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# Football Tourism to England: Reasons Why Finnish Fans Travel

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2013 Kerava

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## Football Tourism to England: Reasons Why Finnish Fans travel

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Degree Programme in Tourism  
Bachelor's Thesis  
November, 2013

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Year	2013	Pages	47
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The English Premier League is the world's most watched football league. England received almost million overseas visitors in 2012 who went there to watch a football match live. This Bachelor's thesis researches the reasons why Finnish football fans travel to England to watch English Premier League matches. The objective was to find the most important factors that affect football fans' decision to travel and which factors attract them to England. Aim was also to create a profile of these fans.

This thesis consists of two parts; a theoretical and an empirical research part. The theoretical framework is based on the theories of sport tourism, event sport tourism, football tourism and consumer behavior. The research as an online questionnaire. The total amount of responses was 153. The results were analyzed by using MS Excel.

Most of the respondents, 84 %, have previously travelled to England to see a football match. Out of these fans nearly two thirds travel with their friends but some travel with family as well. On average over four out of five have travelled at least two times, most of them even more often. Trips are almost always made independently since only two percent of the respondents have used the services of a tour operator while travelling. For four out of five respondents a football match is the most important reason to travel to England. Besides football, other interesting activities were mentioned, for example, beer and pub culture, sight-seeing and getting to know the destination city. Almost all of the respondents have participated in some other football related activities: done a stadium tour, visited a fan shop and/or visited a place otherwise important to a club. The findings from the research also show that fans appreciate the experience of a football game as a whole: the atmosphere, the experience itself, experiencing football culture, supporting their own club and the social aspect of the match, in other words sharing the experience with friends or family. As for reasons not to travel, lack of money and time are the most common but if offered a chance, all except one respondent would like to do a football trip to England.

In conclusion from the findings, seeing a football match is the most important part of the overall experience and it is often the most important reason to travel. Other important reasons to travel were travelling with friends, the feeling of belonging and other football related activities. From the results a profile for an average fan travelling to England for football match was drawn based on the results of this thesis.

Minka Raatikainen

### Jalkapallomatkailu Englantiin: syyt, miksi suomalaiset fanit matkustavat

Vuosi 2013 Sivumäärä 47

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Englannin Valioliiga on maailman katsotuin jalkapalloliiga. Englanti vastaanotti vuonna 2012 melkein miljoona turistia, jotka tulivat katsomaan jalkapallo-ottelua. Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii suomalaisten jalkapallofanien syitä matkustaa Englantiin katsomaan Englannin Valioliigan otteluita. Tavoitteena työssä oli löytää tärkeimmät tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat jalkapallofanien päätökseen matkustaa ja mitkä tekijät vetävät heitä Englantiin. Tavoitteena oli myös luoda profiili kyseisistä faneista.

Tämä opinnäytetyö on jaettu kahteen osaan: teoreettiseen ja tutkimusosaan. Teoreettinen osuus koostuu urheilu- ja tapahtumaurheilumatkailun, jalkapallomatkailun ja kuluttajakäyttäytymisen teorioista. Tutkimus tehtiin internetkyselynä. Vastauksia kyselyyn saatiin kaiken kaikkiaan 153. Tulokset analysoitiin MS Excelillä.

Tutkimukseen vastanneista suurin osa, 84 %, on matkustanut Englantiin katsomaan jalkapallo-ottelua. Näistä faneista lähes kaksi kolmannesta matkustaa ystäviensä kanssa, mutta perheensä kanssa matkustetaan. Keskimäärin yli neljä viidestä on matkustanut ainakin kaksi kertaa, suurin osa heistä jopa useammin. Matkat ovat lähes poikkeuksetta omatoimimatkoja, sillä vain kaksi prosenttia vastaajista on käyttänyt matkanjärjestäjien palveluita matkustaessaan. Neljälle viidestä vastaajasta jalkapallo-ottelu on tärkein syy matkustaa Englantiin. Jalkapallon lisäksi muiksi kiinnostaviksi aktiviteeteiksi mainittiin muun muassa olut- ja pubikulttuuri, nähtävyyksien katselu ja kohdekaupunkiin tutustuminen. Lähes kaikki vastaajat ovat tehneet myös muita jalkapalloon liittyviä aktiviteetteja matkoillaan: käyneet stadionkierroksella, vierailleet fanikaupassa ja/tai käyneet kannattamalleen seuralle tärkeällä paikalla. Tuloksista selvisi myös, että fanit arvostavat jalkapallo-ottelua kokonaisuutena: tunnelmaa, kokemusta, jalkapallokulttuurin kokemista, oman seuran kannattamista ja ottelun sosiaalista aspektia eli ottelun jakamista perheen tai ystävien kanssa. Suurimmat syyt olla matkustamatta ovat puolestaan rahan ja ajan puute, mutta tilaisuuden tarjoutuessa kaikki, yhtä lukuun ottamatta, haluaisivat tehdä jalkapallomatkan Englantiin.

Tuloksista voitiin päätellä, että jalkapallo-ottelun näkeminen on kaikista tärkein osa kokonaiskokemusta, ja se on usein tärkein syy matkustaa. Muita tärkeitä matkustussyitä olivat ystävien kanssa matkustaminen, yhteenkuuluvuuden tunne ja muut jalkapalloon liittyvät aktiviteetit. Tulosten avulla saatiin laadittua profiili keskivertofanille, joka matkustaa Englantiin jalkapallo-otteluiden takia.

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## 1 Introduction

This thesis studies the travelling pattern of Finnish football fans and tries to find reasons why they want to travel to England to see a football match live. The English Premier League is the world's most watched football league thus it is natural for the topic of this thesis to be based on it, no other football leagues of the world.

The theoretical background of this thesis consists of introducing the basic terms of sport tourism, event sport tourism and nostalgic sport tourism (Chapter 3) and then these theories explained a bit further. As the thesis studies the reasons to travel, theory of consumer behavior is important and brought up in chapter 5. Topics of football tourism, tourism in Great Britain and England and English Premier League were explained in chapter 4. There are some statistical facts in this chapter which were referred from readily made research by British tourism authority but published at Visit Britain.com. Other references used the theory part were mostly few selected books, since there is a limited amount of theoretical information about sport- and especially football tourism, and other internet sources.

Research part starts at chapter 7 where the execution, research methods and reliability and validity of the research are introduced. Quantitative methods was used in the execution of the research and it was conducted among football fans via internet questionnaire and spread through Finnish fan clubs of English Premier League teams (whose purpose and function is explained further in chapter 6). Results were analyzed in Excel and put into a graphical form there.

The results of the questionnaire are explained in chapter 8 in graphical and in written form. They are analyzed further in chapter 9. The thesis is concluded in chapter 10 where the research question of this thesis are answered and some general findings are presented along with a profile of an average tourist. Chapter 11 presents some reflection from the writer considering the writing process of the thesis and its successfulness.

At the appendixes, there are the questions of the original questionnaire in Finnish. The research was conducted in Finnish as the wanted respondents are Finnish. However, the questions are explained in English within the thesis in chapter 7.2.

## 2 Background of the thesis

Bill Shankly, best known as a manager of Liverpool Football Club said in 1981: “Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you that it is much, much more important than that”. For the writer of this thesis, this is true. That is why this thesis is about football, the greatest sport in the world.

As you can read above, topic of this thesis was chosen according to the personal interested of the writer towards football, English Premier League and football tourism. The writer has participated herself as viewer to many football matches, also outside of Finland, and has been actively following different football leagues for years. During her year as an exchange student, the writer lived 10 months in a city with a big football team, Valencia.

The reason that this thesis is not researching trips made to see Spanish first division La Liga BBVA games, even though the writer is personally a fan of a Spanish team, is that Premier League has more fans in Finland than La Liga. One can see this by only looking at the amount of Fan Clubs of different teams in Finland. There are at least four fan clubs of teams currently playing at the English Premier league with hundreds of members each and only two clubs dedicated to Spanish teams. This could be due to the fact that there are only truly two teams that are fighting for the La Liga title and around five or six in England. This makes English Premier League more interesting to follow. So from this one can assume that there are more tourists travelling to England to see a football match than to Spain so it makes more sense to write this thesis about Premier League.

There are two research questions that will be studied in this thesis:

1. What are the reasons that make a Finnish football fan to travel to England to watch a Premier league football match live?
2. What kind of tourist makes a football trip to England?

The purpose of the thesis is to find out why people want to travel to see a football match and who are these people. When the writer first thought about the topic of her thesis, the answer to the research questions seemed too obvious but the further one thinks about it, it really is not that obvious. Everyone travels for different reasons and give value to different things. So how could all the people, who travel for football, travel for the same reasons, value the same thing and participate on the same activities? It is impossible. The goal of this thesis is to find the different reasons people travel and find if there are some common factors there.

### 3 Sport tourism

Sports have had an influence on tourism since the Olympic Games in ancient Greece. People have always travelled to either passively or actively participate on especially large scale events. However, the increased number of participants and spectators is a recent phenomenon (Hinch & Higham 2004, 3.)

When defining the word sport tourism one should consider both words included in the term. There is no one true definition for the terms of either tourism or sports and the term is combination of definition of the both words (Hinch & Higham 2004, 18-20.)

Definition for the word tourism has been long a topic of discussion as there has been no clear and univocal term for it. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as: "tourism comprises of activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes". (Goeldner, Brent Richie & McIntosh 2000, 16). Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 4) discuss of the difficulty to find a clear definition for the term. They found it hard to decide how far the tourist should travel from his or her place of residence during their trip and how many nights should they spend at the destination itself. Swarbrooke and Horner also bring up the fact that there are the tourists who do the actual travelling and then there is the leisure industry which includes all the service providers that service the tourist during their travelling. Also Hudson (2003, 2-3) writes that when defining the word tourism, there are two sides that need to be considered: the demand side and supply side. The demand side is tourists and the supply side is the service providers. In the case of the supply side, the fact that for some businesses their total revenue comes from tourist and for some it comes only partially from tourists, it makes it harder to define the extent of the tourism industry.

However, there are three common dimensions of tourism which can be found in most of the definitions of the word. Firstly, there is the spatial dimension. This refers to the fact that one cannot be a tourist unless they leave their current place of residence and travel a varying distance away from the place of residence. Secondly, there can be seen a temporal dimension. This dimension can be seen in the definitions as the part where a tourist has to stay away from their place of residence at least one night. Thirdly, there is the activity dimension. While travelling a tourist usually takes part in some activity, it can be pleasure, business or some physical activity and so on (Hinch & Higham 2004, 17-18.)

