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School of Business
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**SPONSOR SATISFACTION IN A REGIONAL CHARITY SPORT
EVENT**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this Master's thesis is to study sponsor satisfaction in charity sport events. Lack of research in regional charity sport events, emergence of corporate social responsibility and increasing popularity of charity sport events have created a research gap to be further explored. Theoretical part of the thesis focuses in development of sponsorships, charity sport event sponsorships and sponsorship as a marketing tool. Concept of satisfaction is discussed by implementing marketing theories to weight options on measuring sponsor satisfaction as a part of sponsorship evaluation process.

Empirical analysis of the thesis was conducted in a regional charity sport event – Maailman Pisin Salibandyottelu. Evidences were collected in qualitative research method through semi-structured theme interviews. Altogether 12 major and minor sponsors were selected for the primary source of data. The data was analyzed by comparing sponsors' expectations and experiences, and by displaying sponsors' perceived satisfaction.

The results indicated that sponsors were involved by partly altruistic and partly selfish motives as suggested by previous research. Respondents expressed very few, mainly non-financial expectations, yet were hoping to gain positive image association via event exposure. Negative experiences appear to have relatively small impact in overall satisfaction. Exceeding or fulfilling expectations appears to increase perceived satisfaction which was mainly driven by contribution towards the goodwill, perceived success of the event (successful record attempt, visibility (on- and off-line) and event execution.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämän Pro Gradu -tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää sponsorityytyvääsyyttä hyväntekeväisyysurheilutapahtumissa. Yritysten lisääntynyt kiinnostus yhteiskuntavastuullisuudesta, hyväntekeväisyysurheilutapahtumien lisääntyminen ja vähäinen tutkimus niihin liittyen muodostivat tarpeen tutkia aihealuetta tarkemmin. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen osuus keskittyy sponsoroinnin kehitykseen, hyväntekeväisyysurheilutapahtumien sponsorointiin ja sponsorointiin markkinointiviestinnän keinona. Tyytyväisyyden konseptista keskustellaan markkinointiteorioiden avulla ja sponsorointityytyväisyyden arvioinnista osana kokonaisvaltaisempaa sponsoroinnin tehokkuuden arviointia.

Empiirinen osio on toteutettu kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena. Semistrukturoidut haastattelut ovat kerätty haastatellen 12 pää- ja sivusponsorina Maailman Pisin Salibandyottelu nimisestä hyväntekeväisyysurheilutapahtumasta. Datan analysoinnissa on vertailtu sponsoreiden odotuksia heidän kokemuksiinsa sekä tutkittu heidän kokemaansa sponsorityytyväisyyttä.

Tutkimustulokset tukevat olemassa olevia tutkimustuloksia sponsoreiden motiivien olevan niin epäitsekkeitä kuin itsekkäitäkin. Sponsoreilla ei ollut suuria odotuksia, eikä varsinkaan rahallisia odotuksia sponsorointiaan kohtaan. He kuitenkin toivoivat hyötyvänsä sponsoroinnistaan, pääasiassa yrityksen näkyvyyden kautta. Odotusten ylitys tai niiden täytyminen vaikutti positiivisesti sponsorointityytyväisyyteen. Negatiiviset kokemukset eivät välttämättä vaikuttaneet mittavasti sponsoreiden kokonaistyytyväisyyteen. tyytyväisyys näytti määräytyvän pääasiassa hyvän tekemisen, tapahtuman koetun onnistumisen ja tapahtumajärjestelyiden kautta.

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This thesis took so long time to write that finally another organization succeeded in breaking the set world record the focal case's about. This means that my job is done and it is time to move on.

Helsinki, June 5th 2015

Toni Nikunen

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the middle of a hot summer, a floorball player is near collapsing point in a sweaty sports hall. Juuso Häkämies, one of the Urheilun Koskimies Team's players, is being maintained by the team physician. Juuso gasps for a reporter: "I am totally worn out, in a few minutes it is my time for a short break." Two teams, with altogether 40 players, are battling against each other, different injuries and pure exhaustion for a good cause. After more than 20 hours of playing, they are a few long hours away from breaking the current Guinness World Record for the longest marathon playing floorball. (Etelä-Saimaa 2013) The mentioned world record attempt is one of many, not so uncommon charity sport events. Such events are combining a good cause with a sporting effort (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 2). Reasons for player participation in such events are in many and there have been research conducted as well (e.g. Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin and Ali-Choudhury, 2007; Filo, Funk and O'Brien, 2008; Scott and Solomon 2003). How come corporate sponsors are interested in these events?

Charity Event Sponsorships

Sports participation is an important part of life for individuals. In addition, it is common for individuals to address charitable cause while participating in sports events. It is not uncommon for corporations to fund these events via sponsorships. (King 2001; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 2) Albeit there is a growing interest among corporations for combining charitable cause with sports, simultaneously the competition for donations has increased and the charity event markets have become highly competitive and cluttered. (Heere and Walker 2013; Liao, Foreman and Sargeant, 2001) This has forced charitable organizations to find new ways to separate themselves from the competitive environment.

Charitable organizations have been forced to look for new income sources and attracting attention to their causes in various novel ways. To stand out from the dozen, many charity-based organizations have added sporting events to their catalogue. (Filo, Funk

and O'Brien 2009, 2) Such events often include endurance-type sport activities (e.g. marathons, different distance runs and fundraiser games). These sporting events have been a natural fit for charitable organizations. Furthermore, instead of pure donations for the charity, these events have created different types of exchange relations. Besides this mutual exchange between parties, these events have created possibilities for awareness through the media. This aspect of the events is arousing sponsors and thus adding sponsorship value. (Higgins & Lauzon, 2003)

Multiple researchers (e.g. Lamount & Dovel 2008; Skinner & Rukavina 2003; Valanko 2009) state that media attention attracts corporate sponsors. Mack (1999, 25) explains that for corporate sponsors event sponsorships allow them to reach their target market within less cluttered space, expose their products directly to the potential customers and, in addition, allows them to give back to the community. Charity sport events may allow event sponsors to change brand perception in among the event participants. (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 2) This route has become especially interesting for smaller businesses, as big events are often out of their reach and usually not feasible enough to invest in. (Mack 1999, 25)

Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship is growing globally (Jeffries 2010 and IEG 2014). Sponsoring is considered a vital part of every major company's communication strategy in today's business world (Cornwell 2008; Mack 1999; Olson & Thjømøe 2009). Polonsky and Speed (2001; in Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe 2008, 2) state that it has evolved into a "*mainstream component of the marketing mix*" and managers leverage it for creating sustainable competitive advantage. To give an example of the sponsorship scale globally, The Wall Street Journal (2014) reported that Adidas AG has offered a sponsorship contract with value over 103 million USD annually for a decade long contract with English Premier League giant Manchester United Ltd. As agreed upon, the deal would count as the new world record for a sponsorship worth. All in all, globally over 53 billion USD are

invested by companies in sponsorships (Statistic Portal 2014 & IEG 2014a.). It can be thus stated that understanding sponsorships can add value to managerial decision making.

Charity sport events are becoming more and more popular in sponsorship research. These events create an interesting niche in the sponsorship field by combining ever popular sport events with a charitable cause where as other events may or may not provide a linkage to a charitable cause. (Filo, Funk, O'Brien 2009, 379) Researches suggest that charity sport events uniquely provide benefits for participants that they may not others receive (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009; Woolf, Heere and Walker 2013, 96). Overall, participants have several motives and reasons for their participation (Woolf, Heere, and Walker 2013). All in all, charity sport events create interest among multiple stakeholders.

1.1 Literature Review

First, this literature review examines the research conducted in sponsorship in general to create a larger outline for the research field. Second, literature in charity event sponsorship is revised and then finally research conducting sponsor satisfaction is discussed. Purpose of the literature review is to set the table for the study by finding gaps in existing sponsorship research, and moreover, in charity event sponsorship field.

1.1.1 Sponsorship Research in Different Perspectives

Corporate sponsorship of sports, arts, and cultural events has mounted over the last ten years. Still, scholars focus on sponsorship as a promotional tool has been thin. (Cornwell & Maignan 1998) According to Mack (1999, 26) majority of the literature has focused in large companies and major sponsorships. Walliser (2003, 5) states that sponsorship effects and strategic sponsorship management has been key points of research, however

remarkable amount of focus has shifted towards on awareness building and image transfer in sports sponsorships (e.g. Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, Tellegen 2006; Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy 2005; Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka 2004; Gwinner, Larson and Swanson 2009). Walliser (2003) argues that recently sponsorship effects and strategic sponsorship management has taken steps forward in understanding sponsorship in consumer perspective, however in overall research is mainly focused in consumer goods and service companies seeking awareness and image objectives through sports sponsorships. This creates a gap in literature for other sponsorship objectives and sponsorship areas to be further explored.

1.1.2 Sponsorship Research Evolution

In their comprehensive study, Cornwell and Maignan (1998, 2) examined 80 articles that were published by 1996 and were able to categorize sponsorship research into five streams of research: (1) nature of sponsorship, (2) managerial aspects of sponsorship, (3) measurement of sponsorship effects, (4) strategic use of sponsorship, (5) legal and ethical considerations in sponsorship. Their study were extended by Walliser (2003, 7) as another 153 sponsorship studies, published between 1996 and 2001, were scrutinized in to continue the sponsorship evolution study.

Among scholars arguing categorizations in sponsorship study branches can be found. Opposing the Cornwell and Maignan categorization Olkkonen and Tuominen (2006, 64) identify only three sponsorship strands: firstly, definitional issues pertaining to the processes and outcomes of sponsorship; secondly communication issues including measurements of effect and effectiveness and finally; managerial issues that are including the drivers of sponsorship activities.

In general, sponsorship research has drifted from exposure studies (often media exposure of signage or a brand) to measure brand and image transformation by end consumer. Walliser (2003, 23) states that sponsorships in other areas such as art, environmental and

social sponsorships have just started to appear. In addition, he points out that recently the hot topic in sponsorship research has been examining network perspective in sponsorships (Walliser 2003, 20). All in all, sponsorship evaluation is still a colorful cocktail. A large sponsorship survey conducted by IEG (2013) indicates that 27 percent of sponsors spend none of their sponsorship budget into measuring the return of their investment. This is however nothing new in sponsorship evaluation and moreover points out how unsophisticated is the understanding of sponsorships by corporate sponsors and researchers alike.

1.1.3 Sponsor Satisfaction in Charity Events

Sponsorship satisfaction in charity or cause related context have been studied by, for instance, Dean (2002), Doherty and Murray (2007), Filo, Funk and O'Brien (e.g. 2008 and 2009) and Webber (2003). Moreover, different approaches has been taken, for instance, Dean (2002) applied balance theory as he studied how public perception on company community relationship changes while sponsoring a charitable event. His study concludes that company community relations have improved via sponsorships. In other spectrum, Weber's (2003) study focuses on participant motivation in a charitable event. It conducts that fundraisers may be an ineffective way for organizations in maximizing profit gain whilst they may provide an important mean for spreading a word of a particular cause. Doherty and Murray (2007) researched the effectiveness of a sponsorship process by a non-profit organization. Their study focused in satisfaction in sponsorship process of the sponsored organization, or in other words the satisfaction of the sponsee. For instance, Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin and Ali-Choudhury (2007), Filo, Funk and O'Brien (2008) and Scott and Solomon (2003) have examined the participation motives in charity sport events context, but the corporate side has quite much been intact. Overall, the sponsor satisfaction and what constitutes the sponsor satisfaction in charity sport event sponsorship domain has not been overly studied and thus forming the research gap for this study.

1.2 Research Questions

Many of the sponsorship evaluation studies have focused measuring the effectiveness of the sponsorship in point of view of the consumers or the targeted group (e.g. audience), basically these studies have been focusing effectiveness of the sponsorship or in what have been the sponsorship's effects. (Walliser 2003) In addition, majority of the sponsorship research is conducted in context of mega events, tend to focus on major sponsorships (e.g. Mack 1999; Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012) and, as stated formerly, majority of the sponsorship research have been conducted in sports domain. (e.g. Comwell and Maignan 1998) Fewer studies have been conducted in point of view of the sponsors. (e.g. Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009)

Some studies are conducted in the context of regional activities. Scholars Slack and Bentz's (1996) study in local activities sponsored by small business in several areas, the most notable concerning this research was their focus on "*firms' objectives for choosing sponsorship.*" Studies in regional event sponsorships indicate that companies sponsor regional events mostly to "*obtain social credibility*" and to be recognized supporting their local community, economical factors are secondary reasons. Success of sponsorship is being determined through store traffic, customer feedback and the success of the event. (Lamont and Dowell 2008, 13)

Mack (1999) focused in her study to explore SME's objectives in sponsorship domain. The study filled some of the research gap by presenting small business objectives, practices and perceptions in event sponsorship domain. Further it revealed that majority of the small enterprise sponsorships are conducted in charitable event domain, 81 percent, whereas sports related events stand second with 71 percent (Mack 1999, 27). The emergence of charitable sports events sponsor domain has created a need for better understanding of the corporate motives, expectations and reasons for sponsorships. One mean to fill this void is by studying sponsor satisfaction.

Enterprises are very much involved in sponsorships for supporting the local community (Dean 2002, 78). One way to demonstrate this is through a charitable event sponsorship. In fact, charity event sponsorship is common for enterprises (Menon and Kahn 2003), however companies' reasons for sponsorship involvement in regional charity events are not overly studied among scholars by the existing knowledge of the researcher. This research aims at filling the research gap in present literature by scrutinizing an experimental single case study on sponsorship satisfaction in small scale charity event domain. This study is conducted by studying sponsor's satisfaction in focal event. In other words, sponsor's satisfaction towards the sponsorship is evaluated.

Charity event domain offers a fresh ground for sports sponsorship cluttered sponsorship research. This study focuses in the sponsor satisfaction in regional charity sport event context and studies the roles which expectations and experience play in constructing sponsor satisfaction. Regional events offer especially relevant sponsorship opportunities for small and medium sized companies for reaching their target markets at feasible rates where mega events may be out of their price range and thus unworthy the investment.

By developing a better understanding for the reasons companies have for charity event sponsorships the event organizers can further develop their sponsorship offerings and to secure better sponsor satisfaction. On the other hand, by exploring companies sponsoring tendencies the company managers can further understand the economical and non-economical possibilities that lay in sponsorships that otherwise may be overlooked and often unutilized. Therefore this study aims at providing benefits for both sides: the event organizer (sponsee) and the sponsor (for utilizing regional sponsorships). The research is carried out with post-event interviews by exploring sponsors' reasons and expectations for sponsoring and their perception of the sponsorship experience to evaluate overall sponsor satisfaction.

To contribute for filling the identified research gap, the study intends to answer the following main research and sub-research questions.

The Main Research Question:

How to evaluate sponsor satisfaction in charity sport event?

In order to provide an in-depth understanding on sponsorship satisfaction in charitable sport event content following sub-questions are examined:

1.) *What is the role of expectations in sponsor satisfaction?*

2.) *What is the role of experience in sponsor satisfaction?*

In addition to answering above mentioned research questions theoretical part of the thesis provides an introduction to sponsorship in marketing communication based view and provides managerial implications for sponsees to increase sponsor satisfaction in charity sport event context.

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Delimitations

Purpose of this theoretical framework (Figure 1) is to deliver understanding of the studied context and the purpose of the study in a graphical manner. In addition, it will provide readers with key concepts of the study in focal context. Framework is presenting different sponsorship forms that combine or can be seen creating the charity sport event sponsorship context. The bull's eye in the heart of the circles presents the evaluation process of sponsor's satisfaction towards the sponsorship. Sponsor satisfaction is suggested to be measured by evaluating sponsor's expectations by comparing them with the sponsorship experience and/or with the results or outcomes of the sponsorship (Valanko 2009).

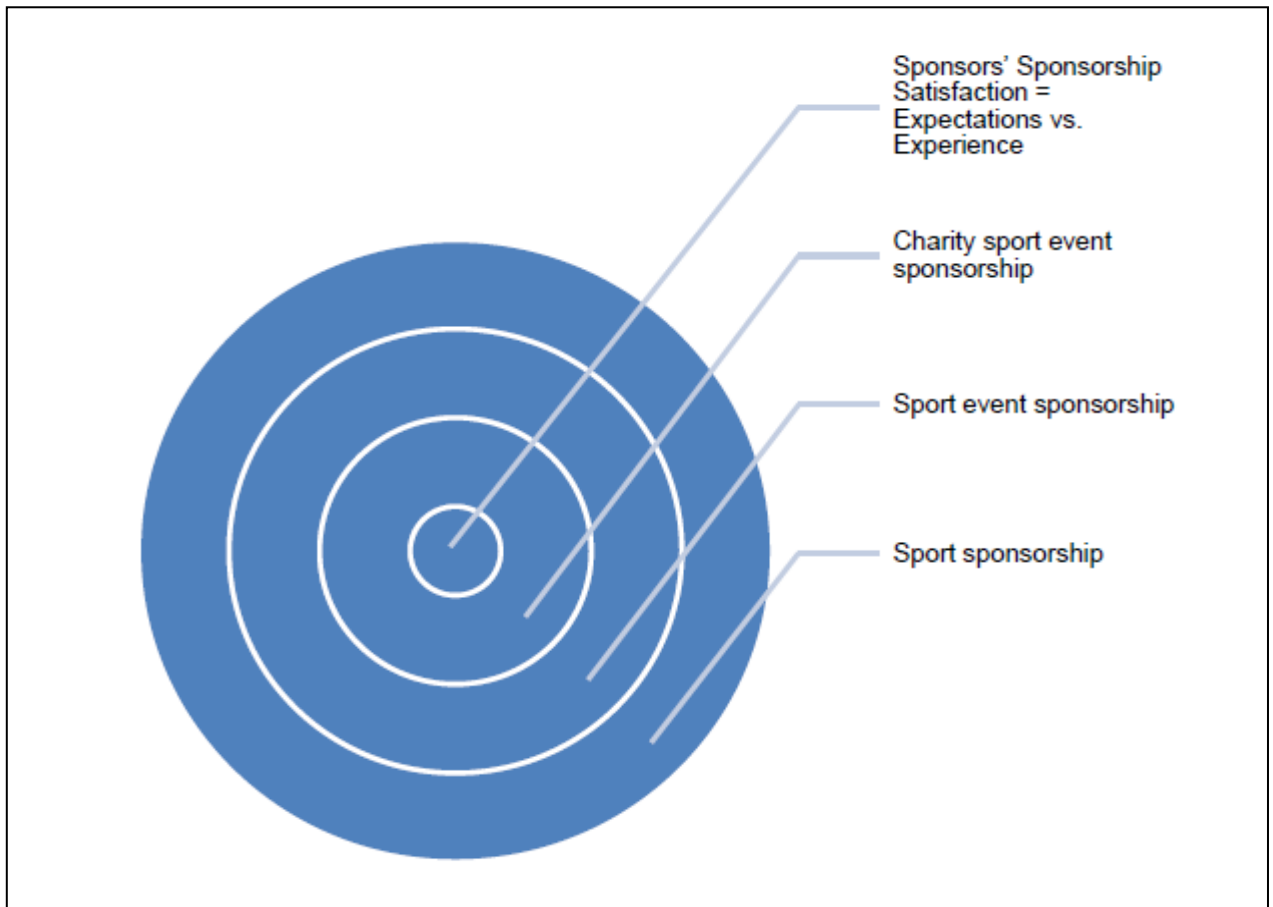


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Delimitations

The findings of this experimental single case research can add a deeper understanding for on sponsor satisfaction in charity sport events. However, findings are hard to be generalized as the unique character of the event and relatively small population. Even if having said that, findings can be used for managerial purposes to better address the need of corporate sponsors in charity sport event domain. In addition, sponsorship literature has a dispute how to character charity sport event sponsorship and whether it should be understood in corporate social responsibility or sponsorship category. This research is not contributing for the thematic dispute or categorization of sponsorships.

