient and economical aspects will be more likely to have revisit-intentions (Swinyard, 1993). In the service industry, word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful forms of communication (Ha & Jang, 2010). Customers seek information and during the information-seeking process, customers often see word-of-mouth information as more reliable because it is a third-party's opinion based on firsthand experience (Ha & Jang, 2010). Previous research has suggested that word-of-mouth is a consequence of customers' emotional responses to consumption experiences (Swan & Oliver, 1989). The more customers value the affective aspects of a dining or drinking experience, the more likely they will be to have the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth.

Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that customer satisfaction significantly influences future behavioral intentions (Oliver, 1992). If the role of satisfaction is examined in conjunction with both its antecedents and consequences, it can be interpreted that satisfaction is produced in a consumer's mind through positive perceptions of value regarding products and services (Ha & Jang, 2010). Further, satisfaction leads to positive future behavioral intentions, such as repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth intention, and a willingness to recommend (Ha & Jang, 2010).

The Customer and Service Quality

There is extensive literature regarding service quality both from within and outside of the hospitality industry. The first issue when examining service quality is a definition of service quality. The most comprehensive definition of service quality is the sum of customer perceptions of the service experience and the “gap” between customers’ expectations and the actual service they receive (Johns & Tyas, 1997). This definition explains why service quality is a difficult concept, as the definition of quality will change from customer to customer and what constitutes excellent service for one customer may be viewed as fair or even poor service to another customer. These quality elements can be broadly defined in three categories: Must-Be Quality Elements, One-Dimensional Quality Elements, and Attractive Quality Elements (Erto & Vanacore, 2002). According to Erto and Vanacore (2002), the simple definitions of these quality elements are:

- Must-Be Quality Elements are service attributes which are so basic that the customer may fail to mention them;
- One-Dimensional Quality Elements are service attributes which the customer generally mention as desirable;
- Attractive Quality Elements are service attributes which are far beyond the customer’s expectations.

Even these simple definitions illustrate that service quality is based on the customer’s expectations and what the customer perceives to be a service attribute.

There is much debate over the necessity to measure customer “expectations”. One side of the debate has argued the “expectations” measurement is necessary in the measurement of the service quality construct (Parasuraman et al., 1985); while the other side has argued the reverse and that one need not measure “expectations” to measure service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). It should be noted that both Cronin’s and Parasuraman’s research focused on a unicultural context. As globalization has spread and “expectations” examined in a cross-cultural context, research has found that tourists from the Asia Pacific region have significantly higher "expectations" of service quality compared to tourists from Europe and America (Armstrong, Mok, Go, & Chan, 1997). However, to the researcher's best knowledge, the idea has been ignored that similar types of differences in service quality expectations may exist within the gay community.

A plethora of journal articles related to measuring service quality exists; however, the methods used can be broadly categorized into two groups: incident-based and attribute-based service quality measurement methods (Stauss & Weinlich, 1997). For management, the issue then becomes how to best measure service quality. The incident-based methods utilize the incidents customers experience in service contact situations (Akbaba, 2006). Attribute-based methods exist in a wide range of variants. Among these variants, the SERVQUAL instrument has attracted the greatest attention as a result of the claim of ability to measure the relevant dimensions of the perceived service quality, regardless of service industry (Gilbert & Wong, 2003). The SERVQUAL instrument still continues to appeal to both academics and practitioners despite the numerous criticisms of the scale (Caruana, Ewing, & Ramaseshan, 2000). Brown & Williamson, the famous tobacco manufacturer of Lucky Strike cigarettes, once ran an advertisement that said "I won't complain. I just won't come back", and for managers, this may be the biggest threat to their business if service quality does not meet the customers' expectations.

Measuring Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

Customers evaluate service quality by comparing what they expect with what they receive. Thus, service quality can be defined as the difference between customer expectation of service and the actual performance of service. Research shows that customers assess service quality along five dimensions: Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Tangibles. These dimensions are defined as follows (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004):

Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Tangibles: Appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

The production and consumption of service quality are inseparable; service is “produced” by the firm and “consumed” by the customer at the time of the service encounter (Parasuraman et al, 1985). In absence of objective measures, the researcher must then rely on survey-based measures. Given these characteristics, survey-based measures are most suited to measuring service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). One of the first such measures was the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The original SERVQUAL scale involved a two-part pen and paper survey containing twenty-two (22) service attributes, grouped into the five dimensions of Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Tangibles. This original survey asked customers to provide two ratings on each attribute – one rating their “expectations” of the level of service delivered by “excellent” companies in an industry sector, and the other rating their “perceptions” of the service delivered by the target or specific company within that industry sector (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

SERVQUAL has been used in a variety of industries and settings. These include real estate brokerages (Johnson, Dotson, & Dunlop, 1988); physicians’ private practice (Brown &

Swartz, 1989); public recreation programs (Crompton & Mackay, 1989); a dental school clinic, business school placement center and a tire store (Carman, 1990); banking, pest control, dry cleaning and fast food companies (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). This listing of industries and settings is only a partial listing used to illustrate the wide reaching scope of the SERVQUAL scale.

While SERVQUAL is a valuable tool for managers to track and evaluate service quality and issues it should not be viewed as the "end-all" for identifying and correcting problems. SERVQUAL should be used as a component of a more comprehensive service quality information system (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). As Parasuraman et al., (1988, pp. 30-31) observed, "The instrument has been designed to be applicable across a broad spectrum of services. As such, it provides a basic skeleton for each of the five service-quality dimensions. The skeleton, when necessary, can be adapted or supplemented to fit the characteristics or specific research needs of a particular organization."

Andrew Carnegie, the famous business magnet and philanthropist, once said, "and while the law of competition may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it ensures the survival of the fittest in every department" (Carnegie, n.d.). As with almost all innovators and discoverers, the "race" by the competition started quickly for Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. In 1992, in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, Joseph Cronin and Steven Taylor published a "competing" article titled "Measuring Service Quality: A Reexamination and Extension" and thus the battle between Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (SERVQUAL) and Cronin and Taylor (SERVPERF) began.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) published four main issues with Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's SERVQUAL model. These issues are:

1. The need to measure customer expectations.
2. There is little evidence that customers assess service quality in terms of performance minus expectations (P-E).
3. SERVQUAL focuses on the process of service delivery, not the outcomes of the service encounter.
4. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are not universal.

The major conclusions from the Cronin and Taylor (1992) article are that the marketing department's current (late 1980's and early 1990's) conceptualization and measurement of service quality are based on a "flawed paradigm". Cronin and Taylor presented empirical data and literature to support that service quality should be measured as an attitude and that their performance-based scale (SERVPERF) was efficient in comparison with the SERVQUAL scale. Further, they stated that SERVQUAL's five-component model failed and this failure supported the use of a performance-based measure of service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

As the great leader and statesman Winston Churchill said, "You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life." Cronin and Taylor developed an enemy very quickly by "standing up" after their 1992 article in the form of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. In the *Journal of Marketing* in 1994, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry rebutted Cronin and Taylor (1992) in an article titled "Reassessment of Expectations as a Comparison Standard in Measuring Service Quality: Implications for Further Research". Parasuraman et al., (1994) rebuffed the blows by Cronin and Taylor (1992) with the following:

1. *The need to measure customer expectations* (Cronin & Taylor, 1992): Studies have shown repeatedly that scores on the perceptions-only component of SERVQUAL are able to significantly explain more variance in customers' overall evaluations of an

organization's service quality (measures on a single-item, overall-perceptions rating scale) than are the perception-expectations difference scores. Thus, measuring expectations is not warranted.

2. *There is little evidence that customers assess service quality in terms of performance minus expectations (P-E)* (Cronin & Taylor, 1992): Although the definition of service quality as the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions is conceptually simple, the operationalization of this definition has been controversial because of the multiple ways to define and interpret "expectations". In 1993 a conceptual model of customer expectations was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry by combining insights from past research with findings from a multi-sector study aimed at understanding the nature and determinants of customers' service expectations (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993).
3. *SERVQUAL focuses on the process of service delivery, not the outcomes of the service encounter* (Cronin & Taylor, 1992): From a practical or diagnostic-value standpoint, the difference-score measures had an advantage – by virtue of generating separate ratings of the adequate-service, desired-service, and perception levels, this format is capable of pinpointing the position of the zone of tolerance and the perceived service level relative to the zone. In contrast, the direct measures indicate whether the perceived service level is above, below or within the tolerance zone but cannot identify the tolerance zone's position on a continuum of expectation levels.
4. *The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are not universal* (Cronin & Taylor, 1992): Replication studies incorporating SERVQUAL have not been able to reproduce as "clean" a five-dimensional factor structure as was obtained in the original study

> (Parasuraman et al., 1988). However, differences in the number of empirically derived factors across replications may be primarily due to across-dimension similarities and/or within-dimension differences in customers' evaluations of a "specific" company involved in each setting.