To sports there are some commonalities which help to define it even though some experts argue that it is impossible to have clear definition of sports since sports is a socially constructed activity. It varies in different cultures, societies and throughout history (Ritchie & Aidan 2004,



3.) Hinch and Higham (2004, 20) define sport to be characterized by “unique rule sets, competition related to physical prowess and play”. Hudson (2003, 2) describes sports with similar characteristics but in addition he writes that there are the elements of recreation and health aspects included in the term sport. For example football includes all of the characteristics mentioned above it has a unique rules, it is almost always played with the purpose to compete, being it professionally or not. In non-professional level it also includes the recreation and health aspects.

When looking at the definition of sport tourism, like tourism and sports, there are many definitions for it. Hall writes that sports tourism is “travel for non-commercial reasons to participate or observe sporting activities away from the home range”. Gibson’s definition has similar characteristics as Hall’s: “Leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activity”. From both of these definitions one can see that there are common denominators for both words like the active and passive nature of sport tourism. There can be special, temporal and activity dimensions which were discussed in the chapters explaining the term tourism. In both of these definitions sports is the primary purpose of the trip (Hinch & Higham 2004, 19-20.) Ritchie & Aidan (2004, 9) introduce in their book, the work of Gibson who suggests that there are three categories in the field on sport tourism: active sport tourism, event sport tourism and nostalgia sport tourism (the two latter will be discussed later in this thesis).

### 3.1 Sport tourist

There are many different types of sport tourists. People who participate on sport activities during their holidays are doing so with different “degrees of commitment, competitiveness and active/passive engagement” (Hinch & Higham 2004, 34). This differentiates a casual sport spectator who for example happened to find an activity during their holiday and participated on it as a spectator and a person whose sole purpose of travel is to participate on a sporting event as spectator. This also applies on the level of commitment in of the actual participants of sports; is a person an amateur or a casual participant or a top level athlete.

In the previous chapter it is said that tourists participate on the event either with passive or active engagement. It is good to note that an active participant is the one who do sports during their travel either competitively or non-competitively and a passive participant is traveling to experience a sporting event in the role of a spectator (Hinch & Higham 2004, 39-44.) The latter type of tourism is explained further in the next chapter 3.2.

In the following table (table 1) Reeves identifies six different types of sport tourists based on their decision-making, motivations, lifestyle and spending profiles. The graph illustrates how many different types of sport tourists there are (Hinch & Higham 2004, 34-36.)

Type	Decision-making	Participation	Non-participation	Group profile	Lifestyle	Spending
Incidental	Unimportant	Out of duty	Not relaxing, holiday-like	Family	Sport is significant	Minimal
Sporadic	Relatively important	If convenient	Easily contained/put off	Friends and family	Non-essential	Minimal except for 'one-offs'
Occasional	Sometimes determining	Welcome addition to tourist experience	Other commitments	Often individual, especially business tourists	Conspicuous consumption	High on occasions
Regular	Important	Significant part of enjoyment	Money or time become prohibitive	Group of individual	Important	Considerable
Dedicated	Very important	Central to experience	Due to unforeseen barriers	Individuals and groups of the like minded	Defining element	Extremely high and consistent
Driven	Very important but very little autonomy	Sole reason	Through injury or fear of it	Elite groups or solitary	The profession	Extremely high but funded by others

Table 1: Reeve's sport tourism types and visitor profiles (Hinch & Higham 2004, 36.)

### 3.2 Event Sport Tourism

This particular branch of sport tourism can be defined as a form of tourism in which a person travels to participate as a spectator to a sporting event. However, the primary or only purpose of the trip might not always be the sport part of the event as there can be for example nostalgic or business motives to participate to the event. In addition big sporting events can attract tourist to whom the main purpose of the trip is not to participate on the event but the participation is a secondary motivation. For example the Wimbledon Tennis tournament which is held every summer at Great Britain, the main purpose of participating for some

might be that Wimbledon holds traditional value and it is part of the heritage of Great Britain (Hinch & Higham 2004, 44.)

Mallen & Adams (2008, 2) categorize sporting events into traditional events and niche events. Traditional events are defined by two characteristics: the rules and regulations, that must be followed to produce the event, must have been set by a governing body and that the sport of the event must be a “recognizable and time-honored”. There are very little changes in traditional events and they tend to stay the same through the years. A good example of a traditional event sport is football. It can be played professionally and non-professionally and in both levels a similar rule set is being used which makes it recognizable. In addition there are governing bodies that define rules and regulations for football events. Niche event however are characterized by innovation and they are many times created through the intention to alternate an already existing event or through creation of a new event. There are no governing bodies in niche events however there has to be an organizing body that gives the rules. Niche events can also evolve into traditional events as their popularity grows. An example of this type of an event is beach volley. When it was developed from volley ball it was a niche event but nowadays it a recognized sport with a governing body as it is played in the Olympic games (Mallen & Adams 2008, 2-5.)

However, Hinch & Higham (2004, 44) categorize sporting events differently. They write that there are non-elite event sport tourism and elite event sport tourism. In non-elite sport tourism the amount of spectators is small or there almost aren't any spectators and amount of participants is large. In elite sport tourism the amounts are the case is the contrary (Hinch & Higham 2004, 44.) A good examples of elite sport tourism events are the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup with hundreds of thousands of spectators (not even added to this number are the millions of television viewers). A non-elite sport tourism event can be any lower level sporting event, for example a local children's football tournament of which spectators mostly consist of parents of the participating children.

The following figure (Figure 1) describes the differences between non-elite and elite sport tourism and how the amount of participants and spectator varies on the two kinds of events.

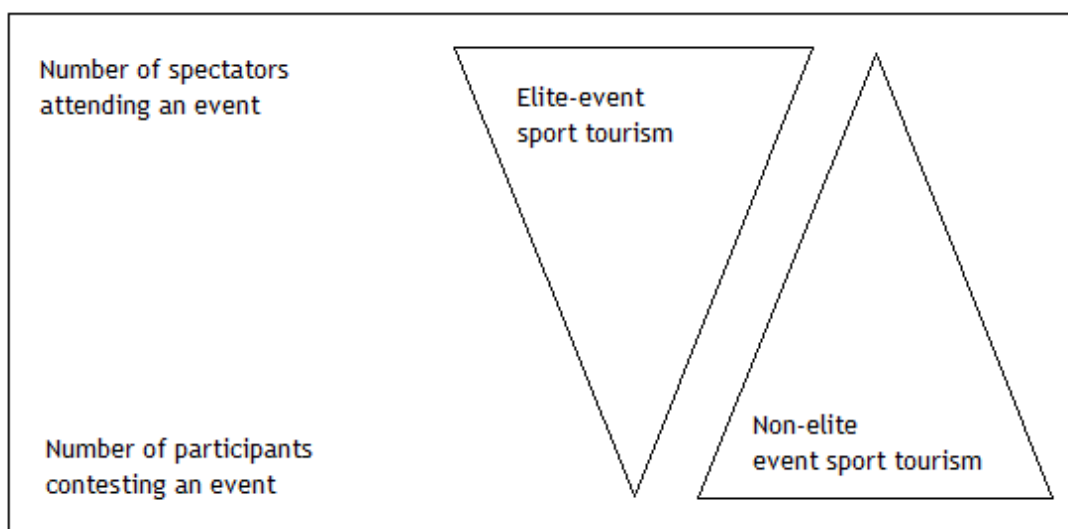


Figure 1: Difference between elite event sport tourism and non-elite event sport tourism (Hinch & Higham 2004, 45.)

There are three different stages to which an attraction is or is not important to a tourist. A primary attraction has a huge influence on the travelling motives of a person, a secondary attraction is known by a tourist before they travel to a destination but it is not a vital element of their trip and tertiary attractions are not known to the person before they travel but can become an activity during the trip once discovered. These three stages are reflected strongly in the sport tourism as for some a sporting event is the sole purpose of travelling, for some the trip is a combination of a sporting event and something else and some discover the event while being at the destination and participate (Hinch & Higham 2004, 25.)

### 3.3 Nostalgia sport tourism

This type of sport tourism is a growing niche market in the tourism sector. According to Hinch and Higham (2004) nostalgia sport tourism “includes tourist visitations to sport museums, hall of fame, themed bars and restaurants, heritage events and sports reunions”. This type of tourism attractions are still very limited to the North America but in the United Kingdom there are still some attractions that can be counted as nostalgic sport attractions. In the football sector these are museums at Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool, Bolton, Aston Villa and Arsenal football clubs and a National Football Museum at Manchester (Hinch & Higham 2004, 48). Ritchie & Aidan (2004, 13) add that this type of tourism can be related even with the concepts of: “worship, heritage, pilgrimage and even religion”. Sport fans that visit nostalgic sport attractions can feel more than nostalgic. For some, seeing a certain important sport related place can be close to a religious experience.

## 4 Football tourism

Football tourism is a branch of sport tourism so the same definition applies to it. It is to traveling away from one's home area to participate on a football match as a spectator or as a player. There are many different levels to this, the event participated on can be small scale or large scale, something from a children's football match to the FIFA World Cup, the biggest football tournament there is. In this thesis, the focus is on large scale event, elite event sport tourism and the focus is on the spectators participating on these events.

There is not a lot of theory found about this subject, even sport tourism theory is very limited but especially theory about different branches of it, is almost inexistent. Most of the research on this topic is made about large scale sporting events, for example the FIFA World Cups and UEFA European Cups and not about regular league football matches.

### 4.1 Tourism in Great Britain and England

Great Britain can be defined a considerable tourism market in the world. Its tourism has been growing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but what can be seen is that outbound tourism has been growing faster than inbound tourism (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007, 119). In 2010 Britain was the 6<sup>th</sup> most popular destination but it was losing its market share partly because of the economic crisis. British marketing strategy of tourism is based on: built heritage, cultural heritage and contemporary culture combined with shopping and visiting sport events. In 2009 Britain received 29 889 000 foreign visits who in average spent 554 pounds during their visit. Top five of the countries with most visitors come from are: France, USA, Spain, China and Italy (Visit Britain 2010 b.)

Number of visits from Finnish tourists to Great Britain was 167 000 in 2009, this made Finland 27<sup>th</sup> on their ranking based on the number of visitors. 44 % of Finnish people travel there for holiday making purposes, 27 % business reasons and 21 % to visit friends and family. 48 % of the Finnish tourists are between the age of 25 and 44 and 48 % are male. They are likely to be travelling alone or with a group of other adults. 6 % out of all the visitors from Finland to Great Britain participate on some sport related activity which is 3 percentage points higher than averagely among visitors coming from the countries of the European Union (Visit Britain 2010 a.)