In conducting, reasons and motivations are interpreted more or less as synonyms and so are goals and expectations. The study also somewhat assumes that reasons for sponsoring are in line with the goals that are sought through sponsoring the event. Moreover, expectations are counted more as overall expectations towards the event. The event sold sponsorships against upon agreed counterpart, for instance signage or logo exposure and thus counted as sponsorships and therefore not viewed as patronage or philanthropy. Moreover, it is assumed in this study that satisfaction can be evaluated measuring expectations against the outcome of sponsorship or, in other words, the overall experience.

1.4 Research Methodology

This research applies qualitative research method. Qualitative research method was chosen for its capability to explain and understand multifaceted and wide-ranging themes to develop deep insights on subject manner (Berrett & Slack 1999; Long, Thibault & Wolfe 2004; Thibault & Harvey 1997). Furthermore, qualitative research is often based on comparison and contradictory to quantitative research due to lack of consistent, generally accepted characterizations (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2008, 131). Puusa and juuti (2001, 41) have mentioned that when interpreting human perception and experiences

qualitative approach is more effective. The nature of qualitative research is comprehensive, and data is collected in regular, ordinary situation in which human is preferred as a source of data collection. Objective of a qualitative analysis is to find unexpected results. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 160) In short, qualitative research is a description of the form of a non-numerical sample and analysis. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 13) Furthermore qualitative method is often applied successfully in sponsorship studies (Berrett & Slack, 1999; Farrelly, Quester, & Greyser, 2005; Long, Thibault, & Wolfe 2004; Thibault & Harvey 1997) which supports the decision of applying qualitative research method.

Primary data and the evidence for the empirical analysis were collected through individual interviews. One-to-one interview enables two-way interaction between the interviewee and interviewer, and hence it is suitable for discovering motives for particular attitudes, opinions and behavior. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 34) Particularly semi-structured interviews matches well for studying attitudes, values, perceptions and motives concerning complex issues. Moreover, semi-structured theme interview enables a freedom of mining for more information and clarification of answers, which is important especially for in-depth exploration of sensitive topics. In addition, it allows a reciprocal, conversational communication for interviews, in which reasons for the answers are discovered. (Barriball & White 1994, 329-330) Finally sponsor satisfaction is evaluated by weighting sponsor's expectations against the sponsor's experience. It is assumed that by measuring these aspects satisfaction can be determined and evaluated.

1.5 Definitions

This chapter introduces the key concepts of the thesis by short definitions. All these concepts will be discussed more thoroughly later in the study, but it is important to provide definitions that may help reader to assess them more easily. It should be noted that these concepts are not globally accepted yet offer a crucial view for the context of the subject

matter. First definition is made by the researcher and other definitions are widely known definitions from scholars.

Sponsorship is as an agreed commitment between two parties (a sponsor and a sponsee) in which an exchange of intangible or tangible products, goods or other material is made against the association of the image of the sponsored party (sponsee).

Sponsor is “*the organization that buys sponsorship rights, packaged and granted by the sponsee.*” In contrary, “**sponsee** is the recipient of the sponsor’s investment (the fee). *Sponsee may also been known as the event or property.*” (Skildum-Reid 2012)

Sponsorship leverage or **activation** is what sponsors do with the sponsorship. Leveraging or activation of sponsorship means therefore the additional mechanisms that support the sponsorship. (Skildum-Reid & Grey 2014, 9 and 201) And it is “*the use of collateral marketing communications and activities to develop the marketing potential of the association between a sponsee and a sponsor.*” (Cornwell 2014, 55)

Charity sport events are “*any sport event where a significant portion of proceeds benefit a specified charity.*” (Filo, Funk and O’Brien 2009, 363)

Consumer satisfaction according to Westbrook (1980; in Maxham 1999, 12): “*consumer satisfaction refers to an individual’s subjectively derived favorable evaluation of any outcome and/or experience associated with consuming a product.*” Whereas **sponsor satisfaction** is seen in this research as sponsor’s evaluation on the outcome and/or experience associated with consuming the sponsorship. Sponsor satisfaction is evaluated by comparing sponsor’s expectations against the perceived outcomes of the sponsorship and/or the experience of the sponsorship.

1.6 Structure of the Study

This chapter introduces the structure of the Master's thesis. Firstly, the introduction chapter sets the stage for the research by briefly introducing the key concepts of sponsorship and investigates the related literature in literature review. These discussions aided identifying a research gap from existing literature and creating research questions and aims for the study.

The next two main chapters (2 and 3) cover the theoretical part of the study. The theoretical part of this thesis further explains the concepts and discusses the charity event sponsorship and sponsorship satisfaction more deeply. Chapter two is assembled around sponsorship (2.1) and charity event sponsorship concepts (2.3) as well as explains how sponsorship works in marketing communication (2.2). The latter theoretical chapter discusses the main concept of the study: sponsor satisfaction. The chapter is constructed in three parts. The first part introduces the concept of satisfaction and implements marketing theories for explaining satisfaction in the focal context. Moreover, it introduces which types of satisfaction have been found in charity sport event context and finally how satisfaction could be measured in marketing view. Next sub-chapter (3.2) discusses on sponsorship evaluation process and which role sponsor satisfaction has in the larger evaluation process and how it could be measured in the focal context. Sub-chapter 3.3 discusses on relevant antecedents of expectations: reasons.

Research methods are explained in chapter 4. The chapter explains the chosen qualitative methods and evaluates its' fit for the purpose as well as delivers details on data collection process.

Chapter 5 firstly introduces the case in which the study was conducted as well as provides some details for creating a background for the context of the study by delivering a discussion on sponsorships in Finland. Sub-chapters (5.4; 5.5; 5.6) provide empirical results related to research questions. Firstly sponsors' expectations and its antecedents are presented. Secondly, the findings on sponsor experiences are displayed. And finally, the sponsors' evaluation on perceived satisfaction is exhibited.

Discussion of the results is provided in chapter 6 which also delivers answers for the research questions. Lastly, chapter 7 concludes the study by offering a summary of the thesis, discussion on managerial implications and evaluates the limitations of the study as well as suggests some future research subjects. Finally, the thesis is concluded with critical examination on reliability and validity of the study.

2 CHARITY EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorships can be in many forms, for instance, corporations can sponsor athletes, sports, music, event or charity (e.g. Davidson & Savolainen 2004, 15; Walraven 2013, 10) and time wise it can be for one event (e.g. charity event or a football game), multiple events (e.g. two years contract) or even for multiple years (e.g. stadium naming rights for 20 years) (Cornwell 2014). Event sponsorship is one of the most popular sponsorship forms (e.g. IEG 2014b). Companies sponsoring budgets have increased and corporations are looking for alternative routes to distinguish them from competitors in the cluttered market place (Mack 1999, 25). Events offer a change for companies to communicate to targeted groups through medium important to their target market (Davidson and Savolainen 2004). Charity sport events do the same while combining sport with a cause. Filo, Funk and O'Brien (2009, 363) describe charity sport events as following: "*Charity sport events can include any sport event where a significant portion of proceeds benefit a specified charity.*" While combining this context with sponsorship definition provided (page 26) we can further understand that by purchasing the sponsorship the sponsor is associating itself with the image of the event.

Due the complicated nature of sponsorship, the sponsorship concept is thoroughly scrutinized in this chapter. To paint a complete picture and explain the formation process of sponsoring a brief sponsorship history is introduced to begin with. Then again followed with sponsorship definitions and how sponsorship actually works in marketing view. Finally concept of charity sport event sponsorship is discussed. It is important to understand how sponsorship works in marketing view and to gain knowledge on multifaceted nature of sponsorship to fully recognize its possibilities in strategic decision making and marketing for both parties: sponsor and sponsee.

2.1 Evolution of Sponsorship

Multiple authors (e.g. Alaja 2000, 103-104; Marttinen 2010, 4-5; Skinner & Rukavina, 2003, xix-xxii; Valanko 2009, 29-35) have described the birth of sponsorship from the early days patronage towards modern day commercial sponsorship. The figure 2 below presents the historical time line for development of sponsorship.

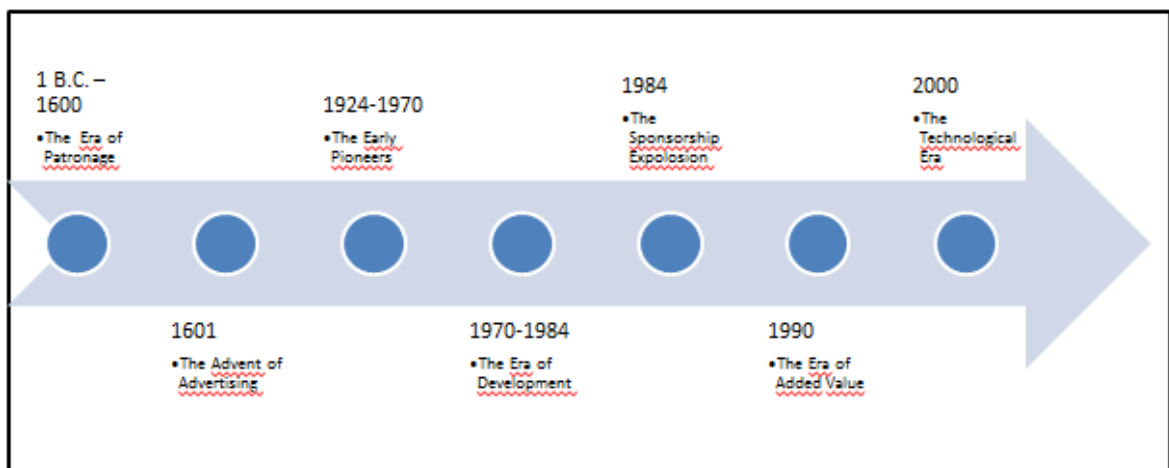


Figure 2. Sponsorship Historical Time Line (Applied from Skinner & Rukavina, 2003, xix).

The modern day commercialized sponsorship started from the USA in 1950s. It became popular during 1970s and early 1980s and expanded rapidly during 1980s while exploding with Olympics in Los Angeles. During that development it changed from patronage to adding awareness and replacing advertisement into part of marketing communication tools as the focus in late 1980s and early 1990s when focus had switched into developing and financing value adding mediums. (Marttinen 2010, 4) Sponsorship has developed into measured and monitored tool of marketing communication (Valanko 2009, 35). However, Cornwell (2014, 30-31) provides summarizing statement as she describes that sponsorship has changed from marketing centered view back to more philanthropic line via corporate social responsibility together with continuing importance of consumer-centered, strategic resource and relationship approach. She also underlays that network

approach in sponsorship is still underdeveloped. The cyclic development of sponsorship that Cornwell underlines is yet another evidence of the multifaceted nature of sponsorship as marketing communication form.

Sponsorship Definition Evolution

Different decades and different research fields of sponsorship have defined sponsorship in alternative ways. Three categories of sponsorship definition can be found (Ghamini 2006, 8-9). In 1980s sponsorship was defined by Meenaghan as “*a provision of assistance*”, an activity including financial support that sometimes had commercial objectives (1983; in Ghamini 2006, 8). Then no real differentiation between sponsorship, patronage, philanthropy or corporate given were made, neither communication objectives were not taken in consideration. By late 1980s and during early 1990s sponsorship was seen in another perspective, for instance Gardner and Shuman (1987; in Ghamini 2006, 8) simplified it as “*an investment*” whereas Hansen and Scotwin (1995; in Ghamini 2006, 8) added into definition “*an investment and a business transaction.*” The last category that Ghamini (2006, 8) points out emphasizes on two elements that are somewhat agreed among scholars of sponsorship. These two elements of purchase and association are being acknowledged by Otker (1988, 77; in Ghamini 2006, 8) as “*buying and exploiting an association with an event*”. Cornwell and Maignan (1998) modified the definition into following: “*An exchange between a sponsor and a sponsored where by the latter receives fees and former obtains the right to associate itself with the activity sponsored.*” Walliser (2003) re-modified the definition: “*An exploitation of the association between the two at the marketing and communication level.*”

Other definition worth mentioning is presented by Klincewicz (1998, 1103): “*an agreement, in which sponsor undertakes an action with economic nature for the sake of a sponsored subject.*” Same author adds (1998, 1108) that sponsor agreements improve both parties’ resources (i.e. capital, image, reputation and experience). It seems evitable that scholars agree on financial or related benefits to be included in sponsorship, as

Skinner and Rukavina (2003, 2) note: *“it is an activity that puts buyers and sellers together, with both receiving certain benefits.”* Furthermore definition focusing on event sponsorship is proposed by Meenaghan and Shipley (1999, 328): *“In effect the sponsor, in agreeing to sponsor a particular event or activity, is purchasing the rights to associate with the profile and image of the event and to exploit this association for commercial ends.”* Scholars Amis & Cornwell (2005, 2) extend the definition by taking into an account multifaceted objectives or motivations for sponsoring as they state: *“As an investment in an individual, event, team or organization with the expectation of achieving certain corporate objectives in multiple countries.”* Their definition definitely has more applicability on mega events and large sponsorships rather than regional ones.

The sponsorship definitions are high and wide, interestingly Alaja (2000, 104-105) points out that often the definitions are in the point of view of the sponsor, not from the view point of the organization the output is targeted. Based on viewing multiple sponsorship definitions this research has modified a view that emphasizes the multifaceted nature of sponsorship. This research defines sponsorship:

as an agreed commitment between two parties (a sponsor and a sponsee) in which an exchange of intangible or tangible products, goods or other material is made against the association of the image of the sponsored party (sponsee).

In other words, sponsor exchanges goods into a loan of the (positive) image associated with the sponsored party for an agreed period of time.

Misconceptions in Sponsorship

A famous scene in a Finnish movie called Kummeli delivers a great misperception on sponsoring. In this scene, three men, a rally driver, reporter and a map reader are having a conversation on sponsoring. The scene is set in a rally car that visible has many sponsor stickers on it. The map reader asks the driver, *“So explain me, what is sponsoring?”* The driver replies: *“Sponsoring is a modern marketing in which an athlete or*

someone else acquires stickers or textile badges.” Map reader then asks; “*Don’t you dare to tell me that you let those stickers to be glued on our car for free?*” “*No. Of course not. I paid a fair price*” (for the stickers). (Kummeli 2012) As stated before in the introduction chapter, sponsoring is a multifaceted form of marketing, and unfortunately often misunderstood mean in marketing communication.

It is not unusual to misunderstand sponsoring in advertising and a real distinction in between the two may be hard to draw, especially when advertising is applied in promoting the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsee. Advertising should however be totally separated from sponsorship. It can serve a purpose of increasing the sponsorship value. In fact, advertising can improve the sponsor effect (Walliser 2003). More on this when leveraging is introduced (see page 36). Meenaghan (1991; in Chamini 2006, 11-12) notes that even if sponsoring and advertising are sharing similar objectives, they deliver the message in different ways. Dolphin (2003; in Chamini 2006, 11-12) adds that advertisement messages are often more direct and easier to control. Harvey, Gray and Despain (2006, 399) deliver a great distinction between advertising and sponsoring: advertising changes the consumer’s perception of a specific product while sponsorship changes the consumer perception of a specific sponsor. In addition, it has been suggested that the target of advertising can be divided into non-viewers and viewers as in sponsorship’s target is composed by the event participants, spectators and media followers of the event. (Ghamini 2006, 12).

Sponsorship should also be separated from cause related marketing. These two terms often cause confusion. Cornwell and Maignan (1998) defined the concept of cause related marketing as “*a donation for a good cause tied with the purchase of a product or a service.*” Cause related marketing appeals in consumer’s camaraderie for a good cause to increase sales. It is combining elements for advertising and goodwill while profiting from it. Further distinction is not needed at this point.

Distinction in between sponsoring and public relations can be difficult to draw. Some authors for instance, Kotler et al. (2009, 738) refer sponsoring as a form of public relations

in the marketing mix. Ghamini (2006, 12) on the other hand points out that public relations are more likely to lead in a two way communication with targeted consumers and does not use a third party to send the stimulus. Respectably, an agreement in general lines of differentiation of sponsorship from other communication and promotional techniques do exist, but there is still much in dispute globally when it comes to the limits (Walliser 2003). Sponsorship academic, Cornwell (1995, 15; in Cornwell 2014, 18) makes a distinction between high and wide used term sponsorship with actual sponsorship with marketing purposes. For the distinction purpose she has applied a term "*sponsorship-linked-marketing*", defined as "*the orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association (link) to a sponsorship.*" Sponsorship of arts, culture, sports or an event is a starting point of building a communication platform. Without leveraging and activating the sponsorship the potential of it may come out flat.

Researcher wants to point out that it is more important in general to understand how sponsorship works and how it can be applied than to understand the complicated thematic of sponsorship or where to categorize it in the marketing mix. Another note to make is that sponsorship definition very much depends on the one defining it and in which way it is being applied. The same can be said for sponsorship categorizations. For instance, Wragg (1994; in Davidson & Savolainen 2004, 15) divides sponsorship into four different categories: "*broadcast sponsorship, event-related sponsorship, cause-related sponsorship and ambush marketing.*" Cornwell and Maignan (1998), on the other hand distinguishes sponsorship from cause-related marketing. Therefore the focus of this study is not to raise eye brows of academics with another sponsorship definition study but to serve some purpose for managers desperate to understand sponsorship as a marketing communication form. Moreover, next chapter introduces sponsorship as a marketing communication tool and how sponsorship actually works.

2.2 Sponsorship as Marketing Communication Tool

According to Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen's (2009, 739) extensive marketing book *Marketing Management*, sponsorship of sporting event and/or charity events can broaden and deepen company's relationship with the target market. It is especially important due the personal relevance for the consumer – often companies want to communicate through something, for instance, a sports team that the consumers care about. Sponsorship stimulates indirectly through image association. Consumer associates the sponsor with the sponsee creating positive (image) association between the two. Hence sponsorship affects the consumer as the consumer associates sponsor and sponsee. Overall, it does not deliver direct message as such but in multiple and complex manners. (Skildum-Reid 2012, 7) According to Valanko (2009, 52) sponsoring is communication form and aims at affecting or changing consumer perception (of the target market) on a brand and the behavior around the brand.

Cornwell (2014, 42) describes (figure 3, p. 30) how sponsorship works from consumer-focused communications perspective in which sponsoring elements and messages (explicit and implicit) are processed. The model is originally published in *Journal of Advertising* and sums up a decade of sponsor research by Cornwell.