The battle royal between the Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, and the Cronin and Taylor camps has continued for the past twenty years and there appears to be no end in sight. However, one common idea that is contained in all of the research and arguments surrounding SERVQUAL and SERVPERF is the need for "further research" (Parasuraman et al., 1994), (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

A variety of different models and tools has been assessed in the literature review. Although SERVPERF has many devotees, and SERVQUAL has many detractors, SERVQUAL has been present for numerous years, has been praised by numerous researchers, and has been utilized in many industries. Thus, SERVQUAL was deemed to be the better tool for this research endeavor.

Chapter III

Methods

Overview

This chapter outlines the research questions and plan, data collection procedures, research tools, and the ethics utilized in the study. In the context of this study, the levels of satisfaction between homosexual and heterosexual patrons within a gay bar are examined through quantitative measures. The results yield a better understanding of these two distinct groups of customers. There is lack of research and literature related to comparisons of service quality perceptions between gay (homosexual) patrons and straight (heterosexual) patrons of a gay bar. Previous research has documented that "gay" service environments "win" by offering an experience superior to that available through traditional (straight) alternatives (Haslop et al., 1998).

This explains why straight customers are attending gay bars; however, straight customers seeking a "superior" service offering may be dissatisfying to the core gay customer base. The reason for this dissatisfaction among gay patrons is the concept of "gay space" (Pritchard et al., 1998). "Gay spaces" provide homosexuals with a strong sense of safety and arenas in which behavior does not have to be edited to conform to a heterosexual norm (Pritchard et al., 1998). However, with the influx of heterosexual customers, many gay patrons may no longer feel "safe" within the gay bar, thus leading to a level of dissatisfaction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of the population who patronize Missie B's in terms of education level, frequency of visits, amount of money spent per visit, smokes cigarettes, purchase of cigarettes in the bar, day of the week most likely to visit, alcoholic beverage of choice, gender, age group, sexuality, and ethnicity?

RQ2: What underlying structure(s) may exist for the responses to the SERVQUAL-type survey, consisting of 22 variables, such as equipment, interior, neatness, trust in promises, dependability, problem resolution, knowledge of services, service delivery, safety, politeness, personal attention, and operating hours on the Missie B's Customer Service Survey? Specifically, does the principal component matrix reveal the five dimensions of the original SERVQUAL model?

RQ3: If reliable components evolve from an analysis of the data structure, what overall variables may best define these components?

RQ4: To what extent do differences exist on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight)?

The null hypothesis formulated for research question 4 is that no statistically significant difference exists on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight).

Survey Measurement Factors

The SERVQUAL-type survey was developed to specifically measure the determination of customers' evaluations of service quality provided by Missie B's. Table 1 provides the statements presented to customers to measure the five dimensions of SERVQUAL: Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Tangibles (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004).

Table 1

Measured Dimensions Statements

Dimensions	Statement
Tangibles	
Item 1.	Missie B's has up-to-date equipment
Item 2.	Missie B's interior is visually appealing
Item 3.	Missie B's employees are well dressed and appear neat
Item 4.	The appearance of the physical facilities of Missie B's is in keeping
Reliability	
Item 5.	When Missie B's promises to do something by a certain time, it does so
Item 6.	When you have problems, Missie B's is sympathetic and reassuring
Item 7.	Missie B's is dependable
Item 8.	Missie B's provides its services at the time it promises to do so
Item 9.	When you have a problem, Missie B's recovers adequately
Responsiveness	
Item 10.	Missie B's does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed
Item 11.	You do not receive prompt service from Missie B's employees *(reverse coded)*
Item 12.	Employees of Missie B's are not always willing to help customers *(reverse coded)*
Item 13.	Employees of Missie B's are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly
Assurance	
Item 14.	You can trust the employees of Missie B's
Item 15.	You feel safe in your transactions with Missie B's employees
Item 16.	Missie B's employees are polite
Item 17.	It appears that Missie B's employees are well trained
Empathy	
Item 18.	Missie B's does not give you individual attention *(reverse coded)*
Item 19.	Employees of Missie B's do not give you personal attention *(reverse coded)*
Item 20.	Employees of Missie B's do not know what your needs are *(reverse coded)*
Item 21.	Missie B's does not have your best interests at heart *(reverse coded)*
Item 22.	Missie B's does keep great operating hours

Plan of Research

The research plan included identification and solicitation of a sample group to collect the qualitative data necessary to answer the research questions. Once the necessary approval was obtained from the owner of the gay bar, approval was also obtained from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The location for this research was chosen for its convenience and accessibility to the researcher. The following sections provide detailed information about the sample and the instrument.

The owner, the general manager, and a shift manager of Missie B's reviewed the initial instrument, provided input for the instrument development, and served as a focus group. This focus group developed several of the questions for the final instrument. For example, questions such as the nine listed below grew out of the focus group:

1. On a typical visit to Missie B's how many shots do you drink?
2. If your bartender could drink shots with you, would you order more shots?
3. Which time of the day are you most likely to visit Missie B's?
4. Are you in favor with Missie B's creating a private/members only club upstairs?
5. If you answered YES to the above at what price would you be willing to pay for a membership?
6. While at Missie B's which bar station do you frequent the most?
7. While at Missie B's which bar station do you frequent the least?
8. Do you smoke cigarettes?
9. Do you regularly purchase cigarettes at Missie B's?

Pilot Study

Prior to the distribution of the survey, a pilot study was conducted utilizing input from the owner, managers and employees of Missie B's. Demographic information for the pilot study respondents is reflected in Table 2. Upon completion of the pilot study, the majority of respondents shared a common grievance with the survey. The issue was with Questions 6 & 7. Those questions asked, "While at Missie B's which bar station do you frequent the most?" and "While at Missie B's which bar station do you frequent the least?", respectively. The concerns were that during the "day shift", from 12:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M., the only bar station open is the "Downstairs Main Bar", and that respondents completing the survey during the "day shift" could not answer the either question objectively. The researcher implemented a process for "coding" surveys with the date and shift on which each survey was collected. The date and shift coding of all surveys satisfied the concerns of the pilot study respondents. Information collected from these two questions, as well as five additional questions, was not used in the course of this research and was solely for management's use. The additional questions omitted from this research are:

1. On a typical visit to Missie B's how many shots do you drink?
2. If your bartender could drink shots with you, would you order more shots?
3. Which time of the day are you most likely to visit Missie B's?
4. Are you in favor with Missie B's creating a private/members only club upstairs?
5. If you answered YES to the above at what price would you be willing to pay for a membership?

Table 2

Frequency and Percent of Responses for Pilot Study Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	13	81.2
Female	3	18.8
Sexuality		
Gay (Homosexual)	14	87.5
Bisexual	0	0.0
Straight (Heterosexual)	2	12.5
Age		
20's	4	25.0
30's	2	12.5
40's	4	25.0
50's	4	25.0
60 and up	2	12.5
Ethnicity		
African American	2	12.5
Hispanic	1	6.3
Caucasian	13	81.2

Sample

The setting for this research, Missie B's, is classified as a "drag bar" or a "show bar" located at 805 West 39th Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. It opened in 1994 and is the "most popular drag bar in Kansas City" (Missie B's About Us). The bar is open seven days a week, 365 days a year from noon until 3:00 A.M. and their motto is "Home of Good Times and Good Friends." Drag shows are offered five nights a week.

During the day Missie B's is a quiet hangout, a place to sit and chat, with few customers and no performers. However, on just about any Friday or Saturday evening, those headed south on Southwest Traffic Way in Kansas City will see a line of individuals formed around the building located on the southwest corner of 39th Street and Southwest Traffic Way. Some of these individuals waiting in line are wearing feather boas, leather "ass-less" chaps, stiletto heels, and even a tuxedo. However, many are wearing jeans (designer, of course) and a tee shirt, or khaki pants with a button down shirt. No matter the differences in attire, they are all waiting to get into Missie B's (Kavanaugh, 2013). The sixty-seven year young owner of this establishment, Mike Burnes, becomes Missie B herself once a year on Thanksgiving night as he performs in drag to benefit underprivileged children in Kansas City.

Upon returning from Vietnam, Mike visited his first gay bar just off post at Fort Riley, Kansas. "There were a whole bunch of people like me! And I was a big 'ole princess, but I didn't know it" recalls Burnes (Kavanaugh, 2013). After leaving the military and a short stint in San Francisco, Burnes returned to Kansas City and founded numerous businesses in the restaurant and bar industries including Mike's Kitchen, The Kon Tiki (his first gay bar), The Dixie Bell, Mary's Saloon and Grill, and lastly Missie B's. Descriptions of Mike Burnes include "the biggest, most kind-hearted man in Kansas City," and "there are no limits, no boundaries to how much he will help people" (Kavanaugh, 2013). Burne's willingness to support this research and facilitate the collection of the surveys were instrumental in the performance of this research endeavor.

