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Master of Supply Management

Developing an existing partnership agreement through value-adding activities

Case Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab

Master Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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The relationship between golf maintenance machine supplier and golf courses has always been important, especially in Finland, because the size of market in Finland. This study focuses on examining the Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab's partnership agreement and the services which it offers. Especially the target is to examine that does the partnership agreement need any changes, which would provide more value not only for Hako G&G but also for their partnership courses. This research use partnership courses experiences and feelings about how partnership agreement's activities and services are working.

This research utilizes both customer satisfaction survey and semi-structured interviews to obtain as in-dept and comprehensive information as possible to generate possible developing ideas. The research came to the conclusion that Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab partnership agreement is a viable solution for partnership courses, but today's problems, like Covid-19 and shortage of components, affects the partnership agreement's ability to meet the needs of partnership courses. The study showed that customers find it important to maintain the current state, but at the same time Hako G&G's ability to respond agilely to a changing environment. With the mindset of lean and kaizen in particular, Hako G&G would be able to maintain the current state of partnership agreement activities, while responding to potential changes and threats.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Golf-koneiden toimittajien ja golf-kenttien yhteistyö ja kumppanuus ovat aina olleet merkittäviä, erityisesti Suomessa johtuen Suomen markkinoiden koosta. Tämä tutkimus pyrkii tutkimaan Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab:n luomaa kumppanuussopimusta ja sen tarjoamia palveluita, ja erityisesti kohde on tarkastella, että tarvitseeko kumppanuussopimusta muuttaa, jotta se toisi enemmän arvoa niin Hako G&G:lle kuin heidän kumppanuuskentillensä. Tutkimus hyödyntää kumppanuuskenttien kokemuksia ja tuntemuksia siitä, että miten kumppanuussopimuksen aktiviteetit ja palvelut toimivat todellisuudessa.

Tutkimuksessa hyödynnettiin niin tyytyväisyyskyselyä kuin puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja saadakseen mahdollisimman laajan tiedon, jonka avulla mahdolliset kehitysideat luodaan. Tutkimus tuli lopputulemaan, että Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab:n kumppanuussopimus on pääpiirteiltään toimiva ratkaisu kumppanuuskentille, mutta nykypäivän ongelmat, kuten Covid-19 ja pula komponenteista, vaikuttavat myös kumppanuussopimuksen kykyyn täyttää kumppanuuskenttien tarpeet. Tutkimus osoitti, että asiakkaat kokevat tärkeäksi nykyisen tason pitämisen, mutta tämä tutkimus kokee, että yhtä tärkeää on Hako G&G:n kyvyn reagoida ketterästi muuttuvaan ympäristöön. Lean, ja varsinkin Kaizen, ajattelutavan avulla Hako G&G pystyisi ylläpitämään oman kumppanuussopimuksen aktiviteettien tasoa, ja samalla vastaamaan mahdollisiin muutoksiin ja uhkiin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“One page is not enough” is the sentence, which I am using very first time. There are so many things I would like to say, and so many people I owe a big thank you. However, one page is the name of the game, and I am going to be fine. So here we go.

Firstly, I would like to thank all my friends, you know who you are but if you do not, I have been a very bad friend. My friends from school and in Helsinki have made my student life so much fun. Sometimes awesome night might not mean a fun morning but let’s not go there. It might not end up be the prettiest road, but important road, nonetheless. Friends, thank you and thank you for supporting me when I was having a hard time. I will always remember you and what you all have done for me. If I do not see you all anymore, I would like to wish you all the best, because you have earned it.

My family, you have supported me more than I deserved. Without you, I would not be writing this, extremely sugared, text about how happy I am about your trust, constant support whenever I need it or just showing that you are here for me if hard times come, and I need you. Thank you and multiply it 100 times. Its still not enough, but I do not want to talk about math anymore, because who likes math? I hope you understand what I am trying to say.

I would like to thank my wife, Venla, about her constant support and carrying me through hard and unpleasant times. She is the true hero, and without her, I might not be here. Trust me, if you have not met her, she is the best. We should all hope that this world has more people like Venla. People who know me, know that I am not the easiest friend, and trust me, I am not the easiest husband either. Therefore, my wife deserves everything I could ever provide her. So, I thank you, and I promise that I will always be there for you. However, I do not blame her if she does not read this, because let’s face it, deciding to open over 80 pages of ramblings and countless references might not be the #1 thing to do after hard day at work.

Finally, thank you LUT University, Oy Hako Ground and Garden Ab, and everyone who has helped me to finish this thesis. Without your help, I could still be sitting on my couch and wondering which topic I am going to choose. Thank you very much.

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Abbreviations

Hako G&G = Oy Hako Ground & Garde

1. Introduction

Slowly but steadily, golf has become more and more popular in Finland. In 2021, there were 157175 verified members (Jäsenmäärät, 2021) in 129 golfclub (Golf Suomessa), and it has risen 6 % from 2020 (Golfliitto, Jäsenmäärät 2020-2021). When golf courses are gaining popularity, golf courses need to create and offer great experiment, which means that golf courses need to be in good shape, for their customers. To meet wanted expectation, golf courses need to create ways to put them into a position where they can gain enough resources. And that is when machine supplier comes in.

Partnerships and partnerships agreement has been well studied and used in different business fields. Nowadays it seems that many different companies are having partnership or partnership agreement with other companies. However, deeper partnership agreements between golf courses and golf maintenance companies have not been very common practice. Hako G&G partnership agreement is the first one in Finland's limited golf maintenance and business market. Globally, different golf courses have been created deeper partnerships with TORO brand. For example, some golf courses in Sweden (Golf advantage, Toro), Pebble beach in California (Golf Course Industry, 2021), and legendary Ryder Cup has named TORO to be their machine choice (Ryder Cup, 2020). However, deeper examination is needed, because of differences in market size and location.

Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab is a golf machine supplier, which has created a partnership agreement to offer their services to golf courses, and at the same time, get them to be committed to their company. The Figure 1 shows the basic idea of the partnership agreement. In this study, it is important to understand the roles of machine supplier (Oy Hako Ground & Garden) and customers (golf courses), but the most important thing is to dig deeper with those two-way arrows, "benefits" and "commitment", which the figure 1 shows. Partnership, and this case partnership agreement, needs to have elements, which creates value for both parties to be meaningful. On the other hand, like Lean will show later on, recognizing defects are as important as knowing where the value comes. It is important to understand that partnership cannot work without both parties putting their effort to make it

work. Therefore, commitment and its tasks, are as important as those possible benefits, which both parties will receive if done right.

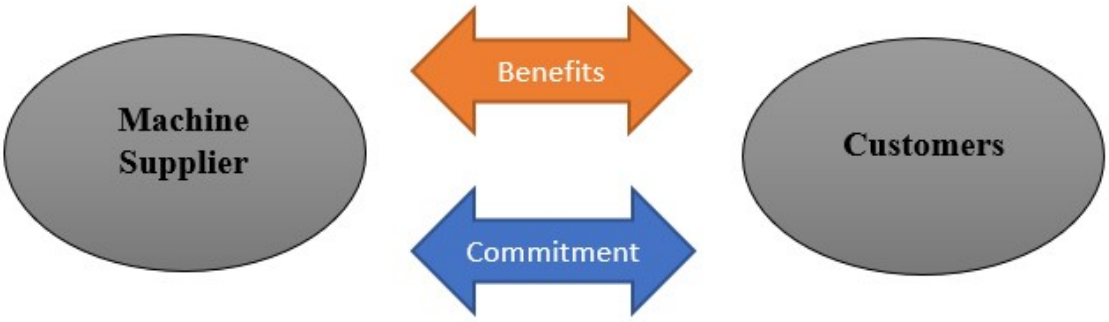

Figure 1: The basic idea of the partnership agreement, which is based on Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab partnership letter (Kumppanuus golfkentille)

Nowadays companies are facing constantly changing business environment, which naturally affects on partnerships. Therefore, it is important that partnership, or in this case provider of the partnership agreement, is capable to answers those fast changes. That is why companies' abilities to be agile and having high resilience level are important when wondering how much value it can create. Hako G&G need constantly to examine the current situation to have a clear picture about how satisfied their partnership courses are without forgetting their own goals. Having balance with how benefits should separate, helps Hako G&G to be capable to react and adapt when changes emerge.

With help of Hako G&G, this study tries to find out what partnership customers, which are golf courses, think about the state of partnership agreement, and are there any activities which should be added, fixed or removed from the agreement. However, the results cannot be putted in use without deeper calculations, but these results can be seen as a recommended developing idea. The results of this study would help not only Hako G&G, but it could also been use in other partnership cases in golf industry. However, results are based on Hako G&G partnership situation, and it is necessary to understand that results cannot be used straight in different situation. Results should be seen as a guideline and an example rather than straight answer.

1.1 Limitation and research questions

This paper limits its focus on partnership agreements activities and how to develop it to create as much value as possible for both parties, and it does not focus on contractual or legal subjects of the agreement as it can be seen from the research questions. However, those aspects might have a role in Partnership customers mind and might affect on how they see the agreement. Also, point of view of this study has limited to be machine supplier's, Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab, because this study is created with and for them. Every possible developing idea is created by keeping machine supplier's interest on mind.

Every study has it owns research questions, and so has this study. This study has one main research question, and it is:

How can machine supplier develop current partnership agreement to add value for both parties

The main research question shows the limitation of the study as it was mentioned earlier. This question creates the area where this study can operate without losing its main goal. To support the main question, this paper includes three different sub-research questions. Those three questions are:

Sub-research question 1: What value and non-value adding activities current partnership agreement have?

Sub-research question 2: What new value-adding activities could be added to partnership agreement?

Sub-research question 3: What risks could evolve after developing the current partnership agreement?

When the main research question limits the wanted "playground" of this study, these three different sub-research questions give it different aspects and shows the wanted target of this study. As it can be seen, these sub-research questions start with the current situation. The next step, sub-research question 2, is the developing process. And finally, the sub-research question 3 tries to understand the life after developing the current partnership agreement.

1.2 Theoretical frame of the study

In this sub-chapter this paper provides superficial but necessary picture about the theoretical frame of this study. Using theoretical tools is necessary when this paper moves to the point where theoretical tools are used with the results of empirical part of the study. This paper recognizes two different theories which are important to the subject. Those two theories are the main theories of this study, and they are: Lean management and Partnership.

As it can be seen from the figure 2, the theoretical chapter starts with pointing out the main subjects, which are Lean Management and Partnership as it was mentioned earlier. This will happen by using earlier studies of the subject to provide quality and trustful information. The next step is to study the background of the subject, which is necessary to know when using theory later this study. The third step might be the most interesting one, because in this step, this paper provides information about the features of those both main theories. Knowing the features is truly necessary, because without providing the small details, this paper might end up using or understanding the theory wrong, which would have negative effects to this study. The last step of theory chapter is "possible pitfalls" like the figure 2 shows. Usually everything has its own weaknesses which need to be recognized and considered when deciding if that theory will be used. Figure 2 can be seen as a guideline which will help to provide clear and necessary structure for this study. Every step will provide own and crucial information which can be seen in the end of this paper.

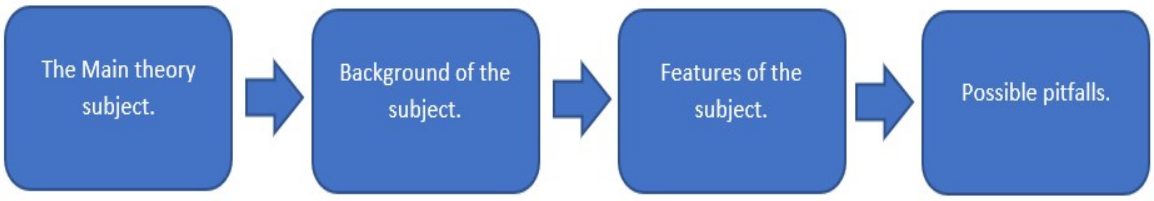

Figure 2: The structure of theoretical chapters of this study.

Figure 3 provides a clear picture about theoretical concept of this study. As it can be seen from the figure 3, Lean includes 2 main features, which are value and waste. According to different researchers, like Helmond (2020) and Johansson & Osternman (2017) value and waste are important part of lean. On the other hand, partnership concept includes 4 different

main features in this paper like figure 3 shows. Partnership includes different parties, which means that they could have different goals, like Andersson et al (1994) point out. However, this paper will examine these concepts deeper later on.

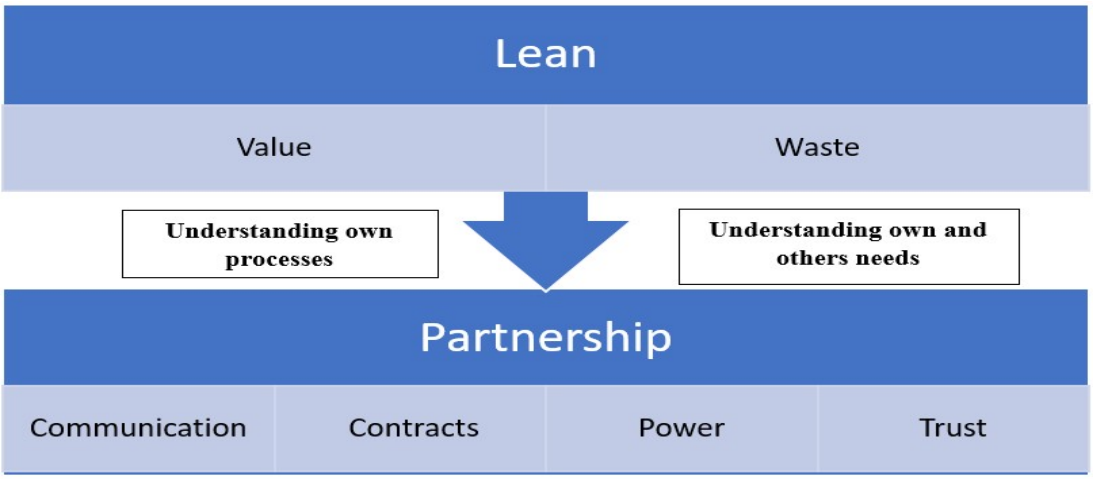

Figure 3: Conceptual framework of this study.

Deciding to use Lean management and Partnership as the main subjects of this paper, helps to limit this paper to the wanted subject and to focus on getting answer to those created research and sub-research questions. Limiting the focus also helps to decrease the possibilities of losing control of this paper. Strict limitations might also be a key element to get the best results for this paper but also for Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab, which could have positive impact for their partnership agreement in the future.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This paragraph is the last one in the introduction chapter. In this paragraph, paper will provide superficial guideline for the rest of the paper and explain what role every character has. Like mentioned earlier, the first one is introduction, and its role is to provide superficial picture about this thesis subject and what point of view it is using. This chapter is important because it is the first contact to the subject, and it creates limits for this thesis.

The next two chapters are theoretical chapters. These chapters target to provide information about theoretical tools, which are used later in this thesis. These chapters are crucial, because it is necessary to open those selected theories to truly understand why those theories were chosen to be used in this study. Theoretical chapters could be called as a “tool warehouse” because theories which are mentioned in those chapters, are the tools which are used with

collected data to find out if the current partnership agreement need or even could be developed.

After theoretical chapters this paper moves on to target company and partnership agreement chapter. This chapter provide deeper information about Hako G&G and the state of the current partnership agreement. This is an important chapter, because it is necessary to understand what kind of company is providing the partnership agreement, the state of the company could affect on how much value this agreement could provide to their partnership customers. However, studying the partnership agreement is more important because that agreement is the point of this study. It needs to be fully understood and to examine what activities it includes. Without doing that, it would be impossible to try developing it.

Th next chapter is focusing on research methods. In this chapter, this paper provides information about which research method it chose to use in this study and why. Also in this chapter, this study will show how used research method will be used when collecting data. This chapter is necessary and maybe more important that it might seem. If the wrong research method is used or it has been used poorly, it could effect on to the results of this study, because the collected data might not be as good as possible. When point of the theoretical chapters were to provide tools to craft the raw material, then this chapter provide the raw material.

After research method chapter this study moves on to the most important chapter, and the chapter is called “empirical study”. The point of that chapter is to focus on to the collected data, which is needed to find out if there is need to develop the current partnership agreement. If the developing is needed, collected data will be used with the theoretical tools to provide new ideas how the partnership agreement can provide more value for both parties.

The last chapter of this study is about assembling the new data and findings. Those new findings and answers will be used when answering to this paper research questions. After that, this paper reflects on how successful this study was, and what possible limitations could have affected on the results of the study. It would also include possible targets for the new studies which could be created in the future.

2. Lean Management

After giving brief picture about this thesis, it is time to move on to theoretical parts of this study. In this chapter, this study is examining and providing information about Lean Management, which is one of the main theories of this study. Lean as a whole concept, have the key role in this study. Lean characters added Hako G&G business environment could create not only developing ideas but also help Hako G&G to create their own pactions to be agile without forgetting to be ready to adapt their own processes if it is needed. Being able to adapt and keeping processes agile, companies can face different problems without dramatic changes. For example, current Covid-19 situation and its different effects are truly the perfect example.

First, this chapter focus on providing basic information and background about Lean Management, before moving on the focus to its small details and features. Understanding and examining small details is needed to be capable of implementing them to own processes. However, different situations need different actions, therefore it is crucial to understand that implementing lean to own systems like others have, could have negative impact. In this chapter, this paper brings different point of view to Lean Management, which are based on earlier studies.

2.1 What is Lean Management?

Origin of the Lean management can be located to Japan and more closely to Toyota automobiles factories in 1940s (Helmond, 2020). Especially the moment when Toyota automobile created and implemented Toyota Production System, TPS, in 1960's (Zhou, 2016). Different researchers state that lean management was the key factor which gave Japanese industries the edge over west (Helmond, 2020; Liker, 1998). Reasons why Japanese companies managed to really implement and use lean management are not only business related, but also Japanese society have a positive impact (Helmond, 2020). There is a disagreement between researchers about how big impact Japanese culture have when implementing lean management in its early stages (Uriona Maldonado et al, 2020). On the other hand, the foundation of the lean management is based on early stages of industrialization and mass production, which are truly born in the west (Kumar BR et al, 2015). However, lean management became gaining a lot of attention after the book "The Machine That Changed The World" by Womack et al (1990), and it might have growth its roots in Japan but now it has spread to everywhere (Helmond, 2020). Also, Lean and Lean

management was first used in automotive industry, but now It has spread to various different industries (Solaimani et al, 2019).

Lean management can be described as a style to make processes to be more optimized by changing inefficient actions or activities with actions or activities which bring more value for customers. (Helmond, 2020; Zhou, 2016). However, different researchers see the lean differently based on the point of view, which has led to the situation where lean has been described numerous ways (Yadav, Mittal & Jain, 2020). It could be said that the point of the lean management is to provide, whatever customers need is, faster and flexible (Schonberger, 2019). The concept "Kaizen" has been linked tightly to the Lean (Helmond, 2020). Kaizen, which means continuous improvement, focus on improving processes all the time to develop them to be on the top (Helmond, 2020; Sandle, 2014).

Figure 4 shows the five-focus point of the lean management, and it shows the fact that customers have an important role in lean management. Some could say that Lean management preach "doing more with less" spirit (Baliga, Raut & Kamble, 2019), and keeping customer in the centre of the focus (Helmold, 2020). On the other hand, Kumar Br et al (2015) points out that when transitioning to lean, it should be noticed that it is more about changing organizational culture and managing styles than managing lean tools.