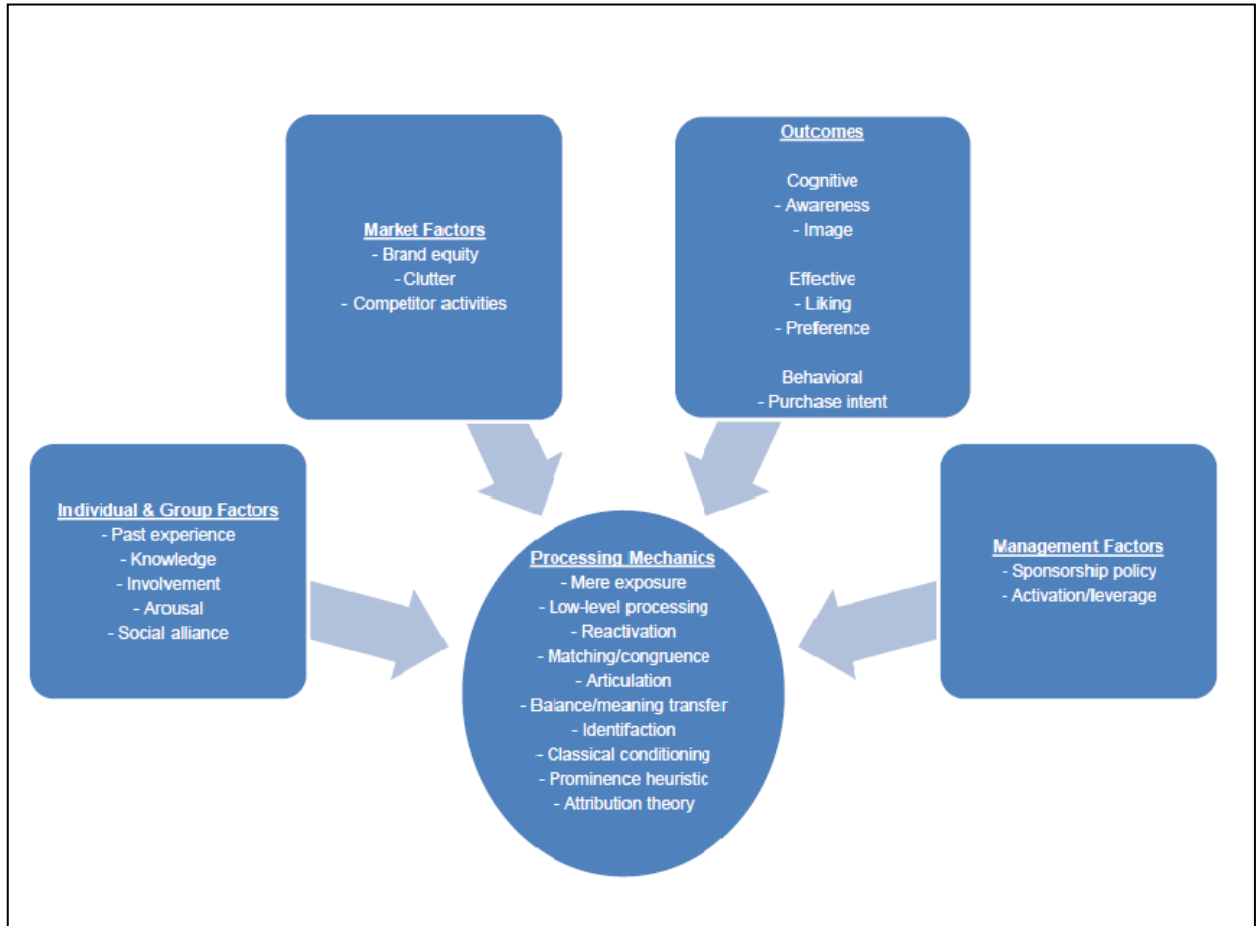


Figure 3. Model of Consumer-Focused Sponsorship-Linked Marketing Communication. (Adapted from Cornwell 2014, 42).

In this comprehensive model, five elements affecting in sponsorship are taken in consideration. These are individual or group factors, market factors, management factors which all influence in processing mechanics of sponsoring and consequently the measured outcomes of sponsorship. The processing mechanics and management factors discussed more thoroughly as they are seeing relatively important for this study.

Individual and Group Factors

Consumers either have or have not previous experiences and perception on a brand. This perception affects either positively or negatively on the brand perception. Consumers

familiar with the brand may be effected with a sole reminder, for instance in logo exposure, together with a genuine fit between the brand and the sponsee to create change in consumer perception or in their attitudes. Whereas, for those that are not familiar with the brand may need additional information and reasons to create change in their behavior or attitudes. This is one reason, why sponsoring needs activation or leveraging, a topic discussed later (see p. 33-34). Individual involvement means consumer's interest and motivation towards the domain, property or for instance, an athlete (Fisher & Wakerfield 1998; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; in Cornwell 2014, 43). For an example, consumer is interested in floorball and thus becomes more aware of floorball equipment sponsors.

Arousal on the other hand deploys from the overall focus that consumer is putting in for instance, following a sports event. The more focused the consumer is in the actual event the less it may have room for noticing the sponsor messages. (Pham 1992; in Cornwell 2014, 43-44) Group factors implicate that fans are more likely to carry positive perception on team sponsors (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; in Cornwell 2014, 44). Finally, there are so called "in-groups" factors in which a consumer feels solidarity among others in that group. Bergkvist (2012; in Cornwell 2014, 44) carried a study in which AIK soccer team fans started to dislike a beer sponsor of their rival Hammarby. It should be noted that this type of behavior may be more likely with common goods with low cost (e.g. beer) than with goods bought less frequently and with more cost, for instance laptop. In addition, it is important to understand that these individual and group factors serve as an example. Corporate sponsors should themselves identify which individual and group factors play a role in consumer perception, which message they seek to deliver and what outcomes they are looking for. (Cornwell 2014, 44)

Market Factors

The current state of a market naturally translates in sponsorships. Well-known brands have an advantage as they may just deliver a reminder and don't need to communicate a

complete message. A natural fit between sponsee and sponsor, for instance an ice-hockey skate manufacturer and an ice-hockey team delivers stronger messages. Clutter in market space, for instance amount of logos in a jersey, can result in negative attitudes towards a sponsor. (Cornwell 2014, 45)

Management Factors

Management decisions are crucial in any sponsorship. Sponsorship is a platform that can and should be built on. The full potential of sponsorship can be achieved via leverage or activation of sponsorship (Cornwell 2014, 46, Skildum-Reid 2012) which will be discussed shortly in later in the chapter. Managerial decisions are made already when considering whether to sponsor event and then again when deciding to enter a sponsorship. Managers should describe their own sponsorship strategies and form sponsorship portfolios to manage their sponsorships (Cornwell 2014, 46). Skildum-Reid notes (2012) that each manager should have their sponsoring plan in which the corporation describes their policies in sponsoring. Cornwell (2014, 46) adds that sponsorship policy combines corporation's mission and objectives with communication tools and sponsoring. Then again, managers negotiate the sponsor contracts and eventually evaluate their worth. It should be added that change in management may occur in change in sponsorship policies.

Processing Mechanics

The central box in this model (figure 3) displays the processing mechanics in communications perspective of sponsorship, in other words through which aspects or factors sponsorships work and effect. Most of the sponsorships aim at developing attitudes and memory for the relationship between the sponsor and sponsee. (Cornwell 2014, 47) Memory is usually measured through brand recognition or recall between the

sponsor and the sponsee. These mechanics are now discussed individually, however it should be noted that they may work simultaneously or individually. (Cornwell 2014, 47)

Mere **exposure** works through repetition. Social psychologist Robert Zajonc (1968; in Cornwell 2014, 47) explained that “*the repeated exposure to a stimulus will develop a sense of liking in a person.*” This liking can be influenced just by simple exposure. This is a reason why corporations seek logo exposure at events (Cornwell 2014, 47).

Low-level processing factor, introduced by Petty and Cacioppo (1981; in Cornwell 2014, 47) claims that there is a central route to communication process including deep thinking of the message and an additional “*peripheral*” route with lower-level of processing involved but that may still influence attitudes and behaviors. In lower-level processing consumer attention may be focused elsewhere, for instance, in the sport game the ads in the boards can affect through that peripheral route. **Reactivation** on the other hand, tries to effect on former positive experiences (memories) linked between consumers and property and serve a sort of mini advertisement and reactivation of these feelings.

Multiple researches (e.g. Weeks, Cornwell and Drennan 2008 and Woisetschläger & Michaelis 2012) show that sponsor message or image transfer is stronger when there is **congruence** or a **fit** in between the sponsor and the sponsee. In other word the message can be stronger when the sponsor and the sponsee genuinely seem to fit as partners. However, in some cases a mismatch can be effective too. Cornwell (2014, 48) , points out that a mismatch, for instance pet cemetery sponsoring a ski jump event can result in better memory as consumer needs to think twice such a unnatural match and therefore it may be effective for longer period of time.

When the goal is in establishing a link between a sponsor and a sponsee there might be occasionally a need to justify this with a narrative to make the fit more genuine or understandable. Thus by **articulating** the link between the sponsor and the sponsee, a positive impact in consumer’s memory may happen. (Cornwell 2014, 48) In an imagined

example Sony PlayStation sponsor a floorball club; they could support their sponsoring message by stating that their mission is to have kids enjoy indoor activities.

Balance theory's effect (**balance and meaning transfer**) in sponsorship context has been researched by Dean (2002). According to balance theory corporation may alter consumer attitudes by strategically sponsoring an event (property) that has positive image in consumer mind. By doing so consumer may transfer that positive attitude and create positive affection on the sponsor too. (Heider 1958; in Dean 2002, 79) Cornwell (2014, 49) warns that this fit (between the sponsor and sponsee) has to be genuine otherwise negative attitudes may be developed by consumer. Hated brands may develop negative attitudes towards the sponsor hence right match between the sponsee and the sponsor is crucial.

Identification is a feeling of belonging to a certain group, creating a "we" feeling in which consumer feels like being part of something. This can result in positive purchase commitment towards the sponsors. (Cornwell 2012, 49-50) Garry et al. (2008, 3) continue by narrating social identification researchers (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Turner and Hogg 1985) that "*individuals, in enhancing their self-esteem, seek to identify with groups that have attractive or prestigious public images* (Dutton et al.1994; in Garry et al. 2008, 3). *Through motives of self-continuity* (maintaining a consistent social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986) *or self-enhancement by gaining status through group belonging* (Ashforth and Mael 1989), *they seek similarity with group behaviour.*" For an example, a floorball stick manufacturer is a sponsor of a floorball team, those who are feeling being part of the team (e.g. faculty, players and fans) are then more likely to purchase sponsor's products because of this identification.

Paring of a sponsor and a sponsee, also referred as **classical conditioning**, this can be viewed to develop similar association among consumers over time. Cornwell (2014, 50) clarifies this with an example, when consumers have positive feelings towards the Olympics, they might start to develop similar feelings towards the Olympic Games

sponsor over time. These feelings can over time then turn into purchase decisions even if the brand (sponsor) itself causes the stimulus.

Prominence heuristic is a theory of market share advantage from advertising research. It means that brands with largest market share are often thought as sponsors even if not sponsoring the property. This is due the fact that consumer may not read the other message and just recognizes the signage that can be false misread. Those brands with suitable fit to the event and bigger market share have a bigger advantage on this effect.

According to Kelly (1973; in Dean 2002, 79-80) and Kelly and Michela (1980; in Dean 2002, 79) consumers try to understand why sponsor has committed resources to sponsee, it is especially important in case of charitable cause. Pracejus (2004; in Cornwell 2014, 51) adds that some sponsorship might work via feelings of reciprocity. This means that consumer thinks that when the sponsor supports something important to the consumer, in reciprocity the consumer feels obligated to support back (purchase from) the sponsor. Dean (2002, 79-80) concludes that if consumer perceives the sponsor acting in self-interest negative impact towards the sponsor (purchase decision) may actually then develop. This concept is called **attribution theory**.

Cornwell et al. note (2005, 29) in addition to mere explicit memory, these other various variables must be considered depending on the sponsorship context, for instance, attribution theory may be more essential for cause sponsorships, whereas the role of prominence may be more significant for large-scale sport events.

Outcomes of Sponsoring

In this box of the figure 3 Cornwell (2014, 51-52) explains the thinking (cognitive), effective (preference) and behavioral outcomes of sponsorship. The central cognitive outcome of sponsorship is awareness. It can be evaluated in brand recognition or recall. Successful sponsorship may include in liking, positive feelings or preference and improved attitudes

in targeted market (e.g. audience). Cornwell (2014, 52) points out that charity and community-based sponsorships are commonly at corporate level to effect on company perception, as music or sports might be utilized in brand level. The change in consumer behavior is often processed in over time the sponsor might seek to alter consumer behavior through sponsorship. Outcomes of sponsorship are further discussed through sponsor satisfaction in chapter three.

Leveraging Sponsorship

Outcomes of the sponsorship are very much impacted by the involvement of the sponsor and the leveraging activities that the sponsor does (Cornwell 2014 & Skildum-Reid 2013). Sponsorship research has shown that companies leveraging activities were in few and done by fewer corporations. (Irwin & Sutton, 1994) Moreover, sponsors' understanding has evolved and recently sponsors have taken this aspect more in consideration as sponsorships have become more planned and sophisticated. (Farrelly et al., 2006)

Leverage or activation is what sponsors do with the sponsorship. It is very much a managerial decision, controlled by the people managing and in charge of the sponsorship. Leveraging or activation of sponsorship means therefore the additional mechanisms that support the sponsorship. (Skildum-Reid & Grey 2014, 9 and 201) Cornwell (2014, 55) adds that leveraging is "*the use of collateral marketing communications and activities to develop the marketing potential of the association between a sponsee and a sponsor.*" These communications methods could include for instance advertising, social media and product sampling. All in all, means for leveraging are in many and through sponsorship multiple stakeholders can be communicated and reached – it's only a matter of choosing the target and developing a proper strategy for reaching the goals. Managers unwilling to leverage their sponsorships risk covering the full potential of the sponsorship (Cornwell 2014, 124). With leverage even a local event can be scaled up to reach larger target audience, for instance via social media by addressing the benefits of the event target market to a larger sponsor target markets. This could be done for instance, by creating a

running school program with a local sports club and then displaying running tips on a video on sponsor's social media channel. (Skildum-Reid 2013, 143-144) That is only a one example on reaching a larger audience than mere spectators of the event of followers of the brand. All in all, sponsorship is a platform that needs to be built on to reach its full potential.

Tony Meenaghan and David Shipley (1999) scrutinized a research on effects on leveraging sponsorships. Their research findings indicated that social cause sponsorships provide the most goodwill image for the sponsor from any sponsoring categories, the second strongest impact were environmental causes as the benefit in mass sports was perceived much lower. In addition, it was found that leveraging too much on cause sponsorships (or charity sponsorships) may be viewed negatively and can be seen as exploitation of the cause by the target audience. Thus sponsors seeking to a caring and concerned image and a goodwill impact on themselves could invest in charity sponsorships but handle the leveraging activities with caution.

2.3 Charity Sport Event Sponsorships from Sponsor's and Sponsee's Perspectives

It is not uncommon for companies to sponsor charity events (Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005 and Menon and Kahn 2013). In general, cause-related sponsorships in North America were worth 1.78 billion USD in 2013 as in 2014 the total worth was 1.85 billion USD. There have been a steady growth in past years and it has been projected that cause related sponsorships grow 3.7 percent this year, totaling 1.92 billion USD. In overall sponsorship breakdown cause related sponsorships count 9 percent of all sponsorships. While sports sponsorships dominate with 70 percent share. Finally, festivals, fairs and annual event count for four percent. (IEG 2014b and IEG 2015)

The popularity of charity event sponsorships is partly explained by several study findings that indicate that sharing similar values with customers may enhance business. In

addition, Keller and Aaker (1997; in Menon & Kahn 2013, 1-2) claim that social responsible corporate activity may provide a source of creating competitive advantage.

Examining charity sport event participation in individual perspective helps shedding some more light for the popularity of the phenomenon. It seems that interest towards these events is multifaceted, as is the nature of sponsorships in general. Firstly, an important factor may be that sports participation is an important part of leisure and recreation, when one adds that with a good cause it creates a greater significance for both individual consumers as well as corporations. (King 2001; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 363) Secondly, it is pointed out that charity sport events can provide extra meaning for participants (e.g. an athlete or as well as a sponsor) that they otherwise would not receive when participating in mere sporting events or activities. (Heere, Walker, Yoshida, Ko, Jordan and James 2011) Finally, Speed and Thompson (2000; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 363) suggest that individual interest towards these events is composed by different aspects. They claim that these are combined from "*attitudes towards to event, attitudes towards the sponsor, and perception of congruence between sponsor and the event.*" These aforementioned aspects can influence the meaning the event holds for participants. Thus it is easier to understand that companies see the multifaceted potential in that charity sport events offer.

Nettleton and Hardley (2006; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 363) advocate that different components related to charity sport events, for instance, "*image of the city, social solidarity and philanthropy have collectively contributed to the growth and success*" of some events. Though smaller scale events may not arouse the media interest for providing larger impacts, they may provide great meaning in multiple ways and facets. These facets are, for instance the host city, event venue, and parties or stakeholders involved, socialization, benefitted charity and so forth. These facets then can together create great meaning for participant and the overall meaning of the event. (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 363) Charity sport events can achieve multiple goals in different perspectives with the unique mixture of sport and cause. And one thing is certain, corporate sponsorship is helping in the success of these events.

Charity Sport Events from the Sponsor's Perspective

Sporting events have become popular for organizations mainly for three reasons: they can be the main fund stream, sport events are in general popular and sports represent a healthy life style (Won, Park and Turner 2010, 20). From the event organizers' perspective, local events often have slim chances for corporate funding. (Mack 1999, 25) Hassay and Pelozo (2009; in Woolf et al. 2013, 96) claim that charity event's fundraising is in twofold: "(1) *secure donations* and (2) *secure future commitments for donations*." For charitable organizations, sponsorships have become a relatively new way for income, in addition to more traditional participant donations and fundraising activities (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 2). Lamont and Dovel (2008, 7) explain that all events need a source of pre-event income in order to succeed. Another comment is added by Turner (2001; in Lamont & Dovel 2008, 7) that events without sponsors are perceived by the audience as "*second-rate or with little significance*." Therefore, not only is sponsorship crucial for the purpose of the event, it also adds credibility to the event. Smith and Westerbeek (2007; in Neale, Filo and Funk 2007, 2) note that "*sport has proven to be an effective vehicle for influencing society in general and communities in particular through positive social contributions*." On any revenue stream, the sponsorship is often the biggest. IEG Sponsorship report reveals that it is an average of 43 percent of any given event's budget. It is being pointed out that events and sponsorships are complimenting one another. Both of their needs have to be satisfied when entering into sponsorship agreement in between the sponsor and the event. Through this agreement parties are able to exchange resources on common basis leading into benefits for both parties. (Lamont and Dowell 2008, 7)

In conclusion, by adding sports into a charitable event organization is creating multiple advantages as they are better attracting media attention by diversifying themselves, contributing for the local community and area, creating meaning and purpose for participating athletes and doing good by creating awareness for the cause and gaining money for charity. When taking sponsorship evolution in counts (more philanthropic

development in sponsorship via CSR), it could be argued that interest towards charitable sport event among corporate sponsors is not at least declining (Cornwell 2014, 30-31). Charity sport events mix sponsorships elements from event sponsorship, cause-related marketing and corporate giving that emerge together in unique manner (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009).

3 SPONSOR SATISFACTION

So far the thesis has had discussion on sponsorship in general, how it works in marketing communication's view and how charity sport events create unique opportunities for sponsors to connect with target markets while supporting a cause. The main focus of this chapter is to introduce satisfaction as a concept as well as how it can be constructed, defined and to discuss on different forms of satisfaction. In addition, the purpose is debate on how satisfaction can be evaluated in different contexts. Furthermore, this theoretical chapter builds up a stage for the empirical research by introducing the main topic of the thesis: sponsor satisfaction. Firstly, chapter 3.1 discusses on satisfaction in general terms and by exploring customer satisfaction theories from marketing research and by providing a definition for satisfaction. The first subchapter introduces forms of sponsor satisfaction that has been found in the literature and finally the latter subchapter provides a debate on measuring satisfaction. The chapter 3.2 is constructed in two parts: sponsorship evaluation and measuring sponsor satisfaction. The first part of the chapter explains how sponsorships can be evaluated in different views. The latter part focuses on measuring sponsor satisfaction that is one key evaluation form of sponsorship evaluation process. Finally, chapter 3.3 introduces an important factor directly influencing sponsor expectations: reasons for sponsoring. All in all, this theoretical chapter continues building understanding for sponsorships in charity sport event context as well as in general and provides definitions for key concepts of the study.