Instrumentation

A pen and paper survey consisting of 46 items comprised the survey instrument. The first 20 items were demographic questions, in addition to some requested by bar management, such as "Are you in favor with Missie B's creating a private/members only club upstairs?"; "If your bartender could drink shots with you, would you order more shots?"; and "On a typical visit to Missie B's how many shots do you drink?" The final 26 items were loosely based upon the original SERVQUAL scale dimensions, designed to measure the customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. The anonymous surveys were distributed to the patrons of Missie B's over a ten day period in March 2011. Surveys were distributed randomly to visitors of Missie B's during the "cocktail" shift (noon to 8:00 P.M.) and during the "night" shift (8:00 P.M. to

3:00 A.M.) daily. All surveys were numbered consecutively, and a total of 2,100 surveys were distributed. Of those, 1,854 surveys were returned and 1,364 were usable by the researcher. Based on the number of usable surveys, the response rate was 64.95%. All returned surveys were date and time stamped by the researcher. This stamp allowed the researcher to collect two additional data points, the day of the week that the survey was completed and the "shift" in which the survey was completed. While this information was not part of this research, this is an area available for additional study. All usable surveys were coded and entered into an IBM SPSS vs. 20 statistics spreadsheet.

The instrument included a mix of nominal (demographics) and continuous (scales) measures. The SERVQUAL scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Analytical methods used include means testing, standard deviations, factory analysis, and multivariate analysis.

Validity

Quantitative validity measures accuracy (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974). Validity is the underlying soundness of the instrument signaling sufficiency that the instrument does measure what it is purported to measure. Validity for this study was determined using content validity, construct validity, and face validity. Content validity was assessed through two methods, expert input from the owner and managers of Missie B's, and through the pilot test conducted on the 16 employees of Missie B's. Construct validity was assessed through the application of factor analysis in order to statistically determine the validity of the instrument.

Content Validity

Content validity answers the question does the instrument measure what it is supposed to be measuring; if the instrument is appropriate, clear, relevant, meaningful, and important to the studied subject (Huck et al., 1974). Content validity was established by the owner and managers of Missie B's through the focus group. They were asked to critique and offer insight into the instrument prior to administration of the instrument. These individuals have over 80 years combined experience in the gay bar industry and have been working in concert as owner and managers at Missie B's for over 10 years. They all have vast experience in every aspect of the operations of gay bars as well as knowledge of the customer base of this bar. In addition, the employees of Missie B's took part in a pilot study of the instrument and based on their comments and concerns, changes were made to the instrument prior to the administration of the survey. The instrument was found to have content validity as determined by the expert review and the pilot study.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is a theoretical modeling of attributes and characteristics under scrutiny by the researcher (Clark, Riley, Wilkie, & Wood, 1998). In research involving self-reporting instruments, construct validity assesses the meaningfulness of the test score, validating the usefulness of the instrument. Construct validity for the 22 items was established using item inter-correlations and principal component analysis. Results of the principal component analysis are reported in Chapter 4, Table 9. In addition, the inter-correlations supported the constructs identified in the principal component analysis. For example, the inter-correlations revealed that items within the same component generally yielded a higher correlation with one another than items not included in that component. For instance, Item 12 and Item 18, both within the Responsiveness component, showed a correlation of 0.72; Item 7 and Item 8, both within the Reliability component, showed a correlation of 0.71; and Item 1 and Item 2, both within the Tangibles component, showed a correlation of 0.67. Furthermore, Item 1, a Tangible component, and Item 18, a Responsiveness component, showed a correlation of 0.24; Item 7, a Reliability component and Item 3, a Tangible component, showed a correlation of 0.21; and Item 11, a Responsiveness component, and Item 1, a Tangible component, showed a correlation of 0.19.

Face Validity

Face validity is the overall appearance of the instrument. Face validity was established by three Kansas City residents who had been inside Missie B's as customers, and a research methodologist. These customers and the research methodologist did not participate in the pilot study or the focus group. These individuals reviewed the instrument for ease of administration and comfort for the respondents. Amount of white space, size and type of print, categories of questions and time to complete the instrument were evaluated. These customers and research methodologist found no issues with the face validity of the instrument.

Reliability

Quantitative reliability is defined as the consistency of a measure (Huck et al., 1974). The ability of solutions to reach valid reliability scores indicates that the measure itself, not chance, explains the results. Reliable research instruments allow for future research to be consistently measured using the same factors and different results can be reliably attributed to differences in the sample and not to the instrument itself. Reliability for the entire scale and individual factors were established using Cronbach's Alpha. The acceptable range of values for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70 to 100 (Huck et al., 1974). The reliability coefficient was very high for the entire scale; Cronbach's Alpha was 0.94. The reliability coefficient was also very high for the Reliability and Responsiveness components; Cronbach's Alpha was 0.93 and 0.89

respectively. The reliability coefficient was lower for the Tangibles component, however, still within the acceptable range; Cronbach's Alpha was 0.76

Ethics

Utmost care was given to meeting the exacting standards required and proper procedures for conducting research using human subjects. The researcher and supervising faculty members are Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certified in Human Subjects Research Training (HSR). The Internal Review Board (IRB) of Auburn University reviewed the study prior to commencement of the research. The IRB examined the purpose of the study, survey instrument, supporting literature, and potential for harm, providing authorization for this research to commence.

Summary

In closing, this chapter provided a full description of the research undertaken and the participants, measures, and methods utilized to obtain the data. The sample group, data collection, and research tools were described. The following chapter will present the data analysis, research results, and the disposition of the hypotheses developed.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

Overview

This chapter presents the results of data analysis as a result of returned questionnaires. Additionally, this chapter addresses the methods taken to provide greater distribution equality in the demographics of male and females, as well as the age groups within both sexes. Analyses of the findings of these patrons, based on distribution equality, are presented.

Description of Returned Questionnaires

Descriptive statistics for participant demographic information related to Missie B's such as education level, frequency of visits, amount of money spent per visit, cigarette smokers, day of the week most likely to visit, gender, age group, sexuality and ethnicity were collected by the researcher. These descriptive calculations were used to answer the first research question, which was stated as follows:

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of the population who patronize Missie B's in terms of education level, frequency of visits, amount of money spent per visit, smokes cigarettes, purchase of cigarettes in the bar, day of the week most likely to visit, alcoholic beverage of choice, gender, age group, sexuality, and ethnicity?

Results of the descriptive statistics for the demographic data are reported in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, severe splits in number of participants were identified for all categories. All categories were unevenly split. Especially noteworthy are the uneven number of participants for the comparison variables such as number of males (1054) and females (300); number of individuals who reported being gay (homosexual), bisexual, and straight (heterosexual) were 1020, 201, and 128 respectively; and the number within each age group (20’s n = 582, 30’s n = 427, 40’s n = 233, 50’s n = 90, and 60 plus n = 23). Results of demographic data from respondent behaviors, such as if the respondent smokes and the respondent’s beverage choice, are shown in Table 4.

Table 3

Frequency and Percent of Responses for Respondent Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	1054	77.3
Female	300	22.0
Sexuality		
Gay (Homosexual)	1020	74.8
Bisexual	201	14.9
Straight (Heterosexual)	128	9.4
Age		
20's	582	42.7
30's	427	31.3
40's	233	17.1
50's	90	6.6
60 and up	23	1.7
Education		
Some High School	52	3.8
High School Graduate	437	32.0
Associate Degree	395	29.0
College Degree	410	30.1
Post Baccalaureate Degree	61	4.5
Ethnicity		
African American	271	19.9
Asian	30	2.2
Hispanic	111	8.1
Native American	10	0.7
Caucasian	801	58.7
Bi-Racial	126	9.2

Table 4

Frequency and Percent of Responses for Respondent Behaviors Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Frequency of Visits		
First Time	95	7.0
Daily	201	14.7
1 Time per Week	358	26.2
2 or more Times per Week	453	33.2
Bi-Monthly	70	5.1
Once a Month	178	13.0
Spend per Visit		
Less than $20	149	10.9
$20 - $30	480	35.2
$31 - $40	418	30.6
$41 - $50	190	13.9
More than $50	119	8.7
Smokes		
Yes	540	39.6
No	820	60.1
Purchase Cigarettes at Missie B's		
Yes	141	10.3
No	1195	87.6
Day of the Week Most Likely to Visit		
Sunday	73	5.4
Monday	48	3.5
Tuesday	74	5.4
Wednesday	90	6.6
Thursday	125	9.2
Friday	393	28.8
Saturday	394	28.9
Beverage Choice		
Beer	590	43.7
Wine	19	1.4
Cocktail	729	54.0
Beer Preference		
Draft	320	53.3
Bottle	273	45.5
Liquor Preference		
Well	463	62.0
Call	200	26.8
Top Shelf/Premium	69	9.2