### 4.2 Football tourism in Great Britain and England

In Great Britain the national tourism authority, British Tourist Authority (BTA) has defined sport tourism as one of their four most important pillars in the tourism section. In 2001 sport

was a part of a trip 25-30% of the trips make to the United Kingdom. The BTA has a sport tourism marketing plan and strategy and they use a lot of resources on the marketing of sport tourism (BTA, 2000.)

In 2012 over 900 000 overseas visitors watched a football game in Great Britain. These tourist spent altogether about 706 million pounds which means that football fans spend over 200 pounds more than average tourist vising Britain. For over 40 % of these visitors seeing a football match was the main reason to travel. Football is considered to be the boost that aids the tourism industry in the times of the year that are considered quieter, between January and March being timespan with most foreign visits to football matches. Top five countries with most visits that include a football match to their trip are: Ireland, Norway, USA, Spain and Germany. Surprisingly Norwegians are the ones that most often include a football match to their trip: one out of thirteen. Most popular stadiums to visit were Old Tradford (Manchester United), Anfield (Liverpool FC) Emirates stadium (Arsenal FC) (Visit Britain Media Center 2012.)

#### 4.3 English Premier League

English Premier League, or Barclays Premier League on its official name, is the most watched football league in the world with broadcasts in 212 territories in 2011 (Premier League 2011). It was originally founded by the governing body of English football The Football Association (FA) in 1888 with only 12, also amateur, teams playing in it. Back then it was only known as the League (The FA 2012.)

There are 20 clubs playing in the Premier League each season and each club plays a home game and an away game against each team in the league. This adds up to 38 matches per team and makes the total amount of games played 380. With each match, team has a chance to collect points; three for a win, one for a tie for each of the teams and zero points for a loss. The team with the most points obviously wins the Premier League title. In addition, the best four teams get the chance to play at the UEFA Champions league (highest and most respected tournament of European club football) and one to three teams places below them, depending on the result of the cups, will play in the UEFA Europa League (not as big as Champions league but still a respected tournament in European club football). Three teams with least points at the end of the season are relegated to Championship at the end of the season and three teams from Championship can gain promotion to Premier League.

There is a difference between Premier League and Barclays Premier League. Premier league is the organizing body of the Barclay's Premier league. It holds the Rule Book (the law of the league) and it is responsible for the organizing of the league and the rights to television

broadcasts and other commercial rights and activities. There are 20 privately owned member clubs that own the Premier League. Member clubs are the clubs that currently play in the Barclays Premier League. Shareholders of the Premier League make all the important decisions concerning Barclays Premier League (Premier League 2013.)

The name for the league itself, Barclays Premier League, comes from one of its sponsors: Barclays. It is an international investment company that owns the rights to the title of the league. This has happened in other leagues as well, for example Spain's highest league is known as La Liga BBVA, and BBVA is an international bank who is the title sponsor of La Liga. The name Premier League is still the common name to call the league, the same as in Spain where despite the official title, the league is still known as La Liga. This is why in thesis the Barclays Premier League is referred as Premier League.

This is the 22<sup>nd</sup> season of the premier League with under the name on Barclays Premier League. In the season 2013-2014 teams playing in the Premier League are:

- Arsenal
- Aston Villa
- Cardiff City
- Chelsea
- Crystal Palace
- Everton
- Fulham
- Hull City
- Liverpool
- Manchester City
- Manchester United
- Newcastle United
- Norwich City
- Southampton
- Stoke City
- Sunderland
- Swansea City
- Tottenham Hotspur
- West Bromwich Albion
- West Ham United

(Premier League 2013.)

There is talk about that there are some “big clubs” in English football. They are: Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United. These four clubs have been dominant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century until Manchester City won the Premier league title in the 2011-2012. Even though more clubs are beginning to rise up to the challenge of ending these four clubs’ dominance, it is clear that there are still some big gaps the financial situation of English clubs and these four clubs still continue to play a big role in the English football although they are not title wise as dominant as in the past years. All of them still have huge amount of supporters world-wide and their brands hold huge financial value.

English Premier League, being the most watched football league in the world, has very wide international market. There is a huge market for sport- and football tourism, especially in Asia in India and China where the football leagues are not developed same way as in Europe. This is why it has been proposed that the English premier league, in addition to summer tours to Asia, United States and other countries of Europe, that there should be some rounds that would be played outside England, for example in Asia. This was however not yet pursued (Ratten V., Ratten H. 2011.)

## 5 Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior means a study made to understand the reasons why consumer buys a certain product or service and how this decision is made. It is important to see that this is a psychological process that includes all from pre-purchase to post-purchase process. In addition consumers may do decisions in groups, not only as individuals. Consumer behavior is important especially for organizations as it helps them to market right to the right customers (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007, 6.)

An important theory concerning the development of theory about consumer and tourist behavior, is a theory by Abraham Maslow. His hierarchy of needs describes that humans have five different levels of needs (Figure 2) (Ryan 2002, 28-32.)



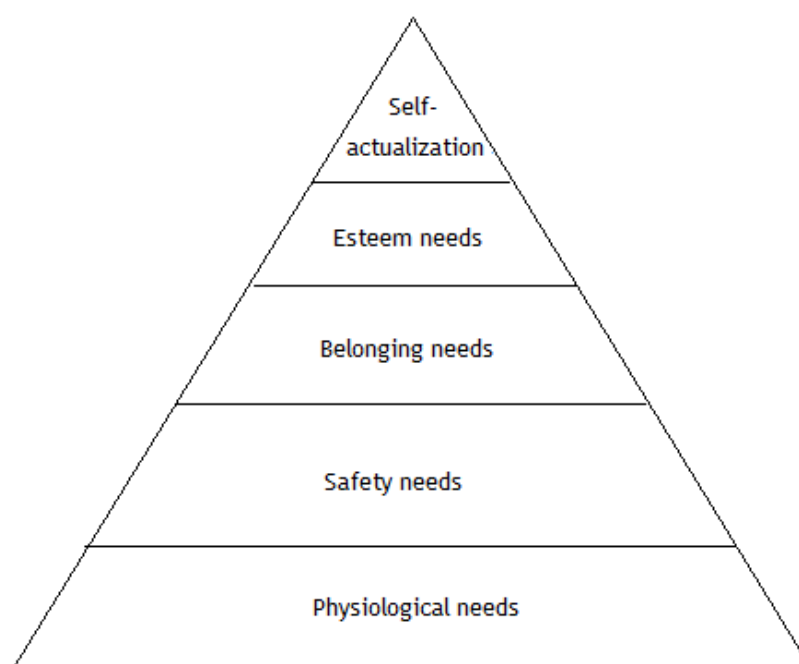


Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Ryan 2002, 29.)

The lowest level is physiological needs, which are the most essential ones like food, water and shelter. Second lowest is safety and security needs which refers to the need of sense of security and stability that a person has. The one in the middle, love and belonging needs mean that a person has social needs, they want to show affection and they need feel they belong to a community. The second highest level is Esteem needs which is divided into two different hierarchies: the lower deals with esteem that has to do with the people around you, for example respect for others and the need to have status and be recognized by others. The higher one is more about the individual themselves: self-respect, competence, independency and achievement. All four of these types of needs are essential to an individual's survival and thus instinctive. They are called deficit needs (Ryan 2002, 28-32.)

At the top of the pyramid is self-actualization. Maslow claims that only two percent of the world's population has can be accounted to belong in this category. These people tend to be, for example, creative, reality- and problem-centered, they have a strong sense of ethicality, and they are more accepting about others and comfortable about themselves. In addition, they tend to have more peak experiences than people who do not belong to this level. However, according to Maslow these peaks experiences can be achieved by everyone. Maslow's theory's popularity in the field of tourist behavior research can be explained by the fact that holidays can be described as a peak experiences. Holiday is something that can be meaningful, inspire creativity, help to socialize and aid spontaneity (Ryan 2002, 29-31.)

There are five phases that are related a tourist's behavior concerning his or her trip. This theory can be related to both consumer behavior and tourist behavior, even though they relate in a different sense of emotion. These phases were defined by Clawson and Knetsh in 1966. They are: anticipation or pre-purchase, the travel to the site, the on-site experience, return travel from the site and a reflection phase (Pearce 2005, 9-10.)

### 5.1 Motivators and determinants

There are two types of factors which determine what kind of product a tourist buys: motivators and determinants. Motivators are the factors that motivate a tourist to want to buy a certain product and determinants are the factors that determine to what extent is a tourist able to buy a product they want (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007, 51.)

It can be seen that motivators are based on the individual's desires and wishes. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 53) still divide the motivators in to two categories: factors that motivate a tourist to take a holiday and factors that motivate a tourist to take a certain holiday at a certain time and to a particular destination. Motivators are not however always divided just to one of these categories and many of them can be categorized to both. Tourists must also be studied as individuals as every tourist has their own motivations to take a holiday and there almost never just only one motivator. These motivations can change over time due to circumstances of a person's life. Even though there can be countless motivators, there are some that are most common, for example personality (is a person adventurous or not), lifestyle, past experience, past life or nostalgia and status (how do they want other people to perceive them) (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007, 55.)

### 5.2 Decision making process

A tourism product's or a service's buying process is a long and complex one. There are many things that a consumer needs to consider prior to the purchase and they process is influences by a large number of factors The process starts with the decision to actually make the holiday and that is only the beginning. After this, the tourist is confronted with a variety of options and decisions. They have to decide everything from the destination to accommodation, means to travel to the location and which activities to participate on. Tourist is influenced by internal and external factors which both influence the decision making process. Internal factors are something personal to the tourist, for example, personality, commitments, life style, attitudes, opinions and health. External factors are the opposite of this, they are coming from the outside, for example advice, information obtained, climate, political restrictions. All of these factors together create a complex process of decision making of a tourist (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007, 74-75.)

## 6 Fan clubs in Finland

Football fan clubs are either official or unofficial clubs that are dedicated to bring together fans of a certain football club and promoting that club. There are several fan clubs for English teams in Finland with hundreds of members. There are some perks for those who belong to a fan club. There are gatherings being organized where fans can meet congenial people, talk and for example watch a match together. Usually fan clubs have a place of for gathering, for example a sports bar. In addition, fan clubs usually have some sort of method that fans can easily discuss with each other for example a forum or a Facebook page. These pages and forums are sometimes private and only accessible for fan club members but some are open to everyone who are interested in the same club. Some fan clubs have their official fan magazine for members.