3.1 Satisfaction

There are multiple views and definitions on satisfaction in academic research and it has been a popular topic to study by scholars. Before discussing on sponsor satisfaction, satisfaction theories from marketing are introduced to provide a starting point and develop a deeper understanding for the subject matter. Customer satisfaction has been very

popular subject in studies as it is seen as a positive factor for firms' competitive position. (e.g. Bearden & Teel 1983; Homburg & Rudolph 2001). Understanding satisfaction is important as satisfaction can be viewed as a main indicator of their behavioral intentions (e.g. Andersson & Sullivan 1993; Bolton & Drew 1994; Cronin & Taylor 1992; Fornell 1992; Oliver 1980; Oliver & Swan 1989). These intentions are important as according to Lam, Shankar, Erramilli and Murthy (2004) positive experiences are more likely to turn in repurchasing and satisfied customers tend to recommend the services to others. Moreover, one of the most prolific assumptions is to meet the customer needs as satisfied customers benefit firm's business outcome in multiple ways. Satisfied customers tend to spread positive word-of-mouth that can influence and attract potential new customers. (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann 1994) In addition, studies (e.g. Oliver 1980) point out that the role of customer satisfaction is important to firms' success and how it can be evaluated. Hence, customer satisfaction has grown into an important measure for evaluation strategic decision making in multiple aspects. Therefore it can be stated that customer satisfaction has developed into a critical factor for company's growth, existence and success. (Guo, Kumal and Jiraporn 2004)

Views on satisfaction definitions that can be related to the sponsorship context are introduced and discussed next. Researcher Maxham (1999, 12) applied consumer satisfaction literature and described satisfaction conceptually and operationally. According to Westbrook (1980; in Maxham 1999, 12) "*consumer satisfaction refers to an individual's subjectively derived favorable evaluation of any outcome and/or experience associated with consuming a product.*" For this research this definition is important as it can be viewed that the product here is the sponsorship, therefore sponsor satisfaction is the outcome of evaluation on the sponsorship experience. Maxham (1999, 12) continues by citing several authors, "*conceptually, satisfaction is a purchase outcome, whereby consumers compare rewards and costs with anticipated consequences.*" (Bolton & Drew 1991; Churchill & Suprenant 1982; LaTour & Peat 1979; Oliver 1980; Yi, 1990) Whereas, operationally satisfaction is close to attitude that represents the entity of numerous attribute satisfaction judgments. This perspective claim satisfaction to be a "*transaction specific measure.*" (Bitner 1990; Parasuraman et al. 1988) In other words meaning that

when a good is sold it is then consumed and being evaluated after consumption by the consumer. Farely et al. (2008) made a redefinition for customer satisfaction in sponsorship context: "*customer satisfaction in sports sponsorship context is argued to be a global evaluation of the sponsor-sponsored relationship.*" Farely's definition leans strongly towards the relationship of between the sponsor and the sponsee and perhaps may not fit in all contexts. This thesis defines sponsor satisfaction is as sponsor's evaluation on the outcome and/or experience associated with consuming the sponsorship.

Naturally, there has been critique towards satisfaction definitions as well. For instance, Malone (1990; in Farely 2002, 30) criticizes conceptualization of satisfaction definition and claims that for the most part it is lacking any theoretical background. Ostrom and Jacobucci (1995) on the other hand take another perspective and view satisfaction "*as global judgement rather than a transaction-specific measure.*" For this research it is more important to understand that satisfaction is a personal evaluation on experienced benefits (outcome and general experience) of the sponsorship. Next subchapter discusses satisfaction related to sponsorship context.

3.1.1 Economic and Noneconomic Sponsor Satisfaction

Often sponsor satisfaction arrives from multiple attributes. It is not common that sponsor satisfaction arrives from single feature, for instance signage or a logo on a jersey. (Abratt, Clayton and Pitt 1987; Irwin and Sutton 1994; Menaaghan 1983; in Farely, Quester and Mamondo 2003, 130) Same authors have found that effective sponsorship requires multiple aspects and dimensions for fulfilling the expectations of sponsors as they often seek several benefits for their investment. Moreover there can be multiple reasons as well as expectations for sponsoring.

Geyskens, Steenkamp, Benedict and Nirmalya (1999) have conducted a research on channel member relationship domain in which satisfaction can be constructed by

economic and noneconomic psychosocial aspects of relationship satisfaction. They relabeled these aspects to economic and noneconomic satisfaction.

In sponsorship domain economic and noneconomic satisfaction is been especially studied by Francis Farelly. Scholar Farelly (for instance: 2002 and 2003) has studied sponsorship satisfaction from market orientation view. He (2002) states that sponsorship satisfaction is driven by economic and non-economic factors. Research findings by Farelly and Quester (2004) indicate that the non-economic side of the sponsorship is important for the sponsor and the sponsored party due the fact that it creates trust which is seeing as a key part of satisfaction. Their study reveals that sponsorship alliances appears to serve the most satisfying results, however it is alarmed that such commitment is not realistic nor commercially wise in all sponsorship forms or cases. For this research a longitudinal study is not conducted, as the research focus on single charity event setting and not a repeatable event series (e.g annual event or multiple event continuums, for instance a professional ice-hockey season).

Whilst many researchers (Ola 2012; Prantl and Andres 2012; Sarli 2010; Wiktor, Ilja & Ali 2009; in Wai 2015, 28) view that economic side that effects the bottom line in short- and in long-term is more important for sponsors in sports sponsorships it may not be the case in charity events (Dean 2002; Garry et al. 2008; Lamont & Dowell 2008; Menon & Kahn 2003; Weber 2004). Satisfaction for sponsors of charity events seems complex and embodied from multiple objects. It will be interesting to find out if that is the case in sports charity event sponsorships as well.

How sponsor satisfaction can then, for instance effect on sponsor renewal? Findings are controversial. Farelly, Quester and Clulow's (2008) study indicated that economic satisfaction did not explain sponsors renewal intention, as noneconomic satisfaction did. This is actually in contradictory with Farelly previous study (2002) that points out that neither economic nor noneconomic satisfaction had a significant role in sponsorship renewal decision (but in which commitment actually was a major factor). One thing could be added here, the assumption in which most researchers claim that when customer is

willing to repurchase from the company and shown loyalty towards it s/he is satisfied (Anderson Fornell & Lehmann 1994) however this is controversial subject and evidences can be found for both sides of the claim (Farely 2002 and Farely et al. 2008).

Economic Satisfaction

Economic satisfaction can be defined by the financial outcomes of the relationship. Satisfaction is determined by the channel member's perception on the economic goals achieved in the relationship. The objectives that are measured against can be for instance cash flow and turnover or such financial indicators. (Geyskens et al. 1999, 224) In sponsorship context economic satisfaction can be achieved via brand equity, increase in customer purchase intention (Cornwell 2014), connecting with the target market (Wai 2015, 29) or the direct impact on increased sales (Dean 2002, 78). Multiple researches (e.g. Dean 2002; Menon & Kahn (2003) has shown that reasons for sponsoring charitable events (sports or other kind) tend to be more noneconomic and even personal motivations can play major role in sponsorship decision making.

Noneconomic Satisfaction

Noneconomic satisfaction is described as channel member's positive response to the noneconomic, psychosocial aspects of the relationship. In general level, it is a social relationship between the parties, in other words a positive relationship or pleasantness of working with the partner. The satisfaction is evident if it is described "*fulfilling, gratifying, and easy.*" (Geyskens et al. 1999, 224) Noneconomic gains from sponsorship are for instance the following: boosting staff morale, CSR, Contract fulfillment, responsibility and commitment (Dean 2002, 78-79; Wai 2015, 29). The reasons for sponsoring charity events are often found to be noneconomic and tend to focus for instance in contributing for the community. (e.g. Dean 2002) Often mentioned reason for sponsoring is awareness (e.g. Skinner & Rukavina 2003, 22; Weight et al. 2010, 124). It is claimed that when the

event raises media attention sponsors achieve media attention and thus awareness (Olson & Thjømmøe 2009). This could therefore be one driver for noneconomic satisfaction.

Dissatisfaction

Sponsors can feel negatively towards their sponsorships. Multiple researchers state that the most commonly dissatisfaction is created by the high perceived cost of sponsorship and difficulty in evaluating the outcomes. This has been taught to be the cause for nonrenewal of sponsorship agreement. (Copeland 1991; Copeland 1996 and Jacobbi 1997; in Farelly 2002, 115) It can be argued that dissatisfaction can arise, for instance, from ethical misbehavior by the sponsee (Cornwell 2014), for an example when the use of illegal substances has occurred. It can be beneficial to further describe satisfaction by counting in aspects that can cause dissatisfaction towards the sponsorship.

3.1.2 Measuring Satisfaction

Ostrom and Iacobucci (1995) suggest that satisfaction is experiential and therefore is most suitably evaluated after the transaction. Grönroos (1994) suggests that the transition and relationship views are opposite of thinking. It was introduced in his marketing strategy continuum. The continuum basically introduces two ways that by applying them, satisfaction can be measured by: *relationships* and *transaction*. According to customer information system view this transaction then can be evaluated as customer satisfaction could be evaluated – in survey form (Grönroos 1994). Relationship view has gained increasing popularity while evaluating satisfaction in business-to-business situation (e.g. Farelly 2010) whereas transaction-specific view is more commonly applied evaluating satisfaction in customer-to-business view. However due the context of the study transaction-specific view may serve a better ground.

As customer satisfaction research is largely influenced by the *disconfirmation paradigm* (Parasuraman et al. 1988) it will be discussed. The paradigm evaluates the level of satisfaction against the pre-purchase expectations and the performance of the sponsorship. (Oliver, 1980) The paradigm is constructed by four concepts (Oliver 1981): **expectations, performance, disconfirmation and satisfaction or dissatisfaction** (see figure 5 below).

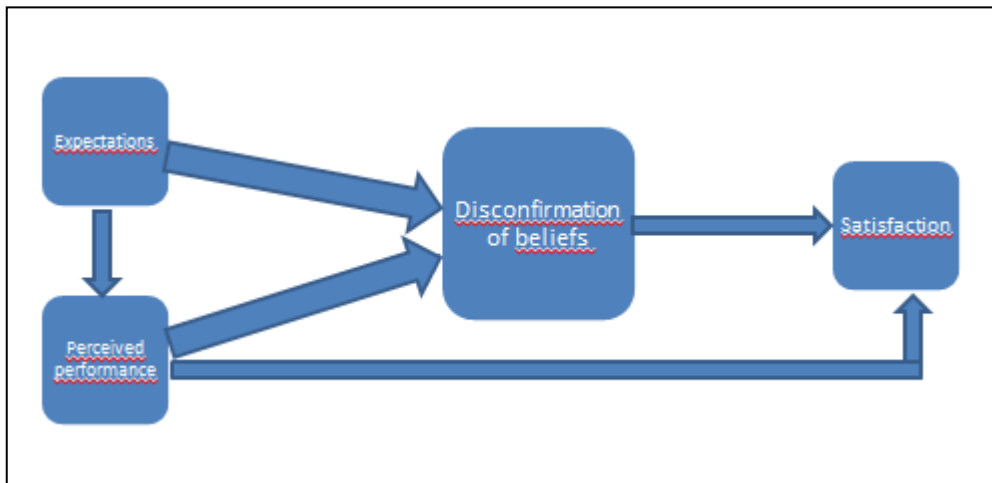


Figure 5. Disconfirmation Paradigm. (Applied from Oliver 1980 & 1981).

Expectations are what person anticipates prior the purchase or a use of a product. Expectations influence directly both perception of performance and in-directly influences in post-purchase or post adoption satisfaction via disconfirmation construct. Expectations form the basis of comparison against which the sponsorship is judged. (Oliver 1980 & 1981)

Perceived performance means person's perception of the performance of the sponsorship. Perception of performance directly influenced by expectations and thus directly influences on disconfirmation of beliefs and satisfaction. (Oliver 1980 & 1981)

Disconfirmation of beliefs is the judgement of or evaluation that person makes with product. The evaluation is made by comparing expectations with perceived performance. Disconfirmation can be negative, positive or neutral. Negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction, whereas zero disconfirmation occurs when product is perceived performing as expected and positive disconfirmation when the expectations towards the performance are surpassed hence resulting satisfaction. (Oliver 1980 & 1981)

3.2 Sponsorship Evaluation

Evaluating sponsor satisfaction is a key part of the larger sponsor evaluation process. It is especially important for sponsees for understanding sponsor initiatives and their needs. To deliver a thorough understanding of evaluating sponsor satisfaction, a sponsor evaluation process is firstly discussed.

According to Cornwell (2014, 94), "*sponsorship evaluation can be thought of as a systematic gathering and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about sponsorships to support decision-making.*" Sponsorship evaluation is the combined measurements and evaluations towards the sponsorship, whereas sponsor satisfaction can be viewed as an individual estimation on perceived value of the sponsorship. Sponsorships can be evaluated in multiple ways and in different perspectives. Sponsors can evaluate them in return on investment (ROI), return on objectives (ROO) or for instance in comprehensive marketing model such as customer life-time value (CLV) (Cornwell 2014, 96-98).

Multiple studies (e.g. Grohs et al. 2004; IEG 2012) point out that companies, in fact practice limited or very little object measuring in sponsorship decision making (Papadimitriou et al. 2008). This claim is supported by a study in North America (Gross, Traylor, & Shuman 1987; in Weight, Taylor and Cuneen 2010, 122) which found that only

47% of the corporations managed in any form of evaluation. Their study showed that less than half of corporations are applying sponsorship evaluation.

It should be noted that measuring sponsorship can be difficult. There are basically two sides: *supply-side* (e.g., sponsors and organization) and the *demand-side* (e.g., spectators, customers). (Kotler 2009, 742) First, it should be decided what should be evaluated and from which side.

According to Hansen and Scotwin (1995; in Weight et al. 2010, 122) there are four separate levels at which sponsorship can be evaluated from the demand side: exposure, attention, cognition and behavior. Cornwell (2014, 75) creates a larger scope here. She describes that there are basically two different views that sponsorship is measured: public relations approach that tries to capture the sponsorship outputs (ROI) and the advertisement or marketing approach (ROO) that focuses on articulatory memory or image transfer of the target audience or how persons process sponsorship-linked marketing communications.

Supply-side sponsor value could be supported by demand-side event survey in three ways: 1) Direct tracking of sponsorship-related promotions. 2) Qualitative research or experimental research which according to Cornwell (2014, 75) are in few. 3) Quantitative research. (Kotler 2009, 742) Pham (1991; in Dean 2002, 78) claims that the real effects of sponsorship can only be distinguished via "*experimental designs*" that ensure control over extraneous variables. In general the qualitative movement has made corporations to realize that universal measurements that apply from business to business, for instance from aircraft industry to banking, may not be the most beneficial (Cornwell 2014, 95-96). Hence measuring is hard to contact in vacuum, each case should be evaluated separately and considering the context to minimize non-sponsorship related factors. This may be difficult to conduct.

Demand-side evaluation can be done for instance by measuring the sponsor satisfaction. Multiple researchers (e.g. Kotler 2009; Skildum-Reid 2012; Valanko 2009, 175; Weight,

Taylor & Cuneen 2010) emphasize sponsor satisfaction as an important part of sponsorship evaluation. It is especially important for organizations to understand how they can better satisfy sponsors in sponsor-ponsee relation.

Multiple researchers (e.g. Crompton 2004) criticize that sponsorship evaluation literature being underdeveloped as there is no universal agreement regarding the exact way for evaluating sponsorship effectiveness. Scholars (e.g. Meenaghan & Shipley 1999 and Valanko 2009, 175) recommend for applying the sponsor set objectives that was planned to be achieved through sponsorship to be measured against the outcomes of sponsorship. In addition, for instance, Ukman (1996; in Dean 2002, 78) suggests using pre and post measures, to show altitudinal changes sponsorship has impacted. It should be here underlined that academic studies of sponsorship apply pre and post measures only seldom. Much of sponsor evaluation is also depending on the context and thus universal evaluation methods hardly apply (Cornwell 2014).

3.2.1 Measuring Sponsor Satisfaction

Farrelly defined customer satisfaction is sports sponsorship content as “*sponsor’s global evaluation of the relationship binding them to the properties they sponsor*” (Farrelly et al. 2008). Väre (2014, 22) continues that customer satisfaction in sports sponsorship context is viewed more often “*comprehensive and cumulative construct of an emotion rather than transaction-specific concept which can be more connected to consumer goods/service sector.*” However, sponsorship relationships and context come in many. For instance, Woodroof and Kaspar (1998; in Farrelly 2002, 31) highlight the importance of process and outcome when evaluating satisfaction, not directly the sponsor-ponsee relationship. Measuring sponsor satisfaction can be seen being two folded. Väre (2014, 22) notes that relationship approach suits well for sports sponsorship relations that are often long-lasting. However, this may not always be the case. Sometimes there is not enough longitude for the relationship to be developed. It could be that the focus of the sponsorship has been

towards the product not the service. Hence the sponsorship can be viewed more as a transaction rather than a service. In such case, they might not be relationship or chain of services that could be evaluated. This could be due the lack of relationship building activities and in addition, meetings could have been limited to only a one call, email or sales meeting in which the sponsorship was sold. Measuring a relationship in such case could be irrelevant. Moreover, in charity sport event context (especially a onetime event) emphasize can be in measuring the sponsor satisfaction via customer survey where as in long-term sponsorship emphasize can be in developing relationship by delivering the real-time customer feedback system and building a closer relationship between sponsor and sponsee as proposed by Grönroos (1994).

It should be once again noted that there is no single formula for evaluating sponsorship in overall. Yet it is recommended that sponsorship objectives are measured against the perceived outcome. (e.g. Valanko 2009, 175) Moreover, it is suggested that sponsorship satisfaction is measured by interviewing managers on their perception of the sponsorship after the event (e.g. Alaja 2000; Grohs et al. 2004, 120-121; Skinner and Rukavina 2003). Finally, based on the aforementioned reasoning and considering the one time charity sport event context, this research constructs sponsor satisfaction by weighting sponsor's expectations against the sponsor's experience on the sponsorship or its' perceived outcomes. The next chapter will discuss on sponsor expectations and reasons for sponsoring. Reasons or motives for sponsoring may be more suitable for generalization than context related expectations that could be described more as individual anticipation of results of the sponsorship.

3.3 Reasons for Sponsoring

Before sponsors can develop expectations for their sponsorship they have certain reasons or motivations for sponsoring. "*These motivations for sports sponsorship are varied and complex; and that varied motivations of sponsors influence the expectations and nature of the sponsor-object relationship.*" (Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe 2008, 10) Research

conducted by Garry et al. (2008, 10) some sponsor claims that “*sponsor motivation derived from sub-cultural identification or tribal connection (Aubert-gamet & Cova, 1999) has a direct impact on sponsor expectations of the sponsor-object.*” Theoretical part of this study focuses on exploring reasons for sponsorships as empirical analysis focuses as well on reasons that are background indications for effecting sponsor expectations.

Reasons or motives for sponsoring are in this research interpreted as general reasons, as well as motivations or drivers, whether corporate or personal that effect on sponsor initiatives. Moreover reasons for sponsoring reply to the question why corporations sponsor creating informative background knowledge for expectations. Whereas expectations are what the corporations look to achieve via sponsorships. However these terms are often used quite deliberately by managers and it could be difficult to provide differences between these terms. Moreover, it can be that reasons for sponsoring are in line with the expectations or goals that sponsors are aiming at to achieve. It is only logical that for instance, a sponsor’s reason to sponsor is to gain goodwill it then expects that goodwill image of the event to translate or be associated with the sponsor. Finally, the aim of this research is not to contribute in the terminology of sponsorship but to understand the behavior, perception and wants of sponsors. Thematic distinctions between the terminologies are not primary focus of this research and therefore provided only limitedly.