Closer examination of the demographic variables revealed uneven distributions among the sexuality groups (homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual) and age groups for males and females. Such uneven distributions among the comparison variables would yield skewed outcomes and present serious problems in the interpretation of the results. In order to make fair comparisons of the unequal strata (e.g., demographic variables) in the population, the researcher used disproportionate allocation sampling for between-strata analysis (Daniel, 2012). That is, it was necessary to select a sufficient number of cases for each category of gender (300 recommended) (Daniel, 2012) for good reliability when performing a factor analysis. It was desirable to maximize the sample size for each stratum; therefore, equal allocation (balanced allocation) was appropriate for this study. The researcher composed a sample from the population by using all the females in the population and randomly selecting 300 males from the population. For the purpose of analysis, the age group identified as "60 and up" was merged with the 50 - 59 year old age group to create the "50 and up" age demographic used for the remainder of this study. The sample used to analyze the data and answer the research questions included 597 cases. Closer examination of the sample data showed that uneven numbers within each category still existed; however, the number of participants for the comparison variables were more evenly distributed for males (n = 298) and females (n = 299); age groups (20’s n = 251, 30’s n = 210, 40’s n = 101, and 50’s n = 33); and sexuality (gay n = 375, bisexual n = 111, and straight n = 107). The resulting demographic information for the sample is reported in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Frequency and Percent of Responses for Sample Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	298	49.9
Female	299	50.1
Sexuality		
Gay (Homosexual)	375	63.2
Bisexual	111	18.7
Straight (Heterosexual)	107	18.0
Age		
20's	251	42.2
30's	210	35.3
40's	101	17.0
50 and up	33	5.5
Education		
Some High School	19	3.2
High School Graduate	192	32.2
Associate Degree	168	28.1
College Degree	190	31.8
Post Baccalaureate Degree	28	4.7
Ethnicity		
African American	109	18.4
Asian	6	1.0
Hispanic	45	7.6
Native American	3	0.3
Caucasian	371	62.6
Bi-Racial	39	9.9

Table 6

Frequency and Percent of Responses for Sample Behavior Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Frequency of Visits		
First Time	57	9.6
Daily	64	10.8
1 Time per Week	177	29.8
2 or more Times per Week	189	31.8
Bi-Monthly	36	6.0
Once a Month	71	12.0
Spend per Visit		
Less than $20	56	9.4
$20 - $30	199	33.4
$31 - $40	197	33.1
$41 - $50	84	14.1
More than $50	58	9.7
Smokes		
Yes	222	37.3
No	373	62.7
Purchase Cigarettes at Missie B's		
Yes	49	8.3
No	538	91.7
Day of the Week Most Likely to Visit		
Sunday	19	3.2
Monday	14	2.4
Tuesday	32	5.4
Wednesday	33	5.4
Thursday	50	8.4
Friday	184	31.1
Saturday	207	35.0
Beverage Choice		
Beer	251	42.7
Wine	13	2.2
Cocktail	321	54.6
Beer Preference		
Draft	120	47.1
Bottle	132	51.8
Liquor Preference		
Well	210	64.4
Call	81	24.8
Top Shelf/Premium	30	9.2

Table 7 shows the number of males and females in each age and sexuality group.

Table 7

Number by Age Groups and Sexuality by Gender

Variable	Age Groups			
Gender	**20's**	**30's**	**40's**	**50's**
Male	126	97	48	25
Female	125	113	53	8
Total	251	210	101	33
Variable	**Sexuality**			
Gender	**Gay**	**Bisexual**	**Straight**	
Male	242	39	13	
Female	133	72	94	
Total	375	111	107	

Evaluation of Scale Validity, Dimensionality and Reliability

The second and third research questions asked about underlying structure(s) of the data and components (variables) that may best define these structures. Prior to the principal component analysis, mean scores, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values were computed for each item. These values are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Sample Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis

Item	Item Description	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
1.	Missie B's has up-to-date equipment	4.33	0.93	-1.28	0.75
2.	Missie B's interior is visually appealing	4.24	0.95	-1.11	0.55
3.	Missie B's employees are well dressed and appear neat	3.95	1.07	-0.89	0.23
4.	The appearance of the physical facilities of Missie B's is in keeping with the type of services provided	4.16	0.88	-0.85	0.24
5.	When Missie B's promises to do something by a certain time, it does so	4.21	0.88	-0.97	0.39
6.	When you have problems, Missie B's is sympathetic and reassuring	4.24	0.94	-1.18	0.92
7.	Missie B's is dependable	4.34	0.78	-1.09	1.08
8.	Missie B's provides its services at the time it promises to do so	4.27	0.86	-1.10	0.90
9.	When you have a problem, Missie B's recovers adequately	4.21	0.95	-1.00	0.41
10.	Missie B's does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed *(reverse coded)*	3.91	1.06	-1.06	0.75
11.	You do not receive prompt service from Missie B's employees *(reverse coded)*	4.05	1.09	-1.16	0.66
12.	Employees of Missie B's are not always willing to help customers *(reverse coded)*	4.17	1.12	-1.35	0.88
13.	Employees of Missie B's are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly *(reverse coded)*	4.15	1.16	-1.29	0.73
14.	You can trust the employees of Missie B's	4.45	0.86	-1.73	2.92
15.	You feel safe in your transactions with Missie B's employees	4.46	0.78	-1.72	3.72
16.	Missie B's employees are polite	4.22	0.95	-1.23	1.05
17.	It appears that Missie B's employees are well trained	4.32	0.92	-1.67	2.88
18.	Missie B's does not give you individual attention *(reverse coded)*	3.96	1.13	-0.99	0.18
19.	Employees of Missie B's do not give you personal attention *(reverse coded)*	4.14	1.12	-1.24	0.64
20.	Employees of Missie B's do not know what your needs are *(reverse coded)*	4.09	1.10	-1.06	0.26
21.	Missie B's does not have your best interests at heart *(reverse coded)*	4.18	1.10	-1.44	1.36
22.	Missie B's does have great operating hours	4.72	0.72	-3.12	10.90

Specifically, the second research question asked:

RQ2: What underlying structure(s) may exist for the responses to the SERVQUAL-type survey, consisting of 22 variables, such as equipment, interior, neatness, trust in promises, dependability, problem resolution, knowledge of services, service delivery, safety, politeness, personal attention, and operating hours on the Missie B's Customer Service Survey? Specifically, does the principal component matrix reveal the five dimensions of the original SERVQUAL model?

The third research question was stated as follows:

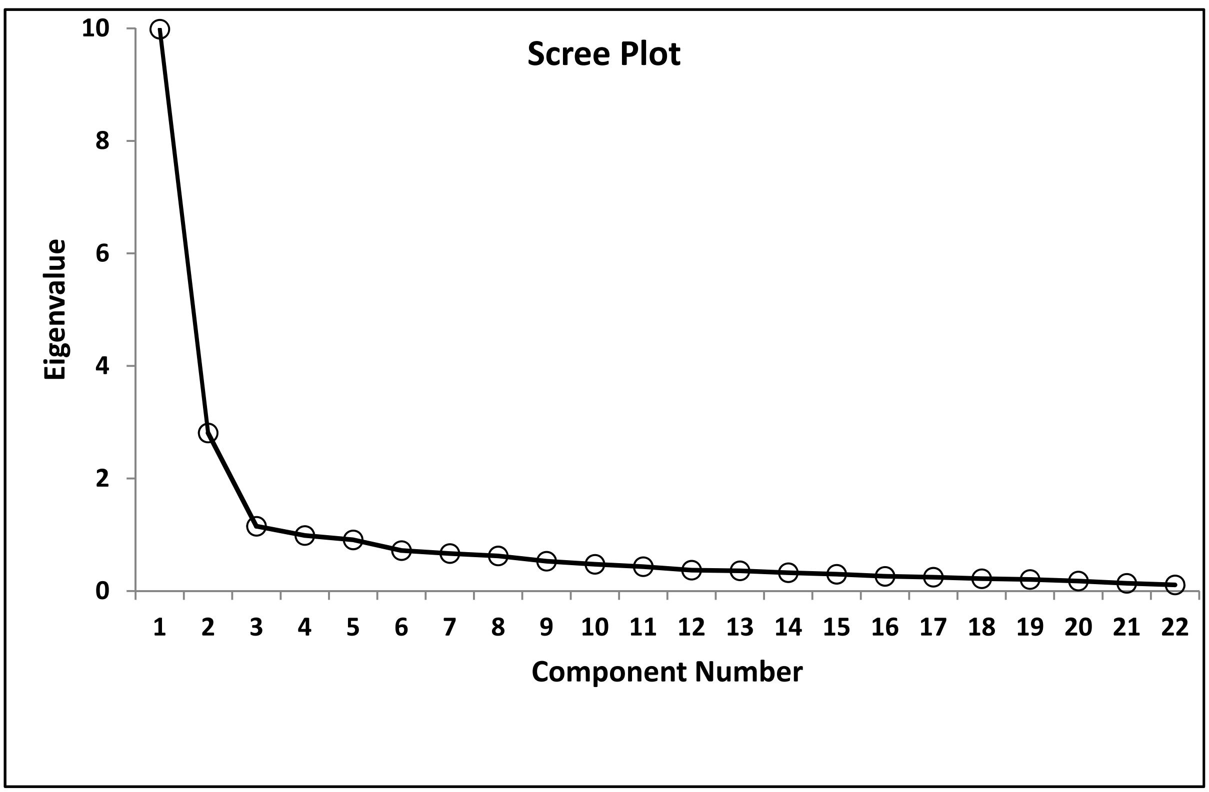
RQ3: If reliable components evolve from an analysis of the data structure, what overall variables may best define these components?