One of the key elements of the Lean management is the waste, which means inefficiencies, in value chain (Helmond, 2020). Some could describe that every action or process which goal is not to create value for the company's end customers, can be seen as a waste (Zhou, 2016). When talking about waste, Helmond (2020) means all actions or processes what company do, or every product or service what company provide to the customer what customer does not really want. For example, Lean sees massive inventories as a waste, and prefers them to be as optimized as possible (Zhou, 2016).

Figure 4 shows that the people, employees, have a crucial role when attempting to work by using lean methods. Some researchers see employees as a key factor because they are working through lean practises (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990; Zhou, 2016). Womack, Jones and Roos (1990) calls employees as a core of the lean organization. Zhou (2016) think that lean management and the whole concept should be told to the employees, and it is crucial that employees understand it well. Researchers found out that understanding the lean concept affected on the result of lean decisions (Zhou, 2016; Solaimani et al, 2019).

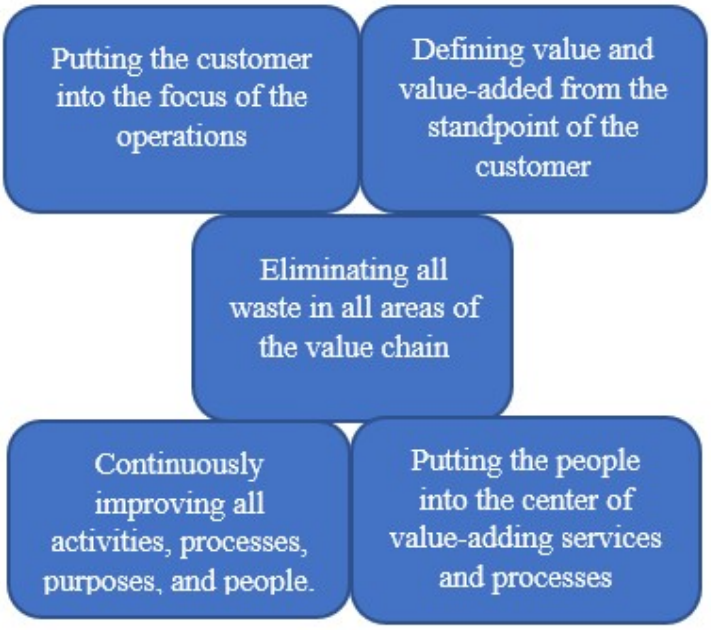

Figure 4: The five-focus point of the lean management. The picture is based on Helmond (2020) provided information about the five-focus points.

Nowadays Lean has changed and evolved massively, which have made some researchers to call Lean more as a way of thinking (Bhasin & Burcher, 2006; Solaimani et al, 2019). Lean should be seen more as a system approach than just a regular tool (Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021). Bhasin and Burcher (2006) separates lean practices to two different groups, which are soft and hard. Soft actions and practices are for cultural and social aspects, and hard practices are for tools and processes (Bhasin & Burcher, 2006). Secondly, lean philosophy has nowadays integrated with many different theoretical tools and aspects which has led to the fact that Lean frame of reference has become more wider and wider than ever before (Solaimani et al, 2019). The research world sees that in the future, researchers should shift their focus on to the human factor of the lean management (Logani et al, 2013). However, importance of the relationship between waste and value is always going to be in the key position when speaking and studying of lean management (Johansson & Osterman, 2017).

2.1.1 What is value?

The term “value” has a key role in lean (Zhou, 2016; Helmond, 2020), and that is why it is crucial not only to know what it really means but also truly understand it. The term has been a notable term in the field of management a long time now (Neap & Celik, 1999). When

looking at the true definition of value in the field of supply chain and production, it is hard to find out the true meaning of value (Francis et al, 2014). Francis et al (2014) also point out in their study that the word "value" is very common, and it could be used, for example, as a verd, adjective or even noun. Hallberg (2017) also states that the meaning of value has created a lot of confusion in the marketing and management community, and it has been used sloppily.

Carl Menger (1871/2013) provided an interesting point of view to the term value "Value is thus the importance that individual goods or quantities of goods attain for us because we are conscious of being dependent on command of them for the satisfaction of our needs". Business world in general might have confusion about the meaning of value (Francis et al, 2014; Hallberg; 2017), but the accepted definition for the term in the field of economics, according to the Hallberg (2017), is: "the collective or social aspects of value are simply the sum of the individually perceived satisfaction of needs".

2.1.2 Waste

The waste, non-value adding activity, has as important role in the lean management as the value (Johansson & Osterman, 2017). Womack and Jones (1996) calls waste as "any human activity which absorbs resources but not create value". When speaking and creating strategies to tackle and remove waste, it actually means that companies plan to reshape wanted action or processes to create value over negative results (Hines & Taylor, 2000). According to the different research, waste can be separated to seven different wastes (Ohno, 1988; Johansson & Osterman, 2017), and that is why those are called "seven traditional wastes" (Womack & Jones, 1996). According to the Ohno (1988) those wastes are: overproduction, defects, unnecessary inventory, inappropriate processing, excessive transportation, waiting, and lastly unnecessary motion. Hines & Rich (1997) point out that when removing possible wastes, the improvements might not be the biggest, but can be an extremely crucial for the company.

The first waste type is overproduction (Ohno, 1988), and according to the Hines & Rich (1997) it is called the most serious waste type. Overproduction is described as a producing too many wanted products, or wanted products are produced too early (Hines & Taylor, 2000; Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015). The reason why overproduction is one of the seven lean waste types is because it increases the inventories (Hines & Taylor, 2000), when the lean is trying to minimize inventories (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). Hines & Rich (1997) point

out that overproduction increase the lead times, and that could affect on other wastes, like defects.

The next waste type is defects (Ohno, 1988), and it means that the produced product or service does not meet customers need and expectations (Helmond, 2020). Defects in processes leads to many different associated cost (Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015). Dinis-Carvalho et al (2015) points out that material, labour and machine costs are prime examples about what associated costs defects can create. However, defects should be seen as a opportunity to reshape and develop company's processes, and that is why defects can be hoard for Kaizen (Continuous improvement) activities (Hines & Rich, 1997).

The third waste type is called unnecessary inventory (Ohno, 1988), which increase storage costs and effect on competitiveness of the organization and value stream (Hines & Rich, 1997). Dinis-Carvalho et al (2015) sees that material which are waiting to be processed, or transported, or inspected, are unnecessary inventory. Like overproduction, unnecessary inventory could lead to the increased the lead times. However, the answer lies in the company's inventories, which means that company needs to go through inventories before unnecessary inventory waste can be fixed. (Hines & Rich, 1997).

The fourth waste type is inappropriate processing (Ohno, 1988), which means that process includes parts which are non-value adding for the company's customer (Helmond, 2020) or providing tasks which are not asked (Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015). Inappropriate processing evolves when companies are using too complex solutions to simple tasks, for example using bigger machine when a couple of smaller ones would be enough (Hines & Rich, 1997). However, Liker (2003) sees that creating too quality products can be seen as a waste. According to the Hines & Rich (1997), inappropriate processing also includes the situation when machines are used without devices which could prevent making the bad quality items.

The next waste type is excessive transportation (Ohno, 1988), which involves tasks where products are be moved from one place to other (Hines & Rich, 1997; Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015). According to the Hines & Rich (1997) every movement or transport inside the factory could be seen as a waste, and that is why the ideal is to minimize the movement of the product. Transportation can also have negative impact to the products. For example, transportation can damage the products. (Hines & Rich, 1997).

The second last waste type is called waiting (Ohno, 1988), which means whenever time is being used ineffectively and it affects not only for the products but also for workers (Hines & Rich, 1997). For example, waiting waste can be when workers are waiting machine to do its process and waiting directions (communication) from others (Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015). Hines and Rich (1997) point out that there should not be any waiting, but if there is waiting, it could be used, for example, training workers or maintenance machines.

The last waste type which Ohno (1988) identified is unnecessary motion, and it means every action or activities which could be avoided (Hines & Rich, 1997). According to the Hines & Rich (1997), unnecessary motion could be tiring for the workers, and that could decrease the quality of the products or services. For example, workers walking and other movements (Dinis-Carvalho et al, 2015) are good examples about unnecessary motion.

Nowadays different opinions and studies might have created some confusion when speaking about the term "waste" (Thürer, Tomašević & Stevenson, 2017). Thürer, Tomašević and Stevenson (2017) point out that there is many different reseaches which provides own definition of waste, but research world has not provided review about waste, and this could have impact on how lean and its effectiveness are seen.

2.1.3 Lean management versus Traditional way

When organization tries to shift from traditional way to the lean management style, it will challenge both inside and outside of the company (Zhou, 2016). The traditional way, like Fordism and Taylorism, has the same strategic importance than lean, but the differences between them is at their point of view (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990; Ohno, 1987). The differences show why Ohno (1998) has called lean as a "minimum workshop". That is why comparing lean management and traditional, could be seen as comparing optimizing (Helmold, 2020) and "minimum workshop" (Ohno, 1988) with mass production (Watson, 2019).

The lean tries to minimize companies' actions, like inventories and movements, because lean tries to be as cost effective as possible, and it sees every unnecessary element as waste (Ohno, 1988). For instance, when comparing lean management opinion about inventories to traditional ways opinion, they are opposite of each other (Forza, 1996). Lean sees huge inventories as a waste (Hines & Rich, 1997), and prefers to produce when the customer has

put the order in (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). On the other hand, traditional way prefers bigger inventories (Helmold, 2020).

When comparing traditional and lean, there is disparities about how they see workforce (Forza, 1996; Helmold, 2020). Lean sees workers as a part of friendly, unified community rather than just unmotivated resource in hostile working climate (Forza, 1996), and workers have an important role in lean management (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990; Zhou, 2016). However, lean might give more respect for the workers, but it does not affect positively on how much pressure workers are feeling (Forza, 1996).

When comparing working styles, it can be noticed that lean is more flexible and provides more quality than traditional ways. Lean systems manage to integrate different complex systems and actions to one whole flow. However, it should be noticed that is same what Henry Ford dreamed of, but he could not create and synchronize the whole process together. (Forza, 1996).

2.2 Lean Principles

According to the different researchers, Lean management has five main principles (Womack & Jones, 1996; Kumar BR et al, 2015), and those are: value, value stream, flow, pull, and perfection. (Womack & Jones, 1996). The lean principles have been developed slowly, and it is a qualitative method (Antony, 2011). The figure 5 shows the five principles of the lean. On the other hand, the five principles of lean could be call as: Identify value, map the value stream, create flow, establish pull, and finally, seek perfection (Aqlan & Mustafa ali, 2014).

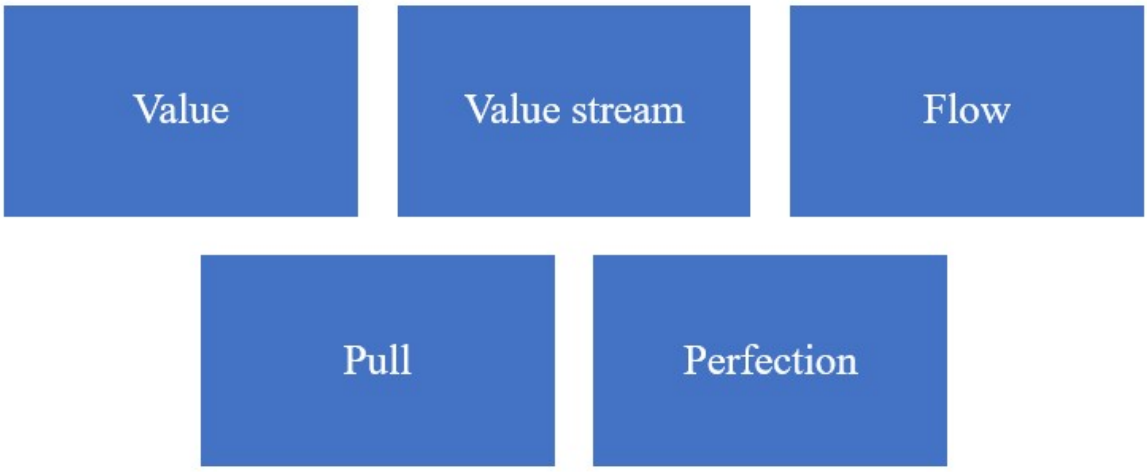

Figure 5: The five principles of lean. This picture is based on Womack & Jones (1996) opinion about Lean principles

Like Womack & Jones (1996) opinion, the figure 6 starts with the value. The value means in this case what the use of the product or service offers for the company's customer (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). In this step, companies need truly to understand what their customers want and need, so they can provide value for them (Hines & Taylor, 2010).

The second principle is called value stream (Womack & Jones, 1996), which is explained little bit deeper in the figure 6. The point of creating and focusing on value stream is to companies to find out and make sure that every step creates value and not waste (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). According to the Hines and Rick (1997) there are three different operations in the value stream: non-value adding, necessary but non-value adding, and finally value adding. Non-value adding activities are the purest waste in processes and those need to get eliminated. Waiting time is a good example about nonvalue adding activity. The second type, necessary but non-value adding, is also a waste, but those cannot be eliminated right away, because that would need to radical changes in current operational styles which. Walking a long way to get a tool and walk back, is a prime example about necessary but non-value adding activity. The last one is value adding, and prime example about value adding operation is a processing raw material by manual labour. (Hines & Rick, 1997). In the company which have not done any lean activities, value adding activities are minorities and type one and two are the majorities (Hines & Taylor, 2000)

The third principle is "flow" (Womack & Jones, 1996), and its point is to shift and reshape processes to help those products gets to move without any problems in different value steps (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). Also, the figure 6, which is based on Hines & Taylor (2010) and Machado & Leitner (2010) opinion about what the point of flow is in the lean management. The next lean principle is called "pull" (Womack & Jones, 1996). The "Pull" means that when customer find out the need of product/service, they "pull" and the company only starts doing the order after the "pull" call from the customer (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011; Helmond, 2020). The figure 6 shows that the "pull" principle means that the company should start doing order not before the customer need. However, the pull principle has faced some critiques from researchers (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). According to Hopp and Spearman (2004), there is problem on about what the pull means, and the confusion around the pull has spread to other issues.

The last lean principle is called perfection (Womack & Jones, 1996), which means that company should focus on fulfilling customers need and constant focus on improving

company's processes (Staats, Brunner & Upton, 2011). The figure 6 shows the point of the "perfection" principle as a motive to focus on removing the waste when the company finds them in their processes. It is important that employees truly understand importance of their action in every step of the process because they are the key factor in lean organization (Zhou, 2016).

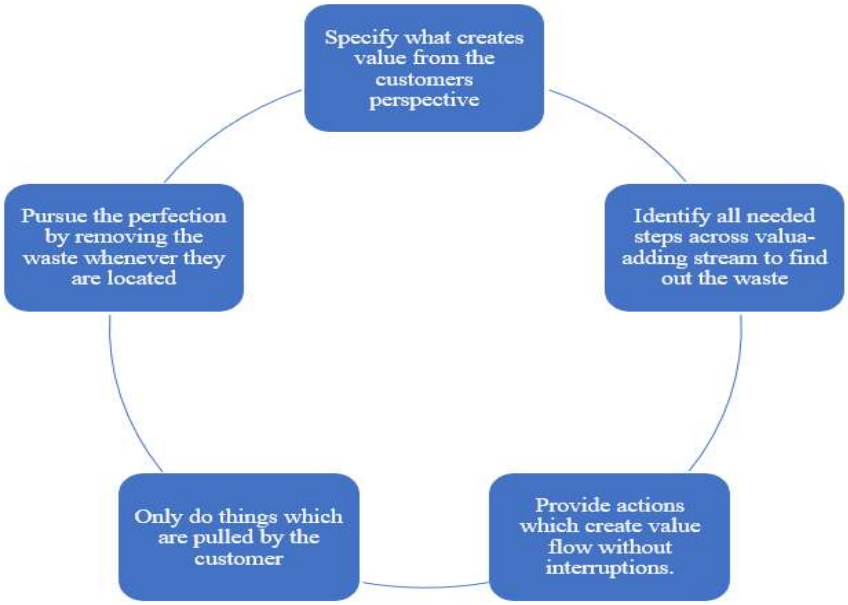

Figure 6: Deeper look to the five lean principles, and it is based on Hines and Taylor (2010), and Machado & Leitner (2010) opinion about the five lean principles.

2.3 The negative side of lean

Usually things have two different sides, positive and negative. Lean is not an exception. Hines, Taylor & Walsh (2020) wonders that is literature of lean too positive to be true. The nature of lean might lead to studies that paint too positive picture, and it is tempting to create "feel good- stories" (Hines, Taylor & Walsh, 2020). Bateman (2001) throw a red flag in her studies, because consultants exaggerate the positives of lean.

The point of the lean is to cut the waste by making processes more efficient, and that is why some researchers see lean approach as a way to exploit employees (Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021). From higher standards to make processes as fast as possible, could be seen as a bad thing to the workers (Huo & Boxall, 2018; Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021). The lean has become so popular, that managers generally do not question the effectiveness of the

lean (Longoni et al, 2013). The unknown effects on workers' health (Longoni et al, 2013; Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021) has concerned some researchers because of the lack of research about the subject (Longoni et al, 2013). Longoni et al (2013) point out that the field of supply chain management has not put much effort on researching lean's possible safety issues than other fields have. Those researchers who research lean sceptically has given lean a nickname "mean" (Adler, 1999), because they see that lean is mean to employees (Longoni et al, 2013). However, those researchers who support lean, argue that possible safety concerns are from those companies and factories who has not implemented lean correctly (Womack, Armstrong & Liker, 2009). It should be noted that safety concerns in lean is not just a research world subject, but also it is political and employment law question (Longoni et al, 2013).

The main problem when thinking if lean is bad for the workers, and what different possible negative side-effects it could have to the workers, are not known (Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021).There is a hole in the literature about the lean's negative effects on the social outcomes (Danese, Manfè, & Romano, 2018), and the whole literature subject is unstructured chaos, which need to be reshaped (Salentijn, Beijer & Antony, 2021). Salentijn, Beijer and Antony (2021) came to the conclusion that the lack of research makes it impossible to make a clear conclusion whenever side-effects of lean are bad for the workers, and if the human-related factors have any impact on how successful the implementation of lean is. Also, there is lack of studies which research on both managers perspective and workers perspective (Genaidy & Karwowski, 2003).

The lean is facing more critiques than just negative effects on workers (Hines, Taylor & Walsh, 2020). Like mentioned earlier on, different researchers have different view about lean, which has created different opinions about what lean really is (Yadav, Mittal & Jain, 2020). And according to the Hallam (2003), (Flynn et al, 1990) and Stone (2012), there lies the problem. Hallam (2003) and Stone (2012) argue that there are obscurities on what Lean actually means. Flynn et al (1990), Schmenner & Swink point out the problem that the coherent theory of lean is not consistent enough.

As mentioned earlier, when lean has done correctly, it might be the best approach and there should not be safety concerns (Womack, Armstrong & Liker, 2009; Longoni et al, 2013). However, Longoni et al (2013) found out that human factor needs to be included when trying

to implement lean, because without that, the lean turns to the mean and at the same time it effects on operational outcomes.

3. Partnership and buyer-supplier relationship

The third chapter of this paper, put its focus on concept "partnership". Partnership is a popular concept, and its effects can be seen everywhere. However, like every theoretical concept, it might not create just positive outcomes. Understanding the whole concept and even its smallest nuances are important when working with it, because it could decrease the possibility to get negative outcomes from partnership. Partnership is a crucial concept for this paper, because this paper focus on developing the partnership agreement. Without examining what is partnership as a whole before developing the partnership agreement, this paper could create negative effects for Hako G&G. This chapter follows the same guideline than chapter 2 followed, which let this paper to examine both, the good and the bad, sides of this concept. This concept, partnership, is the last theoretical concept of this study, which means that after this chapter, this paper moves on to other subjects.