The best practical advantage of being a member of a fan club is easy access to tickets football matches. Even though in England and in Premier League getting match tickets is a lot harder than for example in Finland. Using Arsenal football club as an example, there are the season ticket holders who have a permanent seat at the stadium throughout the season. At the moment, there is a line of 35,000 people for a season ticket. In addition to this, there are many different holders of memberships: red members; levels light and full and junior membership. With these memberships, one gets access to tickets prior to them going to general sale on certain dates, usually one or two months before the match itself. There is also a digital membership that does not entitle the holder for any ticket perks and it is free of charge (Arsenal Membership 2013/2014 2013.)

There are other ways to buy tickets online: black market in the internet and trying to buy tickets at the day of the match at the stadium from unofficial salespersons. There the prices can be three times higher than the normal prices a ticket to a match. It is easy to see why fan club members get tickets through their fan clubs, it makes it a lot easier. Of course the fan clubs hold a limited amount of tickets but the system is still a more beneficial system to a fan.

## 7 Research

The research for this thesis was conducted by the writer between the end of September and the end of October via an online questionnaire. It was open exactly from the 28th of September to the 27th of October. Questions for the questionnaire were created prior to this and were based on the theoretical framework of the thesis. The questionnaire was made on Google Drive which enabled the writer to keep track of the amount of answers and should the questionnaire be kept

open. The questionnaire was open for all to answer however, it was sent to Finnish fan clubs of English football clubs: Arsenal and Tottenham.

Before the sending of the questionnaire the writer researched the internet in order to find the fan clubs with the most members and easiest webpages with information on how to contact the leading members of the fan club. It was easy to start the search since there are some clearly big clubs in the English football (as explained in the chapter 4.2.). The writer sent out first an initial inquiry to the chairmen of the clubs whether or not they would be willing to help in distributing the questionnaire among their members via for example Facebook, email newsletter or discussion forum. The clubs were: Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United and Tottenham. Two clubs replied to the inquiry, Arsenal and Tottenham, and the questionnaire was sent to them, as mentioned earlier.

At first it seemed that not a lot of answers were going to come. After the first two weeks twenty something answers had arrived. However, after this, the questionnaire found its way somehow to a forum of Finnish Liverpool fans and then more answers came. It could be possible that it was available in some football forum also since answers from some other club's fans came as well. The writer does not know how the questionnaire spread in the internet and who sent it forward but she is very grateful that it did.

After the questionnaire was closed on 27<sup>th</sup> of October, all together 153 answers had come in. This makes the sample of the questionnaire larger than the writer ever expected. The results were then put to Excel and analyzed and made into graphs there.

## 7.1 Research methods

In the research of this thesis, quantitative research methods were used. Quantitative method differentiates from qualitative research so that its data can be measured in numbers, unlike data collected with the qualitative method. It is more related to theory as its purpose is to confirm it. It can be described as impersonal, controlled and even manipulative which is the complete opposite of qualitative research which can be described as natural, interactive and personal (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 8.) This means that the quantitative research is very restricted and qualitative research is much more flexible and much more detailed. However, in quantitative research, it possible to get more answers in less time.

Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000, 4) write that there are three different types of research styles which are relevant in the tourism: survey method, experimental method and ethnographic method. Survey, the method also used in this thesis, is the most common out of these methods. The questions are always made before the conduction of the survey and the sample

is selected from a wanted group of people. Surveys can be used to search for pattern in the data pool. This data can be collected either with a self-filled questionnaire or in an interview which is based on a questionnaire (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 4.) This means that a survey is usually used together with the quantitative method.

In the case of this thesis this is what happened. The research was made as a survey (a self-filled online questionnaire) which was conducted among a wanted group of people (fan club members) in order to create a pool of data. This data was then later analyzed in order to find pattern among it and support theory presented in the thesis and present some new findings based on the theory.

## 7.2 Designing the questionnaire

There were 13 questions in the questionnaire. They were all designed based on the theoretical framework of the thesis and to find out about the wanted things to the research.

First, second and third questions were designed to inquire about the background of the respondents. First question asked whether or not the respondent had made a trip to England to see a football match. This question was asked to divide the respondents to the ones who had travelled who had not travelled. Second question asked how many times they had travelled to see a football match in England. This was asked to research how many times does a football fan travel to England to see a match, does this happen only once or if more, how many times does it happen. Respondents could choose between once, two or three times, four or five times and six or more times. The third question inquired who do they usually travel with, this was to find out what kind of group do fans travel with and what is the segment for this. It was lightly based on the theory of consumer behavior since influences from a person's family and friends are different since they have different interests for a holiday.

The fourth question inquired whether or not the respondents had used services of a tour operator when travelling to England or did they do so independently. This question was chosen to be a part of the questionnaire because the original idea for the writer was to write a thesis about this topic only and to research why football fans choose to travel independently instead of using services of a tour operator or the other way around, if the research would have shown that less people travel independently. After deciding on the final topic of the thesis, writer also wanted to include this aspect in a smaller scale to her thesis.

Questions from five to seven were related to other activities respondents had participated on their travels. Question five asked whether or not seeing a football match was the only reason for respondents to travel to England and question six continued this by asking if it was not,

what other activities the respondents participated on. This question was made in an open form, so that the respondents could answer whatever they wanted in order not to limit their answers and to get a clearer picture of the activities. These questions were asked to know if there are other motivators for football fans to travel to England. Seventh question asked what other football related activities did the respondents participate on. There were five options given to them: take a stadium tour, visit fan shop, visit a place otherwise important to the club, all of the above and something else. This question was related to the theory of nostalgia sport tourism (explained in 3.3. Nostalgia sport tourism) and its point was to find out how many have visited nostalgic sport places in their travels.

Question eight was related to what was the most important aspect of the football match/matches the respondents have participated on. This was asked to research what makes a football match something worthwhile to travel to and spend hundreds of euros on. This and the previous four questions were perhaps the most important questions concerning the topic of the thesis and the research questions: why football fans travel. It is based on the theory of customer behavior and options, from which the respondents could choose from, were based on assumptions the writer made about which could be the things that a football match something worth doing.

Questions nine and ten were directed to respondents who had not travelled to England to see a football match. Question nine asked if these respondents had not travelled previously what reasons were there not to travel and question ten inquired of these same respondents were offered a chance to travel, would they take it. These questions were asked to research the motives of the fans that do not travel and what is the most common reason not to travel.

Questions from eleven to thirteen were related to the respondent's personal information. Question eleven asked the sex and twelve the age of the respondents. These two questions were asked to know the demographic profile of the respondents. Question thirteen asked which the favorite club of the respondents was. This was asked since the writer wanted to know from which football club's fan clubs the answers came from. These results are not presented in this thesis since the writer felt that it was not important information regarding the topic of the thesis and it was asked more out of a personal interest of where the answers came from.

### 7.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results get from a research. This means for example in the case of a questionnaire this means that even how many times a certain question is asked from a person, the same answer should always be obtained. Survey type research tends to add to reliability as it is not controlled by a person, such as an interviewer or an observer.

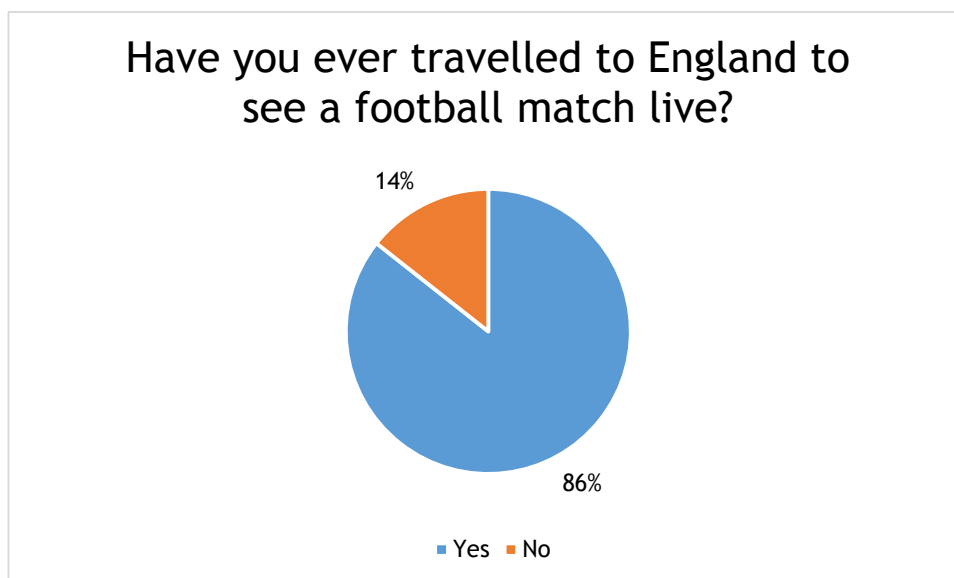
(Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 28.) In this thesis, it can be said that the research done is rather reliable. Some questions could be clearer but most of the questions are so that they could be asked many times and still get the same answer.

Validity refers to the validity of the research methods and are they measuring what they are supposed to be measuring and it is much harder to say if a research is valid or not. There are two types of validity: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity “refers to whether the hypothesized cause produces the given effect in the piece of research”. This means that in the survey type of research, internal validity is lower since the only control over the data is statistical when analyzing the findings and data. On the other hand, external validity refers to the level on which the findings can be generalized. There are two aspects to this: population: to what extent the results can be generalized to another group of respondents, and ecological: can the results be generalized into another environment (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 28.)

In the case of this research, validity can be discussed. Internal validity in this case is low because of the research method, survey. With the external validity, the research is quite valid. The results can be at some level generalized to a population but not completely since the questionnaire was meant for a certain group of people. It would however apply to other football fans. The reasons to travel and what is important in the trip, would not probably change much. In addition, the results could be possible to generalize to the similar population of another country, the reasons would not probably change much if the type of the sample would stay similar no matter the area to which it is applied in.