These research questions were addressed by factor analyzing the 22 items on "Missie B's Customer Service Survey" to identify components that may be useful to indicate overall satisfaction of customers within a gay bar. Each item asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert-type scale. The unrotated and variamax rotated procedures revealed that three components had initial Eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Fabrigar, MacCallum, Wegener and Strahan (1999, p. 278) stated

> An extensive methodological literature has developed exploring the issue of determining the optimal number of factors. A number of procedures for answering this question have been proposed. Perhaps the best known of these procedures is the Kaiser criterion of computing the eigenvalues for the correlation matrix to determine how many of these eigenvalues are greater than 1. This number is then used as the number of factors.

The first component accounted for 45.39% of the variance; the second component accounted for 12.77% of the variance; and the third component accounted for 5.23% of the variance. These three components explained 63.39% of the total variance in the original variables. There were 72 (31.0%) non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than 0.05, suggesting that the components that were extracted may not work well in representing the original data. However, the amount of variance accounted for, the number of components with Eigenvalues >1, and the scree plot all suggested that three components should be retained, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2



Efforts to improve the model by decreasing the Eigenvalues to 0.98 (a fourth component had an Eigenvalue of 0.987) and forcing a four-factor solution did not improve the model. The four-component solution accounted for 67.88% of the total variance, a scree plot showing that three components should be retained, one-component loading on a single variable, and 75 (32.0%) non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than 0.05. Examination of the components revealed that eight variables loaded on component 1, nine variables loaded on component 2, five variables loaded on component 3, and only one variable loaded on component 4. Since some confusion existed around component loadings in terms of one variable loading on its own factor and the discrepancy between the extracted sums of squared loadings (variance accounted for) and the scree plot, the researcher performed another factor analysis on the variables again to retain three components using varimax rotation. The three-factor varimax rotated solution produced excellent loadings (>0.71) on ten of the variables to very good loadings (>0.60) on eight of the variables; and less than desirable on (<0.591) on the remaining four variables. The highest loading was 0.879 on one variable; the lowest loading was 0.485 on one variable. The scree plot showed clearly that a three-component solution was appropriate for the data. In addition, a comparison of the four-component solution and the three-component solution revealed that variables were loading on the same components for both solutions. Consequently, the researcher chose the three-component solution as the solution of choice to identify the underlying structure of the data.

Eight variables loaded on Component 1. Component 1 was labeled “Responsiveness.” Nine variables loaded on Component 2. Component 2 was labeled “Reliability.” Five variables loaded on Component 3. Component 3 was labeled “Tangibles.” The rotated component matrix along with the predicted and observed components based on the survey items are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Rotated Component Matrix with Predicted and Observed Dimensions

			Component		
	Predicted Dimension based on SERVQUAL model	**Observed Dimension**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Item 19. Employees of Missie B's do not give you personal attention. *(reverse coded)*	Empathy	Responsiveness	0.879	0.167	-0.039
Item 18. Missie B's does not give you individual attention. *(reverse coded)*	Empathy	Responsiveness	0.858	0.274	0.004
Item 12. Employees of Missie B's are not always willing to help customers. *(reverse coded)*	Responsiveness	Responsiveness	0.842	0.205	0.211
Item 13. Employees of Missie B's are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly. *(reverse coded)*	Responsiveness	Responsiveness	0.816	0.173	0.201
Item 11. You do not receive prompt service from Missie B's employees. *(reverse coded)*	Responsiveness	Responsiveness	0.811	0.154	0.163
Item 20. Employees of Missie B's do not know what your needs are. *(reverse coded)*	Empathy	Responsiveness	0.794	0.271	0.188
Item 10. Missie B's does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed. *(reverse coded)*	Responsiveness	Responsiveness	0.680	0.167	0.348
Item 21. Missie B's does not have your best interests at heart. *(reverse coded)*	Empathy	Responsiveness	0.678	0.336	0.224
Item 7. Missie B's is dependable.	Reliability	Reliability	0.185	0.830	0.026
Item 8. Missie B's provides its services at the time it promises to do so.	Reliability	Reliability	0.275	0.781	0.032

(table continued)

Table 9 (continued)

Rotated Component Matrix with Predicted and Observed Dimensions

			Component		
	Predicted Dimension based on SERVQUAL model	**Observed Dimension**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Item 9. When you have a problem, Missie B's recovers adequately.	Reliability	Reliability	0.181	0.748	0.207
Item 15. You feel safe in your transactions with Missie B's employees.	Assurance	Reliability	0.214	0.710	0.186
Item 6. When you have problems, Missie B's is sympathetic and reassuring.	Reliability	Reliability	0.210	0.687	0.383
Item 17. It appears that Missie B's employees are well trained.	Assurance	Reliability	0.203	0.651	0.240
Item 14. You can trust the employees of Missie B's.	Assurance	Reliability	0.216	0.601	0.416
Item 5. When Missie B's promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.	Reliability	Reliability	0.216	0.595	0.505
Item 16. Missie B's employees are polite.	Assurance	Reliability	0.288	0.485	0.335
Item 2. Missie B's interior is visually appealing.	Tangibles	Tangibles	0.199	0.449	0.683
Item 1. Missie B's has up-to-date equipment.	Tangibles	Tangibles	0.056	0.484	0.616
Item 22. Missie B's does keep great operating hours.	Empathy	Tangibles	0.047	0.116	0.591
Item 4. The appearance of the physical facilities of Missie B's is in keeping with the type of services provided.	Tangibles	Tangibles	0.195	0.517	0.541
Item 3. Missie B's employees are well dressed and appear neat.	Tangibles	Tangibles	0.246	0.038	0.535

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Results of the principle components analysis for the three-component solution are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Components Retained and Their Corresponding Variables with Loadings

Component		Loading
Component 1: Responsiveness		
Item 19.	Employees of Missie B's do not give you personal attention	0.879
Item 18.	Missie B's does not give you individual attention	0.858
Item 12.	Employees of Missie B's are not always willing to help customers	0.842
Item 13.	Employees of Missie B's are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly	0.816
Item 11.	You do not receive prompt service from Missie B's employees	0.811
Item 20.	Employees of Missie B's do not know what your needs are	0.794
Item 10.	Missie B's does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed	0.680
Item 21.	Missie B's does not have your best interests at heart	0.678
Component 2: Reliability		
Item 7.	Missie B's is dependable	0.830
Item 8.	Missie B's provides its services at the time it promises to do so	0.781
Item 9.	When you have a problem, Missie B's recovers adequately	0.748
Item 15.	You feel safe in your transactions with Missie B's employees	0.710
Item 6.	When you have problems, Missie B's is sympathetic and reassuring	0.687
Item 17.	It appears that Missie B's employees are well trained	0.651
Item 14.	You can trust the employees of Missie B's	0.601
Item 5.	When Missie B's promises to do something by a certain time, it does so	0.595
Item 16.	Missie B's employees are polite	0.485
Component 3: Tangibles		
Item 2.	Missie B's interior is visually appealing	0.683
Item 1.	Missie B's has up-to-date equipment	0.616
Item 22.	Missie B's does keep great operating hours	0.591
Item 4.	The appearance of the physical facilities of Missie B's is in keeping with the type of services provided	0.541
Item 3.	Missie B's employees are well dressed and appear neat	0.535

The fourth research question asked about differences on the identified components based on gender, age group, and sexuality. The fourth research question was stated as follows:

RQ4: To what extent do differences exist on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, 50's and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight)?

A three-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted on the three dependent variables (Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibles) and the levels of the independent variables for gender (male, female), age group (20's, 30's, 40's, and 50's), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight). Prior to analysis, the data were screened for missing cases, univariate and multivariate outliers, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

There were no missing cases for gender, only two missing cases for age, and four missing cases for sexuality. Due to the small number of missing cases, these cases were simply excluded from the analysis. All three independent variables showed numerous outliers and substantial to severe negative skews on each of the components (Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibles). For example, for component 1 (Responsiveness), male skewness was -1.020 and female skewness was -2.169; for component 2 (Reliability), male skewness was -0.457 and female skewness was -1.058. Numerous outliers and moderate to substantially skewed distributions were revealed on the components at each level of the age and sexuality variables as well. To eliminate outliers and bring data closer to meeting the normality assumption, data were transformed using reflect and logarithm procedures. Multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance. Five cases with Mahalanobis distance greater than $\chi^2_{(3)} = 16.27$ were considered outliers for the variables Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibles. After elimination of the multivariate outliers and transformations were made, only one outlier was revealed on the sexuality component. The outlying case was omitted from the analysis.

Next, the assumptions of multivariate normality and linearity were assessed. Based on matrix scatter plots, multivariate normality and linearity were questionable for all dependent variables by groups (gender, age, sexuality). Homoscedasticity was assessed using Box's test of equal covariance matrices among groups. Box's test was statistically significant, indicating that the assumption of equal covariances was violated; however, when homoscedasticity was examined between and among groups, the assumption of univariate normality on the transformed variables was satisfied.

Scatter plots of the standardized predicted values by standardized residuals revealed heteroscedasticity on the Tangibles variable. Regression plots for standardized residuals by standardized predicted values were less than desirable, but tolerable for the Reliability and Responsiveness variables.