3.1 Partnership, what is that?

Earlier on, linkages between different firms were more arms-length and confrontational, and both parties of the linkages tried to get benefits from it on the others expense (Duffy, 2008). Nowadays most of the companies are dependant to their external suppliers, and especially to those resources which suppliers are providing to the firms (Srinivasan, Mukherjee & Gaur, 2011), and that is why firms have been transferring from the traditional arms-length to the deeper and more co-operative style partnerships (Duffy, 2008). Partnership has many different definitions, and the point of view effect on the definition (Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999). Partnership can be described that it is created between at least two parties, where both parties try to work together to gain business advantage (Andersson et al, 1994). Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner (1999) sees partnership as a relationship which is based on trust, openness, risk, and reward sharing, which would create better results than the parties could create by themselves. Some researchers see long-term focus and joint activities as a key element of the partnership (Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999). Generally, partnerships have a key role when thinking about how humans have created their achievements (Charness & Dufwenberg, 2006).

There are different reasons why firms might want to join or create a partnership with another firm (Joseph et al, 1995). For example, to be able to provide better product or services to customers, or the willingness to join is driven by the pressure from the business field (Joseph et al, 1995). However, partnerships do not happen without putting effort from both parties

(Tate, 1996). According to the Tate (1996) in partnership, both parties need to try to understand each other's need and to be willing to be flexible, fair, and finally, truly believe to that partnership. However, some researchers argue that there is no such a thing as a partnership because every relationship is based on competition (Cousins, 2002). Figure 7 provides clear but superficial picture about what different factors affects on how successful the created partnership is going to be. According to the Mohr & Spekman (1994), partnerships which have higher levels of partnership attributes, are going to be more successful ones.

Figure 7: Different factors which could have an impact how successful partnership is going to be. This picture is based on Mohr & Spekman (1994), Lambert, Emmelhainz &Gardner (1999), Tate (1996) opinions.

The importance of the partnership is raising in the nowadays business environment (Tate, 1996; Beekman & Robinson, 2004). Different research has stated that by resource-based view, companies try to create partnership with parties who has those resources that they do not (Nohria & Garcia-Pont, 1991). Uncertainty, frequency of transactions, and specifity of the assets, are the three critical dimensions of transactions, which is created by Williamson (Williamson, 1981; Williamson, 1985), and it has been well used when researchers has studied develop of partnership agreements (Joseph et al, 1995). However, it should be

noticed that what parties think about the possible partnership could have an impact on the result of the created partnership (Joseph et al, 1995).

3.1.1 Different types of partnerships and relationships

There are differences between different partnerships (Tate, 1996). Some partnership includes deeper connection between parties, and some partnership includes only a little bit integration but still more than in regular "arms-length relationship" (Lambert, Emmelhanz & Gardner, 1999; Rezaei, Ortt & Trott, 2018). Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner (1999) identifies three types of partnership styles, and they are named as:

- Type 1: In type 1, both partnership parties see each other as a partner, but it has a short-term focus. In some degree, both parties plan and coordinates different activities together. (Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999)
- Type 2: In type 2, Both parties move past from the coordinating activities to the integrating activities. However, both parties of the partnership do not see the partnership lasting forever, but they still have long-term focus. Both parties are more involved and working tightly with each other. (Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999).
- Type 3: In type 3, both parties see each other as a part of their own organization because they are sharing a high level of integration. In this type, both parties do not see ending point for the partnership. (Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999)

The figure 8, which is based on Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner (1999), Webster (1992) and Duffy (2008) ideas about how these three partnership types separate in the market transaction – vertical integration axle. Type 1 is closer to the market transactions, because both parties do not coordinate activities together, and Type 3 features shows that those firms are truly in deep partnership and that is why it is the closest one to the vertical integration (Lambert, Emmelhainz, Gardner, 1999; Duffy, 2008).

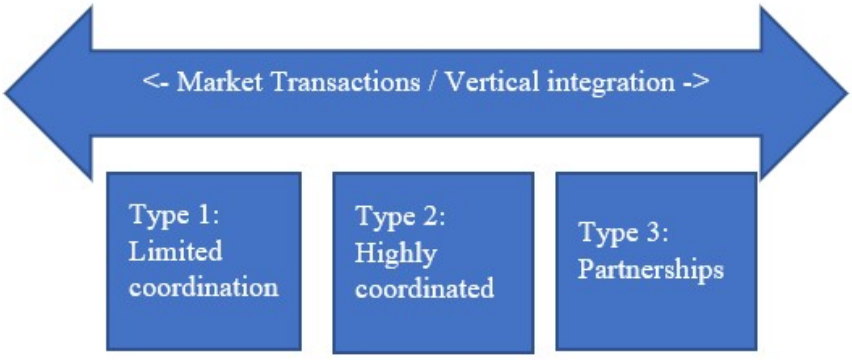

Figure 8: Different types of partnerships in the market transactions/vertical integration axle. This figure is based on Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner (1999), Webster (1992) and Duffy (2008).

3.1.2 Communication

Communication has an important role in creating and developing the partnership (Tate, 1996; Van De Vijver, Vos & Akkermans, 2011), and it has been well studied by different researchers from different perspectives (Van De Vijver, Vos & Akkermans, 2011). Communication has also defined as a sharing information between parties by using formal or informal ways to do it (Goodman & Dion, 2001). According to the Tate (1996), working information flow between both parties could be the deciding factor between success and failure of the partnership. For instance, communication has been linked to affecting trust between both parties in partnership, and it has been seen having an impact on buyers and suppliers' performance (Van De Vijver, Vos & Akkermans, 2011). Also, how well communication between parties is working, have an impact how well possible problems are going to be solved (Cannon & Homburg, 2001; Zhang & Zhang, 2013). On the other hand, higher level of frequent, intense and diverse communication between buyer and supplier could increase the chance that buyer-supplier relationship to survive (Kenis & Knoke, 2002), without forgetting nurturing the relationship (Cannon & Homburg, 2001). Heide & Miner (1992) point out that inter-organizational communication could not only decrease the level of information asymmetry, but also affect positively to behavioural transparency.

According to different studies, there are many different aspects of communication (Van De Vijver, Voss & Akkermans, 2011). For instance, quality of communication, participation and sharing the information are some aspects of communication which are measured by

using different measurement, all the way from accuracy to the completeness (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). Zhang & Zhang (2013) point out that adequacy, timeliness, accuracy and how well communicated information is understood, have an impact how effective the communication is going to be. Claycomb & Frankwick (2004) says in their study that there are four different elements of relationship communication, which are: quality, participation, information sharing and conflict resolution. Effective elements of communication are crucial for relationship partners to solve possible conflicts (Cannon & Homburg, 2001), when severe conflict resolutions, like coercive, could have negative impact on relationship (Cannon & Homburg, 2001; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Monczka et al, 1998). For instance, action to smoothing over possible problems will increase the possibility that the problem could grow to bigger conflict (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Monczka et al, 1998).

Communication can be separated to formal and informal communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2013; Goodman & Dion, 2001). Formal communication is usually traceable and verifiable (Zhang & Zhang, 2013), because formal communication is done by using the name of the organization through, for example, meeting or email (Ruekert & Walker, 1987). According to Zhang & Zhang (2013), the information, which is shared in the formal communication meeting is always task related, and the information is concrete. On the other hand, informal communication is not done officially, which is why there would not be any trace or verifiable documents. Informal communication can describe to be more personal communication style because it is done in privately. In addition, informal communication tends to be more effective communication style, because it can be seen as more honest and straightforward way to communicate. Also, higher level of informal communication could increase the possibility that both parties could jointly solve any problems before problems extend to crisis. (Zhang & Zhang, 2013).

3.1.3 Trust

Trust can mean, for instance, that both parties can count on other party's word and that they do whatever is agreed (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). On the other hand, Hosmer (1995) point out that relationship is combination of economic interests and ethical selections which is the reason for creation of trust. According to the different studies, trust is one of the partnership attributes, and it is one the most important thing in partnership (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Pruitt, 1981; Lambert, Emmelhainz & Gardner, 1999), however it changes between every relationship (Schoorman et al, 2007). Valtakoski (2015) see that trust has an important role

especially in the beginning of the relationship. Trust could be seen as an indicator to firms desire to be collaborate with other party (Pruitt, 1981). Hill et al (2009) point out that in some degree, trust is crucial factor to have in working and successful relationship. Different studies see that trust could work as a moderator and filter in the closer and tighter relationships (Celuch, Bentham & Kalouf, 2011). However, it should be noticed that not every relationship need trust to be cognitive, deep, because sometimes the calculus level of trust is enough (Akrout, 2015).

According to different studies, trust includes two different aspects, which are dependability and benevolence (Hill et al, 2009). Dependability can be described reliability of the relationship partner. On the other hand, benevolence means the relationship partners willingness to be helpful loyal to each other. (Hosmer, 1995). However, the level of trust and how it effects on how well partnership parties can solve possible conflicts, has not yet to be answered (Celuch, Bentham & Kalouf, 2011). Also, it should be noticed that different studies see the characteristics of trust differently (Gullet et al, 2009), and how trust is developed in buyer-supplier relationship (Phillips & Caldwell, 2005). According to Phillips & Caldwell (2005), the whole developing trust process is unclear, and it still is unclear opinion about parties' ethical duties. Usually, trust has been seen as a long-term relationship factor, but different studies has shown that trust has a crucial role at the beginning of the relationship (Grayson & Ambler, 1999).

On the other hand, trust is not just a belief or attitude (Gullet et al, 2009), it can be seen as a cooperation (Deutsch, 1958) where authority could lead to followers' willingness to achieve target goals by collaborating (Barnard, 1938). Understanding that trust is subjective conception which could varies (Schoorman et al, 2007), it is clear that trust does not need to be mutual to exist (Brower et al, 2000). Also, when trying to build trust, it should be noticed that different parties have different values, different agenda, different way of thinking about how to meet the wanted goals, and finally different factors which needs to be filled in possible partnership (Hosmer, 2008).

Different scholars have separated trust and distrust to two different constructs (Adler, 2007). One definition of distrust could be described as a "lack of confidence" another party which is based on the fear that one party could act against those interest which is important to other (Govier, 1994, P.240). For example, distrust is involved in the situation where one party is not doing their commitments because they are protecting themselves from the possibility

that other party could break their obligations (Kramer, 1999). Violating the current psychological contract, it not only massive ethical breach but also action that destroys the trust (Thompsom & Bunderson, 2003). According to Baruch & Lambert (2007) distrust not only create induvial anxiety but also organizational anxiety.

3.1.4 Power

Power is crucial concept, because it is one of the key concepts to understanding relationships between buyers and suppliers (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). According to the different researchers, the concept "power" has not been very well studied (Chicksand, 2015), however, the consequence of power is easy to spot (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). On the other hand, the concept power is an extremely controversial concept (Gaille, 1955), and different scholars are arguing how it should be seen (Chicksand, 2015). Cox et al (2003) and Sanderson (2008) argue that when the environment is interdependence, the partnership has the best chance to be successful. The reasons why interdependence is the best environment for the partnerships is because when parties are equal power and resource wise, neither are in the position to dominate other party (Benton & Maloni, 2005).

Hunt & Nevin (1974) separated power to two different class, which are: coercive power and noncoercive power. Using coercive power to effect on strategies means that firm use hard sanctions or threats other party by using power which is based on coercive or even legitimate power (Hunt & Nevin, 1974; Zhang & Zhang, 2013). According to Hunt & Nevin (1974), Gaski & Nevin (1985) and Reimann, Sein & Kaufmann (2017), use of coercive power increase possible conflicts between parties and decrease possible positive outcomes, when use of noncoercive power decrease conflicts. However, coercive power is well used in the real world despite all negative aspects (Benton & Maloni, 2005; Maloni & Benton, 2000)

Other power class was called noncoercive power (Hunt & Kevin, 1974). Using noncoercive power over coercive is more positive way to effect on strategies, because it includes using positive benefits as a tool (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). For example, giving rewards or using information power base is a noncoercive way to effect on strategies (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). According to different researchers, use of reward power will affect positively to commitment, cooperative behaviour, and to strength of the relationship (Benton & Maloni, 2005; Maloni & Benton, 2000; Nyaga et al, 2013; Zhao et al, 2008). Nyaga et al (2013) states that the party who receives reward power is going to feel obligated to give their best to meet other party's expectations.

3.1.5 Contracts

Contracts effect on partnerships in many different ways (Poppo & Zhou, 2014). Poppo & Zhou (2014) point out that creating contract, could decrease the possibilities to face opportunistic behaviour and asymmetric spread of positive benefits of the partnership. Contracts could affect both negative and positive way to the outcome of the partnership (Faems et al, 2008; Lumineau & Malhotra, 2011; Weber & Mayer, 2011). For example, Faems et al (2008) say that partnership contracts which have been created too tightly and focus on safeguarding, are less likely to have creative behaviour than those where there is interdependence between parties, and they use bilateral coordination. Contract parties act jointly and are capable to resolve disputes when the contract underline the importance of the coordination (Lumineau & Malhotra, 2011). Weber & Mayer (2011) also state that both parties are more creative and use more cooperation when contracts are more flexible than strict.

Fairness, which have an important role in trust (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994), have also important role in contracts (Poppo & Zhou, 2014). Fairness is a key aspect when looking on how legal and social institutions works (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994). If relationship between formal and informal norms, are not taken into account, the governance design will fail (Husted & Folger, 2004). It is possible that both parties have different perspectives to the exchange, which could create problems when deciding the goals and outcomes (Poppo & Zhou, 2014). Poppo & Zhou (2014) add that fairness is the most important thing when parties try to solve their disagreements and management possible conflicts. And, if fairness is not considered, the contract would just favour that side of parties which have more power (Michael, 2000), which would lead to the unbalanced gain of benefits between parties (Poppo & Zhou, 2014).

According to the Poppo & Zhou (2014), there are two framing dimensions, which are: contractual complexity and contractual recurrence. Contractual complexity means the use of flexible and clauses which are based on uncertainty (Poppo & Zhou, 2014). Complex contract could be seen as the guideline if there is a reason to change the original agreement (Reuer & Arino, 2007). However, it should be noticed that complex contract is expensive to craft, because it is necessary to know how the changes impacts on the transactional terms (Poppo & Zhou, 2014).

Contractual recurrence includes positively framed expectations of continued exchange enable cooperation, trust in relationship, and finally, outcomes (Poppo, Zhou and Ryu, 2008). Using extension clauses in contract, can show the expectation of the extended duration (Weber, Mayer & Macher, 2011). However, Poppo, Zhou & Ryu (2008) point out that interdependence and transparent behaviour during exchanges could indicate the desire to extend the duration of the exchange.

3.2 Possible pitfalls

Partnerships might be very popular in this day, but according to the Joseph et al (1995) it might not be the best option for every business relationship. It should be known that partnership is functional option in some transactional and market occasion (Goffin et al, 2006). Shapiro (1985) points out that businesses should not be joining or creating too many different partnerships. And it should be remembered that partnership needs a lot of caring and attention from both parties to success (Joseph et al, 1995), but according to Ireland (2005), Lonsdale (2005) and Sanderson (2008) many organizations do not have or lacks right skillset which is required to have when implementing successful partnership. Ramsay (1996) point out that when creating partnerships, it increases risks (decreased level of power) and costs, and benefits of the partnership should clearly bigger than the costs before joining. For example, high level of trust could lead to the point that buyer decrease attention toward safeguarding, which gives supplier a chance to malfeasance (Villena, Revilla & Choi, 2011). On the other hand, supplier might not give its best performance if supplier feels that they it has reached their wanted goal (Villena, Revilla & Choi, 2011), and close relationship could give supplier a way to systematically cheat the buyer party (Anderson & Jap, 2005).

Firms should not decide joining or creating different partnerships just for the sake of partnering, because that could lead not only to increased level of frustration but also wasted resources (Portes & Landolt, 1996). For example, increasing social capital, which means assets which are from social relationships (Granovetter, 1985; Villena, Revilla & Choi, 2011), could lead to opportunistic behaviour (Granovetter, 1985), which means that increased social capital by partnering could create more negative than positive outcomes (Villena, Revilla & Choi, 2011). For example, buyer side of the buyer-supplier partnership could be trapped into high cost and time-consuming relationship (Cousins et al, 2006), they could lose opportunities to find out new and more capable suppliers (Kern, 1998).

One of the arguments against success of the partnerships is that partnership does not always hold up (Chicksand, 2015). For example, it is not as simple task to move from arms-length relationship to closer relationship as it seems, because relationships are not sequential processes (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994). Also, sometimes the partnership does not provide economic benefits, which is why it should be remembered that the arms-length style is more beneficial in the right situation (Cox et al, 2003; Cox et al, 2005; Gabbe & Snehota, 2000). After closer type of relationship or partnership has been managed to create in right situation, it is not likely that right state of circumstances is going to last (Chicksand, 2015). On the other hand, according to many different research, partnering with other party from different culture and society could increase possible risks (Griffith & Zhao, 2015).

Lack of communication in partnership could create problems for both partnership parties (Tate, 1996; Van De Vijver, Voss & Akkermans, 2011). Kamann and Van Nieulande (2010) argue that communication problems with possible supplier from low-cost countries could have negative effect on possible relationship. According to Bantham et al (2003), how both parties in relationship react and behave when negative events occur could lead to negative spirals, and negative spirals are typical in relationships where parties are not managing conflicts effectively. When partner is unable to modify own actions when negative situation occurs, it would lead to the negative behaviour where partner starts blaming other party for the conflict (Celuch, Bantham & Kasouf, 2011).

4. Company presentation & current partnership agreement

In this chapter, this paper is providing basic information about target company, which is Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab, and about the current partnership deal. This chapter start with Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab. When speaking about Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab, this paper is going to use name "Hako G&G" to make it easier and more convenient for this paper. This abbreviation can be also found in abbreviation list. It is necessary to provide basic information about the company, because it is needed when this paper moves on to the part where different theories are used with harvested data. Lastly, this chapter investigates current partnership deal, which is needed, because without knowing current partnership, it is not possible to find and create activities which could evaluate the level of partnership deal.

4.1 Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab

Hako G&G is established in 1997 (yritys- ja yhteistietojärjestelmä) and it is part of German-based group which is called Hako Holding GmbH & Co (Hako). Hako G&G is focusing on cleaning -, garden – and golf machines (Hako ground & Garden), and Hako GmbH & Co is well-known and leader in field of cleaning machines (Hako). Hako G&G has four different brands under its name (Hako Kumppanuus). However, this paper is focusing on field of golf machines, and according to Hako G&G partnership leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus), their four different brand marks are TORO, Yamaha, Foley and Kioti. However, TORO might be the most import brand in the Hako G&G brand assortment, because it is the world biggest golf machine manufacturer (Hako Kumppanuus).

4.2 Current partnership agreement

The partnership deal, which this paper tries to investigate, can be separated to different actions. It contains six different main character, which are: machine invests, spare parts, diluted guarantee, technical support, spare machines & service guarantee, and marketing aspect. (Hako kumppanuus). The table (numero), which is based on Hako G&G partnership leaflet, shows those 6 different aspects and some examples about what those aspects means. The table 1 shows that the partnership deal gives customers many different services, but also requires customers to provide services to Hako G&G.