To begin with, corporate objectives and motives behind sponsorships tend to be vague (Javalgi, Taylor, Gross & Lampman 1994) and can be partly mixed with personal interest (Webb and Mohr 1999). One reason for this can be that the sponsors perceive simultaneous evaluation of multiple objectives at both brand and corporate level difficult. (Thaiwates 1995) Furthermore, Sponsors have multiple reasons for sponsoring and simultaneously are or at least they ought to be expecting certain gains from the sponsorship. Valanko (2009, 38) bluntly states that ultimately reasons and objects for sponsoring should be same as in business in general, to drive up sales and therefore add revenue. Moreover research has identified multiple reasons for sponsoring (e.g. Skinner & Rukavina 2003; Weight, Taylor & Cuneen 2010) which may change along the sponsored content, for instance the reasons and motivation for sponsoring a charity event may differ

in those of a professional soccer team sponsorship. When organizations (or sponsees) better understand the reasons for companies sponsoring they can better develop their sponsorship offers, grow sponsor satisfaction and help out sponsors to reach their sponsorship goals. Moreover, recognized consultancy group International Events Group (IEG) present ten reasons for companies to sponsor an event. See the table (1) below.

Table 1. Ten reasons that companies sponsor events. (Applied from Skinner & Rukavina 2003, 22).

Heighten visibility
Shape consumer attitudes
Narrowcasting
Provide incentives for retailers, dealers, and distributors
Entertain clients
Recruit/retain employees
Create merchandising opportunities
Showcase product attributes
Differentiate their product from competitors
Drive sales

Some list of reasons weighting the importance order has also been explored by scholars. According to Weght et al. (2010, 123) the most important reasons for companies to sponsor was increasing the company or brand awareness and to reinforce or establish image. This is mirrored to another research (Grohs et al. 2004, 119-120) that displayed similar findings that boosting brand awareness and company image are the main reasons for sponsoring. Research has identified two main factors within the company that effect on

companies' decision to enter sponsorships: "*community relations tie-ins and the cost of the sponsorship*" (Weight et al. 2010, 127).

3.3.1 Reasons for Sponsoring Charity Sport Events

According to Menon and Kahn (2003) it is not rare that businesses sponsor charity events. Their research indicates that charity events are sponsored for two reasons; "(1) to associate the company with a charity and suggest that the business is fulfilling a societal obligation to the community from which it draws customers, employees, and investors and (2) to generate goodwill and enhance the image of the business." Research conducted by Dean (2002, 77) had mentioned the same reasons for motivations behind charity event sponsorship.

Other indicators have been found as well, Weber (2004) studied motivations for fundraiser sponsorships and claims that charity event sponsorship can be a mean for broaden the group of supporters for that particular cause. In addition, he adds that everyone (e.g. sponsor or participating athlete) partaken is looking for a return, whether it is a free meal or an image related, and that expectation of return differentiates the charity event sponsorship from philanthropy. Dean (2002) examined charity event sponsorships positive and negative impacts by implementing balance theory, attribution theory and structural equation model of charitable event sponsorships. His results found that sponsorships enhanced corporate community relations. Similar results are formed in study by Lamont and Dowell (2008) that focused in SMEs sponsoring regional events for community involvement purposes.

Still the whole topic of charitable sponsorship is in dispute. There is a disagreement between scholars whether support of human cause is part of the sponsorship field. For instance Garder and Shuman (in Ghamini 2006, 8-9) are supporting this claim as many others (e.g. Witcher et al. 1991; in Ghamini 2006, 10) consider philanthropic activities that are not expecting a return of any sort to be excluded in sponsorship domain. It is argued

that expectation of return distinguishes sponsorship from corporate giving, patronage and philanthropy. McDonald (1991) points out that goodwill effect of sponsorships causes' confusion among consumers. Again the multifaceted nature of sponsorship makes it difficult to draw an accurate line between sponsorships and patronage, corporate giving or philanthropy. In addition, companies may have different reasons and objectives with each event.

Even if the line between sponsorship and corporate giving can be difficult to draw, the literature on charity event sponsorship raises questions that are companies supporting or exploiting the charity (Dean 2002, 77). For instance, Webb and Mohr (1999) study found that selfish motives to the firm and those of the companies were mixed, partly selfish and partly altruistic. A study by Klincewicz (1998, 1104) underlines the same issue that companies are expecting or at least hoping for mass media attention towards the event to benefit them through image exposure or awareness building. In addition the tax allowances can be additional reason for sponsoring, at least in some countries. This type of expectations and return of an investment makes firms action a sponsorship, not patronage. Reasons for sponsoring can be a result of management factors. In other words, sponsorships can be driven by the personal interest of the management. In fact, many sponsorship deals are still made as a result of personal interest of the management. (Sandler & Shani 1993) Meenaghan (1991) has a similar take on the view by declaring that *"the capacity of sponsorship to fulfill personal objectives is largely unmatched by other marketing communication methods. It can be viewed as ironic that some corporations use sponsorship as an intermediate to serve consumers' self-congruity needs while others use it to fulfill their own."* Finally, Garry et al. (2008) suggested that there are other motivational factors in sponsoring charity events besides altruistic and commercial goals. Their study revealed strong engagement of *"sub-cultural, tribal connection and variations in self and social identification among sponsors and demonstrate how sponsorship motivation affects in complex ways."* All in all, reasons for sponsoring are in many and they influence sponsor expectations directly. This will be further addressed through empirical evidences.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Most of the sponsorship studies make no difference in between major and minor sponsors. Moreover most of the sponsorship research is conducted in context of mega events and are tend to focus on major sponsorships. (e.g. Mack 1999; Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012) One of the concepts of this study was to compare different sponsors based on the level of sponsorship. For that reasons a categorization of sponsors was made and applied in this study. Data was collected in qualitative method from a single charity sport event Maailman pisin salibandyottelu (MPSO). The population consisted of sponsors of MPSO. All in all, 12 out of identified 25 sponsors were interviewed, covering 48 percent of the total population.

4.1 Method

One of the very first decisions for conducting this study was to search and select suitable methods for the research. Different methods for the research were evaluated and compared. When studying sponsorship evaluation in a single case study concept in which the number of whole unit is relatively low, and especially when studying people's perception, their subjective opinion, it was evident that qualitative research method would better fit the purpose than quantitative measure scale methods.

To asses an in-depth understanding of the subject manner, a qualitative research method was chosen. Qualitative method is appropriate mean for assessing the subject matter when the area is wide-ranging and multifaceted (Zaltman, LeMasters, & Heffring 1982). Qualitative method allows developing deep insights to discover respondents' tacit knowledge. In addition, the method has been used successfully in sponsorship studies in numerous occasions. (Berrett & Slack, 1999; Farrelly, Quester, & Greyser, 2005; Long, Thibault, & Wolfe 2004; Thibault & Harvey, 1997) Furthermore, qualitative research is often based on comparison and contradictory to quantitative research due to lack of consistent, generally accepted characterizations. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2008,

131) Patton, (2002) describes that the goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover concepts, patterns, emerging themes, insights and understandings. The nature of qualitative research is comprehensive, and data is collected in regular, ordinary situation in which human is preferred as a source of data collection. Moreover, qualitative analysis often finds unexpected results. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 160) In short, qualitative research is a description of the form of a non-numerical sample and analysis. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 13) Puusa and juuti (2001, 41) have mentioned that when interpreting human perception and experiences qualitative approach is more effective. In addition, qualitative method is often applied when case is unique in character, as in this research. Thus the perception of respondents (sponsors) may not be the same in a different situation and context. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 27-28) support the selection of qualitative method by stating that it is more an understanding approach to a phenomenon. The difference between understanding and bare explanative study is in the compassion characteristic of a quantitative study method.

Primary data and the evidence for the empirical analysis were collected through individual interviews. One-to-one interview enables two-way interaction between the interviewee and interviewer, and hence it is suitable for discovering motives for particular attitudes, opinions and behavior. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 34) According to Fontana and Frey (1994; in Filo et al. 2009, 366) the less structured interviewing permits researchers to understand complex human behavior, rather than explain it. Particularly semi-structured interview technique is well-matched for studying attitudes, values, perceptions and motives concerning complex issues. Moreover, semi-structured theme interview enables a freedom of mining for more information and clarification of answers, which is important especially for in-depth exploration of sensitive topics. In addition, it allows a reciprocal, conversational communication for interviews, in which reasons for the answers are discovered. (Barriball & White 1994, 329-330, 334)

4.2 Data Collection

Before preselection of potentially interviewed sponsors the population was scanned and divided into major and minor sponsor categories to provide a comparison between them. The pre-categorization process identified, in total of 33, companies or supporters of the event. Out of this group eight supporters did not meet the official sponsor status to be qualified for major and minor sponsor categories. Disqualified sponsors were counted out due the commitment level which is either unknown, in term of co-operative stand point or other ways insufficient for the evaluation process and thus dismissed from the group of identified sponsors. For these reasons, the actual size of the population qualified for interviews and evaluation process is 25. The total population was divided into major and minor sponsorships. Major sponsorships count in total of 12 and minor sponsorships of 13 sponsors.

The line defying a sponsor level was withdrawn into an amount of 300 € in which a sponsor that committed with over 300 € was called a major sponsor, and a sponsor that committed with 300 € or less was labeled as a minor sponsor. Minor sponsors were granted with lower visibility versus the sponsors in major sponsorship category, deals worth more than 300 euros. The fine line was also constructed as sponsorship amounts above 300 euros started from 500 euros. Based on these mentioned reasons and the fact of provided visibility based on the amount of sponsorship the sponsorships can be categorized in minor and major sponsor of the event. Some of the sponsorship deals included financial commitment, some in-kind or other material commitment and others mix between the two. All in-kind sponsorships were evaluated by based on the general value of the in-kind goods or services.

A list of preferences in each of two groups was crafted by the author based on the perception in possibility of response and overall commitment. Respondents had to be directly involved with the sponsorship purchasing process to qualify for an interview. Finally, the focus was to gain higher answer rate from the major sponsors as it was assumed that the responses would be more informative as the sponsorship investment

was higher. Sample size fulfilled the target rate as eight presented major sponsors and four minor sponsors. For further details see table 2 on page 65.

4.2.1 Interview Process

As satisfaction is experimental the interviews were done after the event (Ostrom and Iacobucci 1995). Within two months period after the event, 11 out of 12 interviews were completed. Interviews were conducted in person (face-to-face) (3) or by phone (9). Nearly all the interviews were conducted during the last week of August and first two weeks of September in 2013.

Sponsors were contacted by phone and via email to schedule a time for an interview by the researcher. Three of the interviews were conducted in person interviews. The three interviews for in face interview were selected for the reason that they were some of the largest sponsors and due the fact that two of them had committed for the name rights of the teams. The third on the other hand was a sponsor personally close to the author and thus were available for the in person interview efficiently. In addition, the interviews that were chosen for personal in face interview were scheduled based on geographical location and distance in other words availability.

After the 12 interviews researcher felt that the data started repeating itself, therefore reached the saturation point. Repetition emerged within the collected data. (Jennings 2001; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 366) The length of interviews varied in between 14 to 47 minutes. An average interview time for major sponsor was approximately 31 minutes and for minor sponsor 20 minutes. See table 2 on page 65 for an overview of the respondents.

At the interview, participants were asked permission to audio record the interview. Everyone gave that permission. The interview started with some background information questions (Fontana & Frey 1994; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 368) with in rather

formal form rather than familiarity (Seidman 1998 in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 368). Background questions were followed by three sections of the themed interview form. See further information on page 66 in empirical findings. The question form can be seen in appendices (Appendix 1).

4.2.2 Pretesting the Interviews and Storing the Data

The interview form and questions were tested three times. Twice the semi structured interview form was tested in fact-to-face situation and once in an interview by phone situation. The questions were adjusted according the feedback and analysis after the test interviews. The interview form was constructed according to sponsor evaluation theories, sponsor satisfaction surveys and adjusted according to the feedback given by the thesis supervisor.

All interviews were recorded and notes were made. The data was stored at secured Google drive. Interviews made by phone were also recorded. Notes were made during the speaker phone interview. All interviews were afterwards transcribed from the recordings. All interviews were conducted in Finnish. All data was stored and analyzed. After the analysis, the data was kept at secured data base with access available for the author only. Respondents either allowed (11) or denied (1) the use of the company name. One company name will not be revealed and spoken anonymously about. See overview of the respondents in chapter 5 on page 65.

5 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The empirical chapter is constructed in three parts. First two chapters (5.1 and 5.2) discuss on the context of the study and introduce the unique case of the study. This is relevant for understanding the empirical findings in correct context. Third chapter (5.3) introduces the respondents and necessary background information for evaluating the credibility of the respondents. And finally, the fourth, fifth and sixth sub-chapters display the empirical findings of the study. Chapter 5.4 answers the first sub-research question empirically by providing the findings on sponsor expectations. Chapter 5.5 discusses on sponsors' experience and therefore focuses on displaying the empirical evidences related to the second sub-research question. Moreover, chapter 5.6 displays findings on sponsors' evaluation on their satisfaction towards the sponsorship.

Empirical findings are analyzed thematically from the descriptive data. Findings are highlighted with narratives to capture exact meaning of respondents and supported by tables as appropriate. Tables are provided by presenting the data of major sponsors and followed by the minor sponsors. "*Narrative approach captures the meaning and complexity inherent to event attachment by portraying the actual words of the interviewees*" (Rubin & Rubin 2005; in Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009, 368). The questions are also classified according to different major themes: reasons, expectations and satisfaction providing comparison in between the expectations (prior the event) and the experience by which satisfaction can be drawn. Firstly the data is displayed by providing the background information of the respondents.

Scholars, Weight, Taylor and Cuneen (2010, 129) proposed comparing expectations of sponsors based on the monetary level as "*it would be interesting to determine if those who paid higher amounts of money had differing opinions about expectations compared to those who spent smaller amount.*". They continued by stating that "*it may not be as important to evaluate sponsorship for those who do not have as much monetarily at stake.*" This counsel is implemented in mild form by focusing more on emphasize in the major sponsors' responses. Thus these suggestions are carried out in this research. In

each section the empirical evidences are scrutinized comparing the data between major and minor sponsors. However, major differences in behavior in between major and minor sponsors were not found in the analyses the findings are presented simultaneously yet in separate tables for more convenient read. The larger scale comparison between the data found in major and minor sponsor categories are not provided as it had not provided significant differences or new insights. The differences that were found are presented in words. Findings are displayed according to each theme in following order: question introduction, when necessary, and findings according to the theme. Finally, the major findings and their relevance towards the research field are discussed in chapter 6.

5.1 Charity Event and Sports Sponsorship in Finland

Sports participation is a meaningful event for both the individuals and for the community alike (Filo, Funk and O'Brien 2009). Study conducted by Finnish federation of advertising and marketing (2014) projects that sponsorship towards charitable causes are worth 17 per cent of sponsorship pool. In total, 71 per cent of Finnish companies sponsor something. By far the largest share is forwarded towards sports with nearly 75 per cent, whereas culture and different communal projects both share a 13 per cent share of the sponsor pool. (SLU 2014) Filo, Funk and O'Brien (2009, 363) highlight the importance of smaller scale charity sport events, regional charity sport events may not drag the media attention, of big events, *"however, various event facets including the host city, the physical activity or sport, socialization, and the benefiting charity bundle together to contribute to participation in the event, and the overall meaning of the event."*

According to a study in Finland (Mainostajien Liitto 2013) only 62 per cent of the companies have accomplished their sponsorship targets. While only 25 per cent of the corresponded companies had set any targets for their sponsorships. It should be noted that companies annual sponsorship investments are decreasing every year since 2009 which is the opposite of the global trend of increasing sponsorship investments (IEG 2014). Another notable shift in sponsorship deals is that sponsor investments are directed from professional sports to youth sports and local sports (19 per cent ratio). Overall, the

sponsor money in Finland is increasingly directed from professional sports to more philanthropic, humanitarian, youth or local activities in general which somewhat follows the global phenomena of increasing interest towards cause related sponsorships (Mainostajien Liitto 2013).

5.2 CASE: Maaailman Pisin Salibandyottelu

The study is conducted following charity sport event setting. Maaailman pisin salibandyottelu (abbreviated as MPSO), World's longest floorball marathon in English, was a charitable sports event organized by floorball club PoNoVo, Pontuksen Nouseva Voima ry. The event was held in Lappeenranta, South-East Finland, between July 12th and 13th in 2013. The purpose of the event was to collect funds for a local non-profit organization, Etelä-Karjalan perhetyön kehittämissyhdistys ry, and break the Guinness World Record in the longest marathon in playing floorball – a popular indoor team sport in Northern Europe. All in all in total of 10 000 euros in sponsor contributions and additional sporting goods were directed to the charity in a free-entry event that had over 1000 spectators. Moreover the new record was set at 26 hours.

5.3 Overview of the Respondents

The background information on respondents is provided for two main reasons: to evaluate the quality of the data and to understand the possible differences in between minor and major sponsors. In addition, the background information was designed to focus on the company size and background details rather than the details of the corresponding person. Sponsors were labelled accordingly major (S) or minor (SS) sponsors with numeral order, see table 2 on page 65.

Majority of respondents were males (10/12) while all major sponsors were males. The most common titles were sales manager and CEO, both with three representatives. In fact, all but one of the interviewee was in managerial position, while the sole person had

responsibility of sport club contracts (sales representative). Five of the 12 mentioned customer's as their prime target group, as four companies do business in both B2B and B2C sectors while three sponsors mentioned B2B being their main business sector. Five sponsors were providing products, four services and three were operating in both sectors. Majority of sponsors (9) operated at the event region, while two sponsors were based elsewhere and one sponsor is based in multiple locations. Sponsors had between three and 2500 employees and their turnovers were between 1.5 million euros to 80 M, one sponsor did not want to include the turnover. There was no significant difference in the turnover between major and minor sponsors as both groups had similar spread out in their turnover numbers.

Those that were able to mention the number of event they sponsored were in between two and "*more than every weekend, even multiple events at the same time (S3).*" Major sponsors could be seen sponsoring more often. Eight sponsorship deals included a monetary disposal and four of sponsorship deals were in-kind meaning that they included material benefits. In-kind sponsorship worth was determined by the researcher for categorizing a sponsor into major or minor sponsor.

Table 2. Summary of the Respondents and Interviews.

SPONSOR	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4
Title of Interviewee	Store Manager	Product	Sales Representative	Sales Manager	CEO	Sales Manager	CEO	CEO	Communication Manager	Sales Manager	Pharmacist	Marketing Communication Manager
Gender	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F
Date of Interview	22.8.2013	26.8.2013	28.8.2013	28.8.2013	29.8.2013	30.8.2013	26.8.2013	30.8.2013	2.9.2013	6.9.2013	9.2.2014	27.8.2013
Interview Form	In-person	In-person	Phone	Phone	In-person	Phone	Phone	Phone	Phone	Phone	Phone	Phone
Duration (min)	47:12	45:10	33:18	38:09	14:22	28:30	21:42	24:32	22:32	18:52	17:00	23:48
B2B/B2C	C2B	C2B	B2B	C2B	B2B	C2B/B2B	C2B/B2B	B2B	C2B/B2B	C2B	C2B	C2B/B2B
Product/Service	Prod.	Serv.	Prod.	Both	Serv.	Both	Prod.	Prod.	Serv.	Both	Prod.	Serv.
Location	LPR	LPR	OTHER	LPR	LPR	LPR	LPR	LPR	LPR	LPR & OTHER	OTHER	LPR
Numb. of Employees	30	-	10	-	10	-	30	100	40-100	130	3	2437
Turnover	17 M	80 M	1.3 M	-	1.3 M	-	18 M	10 M	4.8 M	70 M	1.3 M	-
Numb. of Spons. Events (Year)	10-20	5	"More than every weekend"	10-13	-	-	Max. 3	2-4	-	3	-	10
Sponsorship type	CASH	CASH	IN-KIND	CASH	CASH	IN-KIND	CASH	CASH	IN-KIND	CASH	IN-KIND	CASH

All in all, the background information did not really provide significant differences between the major and minor sponsors, unless the gender of the corresponding person can be

seen as such. The idea was to investigate whether the size of sponsorship can be related to the sponsor expectations, reasons and actions in this case. Exploring the primary data significant differences were not found.