Results from the MANOVA indicated that no component interactions were significantly affecting the combined dependent variable of Responsiveness, Reliability and Tangibles. There was no statistically significant interaction on any of the interaction terms (gender*age*sexuality; age*sexuality; gender*sexuality; or gender*age). Neither the age nor sexuality components had a significant effect on the combined dependent variable. No statistically significant main effects were revealed for age or sexuality. There was a statistically significant effect of gender on the combined dependent variable [Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.956$, $F(3, 560) = 8.54$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.044$]. Univariate ANOVA results revealed that Responsiveness significantly differs for gender [$F(1,562) = 15.83$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.027$]; and Tangibles significantly differs for gender [$F(1,562) = 20.69$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.036$]. Also, ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant interaction effect for Tangibles by gender and age [$F(3,562) = 2.94$, $p < 0.03$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.015$]. For all comparisons, males had higher mean scores than females across age levels by sexuality. The total mean scores and standard deviations across age groups by sexuality for Responsiveness for males and females were 0.9305, with SD = 0.3277 and 0.7229, with SD = 0.3466, respectively. The total mean scores and standard deviations across age groups by sexuality for Reliability for males and females were 1.124, with SD = 0.2104 and 1.00, with SD = 0.2059, respectively. The total mean scores and standard deviations across age groups by sexuality for Tangibles for males and females were 0.6838, with SD = 0.3186 and 0.5569, with SD = 0.3439, respectively.

Based on the results of the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), three additional follow-up research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to further explore differences based on gender. The first follow-up question addressed differences for gay males and gay females on the three components (Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibles). A MANOVA procedure was conducted to test the null hypothesis of differences between gay males and gay females. Results of the MANOVA showed statistically significant differences based on gender where gender was defined as only gay males and gay females [$F(3, 261) = 25.742$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.228$; Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.772$]. As in the results with the first MANOVA procedure for all males and females, univariate follow up tests showed statistically significant differences for Responsiveness [$F(1, 263) = 53.211$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.167$]; for Reliability [$F(1, 263) = 52.843$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.168$]; and Tangibles [$F(1, 263) = 46.951$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.151$]. In each case, gay males had a higher mean score than gay females. The mean scores and standard deviations for the Responsiveness variable for males were (M = 0.9366, SD = 0.3273) and for females (M = 0.6456, SD = 0.3220). The mean scores and standard deviations for the Reliability variable for males were (M = 1.28, SD = 0.210) and for females (M = 0.9536, SD = 0.1795), and the mean scores and standard deviations for males and females respectively on the Tangibles variable were (M = 0.6749, SD 0.3365; M = 0.4079, SD = 0.2962).

The second follow-up research question addressed the extent to which differences existed between gay males and gay females with regard to their openness to a mixed audience in the gay bar environment. The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between gay males and gay females for acceptance of mixed audience [$t_{(261)} = 7.780$, $p < .01$]. For this comparison, gay females had a higher mean score than gay males; the mean scores were 4.356 with a standard deviation of 1.00 compared to a mean score of 3.244 with a standard deviation of 1.30, respectively.

The third follow-up research question addressed the extent to which only gay males were open to a mixed audience environment across age groups. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to test the hypothesis of no differences. Results of the ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences across age groups for all gay males on their openness to a mixed audience [$F(3, 872) = 4.34$, $p < .01$]. Bonferroni post hoc tests to control for familywise error rate revealed statistically significant differences between gay men in their 20's and those in their 30's, with men in their 20's having a higher mean score (3.33) than the mean score (3.04) for men in their 30's, indicating that men in their 20's were more open to a mixed audience than men in their 30's. In addition, the mean score (3.33) for gay men in their 20's was statistically significantly higher than the mean score (2.97) for gay men in their 40's. No other statistically significant results for comparisons of gay men by age groups related to acceptance of a mixed audience were noted.

Chapter V

Discussion

Research Overview

This chapter provides a brief conclusion to summarize the study as a whole. In this chapter, a brief description of the research and its purpose are provided, with results synthesized. Subsequently, future research opportunities designed to improve and advance this research are presented. Finally, a brief conclusion is offered to summarize both the chapter and the study as a whole.

Description and Purpose of the Research

As outlined in Chapter 1, this study was undertaken primarily to determine if the adaptation of the service quality survey instrument (SERVQUAL) would provide a confirmable quantitative scale when applied to a mixed audience. Additionally, this study was to ascertain if differences exist between homosexual (gay) and heterosexual (straight) customers within a gay bar setting. A factor analysis of the 22 items of the "Missie B's Customer Service Survey" was performed to identify components that may be useful to indicate overall satisfaction within a gay bar. The factor analysis revealed three components (Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibles) which explained 63.39% of the total variance in the original variables. Three follow-up research questions were developed after the initial round of data analysis. The first question was to determine if gay males and gay females showed any statistically significant differences on the three components (Responsiveness, Reliability and Tangibles) derived from the initial analysis. The second question addressed the extent to which differences existed between gay males and gay females with regards to their openness to, and satisfaction with, a mixed audience environment. The final follow-up research question addressed the extent to which only gay males were open to and satisfied with a mixed audience environment across the age groups.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of the population who patronize Missie B's in terms of education level, frequency of visits, amount of money spent per visit, smokes cigarettes, purchase of cigarettes in the bar, day of the week most likely to visit, alcoholic beverage of choice, gender, age group, sexuality, and ethnicity?

Demographic characteristics of the population who patronize Missie B's are of importance to better understand the composition of gay bar patrons. When comparing the sample population to the overall population of the United States, the data show that 77.3% of the patrons of Missie B's are male, compared to United States Census data that shows males only comprise 49.2% of the entire population (United States Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2010).

Additionally, 74.8% of respondents stated that they were gay (homosexual). This is significantly higher than the estimated population of the United States, where approximately 2.3% of the population reported being gay (Painter, 2014). Logically this would be expected as Missie B's is a gay bar catering to gay males. The age demographics provide an interesting glimpse into the customer base as well. 20 year olds, 30 year olds and 40 year olds were represented in much higher percentages than in the general population. For example, in the United States approximately 13.8% of the population is between 20 and 29 years of age (United States Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2010); however, in this sample, almost 43% of the population is between 21 and 29 years of age (patrons must be 21 years of age to enter a bar in Missouri).

The more mature population of the United States is not well represented in the sample, as approximately 32% of the population as a whole are over the age of 50 (United States Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2010); yet only 8.3% of the sample population has reached the half century mark. This is a noteworthy area that, again, logically makes sense as it appears the sample population has a higher level of education than the general public. Nationwide approximately 13% of the population do not have a high school diploma (United States Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2010); however less than 4% of respondents are lacking this degree. Additionally, slightly over 30% of the respondents have obtained a baccalaureate degree while slightly less than 25% of the general population in the United States have matriculated at this level (United States Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2010). The higher level of education could be a reason that gays tend to have more disposable income and are considered a lucrative market segment, as education typically translates into higher salaries.

Research Question 2

RQ2: What underlying structure(s) may exist for the responses to the SERVQUAL-type survey, consisting of 22 variables, such as equipment, interior, neatness, trust in promises, dependability, problem resolution, knowledge of services, service delivery, safety, politeness, personal attention, and operating hours on the Missie B's Customer Service Survey? Specifically, does the principal component matrix reveal the five dimensions of the original SERVQUAL model?

In layman terms, did this research yield the five factor model that is expected when using the SERVQUAL instrument? The factor analysis revealed three components explained 63.39% of the variance. These three components were: Responsiveness, Reliability and Tangibles.

These are three of the five dimensions identified in the original SERVQUAL model. The dimensions of Assurance and Empathy were not identified. The Assurance dimension statements loaded on the Reliability component. Four of the five Empathy statements loaded on the Responsiveness component, while the remaining Empathy statement loaded on the Tangibles component. Closer examination of the wording of the items in the Assurance dimension, survey items 14 through 17, demonstrated these items were closely aligned with the wording of the items in the Reliability dimension. These loadings seemed logical from an industry application. The four items in the Empathy dimension that loaded on the Responsiveness component, items 18 through 21, were all reverse coded, as were the predicted Responsiveness items. All nine items were similar and logically could be considered one component. The final Empathy item that loaded on the Tangible component, item 22, received the highest mean score (4.7217) of any of the 22 items. While operating hours is not a true Tangible feature of a business, this appears to be one area in which the vast majority of respondents agree - Missie B's maintains great operating hours. Since this establishment is open until the final state-required closing time of 3:00 A.M., many of the other Tangible factors such as décor and appearance of staff may be less important. The ability to continue drinking after other clubs have closed is the primary satisfier for some groups of patrons. Additionally, this club is open 365 days a year and has only been closed for 3 days since it opened, due to a fire next door. The concept of being open every day and as late as possible appears to appeal to a large number of respondents. This finding may not be as favorable as others, since it tends to further the stereotype that all gays are copious consumers and due to lack of familial commitments, are able to stay out partying until the wee hours of the morning every night of the year. The demographic information concerning education tends to refute this stereotype, unless most of the gays are able to schedule college courses late in the afternoon and are able to finish assignments prior to going to the bar.