The first character is machine invests, like the table 1 shows, and it provide wide range of activities. This character could be found out to be the most important for some customers because it offers discounts and Toro's machines are well-known and respected brand. On

the other hand, trusted brand could decrease the level of doubt toward the fact that customers pledge to buy machines from Hako G&G. Without having a well-known brand, the partnership deal might not be so tempting for the customers, because other machine supplier could have machine which meet customers need better. Also, Hako G&G helping to create investing plan for the customer is a useful benefit, because machines are expensive and bad investing plan might create financial problems for the customers.

The next character is called “Spare parts” as it can be seen in the table 1. Machine invests and spare parts characters could be described as the transaction part of the partnership agreement. This character could be seen as important as the machine invests character, because golf machines are heavily used which increase the possibility that some parts broke time to time. However, wide range of spare parts and fast delivery services decrease the effects of broken machine. Getting different spare parts fast is crucial for the customer golf courses, because broken machines affect on to the product what golf courses are offering to their customers. However, Hako G&G partnership golf courses commits to use only those “original spare parts” in their machines, which tighten the tie to machine supplier.

When the first two characters were more of transaction part of the agreement, the rest of the characters could be seen and described as service or support part of the agreement, which can be seen from the table 1. The first service/support part of the agreement is diluted guarantee. The partnership deal includes better guarantee for the partnership customers, which create a safety net for both customer and Hako G&G. For the customers, longer guarantee means that if their machine falls apart earlier than it should, they get the new one. This could increase their satisfaction toward Hako G&G. On the other hand, better guarantee shows that Hako G&G trust their brands, which is needed when maintaining partnership agreement.

Technical support is the next character according to the table 1. This part includes three different actions, and those are: yearly technical support visit, crafting maintenance plan, and partnership customer being in better position over regular customers. Yearly technical support visits could be beneficial for both parties. Customers machines are regularly checked and fixed, which could increase machines working years. On the other hand, Hako G&G see what their customers situation is, and they can use it when they are crafting personal maintenance plan for their customer. These actions could increase customers satisfaction level toward partnership agreement. “Partnership customer being in better position over

regular customers"- benefit is an interesting factor, because it not only supports partnership customers by getting technical support faster, which might be crucial in some situation, but also it is a sign for the regular customers that joining to partnership agreement gets you more privilege treatment.

Spare machines & service guarantee could be very crucial part of the agreement for the customer. The table 1 shows that this character includes three different "tools" for the partnership customers. It includes the same privilege position for the partnership customer over regular customer, like in the "technical support"-character. This could be an important aspect for the partnership customers, because they might face situations where fast actions are necessary and getting better treatment is needed. The next one is that Hako G&G promise to bring spare machine for the partnership customer if Hako G&G cannot provide spare parts or providing take too long. This action is necessary, because it could keep their partnership customers satisfied, and it might prevent or decrease the negative impact what their customers could face. The last one is that Hako G&G promise to provide fast support if some technical problems evolve. This might be one of the most important actions for their customers, and it could radically affect on customers satisfaction level.

The last character of the partnership agreement is the marketing aspect. This character is different than rest of the characters, but it still could offer positive impact for the partnership customers. Like table 1 shows, partnership customers begin to call them "TORO course" which means that Hako G&G can use them when they are marketing their services and especially that partnership agreement to other courses. On the other hand, Hako G&G promise to use their partnership courses and their services when they organize different events, like golf tournaments. This could be crucial for some partnership customers, because Hako G&G events bring money to partnership courses from Hako G&G. However, this idea might not be the best idea for Hako G&G in the long term, because if the amount of partnership customer courses raises, it might increase Hako G&G event costs. The marketing character could be the character which needs the most fixing.

In many cases service provider could add guarantees that they meet the minimum. Service level agreement (SLA) is a tool in service contract which defines all the way from rules and responsibilities to what is violations of guarantee without forgetting penalties if provider cannot meet those guarantees (De Almeida Amazonas, Germán & Solé-Pareta, 2016). In this Hako G&G partnership agreement, Hako G&G mentioned in their partnership leaflet that

they promised to deliver customers spare parts from warehouse Sweden to customer in 48 hours (Hako Kumppanuus). However, according to partnership leaflet and Table 1, Hako G&G do not have a true service level agreement included to their partnership agreement. Adding service level agreement to partnership agreement like this could be more complicated than in truly service base agreement. However, profound examination of possible outcomes of adding SLA could be beneficial.

Table 1: Table 1 shows what customers receive and give from Hako G&G when they become part of the partnership agreement. This picture is based on data from Hako G&G leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus).

Machine Invests	Spare parts	Diluted guarantee	Technical support	Spare machines & service guarantee	Marketing aspect
Crafted machine invest plan based on customers need.	High number of different spare parts in supplier's head warehouse.	Offering five-year guarantee over normal two years.	Free technical support visits a couple of times in a season (not include repairing visits)	Fast reaction if technical problems take place.	Customers commit to call them as a "Toro-course" and let Hako G&G to their partnership connection when marketing.
10 % discount to every new machine purchased.	5 % discount to spare parts.		Focus on partnership customers over regular customers.	Providing spare machines if repairing process or getting spare parts is slow.	Customers and their courses are in primacy position when Hako G&G organize different customer events, training sessions, and machine exhibitions.
Customers commits to buy machines from Hako G&G.	Customers commit to use originals spare parts in machines, which Hako G&G has sold/leased.		Providing service to craft technical and repairing plan, which helps to avoid possible technical issues.	Focusing on partnership customers over regular customers.	Hako G&G commit to help their customers to create operations and benefits.
Finance & Leasing solutions	Fast delivery from Sweden where is the Nordic head warehouse.				

There is a lot of potential value-adding activities for both parties, but they all are not as simple as they might seem. For example, partnership agreement bound partnership customers tightly to Hako G&G products, which could create some problems. On the other hand, Hako G&G agreed to create events by using their partnership customers services, could became expensive and problematic if more and more courses change their status to TORO course and become part of the partnership agreement. These questions needs to be

answered. Like mentioned earlier, this partnership agreement can be separated to transaction part and support part. For the sake of this study, it is extremely crucial to find out, which activities might need fixing. These findings are going to be from the customers because they have experienced those activities by using them in their daily activities. Also, it is crucial to find out which actions do not add value and need to be removed or fixed. On the other hand, partnership customers could bring up ideas which could be developed to value adding activities.

All in all, it is necessary to create compact question list, which will be used when interviewing some of the partnership customers. Without partnership customers and their opinions about the partnership agreement, it might be impossible to develop this agreement to bring more value for both parties. The next chapter will provide information about how this paper will collect the necessary data from the interviewees, and what kind of questions are used to get valuable information.

5. Research methods

After studying the chosen theories, company and current partnership agreement, this paper moves on to research methods. In this chapter this paper will focus on chosen research methods which are used in this study to gain needed data and information which could lead to possible developing ideas. Also, this chapter provides deeper information on what are those chosen methods, and why this paper decided to use them. For example, this chapter is going to show what kind of research questions are going to be used, and what kind of environment are they going to be used, to get as much needed information from targets of this study (partnership courses) as possible.

However, it should be noticed that chosen research methods, created interview environment and the interview questions could have the most important role in this paper. Getting and harvesting as good information as possible from the partnership courses is the key process part when trying to find out value-adding activities and non-value adding activities. On the other hand, partnership courses and humans behind them are having huge impact on how good answers, therefor data, this paper can harvest.

This paper is decided to use two different style to collect information from its targets. These styles are Customer Satisfaction score (CSAT) method and Semi-structured interview method. Both CSAT and semi-structured interview has an important role in this paper. However, their roles are very different, and they show different point of view of the wanted target. It could be said that CSAT shows more wider but superficial picture about the subject, but it can be seen as an arrow which shows where might be some problems, or in this case, waste. On the other hand, semi-structured interview provides deeper picture, and using it could be the key factor to find out new developing ideas. However, without finding the possible origin of waste, deeper researching may not create any useful developing ideas. Which is why using both CSAT and semi-structured interview is necessary in this paper, like it can be seen in the Figure 9.

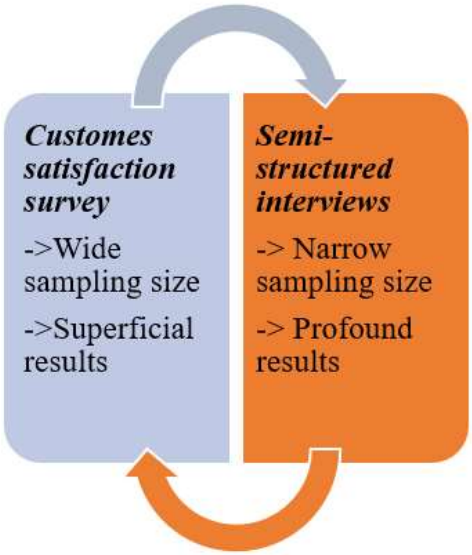

Figure 9: The roles of the chosen research methods and how they are connected.

Choosing to use both CSAT and Semi-structured interview means that this study uses mixed methods, which is necessary when trying to gather wide range of data. The next two paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, will try to provide deeper information on what CSAT, semi-structured interview, qualitative and quantitative research methods means and what kind of data and information can be harvested by using them.

5.1 Quantitative research methods

Like mentioned earlier, this study starts information and data gathering by using quantitative research methods. Punch (2013) point out that the key point of the quantitative researching is to understand possible relationships between different variables. The quantitative research can be described as a research strategy that highlights determination when handling the data (Bell & Bryman, 2011), and it has been designed to provide data which is in numerical form (Punch, 2013). In quantitative research, the goal is truly understand how and why wanted variables are related (Punch, 2013).

This paper will use Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) to gain new information from partnership courses. Customer satisfaction is an important factor for the companies because customer satisfaction could lead to the positively to the market share and word of mouth between customers (Anderson, Fornell and Lehman, 1994). According to the Löyhänen and Kortesuo (2011) customer satisfaction can be measured by using different types of surveys. CSAT surveys are structured, and use scaled answer

options, for instance numbers between 1-5 (Filenius, 2015), or they can be scaled between very dissatisfied and very satisfied (Mihelis et al, 2001). On the other hand, Filenius (2015) point out that NPS is one of the most used methods to measure customer experience. According to Reicheld (2003), NPS is calculated by using a survey which answer options are scaled between 0-10, where 0-6 means "very unlikely", 7-8 "neutral" and 9-10 means "very likely". NPS score can be calculated by reducing "very unlikely" percent score from "very likely" percent score (Reicheld, 2003).

This study is going to use both CSAT and NPS in the same survey. The appendix 1 shows the questions which was e-mailed to 57 people who either are CEO/Executive director or head greenkeepers. The questions 3-9 are CSAT part of the survey, and it has scaled between 1-5, and "we haven't used" option (Appendix 1). 1 means "very unsatisfied" and 5 means (very satisfied) (Appendix 1). The last question in the survey is the NPS part, and it is scaled between 1-5, where 1-2 plays the "very unlikely" role, option 3 plays "neutral", and finally options 4-5 are "very likely". The survey is totally anonymous which means it does not show possible differences in answers between CEO/Executive director and head greenkeepers, as it can be seen in appendix (1)

5.2 Semi-structured interview and qualitative research methods

Qualitative research means that research do not use statistical or numeral approach (Kananen, 2017; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Saldaña, 2011), and it tries to provide deeper picture about the target subject (Kananen, 2017). Usually, qualitative research study subjects which are not numerals but are linked to social and cultural problems (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Saldaña, 2011). According to Kananen (2017), qualitative research is all about describing and understanding the target research phenomenon. Bryman and Bell (2011) pointed out that qualitative research put more focus on words over numbers. However, qualitative research has its limitations, which are based on the fact that it is situation specific and that is why the results do not apply elsewhere than target situation (Kananen, 2017). Like mentioned, this paper is case study based, which is one of the qualitative research styles (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

This paper decided to use semi-structured interviewing style to harvest necessary information. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), in semi-structured interview, interviewer use pre-made question list in the interview situation, where interviewee can

answer freely to wanted topics. The questions in the question list are usually very specifics, but interviewer could ask follow-up questions to get deeper answers from the interviewee (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The question list, which is going to be used in this study, can be found in appendix list by name “appendix 2”. Like appendix 2 shows, this question list includes ten different questions, and those questions’ role is to get deeper insight not only to the subject but also to the mind of the interviewee. This study will interview two different people who have different roles in their organizations. One of the interviewees is the chief executive officer (CEO), and the other one is the head greenkeeper. Interviewing people from different roles could bring deeper insight from the subject because they could have different point of view to it. Increasing the chance to get deeper information, could also increase the possibility of better results of this study. The interview is going to be anonymous, as it can be seen in appendix (2) which means that it does not show who the interviewee is and where does he or she works.

6. Empirical analysis

After carefully pointing out the subject of this study, what theories are going to be used, and how this study is going to collect the necessary data from the target audience, this study moves on to the empirical analysis. This chapter is separated to two different entireties, which both have an important role. The first one is to be studying the data from quantitative research, and the second one is studying data from qualitative research. The point of this chapter is to study what Hako G&G's partnership courses think about the current state of the partnership agreement and use that knowledge to develop partnership agreement if necessary.

6.1 Quantitative research data

Studying quantitative data is the first part of this empirical analysis, because its role is to provide a wide picture about the state of partnership agreement. Appendix 1 shows the satisfaction survey, which was sent to 57 people. Figure 10 provide information on how good response rate this satisfaction survey managed to get. Like figure 10 shows, 22 out of 57 answered to the satisfaction survey, which means that the response rate of survey is about 39%. 39 percent response rate means that this survey managed to get a good number of different opinions about how well different parts of partnership agreement works. However, this satisfaction survey was sent in January, which could have a decreasing effect on to the response rate. If this study will be done again later on, the timing of the data collection should be taken into account.

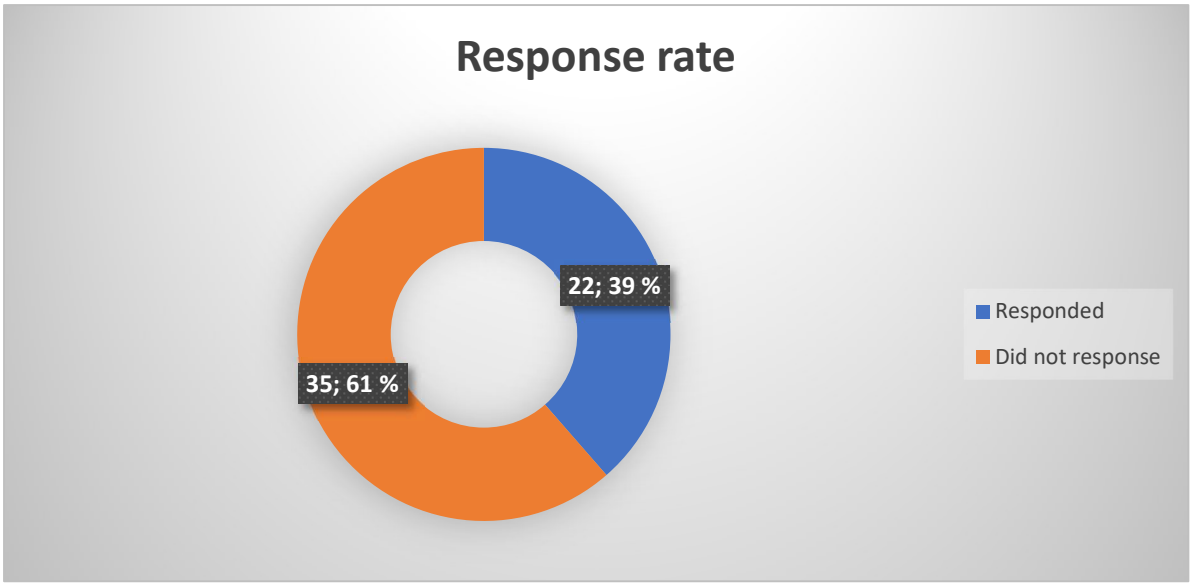

Figure 10: Satisfaction survey's response rate

A good response rate is a good sign because it provides reliabilities to this study. On the other hand, it is crucial to get information from both CEO/ Executive directors and head greenkeepers, because they view partnership agreement from different perspective. For example, Head greenkeeper, who leads operations in the field, see how different things like machines works, and have better understanding than CEO/Executive director on how those machines should work. On the other hand, CEO or Executive directors might have better understanding on economic side of the agreement. However, it should be noticed that different golf courses might have different management structure, which means the level of knowledge on how this partnership agreement with Hako G&G is working for them. On the other hand, this could lead to different and fresh ideas on how current partnership agreement could be developed in the future.

The first question in the satisfaction survey asked, "what is your role?", like appendix 1 shows. The figure 11 shows how answers separated in this question. According to the figure 11, 13 out 22, which is about 59%, were Head greenkeepers and 9 (41 percent) were CEO/Executive directors. It is a good sign that this survey managed to get a lot of answers from both parties, because it is going to increase the level of reliability of this study. However, high answer percent from head greenkeepers is not a surprise, because head greenkeepers might see this satisfaction survey to be more informative and useful, because they are working in a daily basis with the results of the partnership agreement. And like mentioned earlier on, the structure of management and style to operate in different golf

courses might have either positive or negative effect on how willingness people are to answers to these questions.

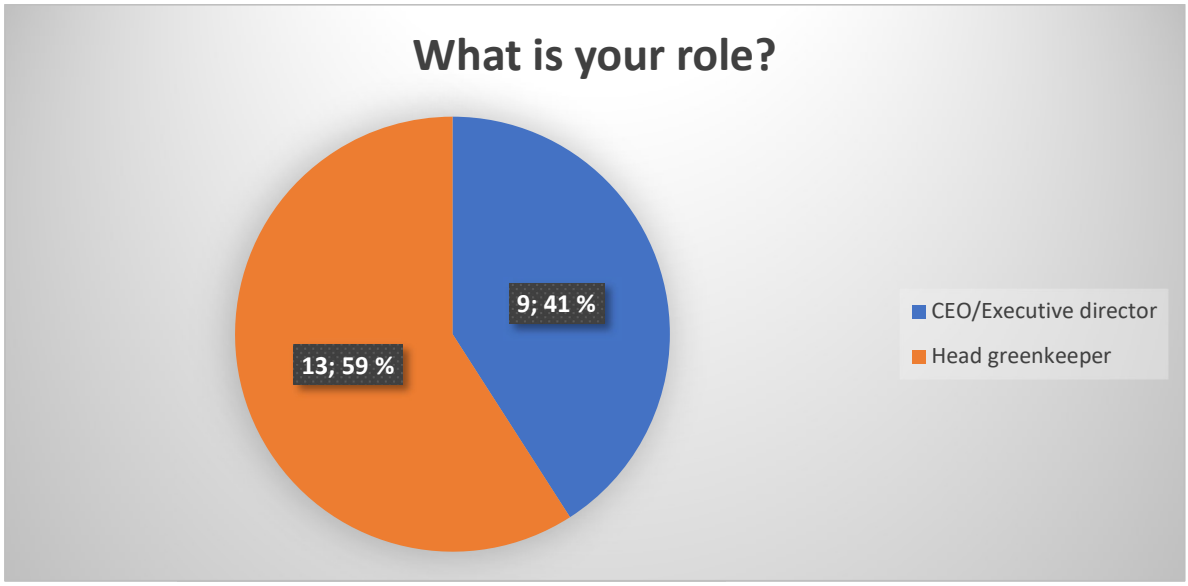

Figure 11: Answers to the first satisfaction survey question.