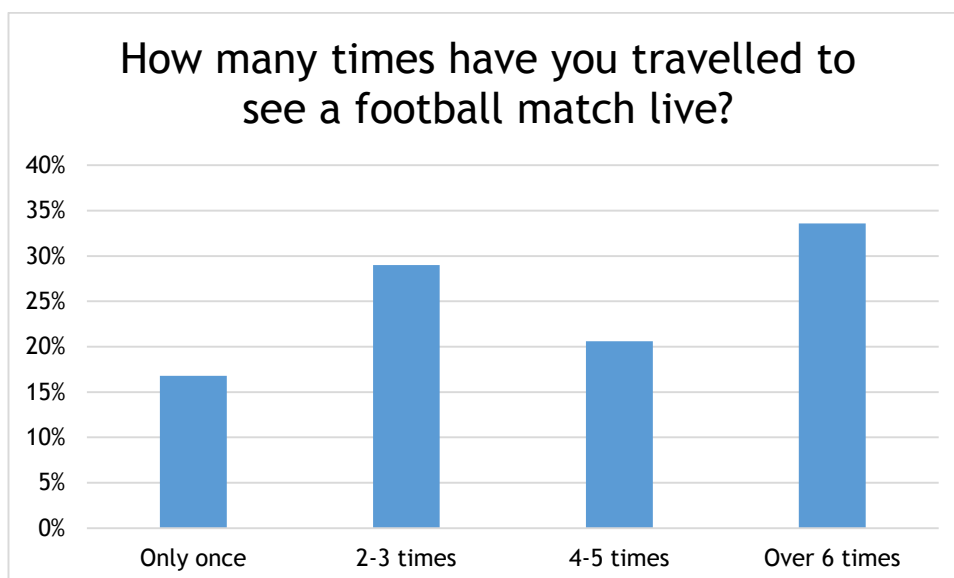
## 8 Results

86 % of the respondents of the questionnaire had travelled to England to see a football match and 14 % had not (Graph 1). The questionnaire was designed to research both types of fans: the ones who travel and ones who do not travel so it is good that both types of responses were received.



Graph 1: Participation to a football match (n=153)

As it can be seen in Graph 2, there was a lot of variation to the answers with the question of how many times the respondent had travelled to see a football match. 34 % of the respondents have travelled over six times, 21 % have travelled four to five times, 29 % have travelled two or three times and the remaining 17 % have travelled only once.

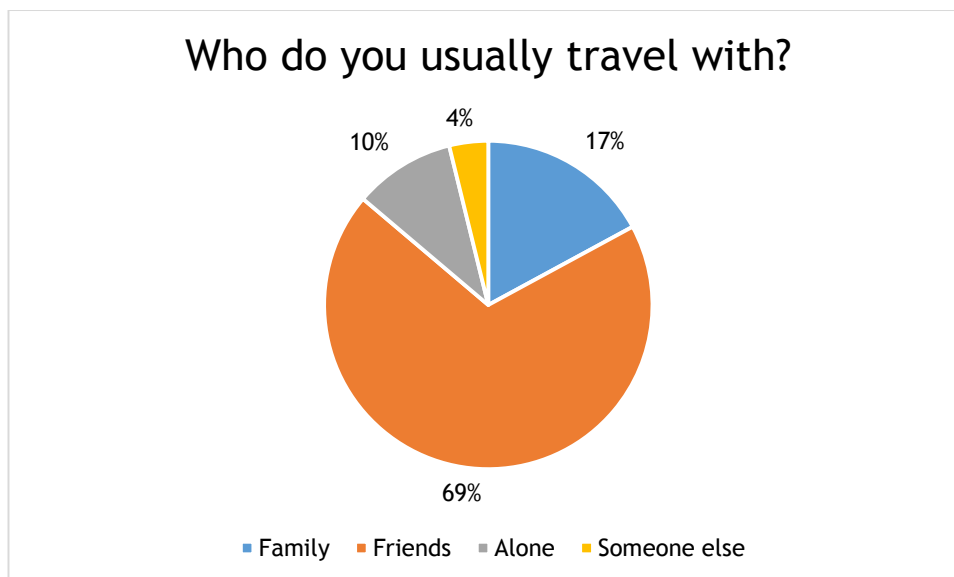


Graph 2: Number of times travelled (n=131)

The respondents were also asked with who they usually travel with (Graph 3). The most popular answer with 69 % was friends. After that, 17 % travel with family, 10 % alone and 4 % of the respondents answered that they travel with someone else. There was a specifying question that if they travel with someone else. The 4 % of respondents to this question represent 5

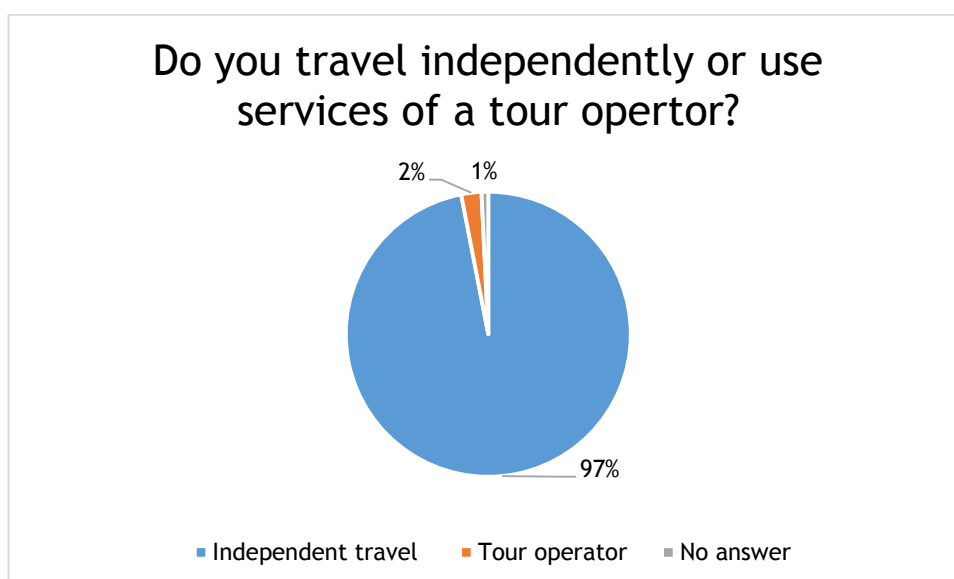


different respondents. Out of these five, three answered to the specifying question with answers: spouse, girlfriend and live-in partner. These three could be in the writer's opinion added to the family category. This still makes travelling with friends the most popular category.



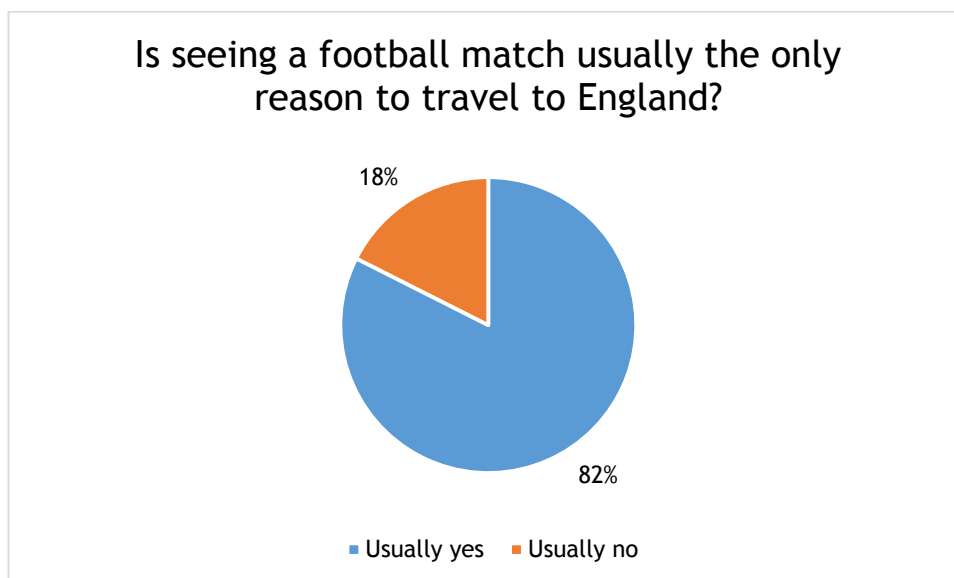
Graph 3: Travel companion (n=131)

Almost all of the respondents, 97 % who have travelled to see a football match in England, have done so independently (Graph 4). Only 2 % have used the services of a tour operator while travelling. 1 % of the respondent did not answer this question.



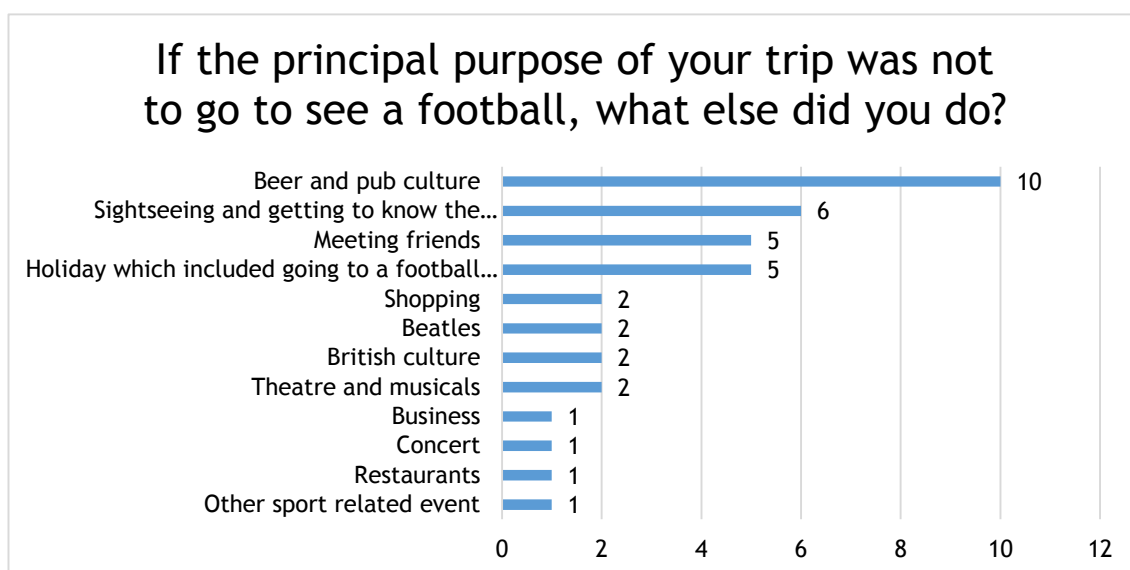
Graph 4: Independent travel or tour operator (n=131)

Seeing a football match was usually the only reason to travel to England for most respondents (Graph 5), 82 % to be exact. 18 % of the respondents usually included something else to their trip besides seeing a football match live.