5.4 Expectations

This chapter displays the reasons and expectations that sponsors had. Answers reflect the prior event expectations and reasons for sponsoring. To understand respondents' expectations, reasons to sponsor were asked first. Expectations may be directly influenced by reasons (Aubert-gamet & Cova 1999) and thus important to understand. Moreover, the respondents were asked about their expectations towards the event and whether they had financial expectations for their sponsorship.

Major Sponsors' Reasons and Expectations for Sponsoring MPSO

There appears to be numeral reasons for sponsoring the event (see table 3). Goodwill or the charitable cause was one of the reasons for seven out of eight sponsors. Clearly only one sponsor (S3) was involved with business oriented sponsorship strategy. The sponsor provided several reasons: "*multiple players testing the products, creating relationships with clubs and sponsorship relations with individual players.*" The respondent saw sponsorship as an opportunity to enter the market and for "*creating relationships to gain visibility at the area.*" Another sponsor (S1) operating in the market area mentions importance of the market reach: "*seldom to reach such a large target market.*" In addition, one more sponsor (S7) mentions something on the target market for a reason as describing the audience "*youthful and student filled.*" Three of the seven sponsors that mentioned the goodwill aspect for reason to sponsor have actually no real expectations towards the event and are involved either for pure goodwill (S8) or for goodwill and ties with the organizers (S2 & S5). One sponsor's (S7) reason for participation is as well employee related and goodwill focused.

Visibility (or awareness) in one way or another was expected equivalent by the sponsors, either for the event and/or for the sponsor as well (S1, S3, S4, S6 & S7). Extended visibility is expected in forms of media exposure (S3, S4 & S7) either for the event and/or the sponsor via event exposure. One sponsor (S3) speaks about expectations on visibility: *“visibility via TV, internet and in the event area.”* The chosen sport appealed to three respondents (S3, S5 & S6). Financially respondents were not expecting much. In fact six major sponsors had no financial expectations at all, and the two respondents had no expectations for direct impact, but were hoping to benefit financially in the future. One of the sponsors (S3) mentions that *“we had no direct financial expectations, but got to get familiar (with our potential clients). The idea behind selling products is to sell them, however results follow as we can get our foot in the market via sponsored players and retail store relationships.”* The other sponsor (S6) said: *“Not in the size of this event. We are hoping the target market felt our presence and it could benefit our business later and in the future.”* All in all, financial expectations were not particularly emphasized by the respondents.

Table 3. Major Sponsors' Reasons and Expectations for Sponsoring MPSO.

SPONSOR	REASONS FOR SPONSORING MPSO	EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS FOR SPONSORSHIP	HAD FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS
S1	<i>Approached with the opportunity.</i>	Visibility related to a goodwill aspect (via team name), no business orientation.	No.
S2	Idea, orientation of the charity, shared values & event organizers come within the company.	No direct goals, good timing and fit between the offer and the charity.	No.
S3	<i>Business strategically a new geographical area, memorability of the record & positive event and making the WR using company's products.</i>	Visibility, product testing and area relationship building.	No direct and no immediately.
S4	<i>Unique, stand out event with happening feel to it. Approached within the company, want to support employee participation in such activity.</i>	Publicity & goodwill aspect of the event.	No.
S5	<i>Family ties. Positive and clean image of the sport fitting with corporate image.</i>	No expectations. Positive corporate image.	No.
S6	Focal sport, young and student filled crowd.	To reach agreed upon goals (logo visibility).	Not directly, however hoping to benefit financially in the future.
S7	Employee participation, involvement and goodwill.	Main focus in supporting the goodwill. Visibility and media publicity.	No.
S8	<i>Goodwill aspect of the event.</i>	Actually no expectations.	No.

Minor Sponsors' Reasons and Expectations for Sponsoring MPSO

The most interesting findings for reasons to participate came from a sponsor (SS1) that said: *"Event organizer's felt that we could provide value to the event."* This is a really interesting and often unmentioned point that can go unnoticed by the sponsee when preparing the sponsorship plan. Family ties also played a role here as reason to sponsor (SS3) was an involvement of a son playing for one of the teams.

It seems that minor sponsors either had no expectations (3 out of 4) or very small expectations for potential gains through the moderate sponsorship investment.

Interestingly one of the sponsors (SS4) did not expect much for the investment but wanted the event to help out sponsor findability in online searches (with search engine findability). Only one minor sponsor (SS2) revealed having in-direct financial expectations through awareness which would bring eventually financial benefits.

Table 4. Minor Sponsors' Reasons and Expectations for Sponsoring MPSO.

SPONSOR	REASONS FOR SPONSORING MPSO	EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS FOR SPONSORSHIP	HAD FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS
SS1	Purpose of the charitable cause (charity's focus) and added value that can be brought for the event.	No expectations and no measures were made.	No.
SS2	Areal charitable cause and charitable organization (EKPK).	No expectations towards visibility, pure goodwill.	Not significant, maybe indirectly.
SS3	Family ties.	No expectations.	No.
SS4	Idea, positive sports event and amount of people participating.	Not much of expectations for the amount of investment. Logo visibility on- and off-line, if breaking the record the visibility of record location in GWR (book).	No.

5.5 Experience

This chapter scrutinizes on how respondents experienced the sponsorship. Answers reflect the experiences of respondents during the sponsorship utilization period and after the event perceptions. All in all, the goal of the research was to understand respondents sponsor experience to provide a thorough investigation for evaluating sponsor satisfaction. In addition, respondents were asked about their leveraging activities to estimate their level on commitment on sponsorship.

Event Experiences

Sponsors were asked which aspects could have been improved by the event organization to improve the sponsor experience. This question was aimed to understand how sponsor satisfaction could have been improved by improving the event experience. One respondent (S1) was displeased with: *"by-the-road-signage could have been brought out earlier, two weeks prior the event was a little silent space in marketing."* One respondent saw more room for improvement in their leveraging actions around the sponsorship: *"We could better market the (participation) in overall and could be even more visible active at the event venue."* One respondent (S4) wished for *"more communication towards the sponsors and what was achieved and what sponsors achieved"* (via sponsorship). The respondent would prefer being better informed with the progress of the event. Five respondents (S2, S5, S6, S7 & S8) couldn't provide any aspects for improvement.

Minor sponsors were also asked to name aspects that event organization could improve to create a better sponsor experience. One respondent could have used more communication on the event and a more thorough sponsorship report. Another respondent had similar view: *"Could have communicated more and provide additional information on signage and in overall provide sponsor with more linkage to the event. More communication (messages) to the people."* Two respondents (SS1 & SS3) could not name any aspects to improve.

The Most Important Gain via Sponsorship

By asking what the most important gain through their sponsorship was, the reasons for sponsoring can be further understood and their experience better evaluated. In addition, it can be assessed which aspects the sponsors value in their sponsorships. This has relevance especially for organizations creating sponsorship proposals. Answers appear to be quite diverse. However some universal themes can be found in, for instance supporting the community (S2, S4, S5 & S7). Respondents described community involvement with slightly different perspectives. Two respondents' mention community involvement (S4 &

S7), where breaking the record was a gain for one respondent (S5) because it creates a unity and feeling of belongingness or unity among all the parties involved with the event and in record breaking. Another respondent emphasizes the cause: "*Money and awareness for an important cause.*" Visibility in form of exposure or in image related manner was the most important gain for three respondents. Interestingly one respondent (S8) highlights the provided media exposure report that revealed the exposure of the event in different media and showed the number of event participants at the venue and in Facebook event followers. Creating positive image among floorball followers and establishing contacts were the most important gains for one sponsor (S3). As for another the most important gain was "*visibility through a team's name. Players feel that we are involved as (their) soul companions.*" (S1)

The most important gain from the sponsorship was a successful event itself for two sponsors (SS1 & SS3). And that the sponsor can be linked to a charity event (SS2 & SS4). Basically three of the four respondents mentioned the importance of the charity aspect of the sponsorships, two directly and one in more or less a hidden in the sentence (SS4) by stating that "*it is important to show our participation and have a logo visible. And it was for a good cause.*" One respondent (SS2) mentions that the visible logo was only equivalent for them, and at the event venue their logo was already visible. Respondent emphasizes that the awareness was especially targeted towards to those who participated at the event organization and as players, as for the audience the logo was exposed at the venue anyways. Never the less, it is common for event venue to hide or cover logos that are not related to the event. However, in his case, logos or ads shown at the event venue were left visible.

Sponsors' Sponsoring Activity and Commitment

To provide an in-depth understanding on sponsor's behavior and their perception it is important to understand their sponsoring commitment. These deliberately interpreted terms are viewed by asking how sponsors activated their sponsorships and by observing

their attendance through questionnaire. It should be noted that the attendance was not asked directly from the sponsors.

All respondents were asked about their sponsorship leverage activities. All in all, leveraging activities did not exist or were minimal, for instance, pushing a like button (e.g. S1) on Facebook or posting comments on company's Webpage and Facebook page. Moreover, respondents revealed details: *"We could have leveraged (the sponsorship) more, however due the lack of recourses at that time it was not leveraged. We still could leverage it."* (S3) Although, strategic approach for their sponsorship and reaching the goals that the sponsor had set they did little to none to leverage their sponsorship. Two respondents (S4 & S7) communicated about sponsorship internally whereas three respondents (S5, S6 & S8) did not leverage the sponsorship at all. Most interesting comment (S1) brought in a concept of ambush marketing. *"We (marketed the event) on Facebook, and brought in a partner to participate in game jersey delivery."* This could be seen gaining a logo exposure through jersey's manufacturer brand logo, although being not an official partner. In this case, this unofficial sponsor could have played an ambush marketing strategy by gaining relatedness to the event without a status of an official sponsor. Did this company acted intentionally to ambush the event or did the company ever activated the (real) option is unknown. One other respondent (S2) was not sure of the leveraging activities: *"I don't know. It is possible that we have communicated the participation internally and on our webpage."* Interestingly, the respondent notes that it might be hurtful for the company to activate the sponsorship overly.

Two of the minor sponsors (SS1 & SS4) did mention having activated the sponsorship. However one (SS1) did so after the event as the event donation was made in an event they organized. The other respondent (SS4) told that a summer trainee applied sponsorship in communicating about it in Facebook and Twitter. Two respondents (SS2 & SS3) said that they did not activate the sponsorship.

It should be noted that only few sponsors attended the event venue. Those respondents that revealed having visited the venue were noted in the table. Data indicates that some of

respondents' replies lay on second-hand knowledge or ad hoc answers as they have not experienced the event at the event grounds. On the other hand, experiencing the event at the event grounds is only part of the sponsorship experience and by all means not necessary for accomplishing a successful sponsorship. Moreover, it was added to the event experience evaluation by the researcher while examining the data to better understand and evaluate the relations of sponsor commitment and sponsor activity. It can add significant understanding towards to level of sponsor commitment and deeper the understanding on sponsor's behavior.

Table 5. Estimated Major Sponsor Attendance.

SPONSOR	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
ATTENDED THE VENUE	Unknown.	No.	Yes.	No.	Yes.	No.	Unknown.	No.

Table 6. Estimated Major Sponsor Attendance.

SPONSOR	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4
ATTENDED THE VENUE	No.	No.	Yes.	Unknown.

5.6 Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to evaluate their satisfaction towards the organizing of the event, sponsorship equivalence and their repurchasing likelihood. Finally, respondents were asked to provide a numeral evaluation for their sponsor satisfaction.

Major Sponsors' Satisfaction towards Organizing the Event

The narrative starts with negative description although criticism was in few. One sponsor (S1) was displeased with the street signing and the marketing efforts that were done close to the event. *"If the event would have been launched earlier the (event) marketing would*

have been easier.” Despite the dissatisfaction towards to event marketing, the sponsor rated equivalent for the sponsorship 9/10. Another respondent (S4) would have liked little more media attention: *“I guess one can be satisfied when having heard no bad word (on the event). I would have wished a little more media publicity towards the event.”* Basically their answers reflect dissatisfaction towards the event management and marketing efforts of the event organization.

Satisfaction can be reflected in multiple comments. Satisfaction was expressed for instance by a sponsor often present at different sport event venues, respondent (S3) describes: *“It was probably organized as well as such an event could be organized with pre-event marketing that was exploiting all possible marketing communication channels. At the event venue all were as good as they could have been.”* Another (S2) positive comment claimed that the event was professionally organized with *“visible action in social media.”* Moreover rest of the respondents were very pleased (S5), quite pleased (S7), *“I didn’t attend the event, but what I have heard all were ok.”* (S6) and *“hard to tell, as I wasn’t present at the event, however I heard the (GWR attempt) game was successful and the money were handed (to the charity).”* (S8)

Table 7. Major Sponsors’ Satisfaction on Organizing the Event.

SPONSOR	SATISFACTION ON ORGANIZING OF THE EVENT
S1	Dissatisfied with pre-event offline marketing. Filled expectations ok.
S2	Professionally and excellently organized event
S3	It was probably organized as well as such an event could be organized.
S4	Wished for more media publicity.
S5	Very satisfied.
S6	OK.
S7	Quite satisfied.
S8	Satisfied.

Minor Satisfaction towards Organizing the Event

In general all respondents were pleased with how the event was organized. One respondent (SS4) mentions the after event media exposure report: "*Very pleased, especially for providing event exposure summary report without asking.*" Other comments: "*Pleased with gained media exposure and practicalities of the venue*" (SS1), "*pleased with gained media exposure and practicalities of the venue*" (SS2) and "*pleased with the event*" (SS3). It should be noted that only one of the respondents had attended the event.

Table 8. Minor Sponsors' Satisfaction on Organizing the Event.

SPONSOR	SATISFACTION ON ORGANIZING OF THE EVENT
SS1	Pleased with gained media exposure and practicalities of the venue.
SS2	Pleased with the event.
SS3	Great event all in all.
SS4	Very please especially for providing event exposure summary report without asking.

Satisfaction on Equivalent of the Sponsorship

Respondents had difficulties describing their satisfaction on equivalence of the sponsorship (see table 9 & 10 on p. 77). Multiple sponsors (S4, S5, S7 and S8) couldn't provide additional narrated evaluation besides what they had provided earlier. Two of them gave a numeral evaluation instead. One respondent (S3) was especially happy for reaching the set goals for the sponsorship: "*It (sponsorship) went as expected. We were able to establish contacts. No expectations for direct financial income. (We) fully accomplished the established goals.*" Another respondent (S2) said the following: "*If ... (note: anonym sum) euros can bring a total of 10 000 euros (for a good cause), that is a really good (amount of) money for a good purpose.*" More critical yet satisfied response came from a one sponsor (S1): "*Especially good (value)...when no financial expectations. A good use of digital marketing channels (WEB & Facebook)...always something could have done better, by-the-road advertisements (signage) and the timing of the event, but how much (more could have been done)?*"

Responses provided were quite generic with lacking significant findings. One comment provided some more insight on how difficult measuring or even evaluating sponsorships can be: *"Impossible to measure, I can't really provide an answer."* (SS2) Two other respondents (SS1 & SS3) emphasized the lack of expectations. Moreover, the final respondent (SS4) was *"very pleased."*

Repurchase Intention on the Sponsorship

Sponsors were asked to evaluate the chances for repurchasing the sponsorship. It has been claimed by a research that satisfaction can drive repurchase intention. (e.g. Oliver 1980) Hence the repurchase intentions of sponsors were asked. In addition, repurchase intention can reveal something on how they experienced the event. Basically all the sponsors would at least consider repurchasing the sponsorship however most couldn't provide a definite answer. Interestingly one respondent (S4) sees changes for larger media publicity larger for repeating the event. *"Records are made for breaking, next time the media publicity would be greater."* Another respondent emphasizes the employee involvement: *"If employees are involved then higher changes (for repurchasing the sponsorship)."* One respondent (S2) might prefer to spread the wealth: *"We like to share the good, although wouldn't say no for family oriented charity."*

Respondents (SS1, SS2, SS4) are likely to repurchase the sponsorship for potential follow up. On the other hand, one respondent (SS3) would only repurchase if a family member would be involved with the event again.

Finally, a summarizing table is provided. These two tables display the Sponsor's evaluation on their sponsorship satisfaction.

Table 9. Major Sponsors' Sponsor Satisfaction

SPONSOR	SATISFACTION TOWARD THE EQUIVALENT OF SPONSORSHIP	CHANGES FOR REPURCHASING SPONSORSHIP	OVERALL NUMERAL EVALUATION OF SPONSOR SATISFACTION, IN SCALE 4 (WORST) TO 10 (BEST)
S1	Digital marketing channels (WEB & FB) utilized quite well.	When a good fit and interesting and similar.	9
S2	Very good (amount) money to a good purpose.	We like to share the good, although wouldn't say no for family oriented charity.	9+
S3	Fully accomplished the established goals.	Yes, definitely.	8 - 10
S4	7	Possible, but hard to say would it be likely.	7.8 - 8
S5	7	Yes.	9
S6	Gained agreed upon aspects while potential gains in the future cannot be yet evaluated.	Can't tell.	-
S7	-	If employees are involved then higher chances for sponsoring.	8
S8	-	50/50.	-

Table 10. Minor Sponsors' Sponsorship Satisfaction.

SPONSOR	SATISFACTION TOWARD THE EQUIVALENT OF SPONSORSHIP	CHANGES FOR REPURCHASING SPONSORSHIP	OVERALL NUMERAL EVALUATION OF SPONSOR SATISFACTION, IN SCALE 4 (WORST) TO 10 (BEST)
SS1	Very pleased as had no expectations.	Very likely if the time of the event is favorable.	9
SS2	Hard to reply as it is difficult to evaluate.	Possibly, however we try to spread the good around.	8
SS3	With no expectations there are no disappointments.	If family members are not involved, not likely.	7
SS4	Very pleased.	Very likely.	10

Next major chapter will provide a discussion on the most interesting empirical findings. In addition, results will be displayed while answering the research questions.

6 DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

This chapter displays the most interesting empirical findings while providing a discussion between the empirical findings and theoretical part of the thesis. In addition, the research questions are embedded in the discussions.

Firstly, it should be noted that comparison between major and minor sponsor categories did not provide enough relevant information to be included in the thesis at whole. Therefore the comparison between the sponsor categories is cut out from the thesis. However the results in major and minor sponsor categories are displayed separately as in empirical part for better reading experience. Bluntly said, minor sponsors had smaller expectations and higher satisfaction than major sponsors. The data suggest that higher expectation may driven by the higher original investment thus minor sponsors may feel higher overall satisfaction towards their stake. This may have been verbally expressed in qualitative form however it is not really supported by the numerical evaluation as the mean for satisfaction for major sponsor and minor sponsors were relatively close by.