Questions on response rate and how answers separated to different positions, are the basic information of this survey. Now this study moves on to next survey questions, which focus on different aspects and activities of the Hako G&G's partnership agreement. The next questions are going to be separated to different sub-chapters, because it would clarify the whole empirical part of this study.

6.1.1 Being part of the agreement & how satisfied customers are.

The next question in the satisfaction survey was "how long have you been involved with Oy Hako Ground & Garden Partnership agreement?" as it can been seen from appendix 1. The goal of this question is to find out how long partnership courses have been used different partnership agreement activities. It is necessary to know, because it can affect on how well partnership courses can provide informative data. For example, if partnership course has been involved with the agreement under a year, have they yet needed to use every partnership activity? On the other hand, those who have just joined to the agreement, might still be in "honeymoon period" in their mind, which means that everything is new and seems/feels perfect.

Figure 12 provides information on how the results of the question 2 spread. As it can be seen from the figure 12, half of the responders, 11/22 (50%), has been involved with partnership

agreement over 2 years, 5 has been 1-2 years, and finally 6 has been 0-1 years. Getting answers from responders who has been involved different amount of time with the partnership agreement, is positive sign, because it provides different opinions from the different perspective, which increase reliability of discovered answers of this study. However, this study is executed as an anonymously, which means that it is not possible to see exactly who answered what, and therefore this satisfaction survey used to get the wide and superficial picture about how satisfied users are.

The high number of responders who has been involved over 2 years might create a balanced starting point for this study. Like mentioned earlier on, those responders who have been 0-1 years and some who have been a little bit over a year (1-2 years option) might been influenced by honeymoon attitude toward how well the partnership agreement is working for them. Therefore, high number of "over 2 years" answers are going to balance that possible effect.

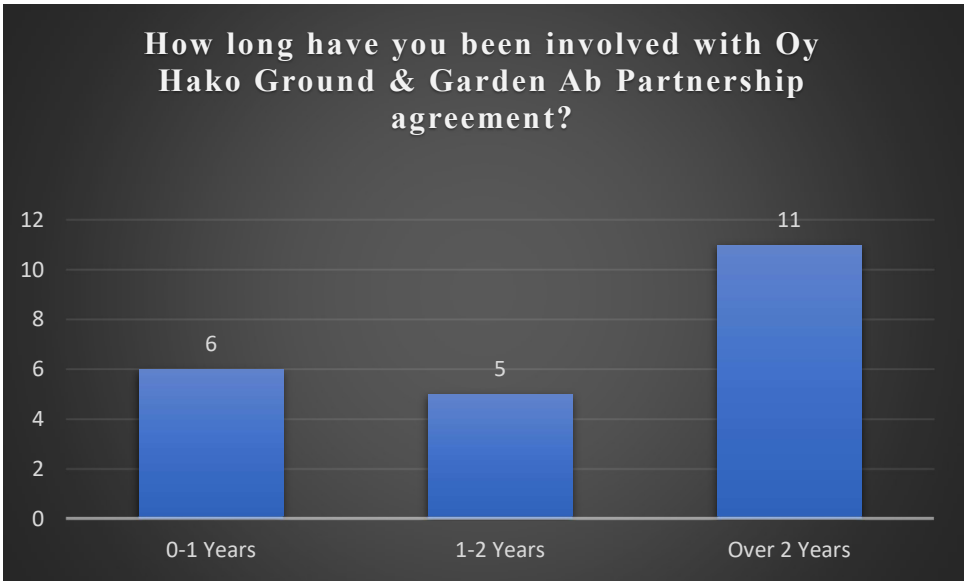

Figure 12: How long have responders been involved with the partnership agreement

After checking how separated responders experience with the partnership agreement is, this paper moves on to question 3 of the appendices 1. The question 3 is called "How satisfied are you with the partnership agreement and its features?", where score number 1 means very unsatisfied and score 5 means very satisfied. On the hand, score numbers 1-2 can be seen as a low, option 3 as a neutral, and finally, 4-5 are the high score options. The point of this question is to get information about satisfied Hako G&G partnership courses are to the

partnership agreement. The score of this question provides an important sign for Hako G&G because it shows how satisfied their partnership courses are. On the other hand, it does not provide an extremely important information for this study.

As it can be seen from the figure 13, this partnership agreement did not manage to get a single low score, which means that there were not 1 or 2 ratings. This is a positive sign for the Hako G&G because it shows, at least in some level, that their partnership courses are happy with the agreement. Three responders, which is about 13,6 %, rated the whole partnership agreement as a 3, which is the neutral score. However, Hako G&G should see that score as a sign that there might be something to be done, because it needs to be remembered that the response rate was 39%. Therefore, there are probably more those users who are not super satisfied with partnership agreement.

On the other hand, option 4 got 12/22 (54,5 %) score, and option 5 got 7/22 (about 31,8 %), which means that "high score options" got 19/22, which means about 86,3 %. Question 3 and figure 13 shows that partnership courses are extremely satisfied with the partnership agreement. Therefore, not only this paper but also Hako G&G should keep this score in mind, when deciding or planning any developing ideas, especially if developing ideas are radicals.

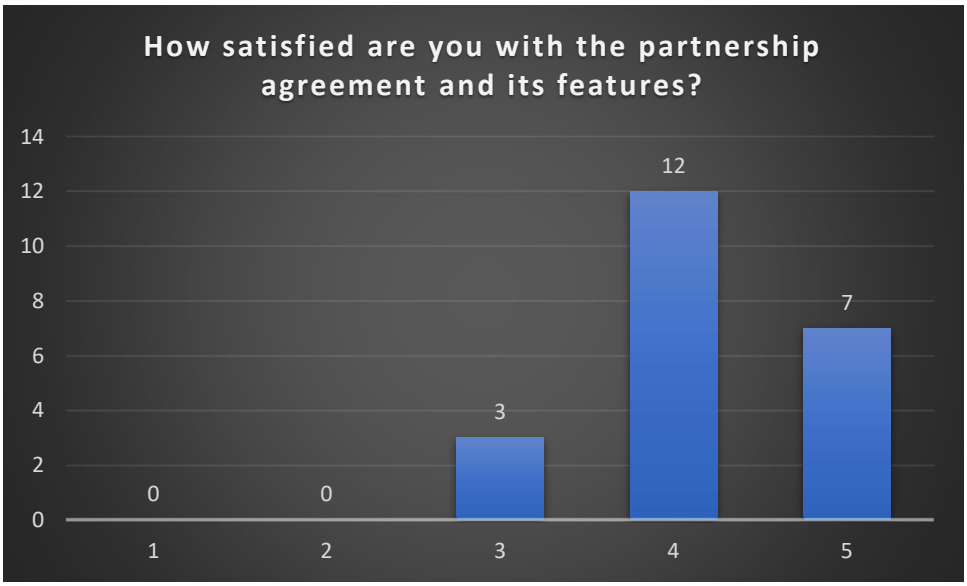

Figure 13: The results of the question number 3 in the appendix 1

After this sub-chapter, this paper moves on its focus to see how 22 responders feel about partnership agreements features and its activities. The score of those features and their

activities provides better information for this paper, because it is necessary to see which segments are working well, and which segments might be lacking something and are needing some developing to work as well as the question 3 of the appendix 1 shows. Therefore, next sub-chapters might be the most important ones of this whole study. It is an important to remember that somewhere behind those features, there might be activities which do not add value. Like Ohno (1988) defined earlier on, those activities are waste and need to be removed.

6.1.2 Machine investing feature

Machine investing feature question, which is the question 4 in the appendix 1, is the first question which focus on getting information about partnership agreement's features and activities. Golf machines are a crucial part of keeping golf courses running and in a good shape. Like Hako G&G partnership agreement leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus) shows, it provides an important possibility for partnership courses to create better investing planning for their machines. Figure 14 provides information about how satisfied responders are to machine investing feature of the partnership agreement.

According to the figure 14, the score of the question 4 is an extremely good. Totally, this question managed to get 21 answers, which means that the response rate in this question is about 37 %. As it can be seen from the figure 14, "low score", which are options 1 and 2, managed to get yet again zero answers. For Hako G&G, this is an extremely good score, because it means that one of the key features of the partnership agreements received to get positive score from their customers. This score shows that this feature might not need any developing actions. However, Hako G&G should ask questions, from time to time, from their partnership courses because this score does not mean that there cannot be any problems in near future. That is why Hako G&G should take, or at least, keep Kaizen principles in their mind, because like Helmond (2020) and Sandle (2014) pointed out, it means continuous improvement of actions. Taking this approach, Hako G&G could prevent possible negative incident and feelings from occurring.

Option 3, which is the neutral score, did not receive any answers, which is also a good sign. The neutral score could be seen as an easy way to answer when responder is not totally happy with the subject. This score supports the fact that customer satisfaction with this feature is

an extremely high. The high score, options 4 and 5, managed to get 19 answers, which means that “the high score” percent is about 90. This is about same score as partnership agreements overall satisfaction. On the other hand, there is more option 5 answers than it was with the overall score. This also support the picture that machine investing feature is working very well. When this study moves on to the semi-structure interview part, it is going to be interesting to get deeper information about why this feature has been so successful in the minds of partnership courses.

Question 4 included “we have not used” option. This option managed to get 2 answers, which is under 10 percent. The point of this option was to provide information about how many courses has not used this feature. However, there might be a chance that responders, has used this option like a “I do not know” option. In any way, those both reasons behind choosing “we have not used” option, are very informative. First, not every course has yet to use this feature, which could be the case if the responders are from the partnership courses, which have been involved with the agreement under 0-1 years. However, if the answers came from courses which have been involved longer period, there might be something to be fixed, like lean management and its principles suggest. Second, if responder did not know how to answer, it is still very informative answer. There might be a couple of reasons why responder did not know how this feature works. For example, if responder could not decide, which score to give, which could be seen as a negative sign. Other reason is that the responder was a CEO or Executive director, and they do not have enough knowledge to answer this question, which could be very likely, head greenkeepers are more involved with the machines than CEO’s or Executive directors are.

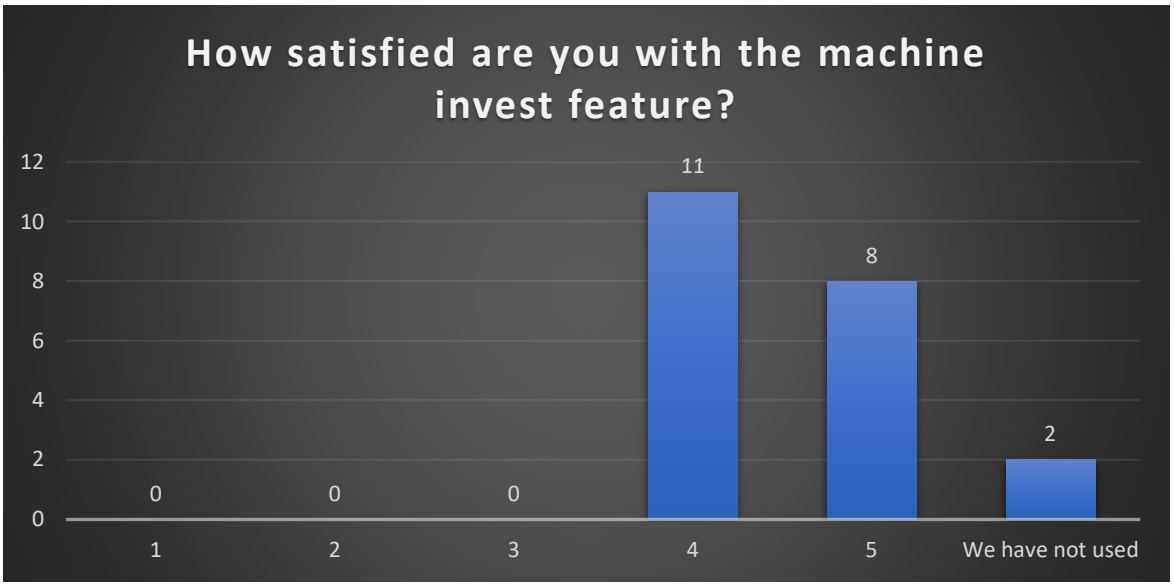

Figure 14: The result of the question "how satisfied are you with the machine invest feature?".

The question 4 in the appendix 1 and its score shows that this feature might not be the one which need to be developed. However, like mentioned earlier on, this study recommends Hako G&G to create similar satisfaction surveys, orally rather than in written, to gather constant information on how their customers feel about this feature. It is important to do because after 5 years, partnership agreement comes to end (Hako Kumppanuus), and partnership courses start thinking if they want to renew the partnership agreement with Hako G&G. Like Joseph et al (1995) pointed out, partnership needs a lot caring, and it needs to bring more value than cost to be successful like Ramsay (1996) pointed out.

6.1.3 Spare part feature

The next question, question 5 in appendix 1, is "how satisfied are you with the spare part feature?". Golf courses need spare part at some point, because they are using their golf maintenance machines a lot when creating and maintaining good conditions in their golf courses. When golf maintenance machines are in heavy use, there is a good chance that something will eventually break down. Workers use those spare parts to fix machines if the problem is not disastrous. Therefore, it is important that partnership agreement spare part feature is working well and fast because partnership courses need to get those spare parts as fast as possible.

The question 5 managed to get a wide range of answers as it can be seen from figure 15. Options 1 (0 vote) and 2 (1 vote), the low score, managed to get 1 (4,5%) vote, which is still

a very low number. However, spare part feature is the first question which managed to get even a single vote to the low score sector. There could be many different reasons on why someone feel that this feature is not working for them or there is something be fixed. Like mentioned earlier, important factor for golf courses is that Hako G&G can provide them their wanted spare parts and provide them as fast as possible. Maybe one, or both, of these "key factors" is not working as well as it should. On the other hand, Covid-19 situation could have impacted on how well Hako G&G can provide those spare parts. For instance, logistics problems and component shortage could affect on Hako G&G ability to fulfil their partnership, and normal, course's needs.

Option 3 managed to get 4 (about 18 %) votes, which is higher amount than the whole partnership agreement had. Higher neutral score is a sign that this feature has some problems, and Hako G&G should be looking at the activities of this feature. Like Helmond (2020) pointed out earlier on, it is important to find out those inefficiencies, which mean wastes. After finding out problems, Hako G&G can move on to changing them to more value adding activities if it is possible. Sometimes those non-value adding activities cannot be removed because they are necessary to have, like Hines & Rick (1997) mentioned.

Once again, options 4 (9 votes) and 5 (6 votes), received the highest vote number. This time responders gave spare part feature 15 (68 %) votes, which is lower than the overall score received but still a good enough. 68 % high score is a good sign for Hako G&G, because it shows that their partnership courses are satisfied to their services. The last option "we have not used" received 2 votes, which is the same number than the machine investing feature received. In this question, it is more likely that the responder has no idea how this feature works than the partnership course has not used this feature, because like mentioned earlier, golf courses need spare parts all the time.

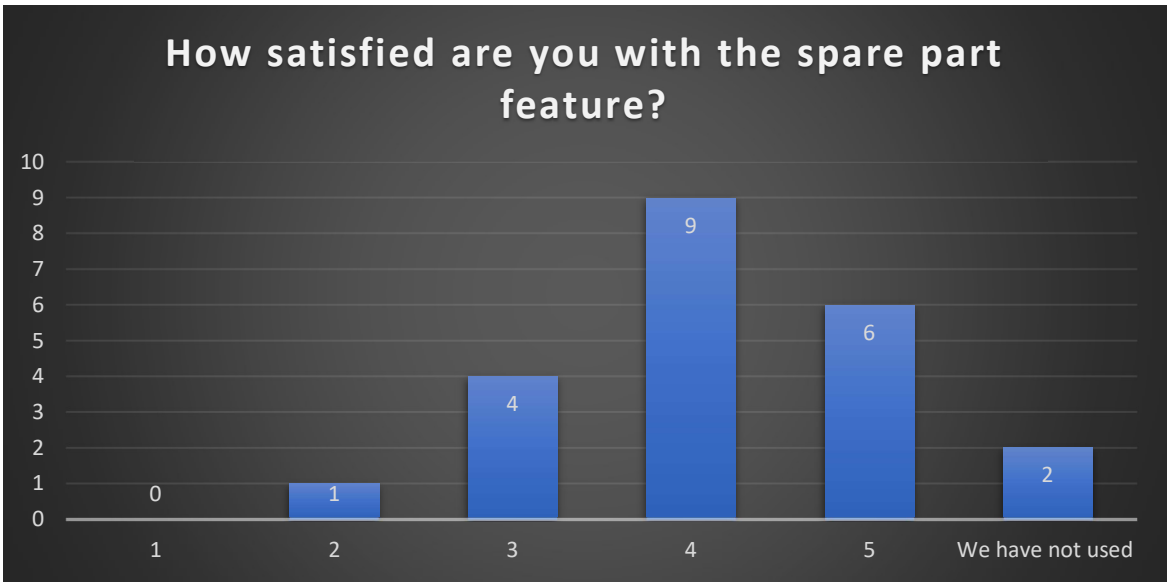

Figure 15: How responders rated question 5 (appendix 1)

The question 5 seems like a target feature that might need some developing or at least more careful look to its activities. Therefore, it is interesting to see, what kind of information and developing ideas this paper manages to get from the semi-structured interviews. On the other hand, Hako G&G should be looking this feature more closely, and try to separate inefficiencies, wastes, which are possible to remove, and which are necessary to have, like Hines and Rick (1997) mentioned.

6.1.4 Expanded warranty

Expanded warranty feature, which is the question 6 in appendix 1, might be one of the hardest features to analyse. Expanded warranty comes to play if the machines stop working, which mean expanded warranty feature might be more of extra feature to this partnership agreement. Like it was mentioned earlier on, about 50 percent of responders have been involved with partnership agreement maximum 2 years, which mean that many of them have not actually have a need to use this feature. The figure 16 shows the answers to question 6 in appendix

The figure 16 shows that expanded warranty feature did not receive any votes to the options 1-3. This means that both low score and neutral score did not receive any votes from the responders, which is a good sign, but in this case, it might be because the nature of expanded warranty. It is a feature which is good to be included to the agreement, but it might be hard to find developing ideas and data from the partnership courses. However, Hako G&G could

ask this question again, when 5 years has past and partnership courses are planning if they want to renew the partnership agreement or not.

The options 4-5, high scores, managed to get 11/22 votes, which means that they get 50 percent of all votes. It is not a horrible score, but it is lower than machine investing feature and spare parts feature managed to get. It is not a surprise that the other 50 percent (11 votes) went to “we have not used” option. This shows that partnership courses have not used this feature yet, which means that they cannot rate this feature. Therefore, the question 6 does not provide data which could implicate that this feature needs any developing.