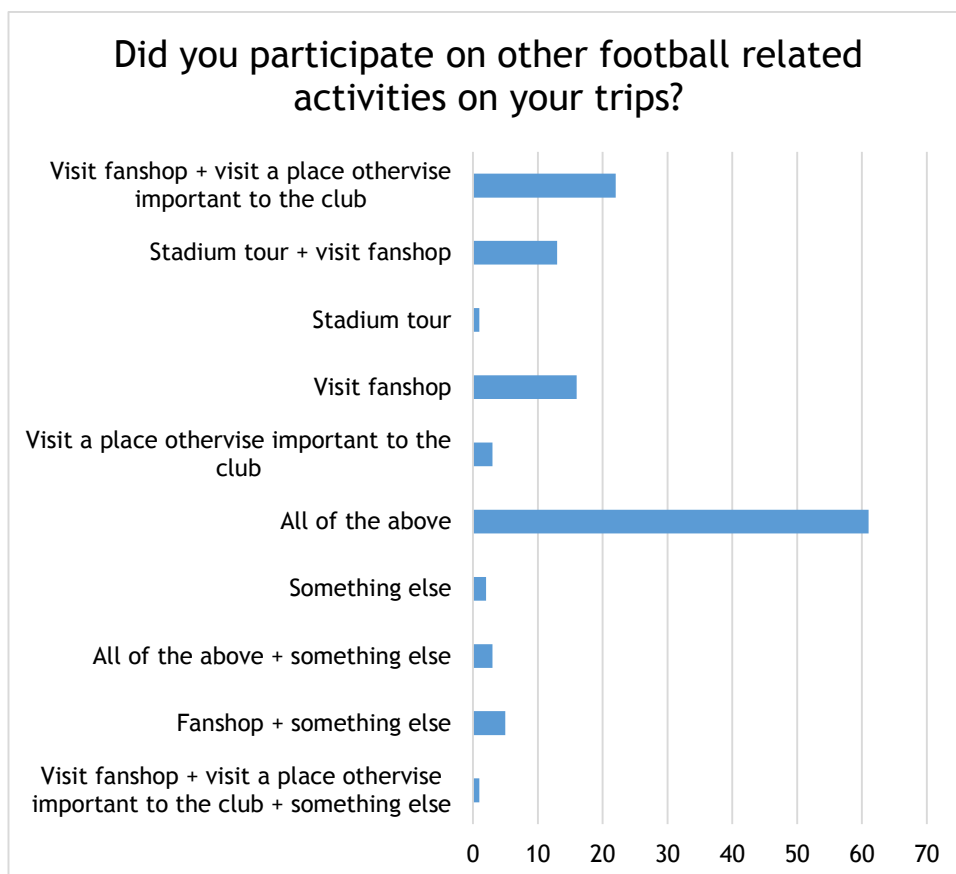
Graph 5: Are there other reason to travel to England besides football (n=131)

The respondents were asked, referring to the previous question, if their trips principal purpose was not to participate to a football match, what it was (Graph 6). Out of the 82 % that responded that they usually travel with the purpose of watching a football match, 6 % also responded to the following question and these answers are also included in the results. Most of the respondents also gave more than one thing that included to their trip. The most popular activity to participate on, was visiting pubs and getting to know the British beer culture. After this the most popular activities were sightseeing and getting to know the destination city and meeting with friends. Five respondents made a holiday to Britain that included a football match as part of many activities. After this, there were lots of activities or points of interest that were mentioned either by one or two respondents. These were shopping, Beatles, British culture, theatre and musical, business trip, concert, restaurants and participating to another sporting event.



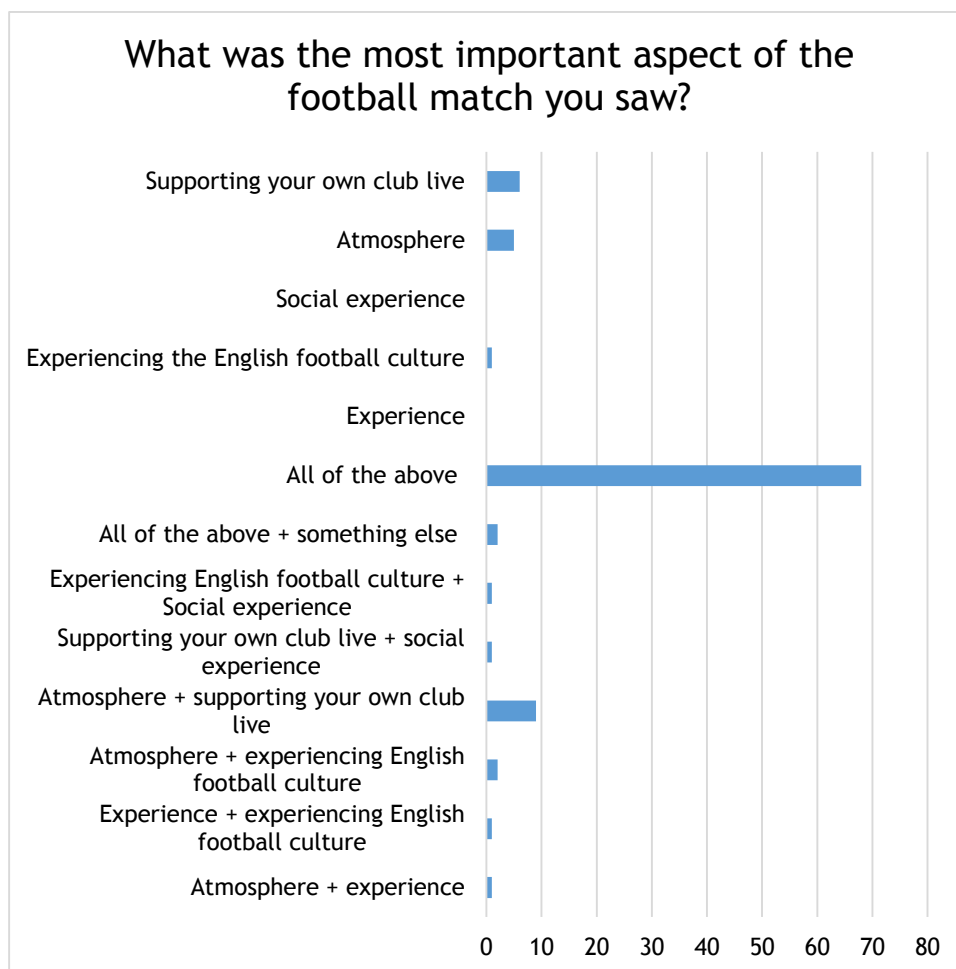
Graph 6: Other reasons to travel to Britain

Respondents were asked if they participated in another football related activities besides seeing a football match (Graph 7). Respondents were able to give more than one answer to the question. 16 respondents only visited a fan shop, only one did only a stadium tour and three respondents only visited a place important to the club. 61 respondents participated in all of the activities above making it the most popular category. 13 respondents did a stadium tour and visited a fan shop and 22 visited a fan shop and visited a place otherwise important to the club. The remaining 5 visited fan shop and did something else, 3 did all of the above and something else, 2 did something else and 1 visited a fan shop, visited a place otherwise important to the club and something else. In the something else category pubs were mentioned twice and three went to see another club's game besides their own. The following things were done by one respondent: hiking, museums and rugby matches, stadium tour in another club's stadium, food and drinking, visiting more than one place per trip and one respondents activities depend on the trip.



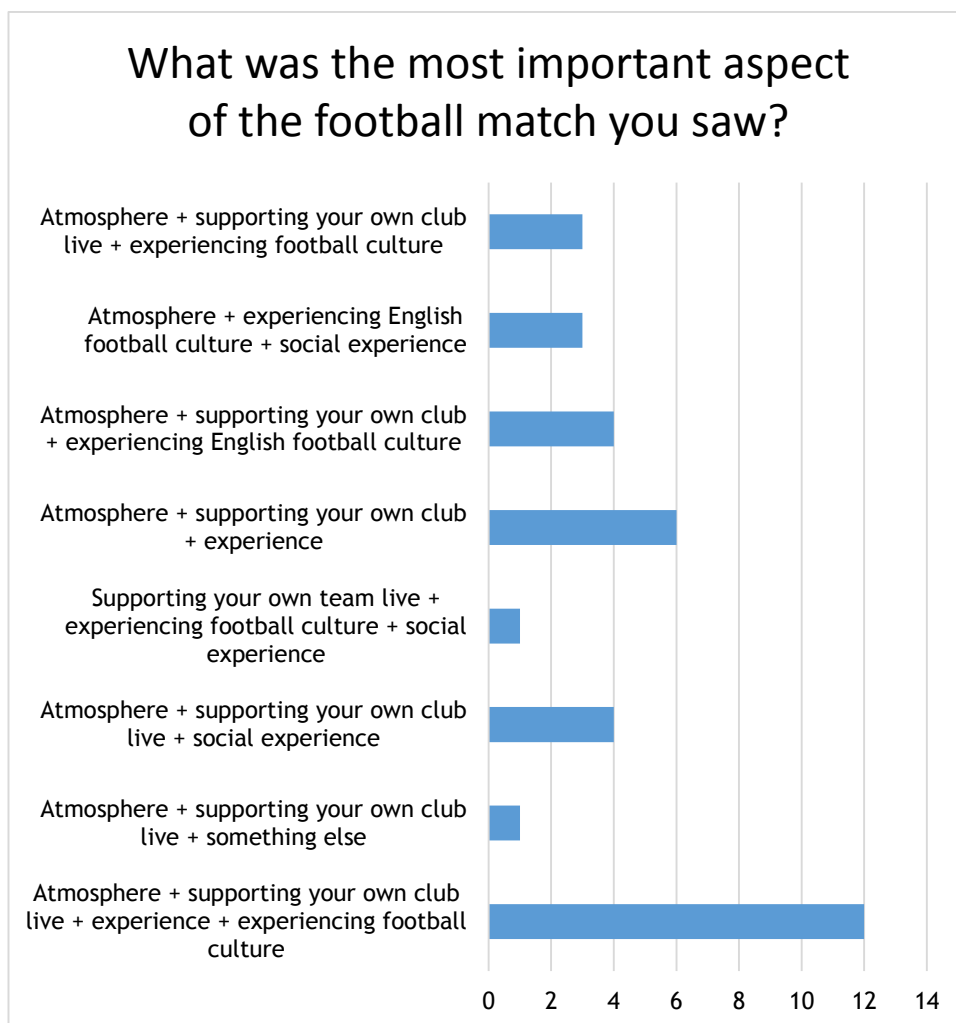
Graph 7: Other football related activities

Respondents were also asked what was the most important part of the experience of seeing a football match live (Graph 8 and 9). This question could be answered with multiple answers so many different types of answers were given with many different combinations. 6 respondents valued most supporting his or her team live at the home stadium, atmosphere was most valued by 6, one thought the experience was the best part and none thought that experiencing English football culture or social experience were most important. 68 respondents thought all the options above were the most important part, so they valued the experience as a whole. Two respondents value all of the above and something else, one experiencing English football culture and social experience, one supporting your own club live and social experience, two atmosphere and experiencing English football culture, nine atmosphere and supporting your own club live, two atmosphere and experiencing English football culture, one Experience and experiencing English football culture and one atmosphere and experience.