Reasons for Sponsoring Regional Charity Sport Event

Previous research (Dean 2002; Menon and Kahn 2003) has named two reasons for charity sport event participation: “(1) *to associate the company with a charity and suggest that the business is fulfilling a societal obligation to the community from which it draws customers, employees, and investors and (2) to generate goodwill and enhance the image of the business.*” Most of the respondents fell under these fore mentioned reasons. See summarizing table 11 (p 81).

Nevertheless, one major sponsor (S3) had strategic business goals for the sponsorship as the sponsor applied sponsorship for entering the market. It should be added that the sponsor is located outside the region and thus applied more of strategic and business

oriented sponsorship strategy. Nevertheless, the most important reason for sponsors was the goodwill aspect of the sponsorship hence at least mentioned by all the other sponsors involved besides S3. Moreover, the importance of the region or geographical area the event was organized played more or less role in reason to sponsor, basically for all the sponsors, however some sponsors emphasized this directly (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, SS2, SS4) as other responses had it buried in deeper in the discussion and revealed it indirectly (S5, S7, S8, SS1, SS3.) Then again, the latter group of sponsors had connection with the area through family or employee ties that also supported the commitment to the region. One minor sponsor (SS3) was not located in the event area but participated due family ties.

Quite a few sponsors mentioned the uniqueness of the event for a reason to sponsor. MPSO combined a popular sport with positive image (e.g. S5) to a (successful) world record attempt while profiting a local charity. Even though, it didn't not appear to play a major part in reasons for sponsoring it was brought up numerous occasions at varying points of the interview process. For instance, for one it served as a selling point (S2) *"Getting a name to the Book of Guinness World Records and the type of charity were well glued together"* (served as a good fit), for other (S8) a general point of interest: *"hard to tell, as I wasn't present at the event, however I heard the (GWR attempt) game was successful and the money were handed (to the charity)."* One respondent (S5) laid sponsorship expectations more towards the record breaking than other goals: *"team filled expectations and the record was achieved."*

Contribution to the existing research was recognition of family and company tie-ins. Previous research in charity sport event sponsorship had not recognized family or employee ties as a main reason for sponsoring or at least had not particularly emphasized these points. It is evident that two of the sponsors' likelihood for sponsoring such an event would have been very limited without the family connection (S5 and SS3) whereas employee or other organizational connection played a part in three other sponsorships (S2, S4 & S7). The latter three could have seen *"fulfilling a societal obligation to the community from which it draws customers, **employees**, and investors and to generate*

goodwill.” In addition, enhancing corporate image was more of a secondary goal not a primary reason for their involvement for respondents S3 and S4. First mentioned primary reason was business strategy oriented. Latter, had company tie-ins as primary reason for involvement. Based on the empirical evidences reasons for sponsoring regional charity sport events are more complex than previous research has expressed.

One of the most interesting findings for reasons to participate came from a minor sponsor (SS1) that said: *“Event organizer’s felt that our company could provide value to the event.”* This is a really interesting and often unmentioned point that can go unnoticed by the sponsee when preparing the sponsorship plan. The fit between the sponsor and sponsee is important. Multiple researches (e.g. Weeks, Cornwell and Drennan 2008 and Woisetschläger & Michaelis 2012) show that image transfer is stronger when there is a fit with the sponsor and the sponsee. In other words the message can have stronger effect on the target audience had the sponsor and the sponsee genuinely seem to fit as partners. This goes both ways, it should be in responsibility for the sponsee to attract strategically chosen sponsors as well as sponsors choose strategic sponsorships to fit their sponsorship policy. (Skildrum-Reid 2012) Empirical evidence pointed that some sponsors may value this aspect as well.

Finally, it should be noted that none of the sponsors approached to the event organizers with an interest to sponsor the event. It could be argued that the event time in the middle of summer holiday season had an effect on companies leveraging activities as well as event participation in general. Sponsor commitment and leveraging are discussed after the expectations. All in all, reasons to sponsor were mixed, partly selfish and partly altruistic as suggested by previous literature (Webb and Mohr 1999).

Table 11. Reasons for Sponsoring MPSO.

SPONSOR	REASONS FOR SPONSORING MPSO
S1	<i>Approached with the opportunity.</i>
S2	Idea, orientation of the charity, shared values, company tie-ins.
S3	Market entry opportunity, Unique, stand out event, product placement.
S4	Unique, stand out event with company tie-ins. <i>Want to support employee participation in such activity.</i>
S5	Family ties. <i>Positive image of the sport.</i>
S6	Focal sport, young and student filled crowd.
S7	Company tie-ins, community involvement, goodwill.
S8	Goodwill.
SS1	Charity's focus, added value for the event.
SS2	Areal charitable cause and charitable organization (EKPK).
SS3	Family tie-ins.
SS4	Idea, event image, amount of people participating.

6.1 Evaluating Sponsor Satisfaction in Regional Charity Sport Event

The tables (12 & 13) below summarizes the research findings by presenting expressed expectations, experience, by combining an overall estimation on perceived satisfaction based on comparing expectations with the experience and provided information by the respondents. In addition, some respondents provided a numeral evaluation of sponsor satisfaction which is added to the table with attendance and leveraging activity. (Y=Yes, N=No, - = Unknown). Numeral scale 4-10, in which 4 being worst and ten the best possible mark.

Table 12. Major Sponsor's Satisfaction Evaluation Table.

SPONSOR	EXPECTATIONS	EXPERIENCE	OVERALL EVALUATION OF SATISFACTION	NO.	ATT.	LV.
81	Visibility, image association.	Dissatisfied with pre-event offline marketing. Digital marketing channels utilized quite well.	Positive and negative feelings, overall numeral satisfaction yet high. Filled expectations ok. Dissatisfied with the visibility, satisfied with the event and charity association. Would consider repurchase.	9	-	Y
82	Goodwill.	Professionally & excellently organized event. Very satisfied with the mounted goodwill effect.	Very satisfied. Exceeded expectations.	9+	N	-
83	Visibility, product sampling, relationship building.	It was probably organized as well as such an event could be organized. Fully accomplished the established goals. Created positive image for football people.	Event execution exceeded expectations, direct sales perhaps less than was expecting. Overall very satisfied.	9	Y	Y
84	Publicity, goodwill.	Wished for more media publicity & communication with the event.	Neutral satisfaction, low expectations.	8-	N	Y
86	Image association, family ties.	Very satisfied.	Very satisfied.	9	Y	N
88	Visibility, charity association.	Gained agreed upon aspects while potential gains in the future cannot be yet evaluated.	Neutral satisfaction.	-	N	N
87	Goodwill, visibility, publicity, employee retention.	Neutral.	Quite satisfied.	8	-	Y
88	Goodwill.	Received first time ever post-event media coverage report from the event.	Satisfied, unexpected post-event media coverage report surprised sponsor positively.	-	N	N

Table 13. Minor Sponsor's Satisfaction Evaluation Table.

SPONSOR	EXPECTATIONS	EXPERIENCE	OVERALL EVALUATION OF SATISFACTION	NO.	ATT.	LV.
SS1	No expectations.	Pleased with gained media exposure and practicalities of the venue. Didn't measure sponsorship. Media exposure exceeded (unmentioned) expectations.	Involved due the goodwill aspect and the value sponsor could add to the event. Very pleased as had no expectations.	9	N	Y
SS2	Goodwill.	Pleased with the event. Hard to reply as it is difficult to evaluate.	Neutral.	8	N	N
SS3	No expectations.	Great event all in all. With no expectations there are no disappointments.	Had no expectations. Involved due the family ties.	7	Y	N
SS4	Good will, visibility.	Very pleased especially for providing event exposure summary report without asking.	Extremely satisfied. Unexpected post-event media coverage report surprised sponsor very positively.	10	-	Y

Expectations

Some respondents saw reasons for sponsoring parallel for expectations. Neither level of the sponsors had any direct financial expectations. One major and one minor sponsor were hoping for some gains in the future, but were not expecting any financial results or rewards. One major sponsor had in-direct financial expectations for the future and used the sponsorship for market entry. Anyhow, it is more or less evident that financial expectations were not involved in charity sport event sponsorships in this case either. In fact, many sponsors had no other expectations (S2, S5, S8, SS1, SS3) either. Yet most of the sponsors had some even if very insignificant or little expectations (S1, S4, S6, S7, SS2 & SS4). Only one sponsor had applied more business or strategic approach to the sponsorship (S3) and was actually expecting more in on-site sales. However did not indicate that in any of the primary expectation questions. This research proposes that sponsors with no expectations could be labelled *goodwill sponsors* as it describes their

attitude and motivation towards to sponsorship. However, it should be mentioned that even if *goodwill sponsors* had no expectations they wanted or at least purchased the sponsorship against agreed upon benefits that included for instance off- and on-line signage. Thus separating the behavior from patronage in which companies should not receive any association or linkage towards the event at least at this scale.

What is more describing for the case is that some respondents were hoping for some gains, however not really expecting to receive any. These sponsors were expecting or at least hoping for mass media attention towards the event to benefit them through image exposure or awareness building which supports existing research (e.g. Klincewicz 1998, 1104). Visibility (or awareness) in one way or another was expected equivalent by the sponsors, either for the event or for the sponsor as well (S1, S3, S4, S6 & S7). Extended visibility is expected in forms of media exposure (S3, S4 & S7) either for the event and/or the sponsor via event exposure. One sponsor (S3) shares views on expectations on visibility: "*visibility via TV, internet and in the event area.*"

All in all sponsors expectations were minimal, as were their leveraging activities too. It could be argued that lack of leveraging sponsorships speaks of not fully understanding sponsoring as a market communication mean, not being committed enough for the sponsorship or purely focusing on the altruistic side of the sponsorship. It can be that all of these claims were real. One of the major sponsors comment sums up quite well the level of commitment to the leveraging activities: "*We could have leveraged (the sponsorship) more, however due the lack of recourses at that time it was not leveraged. We could still leverage it.*" (S3) This could be do lacking knowledge on sponsorship as a marketing communication form or pure idleness. Perhaps one reason for neglecting leveraging was brought up in research on charity event sponsorship on sponsors exploiting the charity (Dean 2002, 77). One respondent (S2) rise up the subject: "*Our company rides the families*"; meaning that they would benefit by the positive image association created between the company and the cause. That may have been one of the reasons for perhaps over cautious leveraging activities sponsors applied. Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) study indicated that over exploitation of cause sponsorship might hurt the sponsor image

more than help creating caring or concerned image. Thus leveraging charity event sponsorships should be cautiously exploited.

The role of expectations in sponsor satisfaction is hindered by the fact that many sponsors either do not have expectations towards the event or that the expectations are not thought out early enough to be targeted as strategic goals. It appears that sponsors that had expectations towards the sponsorship had only small impacts on overall satisfaction. Most sponsors seemed to protect themselves by carrying no or low expectations towards the sponsorship so that as on minor sponsor (SS3) said: "*with no expectations, there is no disappointments.*" Visibility and publicity related expectations may have in some cases negatively affected the perceived overall satisfaction, however results are hardly generalizable. One respondent was expecting earlier marketing efforts that effect his overall evaluation. Exceeding and/or fulfilling expectations influenced perceived overall satisfaction. Expectations were exceeded mainly by event execution and providing sponsors with event exposure report. All in all, the role of expectations is somewhat shrunk by the low or no expectations carried by the respondents and thus not impact overly at least in negative way towards perceived satisfaction.

Sponsors' Experiences

Goodwill sponsors (five) had no expectations, "*with no expectations there's no disappointments.*" (SS3). Two of them that had family tie-ins also visited the event and were pleased with the organization of the event. They were also the only two of this sponsor group that visited the event. One had organizational connection. Whereas other two (S8 & SS1) had positive experience with the media exposure (S2 & SS1) and post-event media coverage report (S8). All of the *goodwill sponsors* expectations (even if not directly expressed) were exceeded and that lead to overall positive experiences among them.

Four *goodwill sponsors* could provide a numeral estimation for their perceived satisfaction and the mean for that was above 8.5 (8.625) that is generally perceived as a very good grade from 4-10 scale. Descriptive for these sponsors are that only one (SS1) leveraged sponsorship in any form. All in all, goodwill sponsors participate purely for the altruistic purposes and saw no financial or business gains via their sponsorship.

Sponsors with very little or insignificant expectations were surprisingly pretty much as satisfied as *goodwill sponsors*. Expectations in general were quite low, however dissatisfaction was caused by lack of publicity (S4) and pre-event signage (S1). Latter expressed dissatisfaction directly, however is considers repurchase and gave a really high grading for the sponsorship (9). Those little expectations that sponsors in this group expressed were related to the exposure or visibility. Another difference between this group and *goodwill sponsors* were that they evaluated sponsorship more critically and leveraged sponsorship more actively as four (out of six) leveraged the sponsorship in some way. Some sponsors mentioned the difficulty in evaluating sponsorships (e.g. S7 & SS2). One respondent (S1) even ponders when it would be possible to evaluate the gains, "*benefits later in the GWR (book) as the name is visible there. Hard to tell what are the actual benefits and when do the benefits end.*"

Five respondents provided a numeral estimation for their perceived satisfaction and the mean for that was above 8.5 (8.55). Descriptive for these sponsors is that they are more of hoping for some gains than actually expecting any. Even if expectations may have been low, companies were still hoping for media attention that could benefit them, similar findings had been mentioned in previous research by Klincewicz (1998, 1104).

Finally, one sponsor stood out the pack. It used the sponsorship for market entry (S3) and relationship building. This sponsor implemented more of a strategic sponsorship. Even that sponsor did not leverage the sponsorship in marketing communication channels but did leverage the event grounds via product placements, test and sale platform. This sponsor expressed great overall satisfaction and mainly gave self-critique for lack of leveraging activities made through marketing efforts. Respondent mentioned that they were expecting a little more in on-site sales, however this didn't seem to be a key point

nor had an impact to overall satisfaction. It is in somewhat controversy to respondent's verdict not having any direct and immediate financial expectations, even though had practiced on site product sales.

Sponsors experiences were heavily influenced by ad hoc evaluation, second hand knowledge and experiences through different event marketing channels. Based on the empirical evidences it could be argued that sponsors that experienced the event on event grounds expressed more gratitude towards the event. Experience was often expressed through the perceived success of the event. This was caused by multiple factors that included post-event media exposure report, media attention, event execution, digital marketing channels and success of the record attempt. Those sponsors that felt something was lacking in experience perceived overall satisfaction lower. For instance, a sponsor that wanted more communication and media exposure expressed neutral on lower to average satisfaction in verbal and numerical evaluation. Interestingly in some cases experiences were not compared to expectations, as for instance, the fore mentioned exposure report caused satisfaction although the respondent was not expecting awareness of any sort. Moreover, two respondents (S4 & S1) that were looking for publicity and awareness had negative experiences in perceived visibility of the event this could have be seen to impact the overall satisfaction.

Evaluating Sponsor Satisfaction

Evaluating sponsor satisfaction in regional charity sport event can be challenging in many ways. Firstly, sponsors either have no or very little expectations towards sponsorships with small or moderate investment. However, it is not uncommon to express very neutral perception towards the (in this case sponsorship) experience. (Bishop 1986) Evaluating sponsor satisfaction via relationships methods can be even a bigger challenge as sponsors may have been only met once during the sponsorship selling process thus relationships have no time to develop. On the other hand, should sponsor expectations be

questioned prior the event? It could be a valuable option. On the contrary, it is hard to estimate when sponsor gains actually end, especially in one time regional event.

Respondents did provide some dissatisfaction or critique on replies on experiences that either exceeded or flunked the expectations. Even if dissatisfaction occurred this didn't necessary lead to a poor satisfaction. Perhaps some respondents were more critical than others. On the other hand, sponsors can be dissatisfied in one aspect but satisfied with other aspects of the sponsorship and therefore the perceived overall satisfaction can be positive.

Sponsorship research (e.g. Valanko 2009) suggests weighting expectations against outcomes. Moreover, expectations are in few or even non existing, weighting the sponsorship experience against them can be therefore challenging. These expectations should however be clearly stated and agreed upon with both parties involved. For charity sponsorship participation partly selfish and partly altruistic reasons were mentioned similar to previous research (e.g. Webb and Mohr 1999).

From sponsor perspective evaluation is more or less based in typically twice a year after event discussions and adhoc evaluation. "*Drawing case specific evaluation is difficult*" according to one major sponsor. Two major sponsors attempt to follow sales that sponsorship drive, one from direct purchases made by the sponsee as the other from sales within the region of a sponsee. Any measurements or evaluations that sponsee can provide can lead is unexpected in this context and thus provides positive perception. All in all, sponsors seldom measure sponsorships at this scale and multiple objectives with their sponsorships could make measuring too big of a hassle for companies to invest it (Walliser, 2003).

From the event perspective evaluating sponsor satisfaction is difficult when expectations are more or less blurry and sponsors are perhaps not that committed to the sponsorship. When sponsors won't leverage their sponsorships the full potential of the sponsorship stays undiscovered and so are the benefits. The lack of commitment also shows in lack of

event participation. However, when sponsorship is seen more of a mean for goodwill rather than a marketing communication method this seems more altruistic. Philanthropic past of the sponsorships can be seen to be so deeply rooted in Finland that many sponsors won't dare to communicate on their sponsorships. Perhaps, for a nation with much to learn from marketing this is yet another step to be taken. One of the sponsors even mentioned the "*riding families*" meaning that communicating on cause sponsorship can be perceived negatively. It also hints that supporting a cause is seen problematic by the sponsor itself. Exploitation of a cause sponsorship may lead into negative perception by the target audience. However with the leveraging activity level that case sponsors impressed that hardly is an issue. Perhaps in general sponsors could develop more longitudinal value based cause programs instead of ad hoc goodwill sponsorships to create seldom wellbeing for the community.

It is clear that sponsors wanted to support the "*community from which it draws customers, employees, and investors and to generate goodwill and enhance the image of the business.*" (Dean 2002; Menon and Kahn 2003) And there is nothing wrong about that. There is also nothing wrong about wishing for financial gains. When sponsors are truly genuine, it would be easy for them to proudly announce their sponsorships. This research supports previous research (Meenaghan 1991; Sandler & Shani 1993) that sponsorships can be driven by personal decisions and motives of the managers. Two of the sponsors were involved purely due the family tie-ins. It was also evident that sponsors with family tie-ins had no expectations towards the event. Furthermore, other motivational factors that drive sponsors can hindsight the business or marketing potential of the sponsorships. Finally, all satisfaction that was created was noneconomic satisfaction, as none of the sponsors had financial expectations. Satisfaction was mainly driven by contribution towards the goodwill, perceived success of the event (successful record attempt, visibility (on- and off-line) and the event production.

None of the sponsors had any real plan for the sponsorship and none of the sponsors contacted the event for sponsoring. All satisfaction was created by noneconomic factors and thus all satisfaction was noneconomic satisfaction. Satisfaction was mainly driven by

contribution towards the goodwill, perceived success of the event (successful record attempt, visibility (on- and off-line) and event management or organizing the event). Sponsors with no expectations were as satisfied as those with very little expectations. Interestingly major sponsors displayed slightly higher satisfaction towards the sponsorship with (8.66) mean compared to that of minor sponsors (8.5). Even if minor sponsors expressed lower expectations towards the event. However such quantitative estimation with relatively low participants offers by itself very little meaning. Moreover, sponsors that expressed dissatisfaction were slightly less satisfied with the overall performance with 8.375 grading against 8.9 grading of those that did not express dissatisfaction. Furthermore, sponsors that seek visibility were very satisfied (9.0) in general, even had they expressed some dissatisfaction towards the visibility. Overall numeral average was 8.8. Most satisfaction was created by the post-event media exposure report (2 sponsors) and the event management (4 sponsors), most dissatisfaction was created by the lack of exposure either media or signage (2) on the other hand two sponsors were positively surprised by the amount of publicity the event gained.