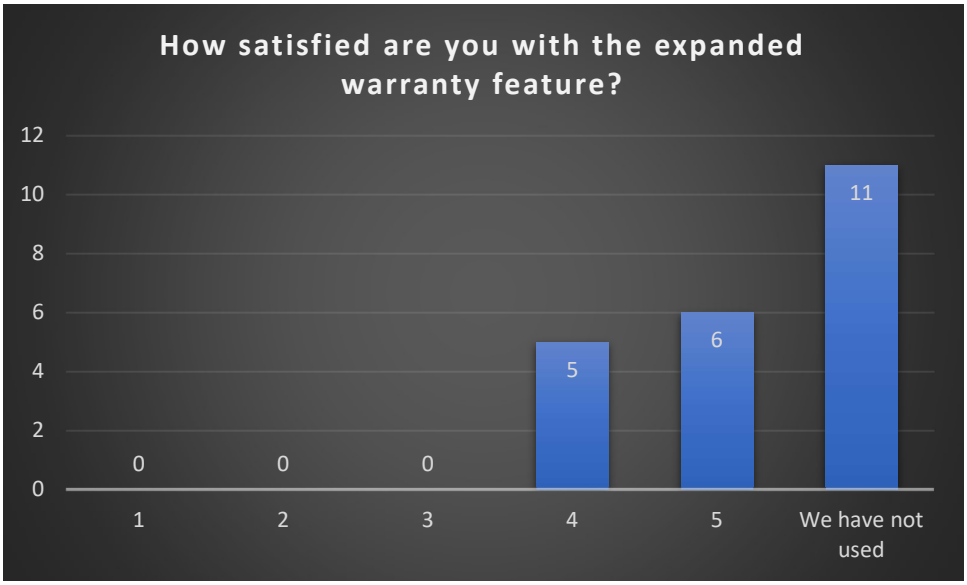

Figure 16: The results of the question 6 in appendix 1

The question 6 could be mark as “indeterminate”, because there is a chance that this study cannot create an answer whenever expanded warranty feature need any developing. However, like mentioned earlier on, the score is still a good, but there is a chance that it might include some waste as well. Therefore, this study starting to change and develop this feature without exact knowledge would not be advisable.

6.1.5 Technical support feature

After expanded warranty, the next questions, which is question 7, focus on to study how satisfied partnership courses are with the technical support feature and its activities. This feature could be one of the most important features in the whole partnership agreement, because technical support and how well it works, could decide how long important golf maintenance machines are broken. Therefore, this feature could be one of the deciding

factors which could decrease or increase the experienced value of the partnership agreement. The figure 17 provides information about how responders votes spread in the question 7.

According to the figure 17, options 1-2 did not receive any votes from responders. This is a good sign, because it indicates that Hako G&G has created a well working technical support for their partnership courses. Also, option 3 did not managed to receive any votes. The fact that neutral score (option 3) did not receive any votes support the idea that this feature is working very well according to those who actually use it regularly. However, Hako G&G cannot become too satisfied with this feature and score because partnership courses satisfaction level could decrease fast if Hako G&G do not pay attention.

The high score options managed to get an extremely good score, according to the figure 17. The figure 17 indicates that option 4 received 4 votes and at the same time the option 5 managed to get 16 votes. Therefore, the high score options managed to get 20/22 votes, which means about 91 percent of all votes. This score is the highest rated feature at this point, and it received a much better score than the whole partnership agreement did. On the other hand, “we have not used” option managed to get 2 votes, which is the remaining 9 percent. There could be a couple of reasons on why technical support received those 2 votes. The first reason is that some partnership courses has not yet used this feature, which is a reasonable assumption, because about 25 percent of responders has not been included with the partnership agreement over 1 year. It is not extraordinary that they have not yet used this feature at all. The second option is that the responders has been CEO or Executive directors, because it is not extraordinary that they do not know how technical support works in daily basis. Assumption is that head greenkeepers have a better idea on how this feature works.

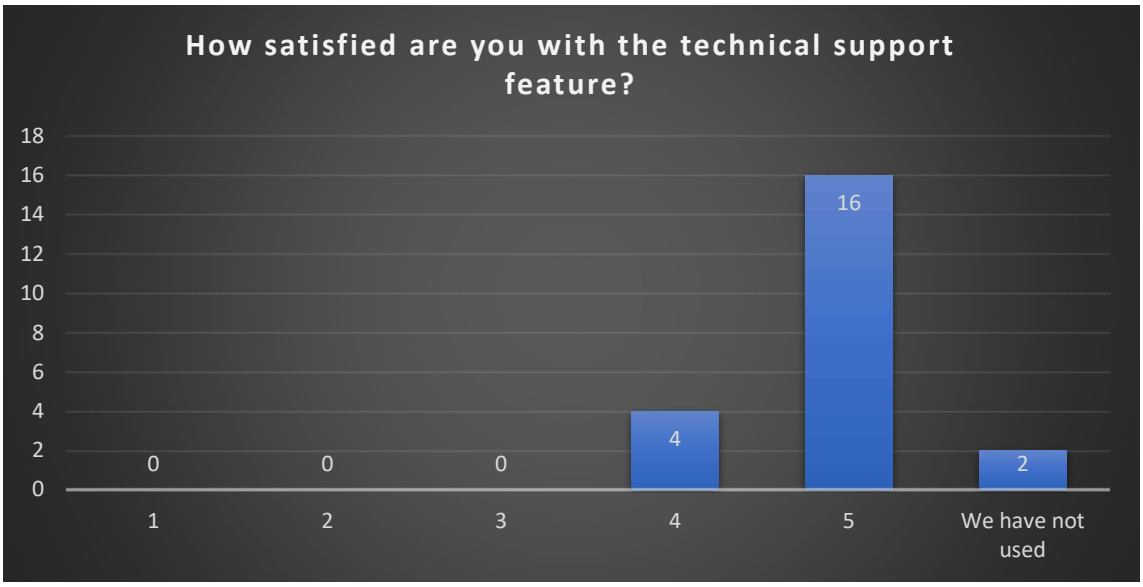

Figure 17: The results of question 7 in appendix 1

All in all, Hako G&G can be very satisfied on how their technical support feature has been working. Their partnership courses seem to be an extremely satisfied how this feature is working, and the score of question 7 did not provide any indicators that this feature need any developing. Other part of this study provides deeper information on how and why his feature is working that well. Hako G&G should focus on understanding why partnership courses are satisfied and keep those reasons in their mind whenever they decide to do any changes in the future.

6.1.6 Response time and spare machine feature

Response time and spare machine investing is a wide feature, which includes different activities. According to the Hako G&G partnership leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus), Hako G&G has promised that they will send a technical support worker to visit partnership course in two days after customer contacted them, and if they cannot fix the machine in reasonable time, they will provide a spare machine for that partnership course. This feature is an important, but at the same time it could be the feature which potentially could create a lot of headache and unsatisfied feelings. Therefore, no matter what the result of the question 8 shows, Hako G&G should be constantly monitor their partnership courses feeling and the level of satisfaction toward this feature.

The figure 18, shows a wide range of opinions toward question 8 in appendix. As it can be seen from figure 18, option 1 managed to get 0 votes when option 2 received 1 vote. This

means that the low score rating is 1/22 (about 5 %). It is not a high number, but it indicates that there are some negative feelings toward this feature. Therefore, it could be a good idea that Hako G&G either start or keep checking their partnership courses opinions about response time and spare machine feature. This would decrease the possibility that some disfunction in Hako G&G processes could get bigger and create more negative opinions about this feature and therefore affect on the partnership agreement as whole. The option 3, the neutral score, once again managed to receive zero votes, which is a positive sign for Hako G&G.

The high score option, option 4 (7 votes) and 5 (6 votes), received 13/22 score, which is about 59 percent. It is lower score than the whole partnership agreement (89 percent) received. However, it is still a decent score, but it indicates that it is not a perfect. Therefore, Hako G&G should do deeper researching on if some of response time and spare machine feature's activities, and how they are being done. The last option, "we have not used", received 8 (36%) votes from responders, which is the highest voted option in this question. The main reason why this feature managed to receive many "we have not used" option, is the same than many other features have, which is that partnership courses who have been involved a short amount of time may not have yet used this feature and its activities. Therefore, this factor should be taken into account when this study moves on to the point when possible developing ideas are being made.

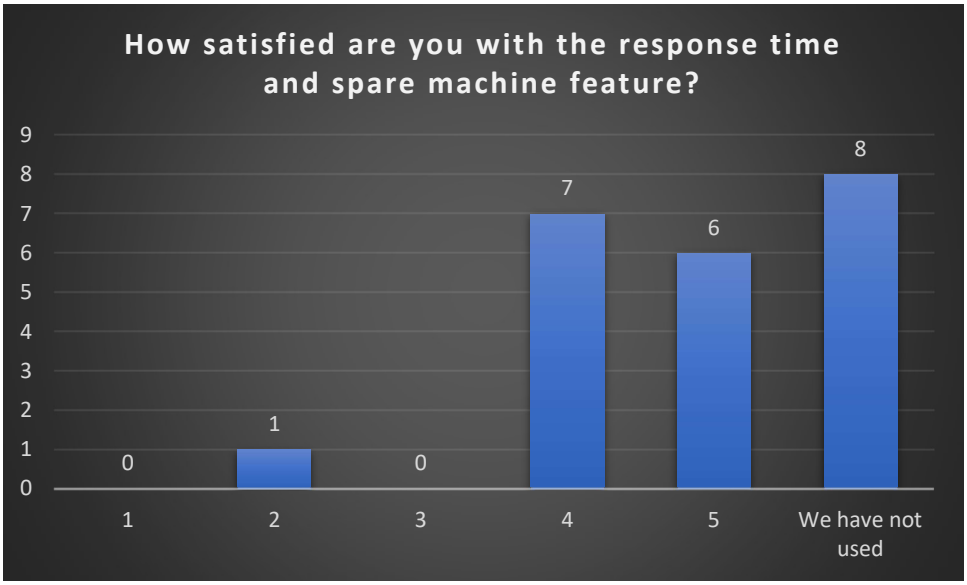

Figure 18: The results of the question "how satisfied are you with the response time and spare machine feature?". Based on question 8 in appendix 1.

The question 8 in appendix 1, provided an interesting result, which shows at the same time positive and negative sides of this study. The positive sides show superficial picture about this feature, which are that the results are decent, and Hako G&G should be focus on getting deeper information from their partnership courses about how well this feature actually works for them. On the other hand, the huge amount of "we have not used" votes include many different reasons, which could easily be wrongly decoded. Wrongly decoded answer could lead to unnecessary developing, which could have negative impact. Therefore, the results of the question 8 in appendix 1, are not going to be used in heavily when this paper moves on to the point where possible developing are being made. However, this question is not as indeterminate than question 6, but still needs to be approached with the caution. On the other hand, the semi-structured interview part of this study could provide an extremely valuable information from Hako G&G's partnership courses. That information could support the results of question 8.

6.1.7 Visibility feature

The last feature of the partnership agreement is visibility feature. It can also be called as a marketing and other activities. Therefore, question 9 in the appendix 1 is the last customer satisfaction question. Visibility feature is an odd one when comparing to other features. It provides mainly immaterial activities and services for partnership courses. According to Hako G&G partnership leaflet, Hako G&G will arrange different events, like maintenance machine demonstrations, in their partnership courses (Hako Kumppanuus). On the other hand, partnership courses promise to use "Toro-course" in marketing (Hako Kumppanuus), like it was mentioned earlier on. Therefore, this feature could be described as a mixed bag, but it could be beneficial for both parties.

The figure 19 shows the results of question 9, and it shows that once again responders votes are separated. The low score received 1 (about 4,5 percent) vote, which came to option 2. On the other hand, the neutral score received 6 votes, which means about 27 percent of all votes. Both low and neutral score are not the best outcome for Hako G&G, because it indicates that there are some activities which are not working well for partnership courses.

However, the result of semi-structure interview is needed to truly understand how partnership courses see this feature.

According to the figure 19, the high score received 12 votes (option 4 received 8 and option 5 got 4), which is 50 percent of all votes. 50 % high satisfaction rate is not horrible, but it leaves room to develop it to be better than now. When comparing to other features, visibility feature manages to receive the co-worst score. The last option, we have not used option, received 3 votes (13,6 %) from responders. There are a couple of reasons why visibility received those votes. Firstly, it is possible that many of those new partnership courses have not yet used that option, which is not a surprise. Secondly, which is the worst reason, partnership courses do not know what actually happens in this feature. Therefore, the score of this feature indicates that something needs to be done.

Figure 19: The score of question 9 in appendix 1

Visibility feature is the worst feature according to the responders. It managed to get same high score rating than extended warranty, but like mentioned earlier, extended warranty was labelled as indeterminate. Therefore, visibility can be crowned as the lowest rated feature of this partnership agreement. Like Hammond (2020) and Womack and Jones (1996), like many others, pointed out that if processes include some activities, which creates waste, it should be removed. Hako G&G should follow lean philosophy and start auditing visibility

feature not only to remove waste, but also to make it to be clearer and more understandable. If Hako G&G and its partnership agreement decide to continue adding new golf courses to be part of it, higher number of partnership courses could make visibility feature to be even more unsatisfied for both parties. How can Hako G&G separate its marketing events to satisfy its partnership courses without creating decreasing their own received value from the agreement? Maybe the semi-structured interview could bring opinions about how to develop this feature.

6.1.8 The net promoter score

The last question in appendix 1, "would you recommend this partnership agreement to other courses", is not the same kind of question than those earlier on. The question 10 is a net promote score (NPS) question. However, the figure 20 and its secrets can tell and provide us more information than just NPS. For example, looking how votes separated between different options is still necessary action to do. Options 1 and 2 managed to receive 0 votes, option 3 received 4 out of 21 (about 19 %) votes, option 4 (9 out of 21, about 43 %), and lastly option 5 received 8 votes out of 21 (about 38 %). However, the figure 18 shows that question 10 received just 21 votes, which means that one responder did not respond to this question. Like earlier on, that is a result of the mistake made by the author of this study.

Like mentioned earlier on, NPS use formula to get the results. The formula is created like this: *Recommenders (options 4 and 5) – critics (options 1 and 2) / all votes= X 100.* In ths case, and by using scores from the figure 18, the NPS formula goes like this:

17 – 0 = 17

17 / 21 = 0,8095

0,8095 x 100 = 80,95 %

According to the formula and figure 20, the question 10, NPS question managed to receive 80,95 % net promoter score. This indicates that over 4 out of 5 users are willing to promote Hako G&G's partnership agreement. This is a very good number and indicates that the partnership agreement has been a successful, at least to this point. When opening the used formula, it shows that this NPS did not have any "critics" score. It is a good sign, because it shows that users are not ready to provide negative feedback to other potential partnership courses. However, 4 votes went to option 3, which were excluded from the formula. There

is a couple of reasons why someone would vote 3. Firstly, responder do not have enough information and experience with this partnership agreement, and therefore did not want to vote basically anything. Secondly, responders are neither ready to promote or give negative feedback, which indicates that agreement are not fulfilling those responders.

Figure 20: The score of question 10 in appendix 1.

The results of question 10 provide a positive information to Hako G&G about the willingness of their partnership courses to promote the partnership agreement. However, like almost with every feature, Hako G&G should be trying to get deeper information whenever voters who voted neutral are not truly satisfied. Actions to understand partnership courses satisfaction levels could be the key factor which could stop borderline satisfied partnership courses decreasing to the unsatisfied partnership courses. It is important to do, because like mentioned earlier on, after 5 years with the partnership agreement, partnership courses are planning and deciding if they want to renew the agreement with Hako G&G. The world changes a lot in the 5-year period, which means that other golf maintenance machine suppliers could bring their own partnership agreements to the table. Therefore, implementing keeping Kaizen in Hako G&G's mind is truly a must thing to do.

6.2 Qualitative interview process

After finishing the quantitative customer satisfaction survey, this study moves on to researching data from the semi-structured interview. This is the second part of this empirical part, and its role is to provide more deeper picture about how partnership agreements features are working, and counting on interviewees to provide valuable information, which could lead to possible developing ideas. The questions of the semi-structured interviews can be seen in appendix 2. There are 11 questions, and 2 interviews were made, which was mentioned earlier on. Interviewees answers to questions 1-3, are assembled to table 2, because it would round up "get to know" information. The first three questions in appendix 2 follows the same path, like appendix 1 did.

The question 1 focus on to find out roles of the interviewees, like table 2 shows. The role of the interviewee affects on how the interviewee is going to answer to rest of the questions. Therefore, it is a necessary to interview people from different roles, because they are seeing features differently, which could provide important information. As it can be seen from the table 2, interviewee 1 is a head greenkeeper, and interviewee 2 is a CEO.

Both interviewees provided a superficial abstract about their job description. Interviewee 1 job is to be the operative leader, as it can be seen from the table 2. The answers shows that interviewee 1 has experience about how procurements are done in golf course, which could lead to valuable information later when this study moves to the features of the partnership agreements. On the other hand, interviewee 2, is a CEO of the golf course. As it can be seen from the interviewee 2 job description, interviewee 2 is doing a lot of things, which includes keeping relationship going with partners. Therefore, interviewee 2 could have valuable information about how partnership agreement is working for them. However, interviewee 2 might be lacking experience on how the effect of the partnership agreement can be seen in the golf course maintenance work.

The question 2 focus on to find out how long interviewees have been working in their golf course, like table 2 shows. Both interviewees have been working in their golf courses a long time, which is a positive news for this study. Firstly, working in the same place and generally in the field of golf, could indicate that both of the interviewees truly understand how things should be done, and which activities are truly value-adding activities. Secondly, both of

interviewees have seen the evolution of golf industry and how their customers consumption habits have change.

Interviewee 1 pointed out that he or she has been working before and after the partnership agreement. This is a valuable interviewee, interviewee 1 can provide own experiences about how Hako G&G's partnership agreement has affected to daily routines, and maybe, be able to provide developing target for this study. According to interviewee 2 answer in table 2, that person has also been involved with the golf industry before and after joining to the partnership agreement. Interviewee might not be working directly with, for example, with spare parts feature, but the level of communication between Interviewee 2 (CEO) and head greenkeeper could affect negatively or positively to how well interviewee 2 knows about golf course maintenance situation.

As it can be seen from interviewees assembled answers in table 2, both of them has been involved with Hako G&G partnership agreement about four years. According to interviewee 1, they were one of the first courses to join it. Being one of the first courses to join in, could mean that interviewee 1 has seen how the partnership agreement grow when time goes on. Therefore, it could mean that both interviewees might be able to provide deep information about how agreement's different features are working, because they have experienced both possible errors and successes. That is why it is good for this study to get deeper information from responders who have been involved longer time than under 2 years.

Interviewee 2 provided an important information. Interviewee 2 told that they have created a relationship with Hako G&G before joining to the partnership agreement. However, this might not be a surprise, because Hako G&G is one of the main players in the field of golf maintenance machines. On the other hand, a deep connection with Hako G&G could be a key factor when increasing the bond between both parties. In the future, the next study target could be to research on how earlier connection between Hako G&G and partnership course affect on the satisfaction level of the partnership agreement.

Table 2: Assembled information from questions 1-3 in appendix 2.

Question / Role	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2
Q1: What is your role on the golf course?	- Head greenkeeper - Leading field management – and work management planning. - Involved in material and machine procurements.	- CEO - Taking care of employees, managing partners, financial and administrative duties, and property relate tasks.
Q2: How long have you been working on this golf course?	- 21 years. - Seen time before partnership agreement.	- 18 years.
Q3: How long your golf course has been part of the partnership agreement?	- 4 years. - One of the first course to join it.	- 4 years. - Strong relationship before agreement, but agreement strengthened it. - Clarified our machine purchasing, and secured maintenance and spare parts functions.

Interviewee 2 also points out machine purchases and spare parts activities became a better, which is an important information, because those two activities might be the key reasons why golf course would consider about joining to partnership agreement. This is a good sign for machine investing feature and spare part feature, which are coming later.

6.2.1 Partnership agreement overall

After the base information, this paper moves on to the see what this study's interviewees think about the partnership agreement as a whole. This question, question 4 in appendix 2, provides a good overall picture about the situation, but like mentioned in satisfaction survey, this question might not provide deep enough information, which could be needed when planning developing ideas. However, Hako G&G should pay attention to this question, because it provides a good average about the current situation.