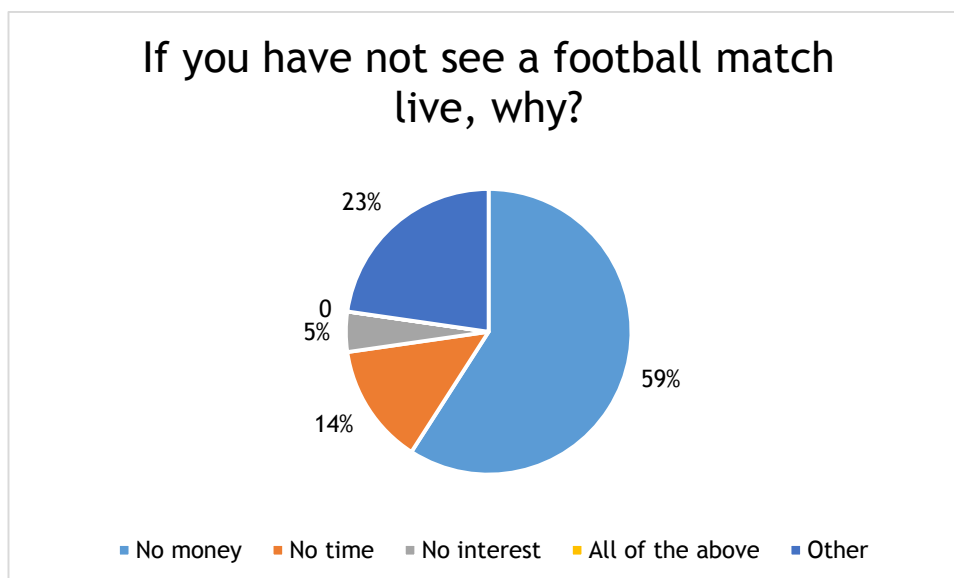
Graph 8: Most important aspects of a football match part 1

Three respondents value atmosphere, supporting your own club live and experiencing English football culture most high, also three value atmosphere, experiencing English football culture and social experience, four value atmosphere, supporting your own club and experiencing English football culture and six atmosphere, supporting your own club and experience. One respondents gives most value to supporting your own team live, experiencing football culture and social experience as a combination, four value atmosphere, supporting your own club live and social experience, 1 gives value to atmosphere, supporting your own club and something else. Finally 12 respondents give most value to everything else except social experience.



Graph 9: Most important part of a football match part 2

The respondents who have not been to see a football match were asked why so (Graph 10). Most popular answer was with 59 % percent that the respondents did not have money to travel. 14 % of the respondents did not have time to travel and only 5 % of them were not interested (this represents only one respondent). 23 % had other reason not to travel, these included rather travelling to another country, Spain specifically, they have previously travelled to other countries to see a football match, they were interested but had no money and no time and because it was too difficult to get tickets to matches.



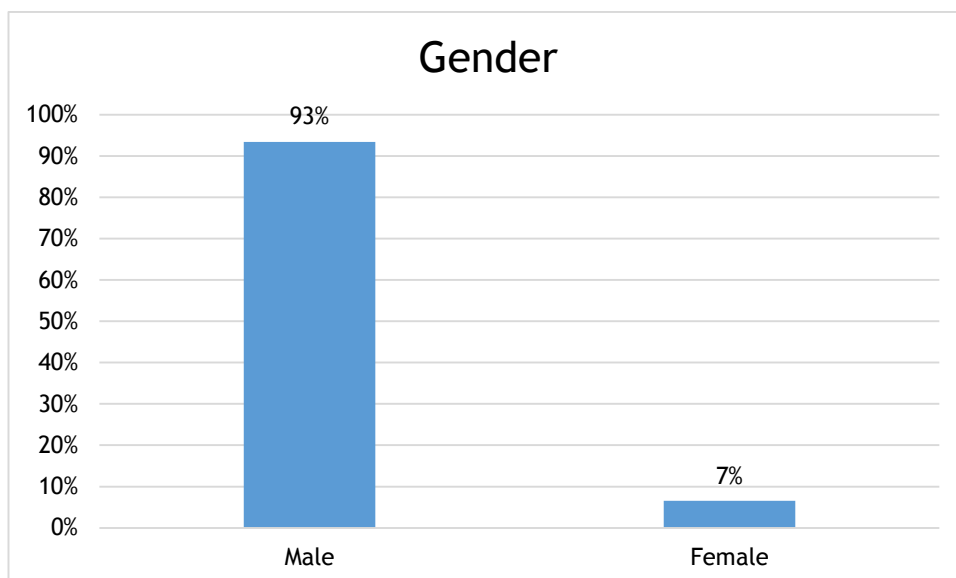
Graph 10: Reasons for not seeing a football match live in England (n=23)

Even though this question was only meant for those who have not travelled before, the question was answered by 66 out of the total number of respondents. It clearly shows that if given the chance, respondents would travel to England to see a football match live (Graph 11). Only one respondent would not go. Referring to the previous results, the very same respondent answered that he would not be interested in seeing a football match live in England.



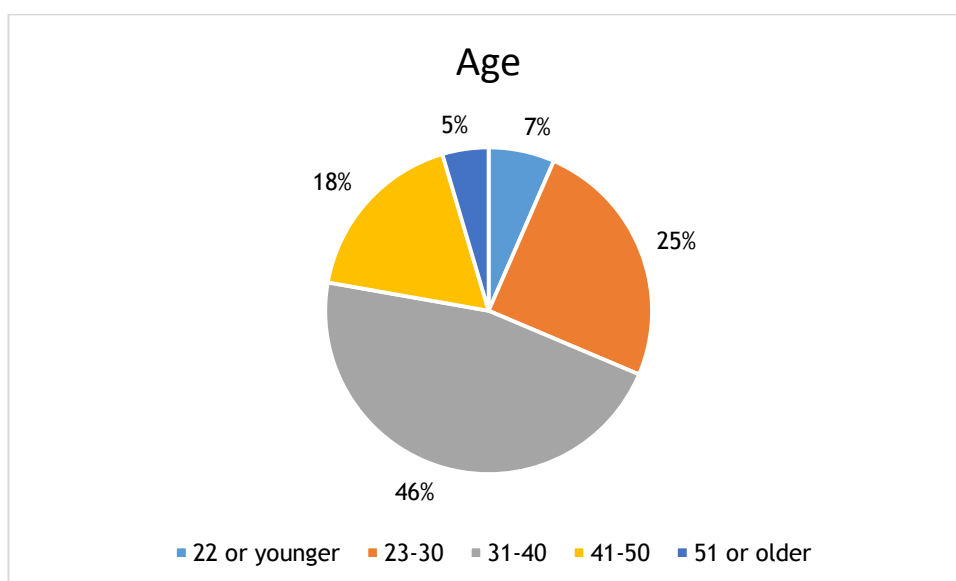
Graph 11: Attendance if given the chance (n=66)

Regarding personal information of the respondents, 93 % of them were male and 7 % were female (Graph 12).



Graph 12: Gender (n=153)

The age of varied but almost half, 46 %, of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40. 25 % were between the ages of 23 and 30 and 18 % between the ages of 41-50. With the almost percentage 7 % were 22 years old or younger and 5 % 51 or older (Graph 13).



Graph 13: Age (n=153)

## 9 Analysis

From the total amount of participants, 86 % have previously travelled to England and 14 % have not. This gives a good presentation to both of the groups which was both wanted. This probably does not represent the general field of football fans because it can be assumed that



out of all football fans, it would be huge number if 86 % of them would have travelled for football in general. However, for this research it is a good representation assuming that people who had previously travelled to England were the ones who answered the questionnaire most eagerly. In addition, the purpose of the research was not to make general assumptions of the whole population but to research the reasons of why football fans travel.

When looking at how many times the respondents had travelled to England, it can be seen that for over 80 % of them, it was not only a one time experience. This tells that seeing a football match live is not just something that is done once but fans return there year after year to experience it, depending on their situation of life at that moment, of course. Perhaps for some who are not fans, this type of an event is something to be done only once but every football game is different, the atmosphere is different so this makes the experience different.

Most of the respondents, 69 %, answered that they travel with friends and 17 % travel with family. This makes football match something that one does with a group of friends. Reflecting this to the results for the question seven where beer and pub culture turned out to be the most popular option of what other activities do fans do on their travels. It is easy to see that for some this type of travel is so called "guys' weekend" where they travel with a group of friends to see a football match and to drink for the weekend and to enjoy time away from routines. Family vacations can be seen as something more tranquil, especially if there are children involved.

Considering how many of the respondents travel independently, there is reason to think about that not many travel agencies are taking advantage of this market. There are a few travel agencies in Finland who organize this type of trips: Tjäreborg, Mr Travel, Event Travel, Björk & Boström and perhaps some smaller companies who do not appear on Google search. Still 97 % out of 153 travel independently even though these kinds of services are available. One might think it is the easiest way to travel when everything is done for you; match tickets, hotels and flights (not all travel agencies who offer this type of trips, include even flights to their packages and prices). This type of travelling is however expensive, even for a normal Premier League match day against teams not that big plus two nights in a hotel, can be 500, 600 euros which can be considered expensive.

This number can be explained also by the fact that at least a part of the respondents belong to a fan club and it is easier to get tickets from there (as explained in chapter 6). These people probably do not want to pay hundreds of euros extra when they can get the services much cheaper elsewhere. In the modern world where booking trips though the internet and cheap

flights because of low-cost carriers, saving money is easy. Considering this, it is almost impossible for a tour operator to reach this market. What the writer suggests, if a tour operator wants to take advantage of this market, is that they contact the fan clubs directly to market there and to perhaps arrange some type of deal with them. If a right kind of deal is made, it could be beneficial to both parties.