While this research did not yield the full five factor SERVQUAL model, it yielded a three factor solution. The three factor solution seems to reflect the views and opinions of the customers of Missie B's. However, more research is needed to determine if a three factor solution would be applicable in other gay bars. It should be noted that all but one of the items that did not load on the predicted component were reverse coded questions. In the context of gay bars, the reverse coding of questions is a potential opportunity for further research.

Research Question 3

RQ3: If reliable components evolve from an analysis of the data structure, what overall variables may best define these components?

While this research yielded only a three component solution, it did reveal valuable information for owners and managers of gay bars. Personal attention and individual attention appear to be the most important elements in the satisfaction of patrons within a gay bar. The appearance and dress, or lack of clothing of employees is far less important. While there may be a preconceived notion that all bartenders in a gay bar are under thirty, a muscle bound Adonis, the demographic information from the pilot study conducted on the employees of Missie B's illustrated that this is not the case. The ability to converse and take the time to be friendly with the customers is far more beneficial to bartenders in both take-home pay in the form of tips, and the overall health and financial well-being of the bar. Additionally, being dependable and doing things when promised are more satisfying to customers than up-to-date equipment and a visually appealing interior. That is not to say that the owner could totally forgo any interior improvements or equipment upgrades indefinitely; but, for example, saying the bathrooms will be remodeled and updated by March 2015, and then completing the work on time would be more advantageous because “you did what you said you are going to do” (being dependable), than the actual benefit of remodeling the bathrooms.

Research Question 4

RQ4: To what extent do differences exist on the identified components based on gender (male and female), age group (20’s, 30’s, 40’s, 50’s and 60+), and sexuality (gay, bisexual, and straight)?

The results revealed when comparing gays and straights, they are the same based solely on their sexuality. In addition, there was no difference within the age groups based on sexuality. However, the not-so-ground-breaking results are that men and women are different. While this should not come as a shock to anyone, we now have empirical data that men and women are satisfied differently even in a mixed audience environment. Additionally, male respondents are more satisfied than women. Though this establishment is open to all, it tends to cater more toward male customers, typically the gay male customer. Also, when only gay males and gay females were examined, there was a statistically significant difference, with gay male customers more satisfied than gay female customers. Because the primary customer is the gay male, logically gay males should be more satisfied than gay females.

The results revealed that gay men were more open to the idea of a mixed audience environment than gay women. These results are not surprising, as straight women, knowing ahead of time that the majority of the customers are gay men, patronize a gay bar for the entertainment aspects and to gawk at the public displays of affection between those of the same sex, while assuming that they will be left alone and not “hit on” by the vast majority of the customers. For gay men, these straight women are just viewed as more of an annoyance and do not negatively impact the overall satisfaction of the gay men or affect their views of the mixed audience environment. However, these straight women may appear to pose a threat to gay women and thus cause gay women to be less satisfied within the mixed audience environment. For the industry, openness by gay males towards the mixed audience is a positive note. The demographic data suggests that the primary customer within the gay bar is male, and the vast majority of survey respondents are male as well.

An interesting finding is that within the gay male sample population, some discourse exists as it relates to the mixed audience environment. The most open and accepting age group to a mixed audience environment appears to be those in their twenties (21 – 29), with the gay men fifty years of age and older being the second most open and accepting. There were statistically significant differences between those in their twenties and those in their thirties (30 – 39), as well as statistically significant differences between those in their twenties and those in their forties (40 – 49). Those in their twenties exhibited a higher level of acceptance and openness in each comparison. These results are somewhat intuitive. Those in the forty-something age group had the lowest mean scores and this can be viewed simply as "the bitter old queens are just that - bitter old queens." This age group came of age when gay bars in most of America were just starting to come out into the open - advertising, flying the rainbow flag, and offering more than just the stereotypical "leather bar" offerings. This same age group, those born in the mid 1960's through the early 1970's, view themselves as the crusaders, those who "opened the doors" for ideas such as gay marriage, partner benefits at work, and an overall acceptance of gays. However, by winning victories in the workplace and at the altar, these same "soldiers" lost what was most dear to many of them – their clubhouse, the gay bar. They feel surrounded by straight people throughout the day, and those straights are now invading their "safe" place as well.

While those in their thirties may not have charted as many new trails as their predecessors, they still remember when a gay bar was for gays, and they remember when it was not politically correct for straight patrons to be in a gay bar. Of course this leads to the question of why the fifty-plus age gay male is not totally livid with this entire scenario. It appears that the fifty-plus gay males, who were the true pioneers of gay equality, enjoy seeing the fruition of their "work" and a mixed audience is very pleasing to them. Since these guys are the true pioneers, many of them smile when they see their "work" (marriage equality, partner benefits, acceptance of homosexuals in society) successful. And of course those in their twenties are open and accepting of the mixed audience environment because that is all they have known since they have been of legal drinking age. Based on the single location of this research, many of the members of this younger age group may have only patronized this or the handful of other gay bars in Kansas City, Missouri.

This dissatisfaction within the age groups of gay males should be a concern to the gay bar industry, as the older gay males will have a larger disposable income and thus are typically considered a more valuable customer. However, owners should be hesitant to "discriminate" against or prohibit heterosexual customers as this may cause the younger age group (those in their twenties) to leave the bar and go elsewhere. Just like in straight bars, the young, attractive, heavy-drinking youngsters (male or female) bring the older age groups to the bar – for the chance to take a youngster home; or at the very least it is a lot more fun to look at people twenty years younger than yourself and your friends. So while those in their thirties and forties may not be as accepting of the mixed audience environment, they may have to continue to tolerate it if they want to see the twenty year old age group continue to patronize the establishment. In addition, as time passes and gay marriages become marriages, and partner benefits at work become benefits, gay bars could find themselves as bars or bars that are very gay-friendly. Bar owners should continue to survey their customers and incorporate changes that will continue to satisfy all customers, both gay and straight.

Academic Implications

For academics who are interested in both the applied and theoretical aspects of research inquiry, the addition of a study that queries the constructive use of the SERVQUAL instrument within a mixed audience has multiple implications. First, additional research is needed to either confirm or refute SERVQUAL's effectiveness in a mixed audience environment. Secondly, marketing researchers may use the results to change or strengthen the marketing message directed at the gay consumer. Thirdly, social scientists may use this research to evaluate and investigate other mixed audiences and the effect this "mixing variable" has on the satisfaction of individuals. Social scientists may also use this research to evaluate and investigate the concept of "space" or more specifically, "gay space". Although images of "colored" lunch counters, then-Governor George Wallace standing in the "school house door", and people of "color" sitting in the back of the bus have been relegated to the history books, segregation did not end in 1968 nor in 2008. There are still two bastions of African American "space" that exists predominately today in the United States.

The first is churches. While churches are open and accepting of all people, at least in theory, churches still remain segregated for the most part (Blake, n.d.). The second areas of segregation are barbershops and beauty parlors. Both churches and barbershops give the African American an opportunity to surround themselves with people who share the same beliefs, share common experiences, and look the same (Blake, n.d.). There appears to be little movement in the desegregation in these two areas by either whites or blacks. Similarly, gay space is important to the gay community; however, in recent years there appears to be an attempt to “desegregate” gay space based on the influx of straight customers. The push to “desegregate” gay space may be coming from two fronts, the straight customers who want to patronize gay bars, and the younger generation of gay consumers. This latter group, in part, appears to be a cause of issue and concern within the gay community. While the older gay males are not satisfied or happy with the mixed audience environment, they do want younger gay males in the bar. Since older gay males typically have a larger disposable income than younger gay males, bar owners want these customers in the bar. The dilemma is that these more lucrative customers, older gay males, want the younger gay males in the bar but do not want the straight customers; yet the younger gays males want to go to the bar with their friends. For the younger gay males, friends may be gay, straight, lesbian, or bisexual but they are friends, and they want to spend time with them socializing. As the older generation of gays move more into the “sunset” and the younger and coming generations of gays gain maturity, the “mixing” of gays and straights may be less of an issue. But as “desegregation” of “gay space” increases, the gay community may lose some of the history and ideals that the current older gay males attempt to impart onto these younger gay males.

Managerial Implications

The industry implications of these results are that a business must ensure that employees are responsive to the needs and requests of customers if they want to attract and keep customers, both gay and straight; the employees and the business must be reliable, and both must do what they say they are going to do, when they commit to doing so. Additionally, the business should maintain and/or improve the tangibles, which include the physical location, the appearance of the facility, and amenities offered within the facility. All three components are logical and would apply across numerous industries consisting of mixed audiences.

Specifically for gay bars, owners and management need to be cognizant of the core base of customers and the type of overall audience are they attracting and admitting to the bar. As stated earlier, there is a catch-22 for ownership and management: they need the younger, heavy drinking gay male, to attract and keep the more mature and financially stable gay males. However, the younger males (21-29 year olds) are very satisfied with the mixed audience environment and in some cases want their straight friends, both male and female, to accompany them to the bar; yet these straight friends tend to dissatisfy, and in turn, discourage the mature gay males from patronizing the establishment. While straight patrons may boost the bottom line on Friday and Saturday nights, these same straight patrons may have caused revenues to decline sharply on the other five nights of the week. The "core" gay male customer may choose not to visit the bar at all and either stay at home or go to a bar where they can feel comfortable seven nights a week.