Experience on the other hand was in many cases leaning towards the perceived success of the event, ad hoc estimation of second hand knowledge on the event production. In overall, the sponsors were perhaps not committed enough to provide theoretically important insights towards sponsor satisfaction literature. Experiences were formed on “what the event provided” rather than “what the sponsors made out of the sponsorship.” It is almost certain that with higher sponsorship investments this could be changed. In some cases, had the perceived event exposure been lower than expected the experiences were negative. This seemed to have impacted the overall satisfaction among those respondents. Finally, sponsor satisfaction was surely influenced by expectations and perceived experience and larger quantitative research could provide more insights on the relations of expectations and experiences on sponsor satisfaction as well as provide information on the significances on sole factors.

All in all, satisfaction was mainly driven by contribution towards the goodwill, perceived success of the event (successful record attempt, visibility (on- and off-line) and the event

production. It could be argued that role of the expectations in overall sponsorship satisfaction was not as significant as many sponsors either had no real expectations or their expectations were altruistic. Interestingly, satisfaction can be caused by aspects unmentioned and perhaps not thought by the respondents prior to the event. It appears that sponsors seek for “*whatever they can get*” rather than focusing on reaching certain goals. Respondents that were seeking pure *goodwill* can still perceive satisfaction on other aspects, e.g. post-event media exposure report.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to evaluate sponsor satisfaction in charity sport event context. Moreover, the academic research in sport sponsorships and especially on charity sport event contexts is still underdeveloped in developing global measures in evaluating sponsor satisfaction or in general evaluating sponsorships. Hence marketing theories in customer satisfaction were implemented to develop discussion in satisfaction. Moreover, theoretical discussed how sponsorship works as a marketing tool and how sponsor satisfaction could be evaluated in different sponsorships.

Increasing popularity of charity sport events is highlighting the shift back towards the more philanthropic approach in sponsorship development. These events create a unique combination of event sponsorship, sports and charity sponsorships. Emergence of corporate social responsibility and on the other hand increasing availability and mix of charity sport events are attracting corporate sponsors. Giving back to the community and personal references of managers drivers for the corporate involvement to reach target markets via charity sport events. Sponsors are hoping to gain benefits through their participation yet unwilling to measure effectiveness of the sponsorship investments.

The empirical research was conducted in qualitative manner to capture the originality and to develop deeper insights in the case context. Empirical evidences were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews in Maailman Pisin Salibandy Ottelu – a regional charity sport event. All in all, 12 interviews were conducted. Eight respondents represented the views of major and four of minor sponsors' of the event.

Sponsor satisfaction was evaluated by comparing sponsors' expectations with sponsors' experience as suggested in sponsorship literature. In addition, sponsors' perceived satisfaction was implemented, displayed and discussed. This chapter presents the summary of the empirical results, empirical and managerial implications. In addition, the chapter discusses on the limitations and proposes research areas and subjects for the

future research. Finally, the evaluation of reliability and validity of the thesis concludes the thesis.

Summary of the Results

All in all, none of the sponsors had any real plan for the sponsorship and none of the sponsors contacted the event for sponsoring. Leveraging activities of the sponsorship were minor and in few. The overall commitment of sponsors and/or the overall interest in increasing the value of sponsorship investment can be questioned. Empirical evidences point that in marketing view sponsor's behavior is more or less passive, in terms of leveraging and involvement in the sponsorship. Sponsors' reasons to sponsor were based on the uniqueness and goodwill aspect of the event. It is evident that sponsors wanted to support the *"community from which it draws customers, employees, and investors and to generate goodwill and enhance the image of the business."* (Dean 2002; Menon and Kahn 2003) Sponsors were attracted by the focal sport, supporting local community and Guinness World Record attempt. Most sponsors were seeking for visibility that could translate to benefit sponsors through image association. Furthermore, passive sponsoring would be the best way of describing sponsor action in the focal case. Visibility is sought through the event but sponsors hesitate in utilizing their own marketing channels. All the responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of the sponsorship is basically left for the sponsee. It is interesting would this be the case in other sponsor venues or do sponsor and sponsee communicate on this subject matter setting mutual expectations and goals?

This research suggest that sponsors with no expressed expectations could be labelled as *goodwill sponsor*, however, should not to be confused with corporate giving as sponsors received benefits and agreed upon equivalent where as in philanthropy counterpart shall not receive such benefits or association. Even though, this does not mean that sponsors cannot view their sponsorship as altruistic act, corporate giving or philanthropy and actually they often do. Findings of this research support existing research in charity sponsorship that partly reasons to sponsor are partly selfish and partly altruistic (e.g.

Webb and Mohr 1999). Finally charity sport event sponsorship participations are driven by personal decisions of managers as suggested by previous research (e.g. Meenaghan 1991; Sandler & Shani 1993). Some sponsors were involved due the family tie-ins. One of the sponsor mentioned that it would not be likely to repurchase without the family tie-ins. Such sponsor relations have not been mentioned by previous literature that was identified by the researcher. Therefore, it is suggested by this research that family tie-ins could be added for a reasons to sponsor charity sport or at least the tribal or community linkage between the sponsor and the sponsee could be viewed in broader perspective. In addition, it could be mentioned that sponsors with family tie-ins expressed no expectations towards the sponsorship. Finally, sponsors without a sponsorship plan and/or with no expectations are missing in discovering the full potential as key market communication platform.

It is clear that sponsors wanted to support the *“community from which it draws customers, employees, and investors and to generate goodwill and enhance the image of the business.”* (Dean 2002; Menon and Kahn 2003) This research supports previous research (Meenaghan 1991; Sandler & Shani 1993) that sponsorships can be driven by personal decisions and motives of the managers. Two of the sponsors were involved purely due the family tie-ins. It was also evident that sponsors with family tie-ins had no expectations towards the event. Furthermore, other motivational factors that drive sponsors can hindsight the business or marketing potential of the sponsorships. Visibility and publicity related expectations may have in some cases negatively influenced the perceived overall satisfaction, however results are hardly generalizable.

Expectations were exceeded mainly by event execution and providing sponsors with event exposure report. Fulfilling and exceeding expectations contributed in positive overall evaluation of satisfaction whereas underachieving expected results seemed to cause negative experiences. However, the role of the expectations in overall sponsorship satisfaction was perhaps not that significant.

Experience on the other hand was in many cases leaning towards the perceived success of the event, ad hoc estimation of second hand knowledge on the event production. In overall, the sponsors were perhaps not committed enough to provide theoretically important insights towards sponsor satisfaction literature. Positive experiences were perceived outside the expectations, for instance a respondent that were seeking pure *goodwill* felt satisfaction on post-event media exposure report. In addition, positive experiences seemed to be formed from sponsee's actions (e.g. marketing efforts) and not on sponsor's leveraging activities or other pro-activity.

Finally, all satisfaction that was created was noneconomic satisfaction, as none of the sponsors had financial expectations. Satisfaction was mainly driven by contribution towards the goodwill, perceived success of the event (successful record attempt, visibility (on- and off-line) and the event production.

7.1 Managerial Implications

Charity sport events could differentiate themselves with unique opportunities that other events don't offer. One point is to attach a meaningful world records attempt to the event. Different running events are and have been very popular although it is hard for the event to differentiate itself in tough competition. On the contrary, choosing a sport that is held in some regard in the area and combining that with for instance a Guinness World Record attempt is likely to raise much more attention among local media as well as arouse the interest of potential sponsors.

Many small and macro sized companies are eager to sponsor charity sport events and won't require long negotiations or multiple perks. Local charities can approach *goodwill sponsors* with generic sponsor packages when the asking prices are reasonable. In general, companies with million or above annual revenue don't need to think too long for investments worth 500 euros and less. However events should be aware that companies are receiving sponsor offers all the time. For creating some results and avoiding signage

clutter sponsees should have a clear plan which business sectors to approach and how to make purchase as easy as possible. For annual events and larger charity sport events more careful and precise planning process is needed. Larger asking prices and larger sponsorship offers demand longer periods of time to negotiate and to craft the offers. For larger sponsorships generic offer may not be the best solution as every sponsor have different needs and wants. Larger sponsorships may require easily more than a year before the event to contact the sponsors for potential sponsorship opportunities. Anyhow, all offers should clearly state the benefits that sponsors are receiving via sponsorship.

A really good idea would be to provide sponsors with the event's marketing plan and to tell and educate sponsors about leveraging possibilities and ideas. Sponsorship's full potential is never discovered without a proper leverage plan. Too often sponsorship proposals are generic offers that may not meet the sponsors needs or wants (Skidum-Reid). Therefore sponsor proposals from sponsor perspective could provide more interest among the potential sponsors. In addition, event could offer marketing plan for sponsors so that they could implement their sponsorship leveraging program in sync with the event marketing plan. Sponsees' should consider the sponsor fit as well as sponsors consider their fit with the event. Sponsors can even appreciate it if they can bring extra value for the event. Finally, sponsors should be informed about possible leveraging opportunities. Moreover, unexpected positive surprises and gains can increase sponsor satisfaction which may then lead into repurchase intentions.

Sponsors' sponsoring experience appears to be influenced by multiple aspects and event second hand knowledge. Creating good communication relations in between sponsor and the sponsee can create multiple advantages and may develop more positive relationship. Providing sponsors with perks that were not included the sponsorship agreement can influence positively on perceived sponsorship experience. The case provided evidences that sponsors may not expect to receive media exposure reports, providing them with one can be a mean for creating positive satisfaction.

There are some soft spots for finding corporate sponsors. Family and company or organization tie-ins may ease sponsor acquisition. According to this research sponsors with family tie-ins don't value the perks and have no expectations towards the sponsorship. It is not wise to exploit family relations but it is smart to acknowledge that relations matter and can ease the burden.

Sponsors should develop their understanding on sponsorships further. In addition, they should develop proper sponsor plans instead of ad hoc decisions. A good starting point is to view company values and whom they want to communicate with. When companies would sponsor with better focus it would be easier for them to implement sponsorships in marketing strategies as well as other aspects of internal and external communications. Companies should acknowledge that over exploiting cause sponsorships can be negative, however based on this research there is more risk in under exploiting the sponsorships and not covering the full potential of sponsorships. In addition, sponsors should develop proper leveraging plans and secure enough resources to actually follow these plans. Passive sponsorship is not very productive. According to this research it is evident that companies sponsored with no expectations or with really low expectations. It is difficult for sponsors to evaluate the sponsorship if they haven't established goals for it. Furthermore the personal motives of managers to sponsor can hindsight the business or marketing potential of the sponsorships. One of the most important aspects for sponsor is to know which target market they can reach and communicate with through the sponsorship. If sponsee can't offer proper information on this, strategic and marketing minded sponsors should hesitate. It should be noted that sponsorship is all about communication and changing target markets behavior and attitudes via sponsorship (Skildum-Reid 2012).

7.2 Limitations and Future Research Proposals

This thesis is an experimental study and empirical findings may be hard to generalize as they are context drawn. Experimental studies provide more internal validity than field studies, however findings may be complex and content suppressed (Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012, 510). Satisfaction is drawn from sponsor expectations and experience.

However longitudinal research has not been conducted. In addition causal links were not investigated nor proposed. Sponsor satisfaction was influenced by expectations and perceived experience, however to which extend remains unanswered. Perhaps larger quantitative research could provide more insights on the relations of expectations and experiences on sponsor satisfaction as well as provide information on the significances on sole factors.

Due the longitude of the event and the nature of a single event case relationships can be rather thin, therefore the study of the relationship itself is neglected. It should be mentioned that quantitative significances or the impact of relations of expectations, experiences and satisfaction were not calculated. Therefore, results may be exposed in interpretations.

As sponsor satisfaction survey was scrutinize after the event, the sponsor objectives may have deferred from original objectives or the original objectives and reasons for sponsoring may have forgotten by the respondents. Finally, it should be noted that value of each sponsorship deal was relatively low (300-1500 euros) which most likely had an effect on the sponsor commitment, and their leveraging activities. It may be that with higher investments sponsors might have behaved differently. Unfortunately comparing minor and major sponsor categories did not provide relevant new information or significant differences between the data. It could be more likely that when general investments would be higher more differences would also show up.

In conducting, reasons and motivations are being used as synonyms as well as reasons and goals. It is assumed that if the reasons for sponsoring are in line with the goals that are sought through sponsoring the event. Whereas, expectations are counted as overall expectations in general towards the event and/or the sponsorship experience itself. From event organization's perspective, all MPSO sponsorships were sold against upon agreed counterpart, for instance signage or logo exposure and thus counted as sponsorships and therefore not viewed as, for instance, patronage. Moreover, it is assumed in this study that

satisfaction can be measured against the outcome of expectations, goals and the overall experience.

In addition, sponsors in general had only minor or no expectations. Comparing expectations against the sponsorship outcomes or experience can be therefore challenging. In longitudinal sponsorship relationship a relationship based view could provide more meaningful findings. Expressing expectations can be also difficult for the respondents. Actually, some respondents interpret reasons for sponsoring parallel for expectations. Exploring satisfaction via relationship view would not have been fruitful in case of relatively small scale single case in which neither sponsor or sponsee have enough resources to invest in relationship management or developing these sponsor-sponsee relationships. On the contrary, it has been suggested by multiple scholars (e.g. Valanko 2009) to weight sponsor expectations against outcomes. Unfortunately, when sponsor expectations are in few it is difficult to really address non existing expectations against the perceived outcome. When expectations are trivial or even not existing, weighting the sponsorship experience against them can be challenging. Therefore these expectations should however be clearly stated and agreed upon with both parties prior the event. Expectations could be also asked by a research prior the event and then evaluated against the results in after event survey. It should be noted that sponsor satisfaction evaluation is and should be one part of larger evaluation process conducted by both parties involved: sponsor and the sponsee. Finally, perfect time for conducting a survey is challenging as one sponsor brought up: when do the sponsorship gains actually end: *"Benefits later in the GWR (book) as the name is visible there. Hard to tell what are the actual benefits and when do the benefits end."* So far right answer for this hardly exists. One interesting topic that this study did not focus was effectiveness of charity sport event sponsorships. It would be interesting to evaluate the sponsorship effects that charity sport event sponsorships could achieve. Conducting research in such perspective could add more meaning and reasons to sponsor charity sport events in the future. Further understanding of sponsors leveraging activities could also provide some meaningful insights for academic as well as managerial purposes.

7.3 Reliability and Validity

In this chapter the validity, originality and credibility of the data is discussed. The research findings suggest widening the understanding of sponsor motivations or reasons behind charity sport event sponsorships. It could be that some of these findings could be valid for other sponsorship forms however more research would be needed to make such suggestions. It is also suggested that term *goodwill sponsor* to be implemented in describing a sponsor with no expectations and with only altruistic goal in mind to be achieved.

Reliability and validity of the thesis were conducted to evaluate the applicability of this research in marketing purposes. It is typical for qualitative study to assess them throughout the study process which is also one of the principles of scientific research. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 210) According to Hisjärvi et al. (2008, 226) reliability refers to the tolerance of repetition, meaning that reliable research can be repeated with the gathered data. Whereas validity means that study accurately can measure what it is intend to measure. In fact, qualitative research is openly subjective study and the researcher has an influence on the interpretations of the results (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 210).

The total answer percentage was 100, as 12 interviews were targeted, scheduled, completed and approved. By portion the major sponsors reflected 66.7 percent of the population (8 out of 12) and minor sponsors 33.3 percent (4 out of 12). All in all, 12 out of identified 25 sponsors were interviewed, covering 48 percent of the total population. Researcher conducted all the interviews with openly telling the respondents that will record all the interviews and takes no stand on the comments. Due the relatively small sample it is impossible to receive bullet proof reliability. However, the purpose of the research was to understand sponsor behavior in focal context and not to try to generalize findings. In addition, the number of interviews offered needed amount of data and repetition to be analyzed and for the study to be conducted. Moreover, the internal

relations of expectations, experiences and satisfaction were not calculated or estimated by any quantitative manner. Data was analyzed in qualitative manner and can be exposed to interpretations. Finally, all interviews were conducted in Finnish and made in Finland. Therefore results cannot be fully generalized in world wide.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnairy form

Sponsorship Questionary in Finnish

SPONSORITYYTYVÄISYYSHAASTATTELU

1. Taustakysymykset

1.1 Henkilökohtaiset tiedot

Nimi:

Ammattinimike yrityksessä:

1.2 Yritystiedot

Yrityksen nimi:

Yrityksen liikevaihto

Tuotteita vai palveluita myyvä yritys:

Ovatko asiakkaanne pääasiassa toisia yrityksiä vai kuluttajia? Kuluttajia

Yrityksen työntekijöiden määrä:

Yrityksen sijainti:

1.3 Yrityksen sponsoroinnista

Minkälaista sponsorointia yrityksenne tekee (i.e., kulttuuri, urheilu, yksityisurheilijat, joukkueet)?

Voitteko nimetä sponsorikohteitanne?

Kuinka monta tapahtumaa yrityksenne sponsoroi vuodessa (i.e., perhetapahtumat, musiikki festivaalit ja urheilutapahtumat?)

1.4 Sponsoroinnin syitä ja tavoitteita

Miksi sponsoroitte?

Minkä takia nämä syyt?

Millaisia tavoitteita teillä on sponsoroinnille? (Mitä haluatte sponsoroinnilla saavuttaa?)

Miten yhteistyön tuloksia ja sponsoroinnin tehoa arvioidaan?

Kuinka näitä tuloksia hyödynnetään yrityksen toiminnassa?

Koetteko yrityksenne hyötyvän sponsoroinnista?

Onko sponsoroinnissa haittapuolia?

Kuinka tärkeää sponsorointi on yrityksenne markkinoinnissa?

Millainen näkyvyys on yrityksellenne tärkeää?

Miten paljon ennen itse tapahtumaa teitä kannattaa lähestyä sponsorointi mahdollisuuksilla?

2 SPONSOROINTI: MAAILMAN PISIN SALIBANDYOTTELU - ODOTUKSET

Miksi sponsoroitte MPSO:ta?

Mitä yrityksenne odotti saavansa vastineeksi sponsoroinnistaan?

Millaisia odotuksia yrityksellänne oli tapahtuman näkyvyyden suhteen?

Miksi juuri nämä odotukset?

Oliko teillä taloudellisia odotuksia sponsorointianne vastaan?

3 SPONSOROINTI: MAAILMAN PISIN SALIBANDYOTTELU - TOTEUMA

Miten tyytyväisiä olitte yleisesti tapahtuman järjestämiseen?

Arvioikaa sponsorointityytyväisyyttänne kouluarvosanoilla (4-10)?

Kuinka tyytyväisiä olette yrityksenne saamaan vastineeseen sponsorointianne vastaan?

Mikä oli yrityksellenne tärkeintä sponsoroinnilla saavutettua MPSO tapahtuman osalta?

Miksi tämä on tärkeä asia?

Miten seuraisitte tapahtuman etenemistä ja toteutusta?

Huomasitteko tapahtumasta uutisointia mediassa?

Oliko tästä mielestänne yrityksellenne hyötyä?

Miten tapahtuman saama näkyvyys hyödyttää tai hyödytti yritystänne?

Hyödyntääkö tai hyödynsikö yrityksenne MPSO omassa viestinnässään?

Jos hyödynsi, niin miten?

Jos ei, niin miksi?

Miten arvioisit todennäköisyyttä osallistua kyseiseen tapahtumaan uudelleen tulevaisuudessa?

Miten MPSO voisi parantaa yrityksenne kokemusta sponsoroinnista ensi kerralla?

EXTRA KYSYMYKSET

Miten sponsorointia ylipäätänsä voitaisiin parantaa, jotta yrityksenne haluaisi panostaa enemmän sponsorointiin?