The question 4 is: *Do you feel that the content of the partnership agreement meets your own needs?*

Interviewee 1: *The partnership agreement eases out own operations because we have been using Hako G&G's machines earlier on, and we know that they are high quality machines. That is why the partnership agreement, as a whole, clarifies and simplifies out own operations.*

Interviewee 2: *Yes, I feel like it. In a partnership agreement between a machine supplier like this, I consider after-sales marketing related stuff to be important. Okay, the prices of the machines that have been agreed in the contract affect, but how they will be able to respond*

to situations when the machines become defective in terms of their spare parts and maintenance.

According to interviewee 1, the partnership agreement is working for them because they have been using Hako G&G's machines, and probably other services, earlier on. Also, interviewee 1 pointed out that this partnership agreement clarifies their operations when comparing to the situation when their relationship was non-agreement. Interviewee 2 answered the same thing in the question 3. Earlier relationship with Hako G&G could ease out the transition from non-partnership agreement to the partnership agreement, because both parties already know how other operates and partnership course knows the quality of Hako G&G's services. In the future, it could be interesting know how earlier relationship with Hako G&G affect on how satisfied partnership course is with the partnership agreement. Both interviewees shows that their partnerships with Hako G&G includes features, which are important to partnerships to be successful, like Mohr & Spekman (1994), Lambert, Emmelhainz and Gardner (1994), and Tate (1996) pointed out earlier.

Interviewee 2 brought up the point that after-sales marketing to be important, and it seems that Hako G&G has been successfully done after-sale marketing. Also, interviewee 2 brought up that Hako G&G has been successfully helped them to deal with situations when spare parts and maintenance is needed to be able to do golf course maintenance tasks. On the other hand, when viewing interviewees answers, it shows that three different features pop up, and those features are machine investing, spare part feature and maintenance feature. This takeaway from question 4, could indicate Hako G&G that machine investing, spare part feature and maintenance features are those features which are the most successful. However, deeper examining is needed to be truly able to support that hypothesis. After this question, question 4, this study moves on to examine Hako G&G partnership agreements features.

6.2.2 Machine investing

The machine investing feature starts the deeper examining process to get deeper knowledge of those features. unlike earlier questions in appendix 2, these questions about partnership agreements features are two-parts. The first part focus on to the current state and how happy partnership course is, and the second part focus on asking developing ideas from partnership courses. This way, interviewees need to dig deeper and think more about how partnership agreement is working for them, and based on those feelings, provide developing ideas.

The question 5 main question is: Do you feel that the machine invest feature of the partnership agreement is a workable solution to meet your own needs?

Interviewee 1: *The machine investing feature works for us because our principle has always been that we buy and own our machines. So, for example, we do not use leasing principles with our machines.*

Interviewee 2: *Well, it clarified things when this was originally done. It clarified what kind of cycle and what machines we will be acquiring and upgrading over the next five years. At the same time, it brought more certainty to the people who works in the golf course maintenance, that is those who use those machines in the daily basis. At the same time, they were (Maintenance workers) informed of what machines would be acquired and upgraded over the next five years.*

According to the interviewee 1, machine investing feature works well for them. Interviewee 1 pointed out that they do not leasing methods with their machines, therefore it is a good for their course that machine investing feature, like Hako G&G partnership leaflet (Hako kumppanuus) says, Hako G&G will help partnership courses to create machine investing plan for the next 5 years. This planning is important for golf courses because golf maintenance machines can be very expensive and investing plan is necessary to have, because buying own maintenance machines requires more planning than leasing them.

Interviewee 2 pointed out the importance of maintenance machine investing plans. Interviewee 2, who was a CEO, point out that it is necessary for golf maintenance workers to have legit knowledge about which machines are going to be changed every year. This is true, because it is important to share the investing plan to maintenance workers, because without that knowledge, miscommunication could lead to pointless action, which is like Helmond (2020) says, waste. For instance, if partnership courses repair man start a big fixing process to machine, which is going to be changed soon, means that repair man has waste own time and resources. Therefore, like Zhou (2016) pointed out, sharing information with employees and teaching them to truly understand why everything is done, is part of the lean principles, perfection.

Creating investing plan not only helps to understand costs, but also helps head greenkeepers to plan possible developing tasks in golf courses. If head greenkeeper knows that certain machine is going to be changed, usually for the better one, he or she can start to plan bigger

developing plans in the future. This will eventually make the state of golf course better and make it easier to start executing those bigger developing tasks. In the end, this could lead better outcome for golf courses customers. Therefore, like both interviewees indicates, Hako G&G's machine investing feature is working very well, and it provides many different services.

The second part of this question 5, is: *How would you develop this feature?*

Interviewee 1: *At the moment, the machine investing feature Is working for us, so we do not see any need to change it at all.*

Interviewee 2: *There is really no need for development, more about maintaining the current state than getting better.*

Both interviewees are very satisfied to machine investing feature as it can be seen from their answers. The request from interviewee 2 is that Hako G&G need to keep this state in the future. However, Hako G&G cannot stop looking on to this feature's processes, because without looking at own processes time to time, some negative actions, waste, could born without Hako G&G's knowledge. Therefore, it is important to have Kaizen principle in their mind when maintaining daily processes. This could save Hako G&G from long- or short-term negative incidents. Also, showing that Hako G&G is constantly paying attention to their processes could have huge impact when their partnership courses are planning if they are going to renew the partnership agreement,

6.2.3 Spare parts

The question 6 in appendix 2 focus on spare parts. Like mentioned earlier on, spare parts are important factor for golf courses, and that may be the reason why interviewee 2 mentioned it in question 3. Both machine investing and spare parts managed to get good rating when examined satisfaction survey, and therefore, it is important to know why it is working and how it could be developed based on interviewees opinions.

Interviewee 1: *This spare part feature is not so different than our previous spare parts operation. That is because we have always preferred high quality and original spare parts over low quality cheap versions when we are acquiring spare parts. My opinion is, that Hako G&G's idea to use high quality and original designed spare parts in this feature is very*

smart, because this feature must be seen as a bigger picture. This means that you always use high quality spare parts and machines.

Interviewee 2: *Has worked very well. Of course, the last couple of years have been different, because of covid-19 and the general shortage of components, as well as everything else that comes with spare parts like this. But it has been seen in every aspect, whenever it is related to lawnmowers or even snowmobiles in the winter. When there is a shortage of components, then there is a shortage of them. Otherwise, worked really well.*

Interviewees gave different opinions about the spare part features, other than both being very satisfied with it. However, the differences between answers could be explainable by remembering that interviewees 1 and 2 are working in different positions, which lead to the fact that they see these features from different perspectives. Interviewee 1 pointed out that there are not many differences when comparing spare part process before and after joining to the partnership agreement. This might be the result of deeper relationship between Hako G&G and the golf course where interviewee 1 works. This opinion supports the earlier mentioned hypothesis that deeper relationship before joining to partnership agreement could lead to better outcomes.

Interviewee 2 also brought up that they are using only high-quality spare parts in their machines if possible. According to interviewee 1, Hako G&G are using high-quality and original spare parts when offering spare parts to their customers. This is good news for Hako G&G, because it shows that Hako G&G provides high-quality items for their customer, which leads to the happy customers. However, this might lead to standard issues later. For instance, when keeping standard high, it means that customers are going to demand high quality all the time. If Hako G&G face their own suppliers' problems, like Covid-19 has created their ability to offer those spare parts might not be possible, and if Hako G&G decide to provide lower quality spare parts to minimize longer waiting times, partnership courses will notice it. This could decrease the level of satisfaction in partnership courses mind.

Interviewee 2 brought up the current situation in the world, where all businesses are facing the components shortages. This means that Hako G&G has faced some problems to provide partnership courses needed spare parts. All in all, interviewee 2 is happy to spare parts feature, which is the good news. However, this answer shows that Hako G&G should be thinking and planning other ways to make sure that they can keep their promises and provide

high quality items. Hako G&G's supply chains might need some fixing or deeper examining. On the other hand, this study cannot give an opinion about this subject because of lack of information about Hako G&G's supply chains. However, later on creating research about their supply chains and how to prepare possible problems could be worthwhile.

The other part of question 6 is about: *How would you develop this feature?*

Interviewee 1: *Like machine investing feature, spare parts feature works well for us, and I do not see any point to fix it at least at this moment.*

Interviewee 2: *On the machine spare parts side, there is the question of how long it takes to get a particular spare part. In Finland, the market is limited. Next warehouses are somewhere in Europe, but otherwise worked very well. On the other hand, head greenkeepers know better whether there are any wishes for practical action. In some cases, some spare parts orders could be placed directly through web portal or something like that. but it requires repair technician to know directly which part is needed. After all, nowadays it is a normal to have spare part ordering portal, at least in car repair shop business. However, there is no such function in Hako G&G's operations yet.*

Interviewees provided different answers to this question. Both of them are happy to the situations, but interviewee 2 is the only one who provided some developing ideas. Interviewee 2 understand that Finland is a smaller market, and its geographical location could lead to the situations where it takes time to import needed spare parts. However, according to interviewee 2, Hako G&G is lacking spare part ordering portal. This is a huge news, because nowadays almost everyone has one. Having a well working web portal is crucial, because it makes it easier and faster to partnership customers to order needed spare parts and decrease Hako G&G warehouse managers time in phone taking the orders from customers. Therefore, creating a web portal could be the key developing idea of this feature.

6.2.4 Extended warranty

This sub-chapter focus on question 7 in appendix 2, which is about extended warranty feature. Like mentioned earlier on, this question managed to get labelled as "indeterminated" in satisfaction survey. Therefore, it is important to know that the result of this question needs to be taken into account when deciding if any developing is necessary.

Interviewee 1: *Yes we do. This extended warranty feature ensures that many times certain parts of the machine stop working after the warranty has been fulfilled and expired. This minimizes the occurrence of a so-called margin of error, which always raises the emotional surface, and its effects.*

Interviewee 2: *It has worked, it gives such additional certainty as to when the machines come, and what involves to the warranty period and its operations. The whole feature is good in the long term, and that is why we need to be happy that there have not been any big problems with machines. We have experienced that those machines work well, and we have not yet needed to use extended warranty. I think extended warranty is more about being a good additional to the whole package rather than major factor in this agreement. For example, spare parts are more important factor than extended warranty*

Like it can be seen from the answers, both interviewees 1 and 2 are satisfied with extended warranty feature. Interviewee 1 pointed out that extended warranty is a good tool to have, because it decreases the effects of possible "margin of errors". This support the interviewee 2 idea that extended warranty is more about being a good additional tool to the partnership agreement, because it creates additional protection for the partnership courses, and its very useful service when looking at from Hako G&G's perspective. These answers support the results of satisfaction survey because this feature does not show in the daily business. Therefore, it is a necessary solution to stick with "indeterminate" label in this feature.

Interviewee 1: *I do not think that this feature needs any developing.*

Interviewee 2: *There is no need for developing, at least now.*

According to interviewee 1 and 2, developing extended warranty feature is not necessary to do. For this study, this extended warranty question shows that it is a necessary tool have but it needs to be left alone. On the other hand, this feature could be merged with "machine investing" part in the Hako G&G leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus), because it is more of activity, which is connected to machine investing. This could make the leaflet cleaner and lower the number of features in the leaflet.

6.2.5 Technical support

The next question, question 8 in appendix 2, is about technical support feature. In appendix 1, satisfaction survey part of this study, technical support managed to receive 20/22 high score from partnership courses, which was the highest rated feature. Therefore, it is important to get deeper and more detailed information from partnership courses, it is crucial to know why and how responders are satisfied with this feature. On the other hand, Hako G&G could receive good developing ideas, which could make this feature to be even better for both parties.

Interviewee 1: *We are very satisfied with the technical support feature in the partnership agreement, and it has been available quickly when we have ever needed it. For example, if we need technical support or advice for our newer machines, we will receive "factual information" from Hako's technical support, and it will come very fast. Additionally, not only by phone but also they come to visit us.*

Interviewee 2: *I am a wrong person to answer this question because of my role, but as far as I understand it has met our needs. the problem with technical support is that as machines and equipment evolve and become more intelligent, does Hako G&G have people who really can handle them?*

As the answers indicates, both interviewees are happy with technical support feature and what it keeps inside. Interviewee 1 brought up that Hako G&G managed to create technical support service to be fast, which is crucial for golf courses, like mentioned numerous times in this study. Having a trustful technical support is a necessary for partnership courses but also to be included to partnership agreement, because it could decrease the stress level in partnership courses mind. Also, interviewee 1 pointed out that Hako G&G's technical support not only stay in phone, but also, they come to visit partnership courses. This is a good option to have, because sometimes problems with maintenance machines could be very complicated and it is better to have someone who has a deeper knowledge about Hako G&G machines to look at them.

Interviewee 1 and 2 might both be satisfied with technical support feature, but their answers are still extremely different. Like this study has found out, CEO's may not have enough knowledge to provide necessary information, which is why interviewee 2 pointed it out. CEO's lack of knowledge of how some features work is not the end of the world. However,

it could be beneficial to have that knowledge. On the other hand, Hako G&G cannot do anything to increase their knowledge, therefore this will not affect on developing plans. Still, interviewee 2 managed to provide interesting point about AI and if Hako G&G is capable to handle those machines. However, partnership leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus) does not mention anything about this subject, which leaves this study create assumptions, which could be problematic. Therefore, it is better to assume that Hako G&G tries to follow trends and, in the end, could be capable to answers to new problems.

The other part of question 8 ask interviewees about: *How would you develop this feature?*

Interviewee 1: *On behalf of our course, I can say that no more could be demanded from technical support feature, so I do not see how this feature could be even further developed. Also, our course is very lucky to be located close to Hako (G&G)'s office and warehouse, which means we are located close to their services. So, the geographical location supports our experience.*

Interviewee 2: *I cannot answer to this question.*

The result of this question indicates that there is no developing to do. However, interviewee 1 pointed out that their close location to Hako G&G's office and warehouse could increase their experiences. This is an interesting point. Hako G&G could create a poll and ask their partnerships courses about if location affect on the level of satisfaction. Knowing this could be useful, but Hako G&G cannot really do huge changes base on it results, because geographical location always plays a huge role in many businesses.

All in all, technical support did receive a good result from these interviews. Technical support might not be the primary reason why partnership courses would join to the partnership agreement, but it might be the reason why partnership courses stay in. Support features are truly necessary features to have because it increases the value of the whole partnership agreement. Hako G&G might not receive any developing ideas, other than interviewee 2 AI question (Indeterminate), but it does not mean that Hako G&G could not pay attention to technical supports processes.

6.2.6 Response time

After examining interviewees opinions about technical support feature, this paper moves on to question 9 in appendix 2. The point of that question is to find out what interviewees think

about maintenance response time, which according to Hako G&G partnership leaflet, guarantees that Hako G&G response in 48 hours after the call from partnership course and they are in better position to get spare parts or spare machines comparing to non-partnership courses (Hako Kumppanuus). This feature could be seen one of the most important support features, because partnership courses expect getting needed service or parts as fast as possible. The question 9 is: *Do you feel that the maintenance response time and spare machine feature matches the needs of your course?*

Interviewee 1: *The maintance response feature has been quite reasonable. The possible spare machine feature in our course has worked, but of course it matters which machine is in search, because it is not possible for anyone to considering keeping all kind of machine as a spare machine. But mainly, Hako (G&G) will provide us our order even if it has not yet come to their warehouse. For example, they would "borrow" you a similar machine or certain part of the machine for us, and we would give it back after our order arrive. As a result, our own machines has been up and running faster than without maintance response feature. In this feature, we are yet again very lucky to be located close to Hako (G&G)'s warehouse and service, because those spare parts and machines arrive pretty fast to us after arriving to Hako (G&G)'s warehouse.*

Interviewee 2: *I think the maintenance response time has worked well. The problem is that these Covid-19 years have increased response time to all activities. But it has still worked surprisingly well in my opinion. I think that spare machines have been found to fix situations if there have been situations where spare machine has been needed. However, it must be kept in mind that when you live in a small country, some things take time to come here (Finland) than elsewhere.*

When comparing answers of both interviewees, it can be noticed that both are satisfied about how maintenance response time feature has been working. However, both of them think this feature has some problems. For example, interviewee 1 pointed out that limitations of spare maintenance machines are affecting time to time, but like interviewee 1 continued, it may not be possible to have a lot of spare machines in their warehouse, because that would not be worthwhile. On the other hand, Hako G&G idea to decrease possible negative feelings by lending "extra" parts if they cannot provide customers order in time (48 hours). This additional backup plan is an extremely genius, because like reseachers Mohr & Spekman

(1994), Lambert, Emmelhainz &Gardner (1999), Tate (1996) pointed out earlier on, partnership cannot survive if parties are not receiving results which match with their goals.

Interviewees 1 and 2 both brought up that geographical situation matter in this feature as well as earlier features. Interviewee 1 think that their close location to Hako G&G office and warehouse could increase their experienced value. This assumption is more than likely to be true, because shorter logistics usually means that customer can receive their order faster than customer who is located far away. However, actions which Hako G&G could do to decrease the effects of the geographical location, are little to none. On the other hand, interviewee 2 brought up limitations of market size and how it covid-19 increased its effects. Like different business fields understand, Finland is a small market, and it is affecting on response times. For example, it logical that Finnish customers are getting spare parts slower than customers, which are in Sweden, because one of the main warehouses are in Sweden. However, these are supply chain questions, and Hako G&G have more opportunities to change and develop it than changing golf course's location.

The second part of this question focus on: *How would you develop this feature?*

Interviewee 1: *By commenting from the customer's perspective, it would be useful that if some crucial machine breaks down and they do not have spare parts for it in a few days, it would be nice if they would have every machine types ready to go as a spare machine, but I understand that it may not be possible or profitable.*

Interviewee 2: *Greenkeepers knows better how to answer to this question.*

Interviewee indicated the same thing than earlier on. Increasing the number of different spare machines would be a good thing for customers, according to interviewee 1. However, this might no be the best option for Hako G&G. On the other hand, creating calculations about if it possible to be done, could be a good developing idea. After that, both interviewees did not provide any other developing ideas.

The question 9 provided couple of developing ideas, which could be done. First, creating calculations if increasing the numbers of spare machines is possible or make any sense to Hako G&G. The last possible developing idea is to examine Hako G&G supply chains or creating alternative chains if possible. However, this paper cannot provide deeper supply chain developing plans, because this paper does not have enough information about them.

That is why it could be wise to create other research, like mentioned earlier on, which would focus on their supply chains.

6.2.7 Visibility and marketing feature

After examining the results of other features, this paper moves on to question 10 in appendix 2. This question focus on how the last feature of the partnership agreement works in daily basis. Visibility/Marketing feature is nothing like features earlier on. Like mentioned earlier and how Hako G&G describes this feature in their partnership agreement leaflet (Hako Kumppanuus), it is very complicated group of activities. This feature could add a lot of value for both parties, but it could easily be more problematic for Hako G&G than to partnership courses. The question 10 is all about: *Do you feel that Hako G&G's visibility and other assistance, such as organizing and marketing machine shows, meet your needs?*

Interviewee 1: *I would say that, in general, such a partnership agreement gives a good picture of our own activities and shows our planning. This means that we do not operate only at this moment, but we have planned our operations for four years, for example.*

Interviewee 2: *We feel that it has worked well. Of course, Covid-19 contributed to the fact that they have not been able to hold events here in the same way as before. I could imagine they are happy because we are happy. I understand that they are partnering with other golf courses as well, so they cannot implement all the events here on the (our) golf course alone. I would rather ask if they (Hako G&G) feel that they receive value from our golf course in this marketing feature.*

Base on answers from interviewees, both responders are satisfied with visibility feature, but they took different routes in their answers. Interviewee 1 highlighted that Hako G&G's partnership agreement has helped their golf course to plan their operations by using long-term point of view. When adding interviewee 2's opinions to interviewee 1 opinions, it can be seen that visibility feature has been successful. However, like in many other features, visibility feature has been decreased its value because of Covid-19. Hako G&G cannot do anything about Covid-19, but at the same time, partnership courses who have just joined might not see the value of this feature like partnership courses who has been involved before Covid-19.