While the number of gay bars has been declining and most likely will continue to decline; and since almost all industry segments have been challenged by the most recent recession, it is imperative that bar owners and management staff attempt to find a balance between the core gay male customer and straight customer. Being ever mindful potentially once gay equality issues are not a constant focal point in the media, the straight customers and younger gay customers may find another location in which to socialize, drink, and be entertained. Focusing on the customer and giving that customer personal attention regardless of sexuality and gender may be the best insurance that owners have to, at a minimum, maintain the status quo; or even potentially expand and increase revenues.

Limitations

Every effort was made to plan this research study to minimize limitations; however, limitations still exist and caution must be exercised in attempting to explain and generalize the results. This section is offered to reveal potential limitations in an effort to improve the conceptualization of the research construct for further researchers who might wish to build upon this study and spend their nights in a gay bar collecting data.

One limitation lies within the sample group itself. The sample was limited to the customers of Missie B's during a ten-day period of time. This research does not address all mixed audience environments or even all gay bar patrons, only those who happened to patronize this establishment during the time frame of this research.

Another limitation is the survey itself. The survey was self-administered and was administered in a bar where alcohol was being served. Thus the survey carries the attendant issues and ramifications inherent in self-reporting survey instruments, such as subjectivity, potential confusion and misunderstanding, and the lack of expert administration to each participant. In addition, the survey included the satisfaction scale and extensive demographic questions. Considering that businesses are bombarding customers with performance/satisfaction surveys similarly to the Nazi Blitzkriegs during World War II, coupled with the length of this instrument, fatigue is certainly a point to consider in assessing both the percentage and the quality of the responses. Lastly, the issue of comparability must be acknowledged. The lack of empirical studies involving mixed audiences within gay bars limits comparisons of methods and results with other research.

Future Research

The obvious first step in future research should be a re-administration of the survey within this establishment to confirm the results of this initial survey. Once confirmation is achieved, the next logical step would be to replicate the study in gay bars located in different geographical locations. The researcher initially attempted to do this, but access was severely limited, with some bar owners in various locations becoming somewhat hostile. An additional research area would be to expand this survey from gay bars to other “mixed-audience environments” such as Catholic bingo halls, with the Protestants being the minority demographic composition creating a mixed audience environment; or surveying smokers and nonsmokers in an establishment that does not ban smoking indoors; or even surveying customers within a strip club where the female customers are the heterosexual customers and the male customers are the homosexual customers (from the original survey).

Conclusions

This study presented substantial analysis of service quality within a mixed audience environment. This study also provided some insight into the current customer demographics and customer satisfiers within a gay drag bar in the United States. This study is both timely and beneficial to the *eat and drink* industry as the homosexual market grows and social acceptance of homosexuals increases. Although this research was limited to a hospitality industry, marketers of all products aimed at the homosexual segment of the population could benefit from additional empirical studies.

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AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION, DIETETICS,

AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled
"Perceived Service Quality Satisfaction Among Mixed Audiences within Gay Night Clubs"

You are invited to participate in a research study to determine if there are any significant differences on perceived service quality between homosexuals, bi-sexuals and straight individuals. The study is being conducted by Jason Gogue, Graduate Student, under the direction of Dr. Martin O'Neill, Department Head in the Auburn University Department of Hotel and Restaurant Management. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a customer of Missie B's and are age 21 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a survey that is front and back of a letter size piece of paper. Your total time commitment will be approximately five (5) minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to potentially improve the service quality at Missie B's.

Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by securing surveys and not collecting any identifying information that would enable anyone to identify any of the data that you provide. Information collected through your participation may be in a course project, or in a publication or presentation.

If you have questions about this study, *please ask them now or* contact Jason Gogue at 816-550-0918 or Jason.gogue@yahoo.com or contact Dr. Martin O'Neill at 334-844-3264 or oneilm1@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

MARCH 10, 2011

Investigator's signature Date

Jason Gogue

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 3/10/11 to 3/9/12 Protocol # 11-094 EP 1103

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MISSIE B'S CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

As a Graduate Student at Auburn University, I as well as the management of Missie B's, are interested in your feedback as a customer of Missie B's. **Directions:** Please answer each of the following questions by darkening the appropriate response. Your answers are completely Anonymous. **Thank You** in advance for your participation.

What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

Some High School O
High School Graduate O
Associates Degree O
College Degree O
Post Baccalaureate Degree O

How often do you visit **Missie B's**?

First Time O
Daily O
Once a week O
2+ Times a week O
Bi-Monthly O
Once a month O

How much money do you normally spend when you come to **Missie B's**?

Less than $20 O
$20 - $30 O
$31 - $40 O
$41 - $50 O
More than $50 O

Do you smoke cigarettes?

YES O NO O

Do you regularly purchase cigarettes at **Missie B's**?

YES O NO O

While at **Missie B's** which bar station do you frequent the ***most***?

Downstairs Main Bar O Patio/Tiki Bar O Stage Bar Downstairs O

Upstairs Main Bar O Side Bar Upstairs O

While at **Missie B's** which bar station do you frequent the ***least***?

Downstairs Main Bar O Patio/Tiki Bar O Stage Bar Downstairs O

Upstairs Main Bar O Side Bar Upstairs O

On a typical visit to **Missie B's**, how many shots do you drink?

None O One (1) O
Two (2) O Three (3) O
Four (4) O Five or More O

If your bartender could drink shots with you, would you order more shots?

YES O NO O

Which day of the week are you most likely to visit **Missie B's**?

Sunday O Wednesday O
Monday O Thursday O
Tuesday O Friday O
Saturday O

Which time of the day are you most likely to visit **Missie B's**?

Noon – 4pm O
4pm – 8pm O
8pm - Midnight O
Midnight – 3am O

Are you in favor with **Missie B's** creating a private/members only club upstairs?

YES O NO O

If you answered **YES** to the above at what price would you be willing to pay for a membership?

Less than $25 O
$25 - $50 O
$51 - $100 O
$101 - $150 O
More than $150 O

What is your primary alcoholic beverage of choice?

Beer O Wine O Cocktail O

If you selected **Beer** above, which type of beer do you normally drink?

Draft O Bottle O

If you selected **Cocktail** above, which type of liquor do you normally drink?

Well O Call O Top Shelf O

PLEASE TURN OVER THE PAGE

Your gender is?

Male O Female O

Your age is?

21-29 O 30-39 O 40-49 O 50-59 O 60 + O

How do you describe your sexuality?

Gay O Bi-Sexual O Straight O

What is your ethnicity?

African American (Black) O
Asian/Pacific Islander O
Hispanic O
Native American O
Caucasian (White) O
Bi-Racial O

Directions: The following set of statements relate to your feelings about **Missie B's** service provisions. For each statement, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree by circling the corresponding number. There are no right or wrong answers. All we are interested in is a number that best shows your perceptions about **Missie B's.**

	Strongly disagree				**Strongly agree**
1. Missie B's has up-to-date equipment	1	2	3	4	5
2. Missie B's interior is visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5
3. Missie B's employees are well dressed and appear neat	1	2	3	4	5
4. The appearance of the physical facilities of Missie B's is in keeping with the type of services provided	1	2	3	4	5
5. When Missie B's promises to do something by a certain time, it does so	1	2	3	4	5
6. When you have problems, Missie B's is sympathetic and reassuring	1	2	3	4	5
7. Missie B's is dependable	1	2	3	4	5
8. Missie B's provides its services at the time it promises to do so	1	2	3	4	5
9. When you have a problem, Missie B's recovers adequately	1	2	3	4	5
10. Missie B's does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed	1	2	3	4	5
11. You do not receive prompt service from Missie B's employees	1	2	3	4	5
12. Employees of Missie B's are not always willing to help customers	1	2	3	4	5
13. Employees of Missie B's are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly	1	2	3	4	5
14. You can trust the employees of Missie B's	1	2	3	4	5
15. You feel safe in your transactions with Missie B's employees	1	2	3	4	5
16. Missie B's employees are polite	1	2	3	4	5
17. It appears that Missie B's employees are well trained	1	2	3	4	5
18. Missie B's does not give you individual attention	1	2	3	4	5
19. Employees of Missie B's do not give you personal attention	1	2	3	4	5
20. Employees of Missie B's do not know what your needs are	1	2	3	4	5
21. Missie B's does not have your best interests at heart	1	2	3	4	5
22. Missie B's does keep great operating hours	1	2	3	4	5

	Totally dissatisfied				**Totally satisfied**
1. Please rate your overall satisfaction with Missie B's	1	2	3	4	5
2. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the mixed audience (gay/bi-sexual/straight) at Missie B's	1	2	3	4	5
	Very unlikely				**Very likely**
3. How likely are you to revisit Missie B's	1	2	3	4	5
4. How likely are you to recommend Missie B's to a friend	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND YOUR PATRONAGE!!!!