Hako G&G promises to bring their own marketing events to their partnership courses are good not only for partnership courses (See interviewee 2 opinions), but also for Hako G&G,

which is necessary. According to interviewee 2, making Hako G&G happy is important, which support the ideas of Mohr & Spekman (1994), Lambert, Emmelhainz &Gardner (1999), Tate (1996). Interviewee 2 attitude toward shared benefits, is a good sign for Hako G&G when thinking about the future. Having deep and respectful partnership, without forgetting mutual interests, are the key factor to have a long and successful partnership. However, it seems that Hako G&G has not used their partnership courses to the fullest, or at least, have a good communication about how much value they are getting from interviewee 2's golf course. Hako G&G could have better communication about how they would like to use partnership courses to create better value.

The second part of this question focus on: *How would you develop this feature?*

Interviewee 1: *I would say that when our course joined to this partnership agreement, this feature has already been developed from what it was earlier on. For example, nowadays Hako (G&G) creates more demo days which are held in partnership courses, which is good for both the partnership course and Hako (G&G). The partnership courses are experiencing the strengthening of their own position in the direction of Hako (G&G).*

Interviewee 2: *Hako (G&G) could think more about how they could use opportunities, which their partners creates. For example, how could we as a course promote their (Hako G&G's) other products and services to our customers. If we have like 1000 share holders and 1700 members, I do not think that they are taking advantage about that. I understand that within a company, there are different operating models for the B2C and B2B sales. It could be an opportunity that could add value for both parties.*

Like the first part of this question, the results of the second part are also positives. Interviewee 1 pointed out that this feature has been developing from the beginning of the partnership agreement, which is a good sign. Also, interviewee 1 added that those demo days, like interviewee 2 mentioned earlier on, are very useful for both parties. Interviewee 1 added that this feature creates better position for partnership courses. This could lead to problematic situations in the future. Firstly, if Hako G&G can keep up with their marketing and their promises, this feature could keep partnership courses in the agreement a long time. Secondly, if Hako G&G counts that this feature is not economical for them in the long-term, which would lead to the situation where Hako G&G start developing this feature. This could lead savings, but at the same time, some partnership courses could be unsatisfied with that,

and decide not to renew the agreement after it expires. Therefore, every developing plan need to be extremely well calculated and having communication with their partnership courses to get needed information about their possible reactions to changes.

The interviewee 2 provided an interesting opinion about the possible developing. The roots of that opinion are based on the fact Hako G&G should be using their opportunities better. Using their partnership courses as a place to advertise not only golf maintenance machines but also their other products/services, like interviewee 2 suggested, is an extremely good idea. For example, using golf maintenance machine demo days to promote other services to partnership courses customers, could create extra value for Hako G&G and decrease advertising costs, because partnership courses could let Hako G&G advertise their other services and products for free.

The results of the question 10 provided a lot of useful information about how well visibility feature is working. The results are positive, which is always good news, but the most important thing was the excellent developing idea. However, this paper cannot sophisticate it to clearer form, because of the limitations of the data. Nonetheless, this paper recommends Hako G&G to have internal communication meeting between different departments to start examining if using partnership courses to advertise their other products or services would add value for Hako G&G.

6.2.8 Future of the partnership agreement

After examining the last partnership feature, this paper moves on to the last question, question 11 in appendix 2. The last question is trying to get opinions about how interviewees see the future of the partnership agreement. The answers to this question are going to be conjectures because future is not set in stone. However, those answers might include some informative opinions, which could be used when creating developing plans. The question 11 focus on: *Do you have any other developing ideas or concerns about the concept of the partnership agreement or its actions?*

Interviewee 1: *There is really no concern about the content of the partnership agreement. However, the fact that as the number of partnership courses increases, will Hako (G&G) have the resources to respond quickly enough to the demands, needs and aspirations of all partnership courses. In other words, is there any risk that the number of partnership courses*

will expand too much in relation to Hako (G&G)'s resources, for example, could technical support be overburdened.

Interviewee 2: *Not really. What interests me more is that when doing partnering, both parties are happy with the situation. If the partnership agreement is going to be developed, it will be important that both sides benefit from the situation. Otherwise, it could lead to the situation where other party is not interested about the partnership.*

Both answers to the last question shows that the interviewees are bringing totally different opinions to this question. Interviewee 1 is pointing out possible concerns about the future. Interviewee 1 has a fear that Hako G&G actions to add more golf courses to partnership agreement could affect on Hako G&G's ability to be agile and challenge their resources. This is a legitimate concern, because when the amount of partnership courses increases, Hako G&G needs to hold their promises for a larger crowd. When adding effects of the Covid-19 situation and current shortage of components, Hako G&G could face difficult situations in the future. This paper recommends Hako G&G to calculate current situation and its effects to their calculations about their ability to answers partnership courses needs. However, this paper assumes that Hako G&G has created plans and calculations about how adding new courses to their partnership agreement affect their ability to provide needed products and services. On the other hand, without legitimate information about Hako G&G calculations, it is not possible to create, or even try to create, any changes.

Interviewee 2 gave a different answer to this question. Interviewee 2 started to tackle this question from partnership perspective. Like earlier on, interviewee 2 want to make sure that both parties, golf course and Hako G&G, benefits from partnership agreement, and if any changes come in the future, the situation needs to benefit both parties. This is the same point of view than researchers, who have studied and examining partnerships, have. That is why Hako G&G should focus on the situation and have a working communication to its partnership courses, it is necessary to know how satisfied partnership courses are and does the partnership agreement create value for them. On the other hand, the last point from the interviewee 2 support Ramsay (1996) idea that partnership should bring more positive value than negative value to be able to work. Therefore, it could be a wise idea to create satisfaction surveys, for example, every year because that could provide Hako G&G information about how satisfied their partnership courses are. On the other hand, it is important that Hako G&G examine before any changes that those changes will not decrease Hako G&G experienced

value too much. Balancing between Hako G&G experienced value and their partnership courses experienced value could be difficult if the current unstable situation continues.

7. Discussion and conclusion

After examining theoretical background, Hako G&G's background, and results of satisfaction survey and interviews, this paper has come to the final chapter. In this chapter, this paper provides answers to those research question without forgetting limitations of this study. Also, this chapter will recommend possible research targets for Hako G&G, which could be useful and beneficial in the long term. First, this paper starts with answering to the main research question and sub-research questions. After that, this paper moves on to limitations part, which provides information about limitations and errors of this paper. The final part of this study is to examine and plan possible research targets and provide opinions and recommends why those should or could be done.

7.1 Conclusion

This paper had one main research question and three sub-questions, like mentioned earlier on. The table 3 contains answers to those questions Firstly, the main research question focused on: *How can machine supplier develop current partnership agreement to add value for both parties?* According to the table 3, which includes interviewees opinions, there is not a lot of developing to be done. Like table 3 and earlier chapter implicates, Hako G&G's partnership courses are satisfied with the partnership agreement, and mainly hopes that Hako G&G can keep the current state of the partnership agreement rather than developing it. However, there was couple of good developing ideas. First, Hako G&G could calculate if increasing their spare machines in their warehouse is possible. This could decrease the negative effects of the component shortage and Covid-19 pandemic, because Hako G&G can be prepared to lend machines which will satisfy their partnership course's needs. However, this could increase Hako G&G's costs, but it could keep partnership courses renewing their contracts with them.

The answers from interviewees, like table 3 shows, indicates that lean's fifth principle, perfection (Womack & Jones, 1996), has a crucial role when wondering key elements to the main research question. The fifth principle of lean suggest that companies should try to seek perfection by examining their processes and being in constant improving mode like Staats, Brunner and Upton (2011) indicated. When adding interviewees statements about how Hako G&G should rather focus on keeping the same level than developing their features, it shows that Hako G&G could add value for both parties by making their current features and processes to run as smoothly as possible. Therefore, one of the answers to the main research

question could see to be that Hako G&G need to focus on running its processes as well as possible to be able to create the most value.

Table 2: A summary table

	Tech Support	*Machine invests*	*Spare parts*	*Spare machine and response time*	*Marketing*	*Expanded Warranty*
High score percent	**90,9 %**	90,48%	68,18%	59,1 %	54,5 %	**50 %**
Interviewee 1 key takeaways	- Satisfied - Close location to Hako G&G helps	- Satisfied - No need to develop	- Works well and no point to develop at this moment. - Using high quality spare parts is a good thing.	- Working well. - Increase number of spare machines. - Close location to Hako G&G warehouse matters.	- Already developed from the beginning.	- Adds certainty when facing errors.
Interviewee 2 key takeaways	- Satisfied - Is Hako G&G capable of to handle more developed machines?	- Clarifies investing plans. Maintaining the current state of this feature is more important than developing.	- Worked well. - Covid-19 and shortage of components affecting. -Limited market size affects - Creating better ordering system	- Working well Covid-19 affecting to response time. - Small market size affects.	- How partnership course help Hako G&G to get more value out of this feature? - Using partnership courses to promote Hako G&G's other products and services.	- Adds certainty. - Good long-term tool.

The other developing idea focus on to the visibility/marketing feature. Like interviewee 2 pointed out earlier on and now in figure x, Hako G&G should make deeper advertising plans with their partnership courses. Hako G&G partnership courses have a good number of people who could be interested in buying Hako G&G's other products and services to them or to their businesses. Therefore, creating marketing plans with other departments should be done. However, some calculations need to be made, but this could be an idea that can be developed to bring value.

The first sub-questions focus on: *What value and non-value adding activities current partnership agreement have?* Figure x indicates that 3 out of 6 features, which are tech support/machine invests/spare parts, managed to get high "high score" rate. This implicates that these three features and its activities are working well. However spare machines and response time, marketing, and expanded warranty managed to receive under 60% high score rate. This is not ideal score, but when comparing these scores with their "we have not used" score, which examined earlier on, it can be seen that spare machine and response time, and expanded warranty managed to get high "we have not used" score. Therefore, this paper cannot criticize those two features too much. However, marketing/visibility feature did not receive high "we have not used" rate, which implicates that this feature includes some non-value adding activities, which Hako G&G needs to examine more closely.

Secondly, Hako G&G could brace themselves that their partnership agreement includes activities, which might not be the most value adding but still necessary. The answers from this study suggest that some features might add little to no value for the partnership agreement. Which features creates the least, or none, value depends on the perspective. However, these findings support the idea that some wastes are necessary to have when thinking the bigger picture. For instance, like Hines & Rick (1997) pointed out, some wastes are necessary to have when thinking about the bigger picture.

Finally, our world, especially business world, has faced a lot of new challenges. Component shortage and Covid-19 affects on how well Hako G&G can provide those activities, which creates value for their partnership courses. These problems might be bigger than Hako G&G can answer, which lead to the fact that this paper cannot criticize Hako G&G too much, because it is affecting whole world, and this paper do not have enough information about their supply chains. However, if Hako G&G keep facing these problems in future, their partnership courses could become inpatient and seek alternative options to substitute Hako G&G and their partnership agreement.

The second sub-question is: *What new value-adding activities could be added to partnership agreement?* The answer to this sub-question is pretty much same than to the main research question. The outcome of this study seems to be positive, and Hako G&G's partnership courses are satisfied with the partnership agreement. Therefore, Hako G&G should be only examining their features, especially those which managed to receive low satisfaction score, and those, which received high "We have not used" score. Developing features and its

activities in sake of developing, is not advisable. However, trying to keep features as agile as possible is advisable, which could not only add value but also help Hako G&G to answer possible radical changes in world.

The final sub-question is: *What risks could evolve after developing the current partnership agreement?* If Hako G&G decide to do developing, there is a change that partnership courses are not happy with the changes. As it can be seen from the table 3, Hako G&G's partnership courses are satisfied, and like interviewee 1 and 2 pointed out, maintaining the current state might be the best option. Therefore, if Hako G&G start developing the partnership agreement, it is crucial to ask their partnership courses opinions. This could decrease the negative effects of the development. Value, the first lean principle (), support the idea of understanding customers needs. Like mentioned earlier on, value principle sees that it is necessary to company to know and understand their customers necessities to be even able to provide them value through company's offerings (Hines & Taylor, 2010).

On the other hand, Interviewee 1 pointed out earlier on that if Hako G&G decide to keep adding more courses to its partnership agreement, how it will affect on Hako G&G ability to provide needed services or products to its old partnership courses. This is a legitimate fear, which Hako G&G need to address. This paper has not the needed information about how Hako G&G calculate effects of adding new course to the agreement. However, this paper recommends that Hako G&G creates calculations on if they can maintain the needed product and service state. Having good communication with old partnership courses about plans to expand, could be advisable and a cheap way to decrease possible fears.

7.2 Limitations and future considerations

Finally, this paper moves on to point out possible limitations of this study and provides needed opinion about if there are any future considerations to do. Figure 21 shows "we have not used" rates of partnership features. In figure 21, partnership agreements features are categorized from the highest "we have not used" rate to the lowest. For this study, and for Hako G&G, lower rate is more desirable. Expanded warranty received the most, and what is why this paper decided it to be indeterminate, and tech support / spare parts received the lowest. Like mentioned earlier on, "We have not used" option is a complicated and creates a limitation to this study for couple of reason. Firstly, if the answer means that responders

have not used this limitation, the answers create complications for Hako G&G, because this paper cannot be sure how long the responder have been involved with the agreement. Therefore, it might be impossible to make any conclusions. Secondly, if the responder just does not have enough information or experience to answer anything else, for example if responder just started working there or if responder is CEO/Executive director.

Earlier on, this paper examined how long responders have been involved with the partnership agreement, and the results shows that many have been involved under 1 year. This creates limitation to this study, because responders might not know enough how partnership agreements features works. Therefore, those responders might not be able to provide crucial information, or their answers are affected by honeymoon period, about how those features work. On the other hand, this paper fails to interview person who has been involved under 1 year. This could have been a good possibility to compare answers between persons who have been involved a long time to those who have just joined.

	Expanded Warranty	*Spare machine and response time*	*Marketing*	*Machine invests*	*Spare Parts*	*Tech Support*
We have not used percent	50 %	36,4 %	13,6 %	9,5 %	9,1 %	9,1 %

Figure 21: "We have not used" percent from the highest to the lowest. The figure is based on results of appendix 1.

One problem with answers came from questions 4 and 10. Overall number of responds were 22, but in questions 4 and 10, it was 21. This happened because of the style of the satisfaction survey, which did not include "must be answered to continue" rule. This is one of the mistakes of this study, but luckily it does not decrease reliability of this study, because number of "missing answers" is low, and it decreased response rate about 2%. However, there could be many reasons why responder did not answer to this question, but because author of this study cannot be sure, it is better not to make any conclusions.

Nonetheless, this study provided a good amount of information for Hako G&G, which they can use when deciding developing ideas. In the future, near or in long distance, Hako G&G should create similar research, or at least satisfaction survey, because it would show if there were any changes about how their partnership courses feels. It is a cheap and pretty fast way to gather valuable information, which could have a huge impact on the future of this partnership agreement. Like interviewees mentioned earlier on, partnership agreement is

made for 5-year periods. Therefore, it would be wise to target next customer satisfaction surveys before partnership agreement expires, and Hako G&G have time to fix possible negative actions before they start to negotiate about renewing the agreement.

On the other hand, constant examining own supply chains, or plans, is advisable. Therefore, creating study, which focus on Hako G&G's supply chains and if there are any reasons to make changes. In this study supply chains did not play any role, because it was not the target of this study. However, these recommendations are truly side effects of the results of this study. However, those should still be considered when creating new plans.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Satisfaction survey

1) What is your role?
   a) CEO/ Executive director
   b) Head greenkeeper
2) How long have you been involved with Oy Hako Ground & Garden Ab Partnership agreement?
   a) 0-1 Years
   b) 1-2 Years
   c) Over 2 years
3) How satisfied are you with the partnership agreement and its features? (1= very unsatisfied / 5= very satisfied).
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
4) How satisfied are you with the machine invest feature? (1= very unsatisfied/ 5=very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
   f) We have not used
5) How satisfied are you with the spare part feature? (1= Very unsatisfied / 5= Very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
   f) We have not used
6) How satisfied are you with the expanded warranty feature? (1= Very unsatisfied / 5= Very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
   f) We have not used
7) How satisfied are you with the technical support feature? (1= Very unsatisfied / 5= Very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3

d) 4
e) 5
f) We have not used

8) How satisfied are you with the response time and spare machine feature? (1 = Very unsatisfied / 5= Very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
   f) We have not used
9) How satisfied are you with the visibility, ergo, marketing and other activities? (1= Very unsatisfied / 5= Very satisfied)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5
   f) We have not used
10) Would you recommend this partnership agreement to other courses? (1= Very unlikely / 5= Very likely)
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) 4
   e) 5

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions

1) Mikä on roolinne golfkentällänne? / What is your role on the golf course?
2) Kuinka kauan olette työskennelleet kyseisellä golfkentällä? / How long have you been working on this golf course?
3) Kuinka kauan golfkenttä x on kuulunut kumppanuussopimukseen? How long your golf course has been part of the partnership agreement?
4) Koetteko kumppanuussopimuksen sisällön kokonaisuudessaan vastaavan omia tarpeitanne? Do you feel that the content of the partnership agreement meets your own needs?
5) Koetteko, että kumppanuussopimuksen ”koneinvestointi ominaisuus” on toimiva ratkaisu vastaamaan tarpeitanne? Do you feel that the machine invest feature of the partnership agreement is a workable solution to meet your own needs?
    a) Miten kehittäisitte tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
6) Koetteko varaosa ominaisuuden vastaavan kenttänne tarpeita? Do you feel that spare part feature meets the needs of your course?
    a) Miten kehittäisitte tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
7) Koetteko jatketun takuun ominaisuuden vastaavan tarpeitanne? Do you feel that extended warranty feature matches the need of your course?
    a) Miten kehittäisitte tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
8) Koetteko teknisen tuen vastaavan kenttänne tarpeita? Do you feel that technical support feature matches the needs of your course?
    a) Miten kehittäisitte tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
9) Koetteko huollon vasteajan ja mahdollisen varakone ominaisuuden vastaavan kenttänne tarpeisiin? Do you feel that the maintenance response time and spare machine feature matches the needs of your course?
    a) Miten kehittäisitte tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
10) Koetteko Hakon näkyvyyden ja muun avun kuten konenäyttelyjen järjestämisen ja markkinoinnin vastaavan tarpeitanne? Do you feel that Hako G&G’s visibility and other assistance, such as organizing and marketing machine shows, meet your needs?
    a) Miten kehittäisit tätä ominaisuutta? How would you develop this feature?
11) Onko teillä muita kehitysideoita tai huolia liittyen kumppanuussopimuksen sisältöön tai toimintaan tulevaisuudessa? Do you have any other developing ideas or concerns about the concept of the partnership agreement or actions?