Out of the respondents who have previously travelled, 82 % have usually done so with the only purpose of seeing a football match. Remaining 18 % have done also something else but the football match has been included in their trip. The word “usually” had to be included in the question since many of the respondents have travelled more than once, such as was suspected during the process of making the questionnaire, so these fans do not necessarily make the same type of trip every time and might include other activities to their trip. The point of this question was to research what they usually do.

Next question continues the theme of the previous one. The respondents what did they do if their principal purpose to travel was not to see a football match. Most of the respondents gave more than one activity that they included to their trip. The options were categorized according to what the writer saw best. Not surprisingly to participate on was getting to know British beer and pub culture. When looking at the demographic group the respondents belong: they are relatively young man, of course there is beer included. This is a very bad generalization but it is true. Britain is also known for its pubs and wide selection of beers even though it is not something they advertize in their tourism profile.

After this option, the most popular activities were sightseeing and getting to know the destination city and meeting friends. There is no reference does this means English friends or the travel companions of the respondents, could be both. A football trip could be a possible way to get together with friends one does not normally have to meet. Football culture also connects people so it is possible for many respondents to have friends abroad. After these, 5 respondents made a holiday to England that just included a football match as a part of it. This option could be connected with sightseeing and getting to know the destination city but this could include more activities so that is why it presented separately.

Finally, there were activities or points of interest that were mentioned either by one or two respondents. These were: shopping, Beatles, British culture, theatre and musicals, football as part of a business trip, participating to a concert, visiting restaurants and participating to another sporting event. These are very typical activities for a touristic trip. There was one thing that affects the numbers of the answers of this question: out of the 82 % that responded the previous question with a positive answer, 6 % also responded to the following question and

these answers are also included in the results. This could be due to the use of the term “usually” as explained in the previous question’s result’s analysis. Perhaps they wanted to mention the activities that they participate on when they do not travel with the principal purpose of seeing a football match.

As told in the results, many of the respondents did an activity related to nostalgic sport tourism: a stadium tour or visited a place otherwise important to the club. This market holds potential to grow as well. There is not a lot of research found on the topic but it is a growing niche market and thus worth taking a closer look at. What can be seen from the results is that all together 100 respondents out of 153 participated on either or both of the activities related to nostalgic sport tourism. One respondent even mentioned that he or she did a stadium tour at another club’s stadium.

What could have been done differently with this question, and what the writer considers as an error, is that there was no option to answer: nothing. This is why some respondents passed on this question completely. They could be considered as answering nothing but it is not valid to use this information this way. There also could have been a specifying question what does the “visit a place otherwise important to the club” mean to the respondents. Now it is up to interpretation what is considered important to the club and what these places were that they visited.

With “a place otherwise important to the club”, the writer however meant places that can be considered as sights for nostalgic sport tourism such as: fan pubs, museums, statues, places old stadiums, other gathering places for fans, memorials (such as the memorial at Liverpool for the victims of Hillsborough) etcetera. As seen from the answers, these types of activities are important to the fans. They are nostalgic; they are something that holds value as an experience and as an historical monument. This is something to be considered for the future of sport tourism. As everything develops and new stadiums and places are built, the old still is something to value and to remember.

When it comes to what the respondents value most and what is the most important aspect of the football match for them, there are many answers. Most of them, 68 respondents, value the experience as a whole which means they selected all of the options that were given: supporting his or her team live at the home stadium, atmosphere, the experience itself, experiencing English football culture and social experience meaning the experience a football match with your friends or family. All of the aspects being important to the fans, it makes the experience something they value highly, it has many aspects that make them return time after time. Perhaps at one trip, one travels alone and does not the social experience but there

are still the other aspects that are there. This makes it an experience that does not lose its value even though done many times.

With the options to be able to choose as many options as wished, there are so many different answers that it is hard to find a clear pattern among them. Though lack of interest for the social experience can be seen through the answers and that atmosphere and supporting your own club live are given the most value. This question could have been written in an open form because that would have given the respondents an option to choose for their selves what do they value most and perhaps the answers would have been different and varied differently. When one is given certain options, it limits them and not many tend to answer with the open option. In this case only two answered with the open option of something else and the answers given were: visiting a fan pub before the game was a really important part of the experience and that short holidays are very convenient for an entrepreneur.

Out of those 14 % of respondents who had not travelled to England to see a football match 59 % did not have money to travel. It was expected that particularly this option would be the most popular one. Even in the time of low-cost airlines, one still needs to pay for hospitality, match tickets, transportation within the host country and food and beverages. England and especially London, are not known to be the cheapest of places to travel, in fact London is one of the most expensive cities in Europe. There has also been discussion in England about the prices of the tickets to Premier League football matches; they are very expensive, even for smaller club's games. Compared to for example Spain, ticket prices in England are very high. In Spain, a tourist can see a football match starting from eight euros. Of course this is not the case for Real Madrid and Barcelona fans that have to pay more in order to see their team play, but a match from almost every other club in Spain can be seen for less money than all the teams in England.

14 % of the respondents did not have time to travel. This should not be an issue for many since this type of trips take usually only a long weekend but of course in the busy modern life it sometimes hard to find time for things that one likes. People who do not have that much time to travel perhaps want to do all in one trip when they do have time to do it and maybe want to include other activities to their travels as well. Only 5 % of the respondents were not interested in traveling. However, this represents only one respondent.

Out of the respondents, 23 % had other reason not to travel. These were that the respondent would rather travel to another country, Spain specifically, respondent had previously travelled to other countries to see a football match, respondent was interested but had no money and no time and one respondent said that it was too difficult to get match tickets. Difficulty to get match tickets was discussed in the chapter 6 Fan clubs but it was surprising that only

one felt the difficulty to get tickets. This could be due to the fact that some of the respondents are part of a fan club so it much easier to get match tickets that way. Problem with this question was that there was no option to answer “no time and no money”, there was all of the above which included no time, no money and no interest which was chosen by none.

Almost all respondents, 98 %, would take the chance if given, to travel to England to see a football match live. Only one respondent, which represents the remaining two percent, would not travel. This is the same respondent who answered the previous question that he or she had not travelled because he or she was not interested. Cross referencing these results to the previous question’s results, one can see that even those fans that had not had the time or the money to travel, would be interested in travelling, if given the chance. The default of this question was that even though it only meant for those who had not travelled, some other respondents answered as well. The question was asked in a form that referred to the previous question but perhaps it was not clearly instructed in the question that who should answer this question and who should not.

Considering the personal information of the respondents, the fact that 93% out of all the respondents were male, represents well the fans since most of football fans are male. It is good to have some women to be represented as well since there are some very passionate female football fans out there. However, it is surprising that the questionnaire did get so many responses from men since men are known not be very eager to fill in questionnaires unless they have to. The age distribution was a positive surprise as well since all the age groups are so well represented in the research. Answers came in from all the categories but most of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 which represents well the average enthusiastic football fans even though of course they come from all the age groups.

## 10 Conclusions

Football moves fans all over the world but it is in bigger scale in some places. English Premier League being the biggest and most watched football league in the world, it has almost million fans travelling to see the matches in a year. Tourists travelling from Finland to England take part on a sport related activity more often than an average tourist from European Union’s countries, however Finland is not at the top of the countries with most visits for football tourism purposes.

The primary research topic was to study why Finnish fans travel to England to watch a football match live. There is no exact reason why fans travel to England, each tourists are individuals and value different things but there are some findings and generalities that were made and points of interest that were found with the research of this thesis.

**The match itself** is the most important part of the trip for those whose primary purpose is to travel to see a football match. This can be said to be obvious. According to the research, fans enjoy the overall experience of the match, the experience of it, atmosphere at the stadium, living English football culture, supporting their own club there and the social experience of it. Many of these things are related of the whole experience of the match itself but some are also related in some way to a feeling of belonging; being part of an experience, living everything with their friends, belonging to a club and cheering with tens of thousands of other fans. It is a very special experience.

This leads to the second point made with the research: **travelling with friends**. Sharing the trip with friends and experiencing the British pub culture is something that is valued highly as well. Even if the main purpose of the trip was to see a football match, there usually is some time to do something else, even if it is a short weekend holiday. As most of the respondents were male, this type of holidays could be called “guys’ weekend”: having fun with friends, drinking and then enjoying a football match is a getaway from routines and something worth doing again.

**Uniqueness of the experience**, meaning with this that each trip is different. Football match is different each time and the experience is something that does not lose its value even after several times. This is proven by that over 80 % of those who travelled for football, has made the trip at least twice and over half over half four or more times. Football match is something that fans want to return for which makes it a very special experience for them.

**All activities related to football** are an important part of the trip. Many fans mention that pubs are important part of the trip. To all, they do not necessarily mean the fan pubs of clubs but for some it is. Experiencing a football game in a fan pub is almost as important as seeing the match itself. Stadium tours and other important places were visited by most of the fans who had travelled which makes them something worthwhile. In the theory part it was mentioned that this type of nostalgia sport tourism can even get characteristics of a religious kind. This is why this branch is especially interesting and important as it is not researched almost at all but is clearly important to the fans.

**Activities unrelated to football** should also be mentioned. As mentioned the chapter before the previous one, that even with a short weekend holiday there is almost always time to participate on other than football related activities. Beer and pub culture were obviously the most popular points of interests among all. However, there are some great cities in England and the big clubs usually come from bigger cities with many opportunities for, for example, sightseeing.

The second topic to research in this thesis, was the profile of a Finnish football fan travelling to England. Taken from all of the answers, a profile for an average football fan who travels to England, can be drawn. He is a male between the ages of 31 and 40. He has travelled to England, at least twice to see a football game and has done so with friends. He travels independently, so he does not use the services of a tour operator. His primary reason to travel to England, is to see a football match but sometimes he does enjoy English beer and pub cultures on his travels. He has done a stadium tour, visited the fan shop and visited another important place to the club on his travels. He enjoys most in a football match the general atmosphere, supporting his team live at the home stadium, experiencing English football culture and social experience so he values the match experience as a whole and all aspects of it. He has desire to travel again and would do so if offered the chance.

Some of these answers match with the profile of an average Finnish tourist that travels to England (explained in chapter 4.1). The age is roughly the same, as are the more male oriented gender and the fact that Finnish tourist prefer to travel with a group of other adults which would in this case refer to the fact that football fans prefer to travel with friends. This increases the validity of this research.

When looking into the topic more deeply after deciding on the topic of the thesis, an unexpected market rose up: nostalgic sport tourism. The writer had not heard of this topic prior to building the theoretical background of the thesis and found it very interesting when looking more deeply into it. Thinking about it later on, it could have been the whole topic of the thesis. Nostalgia sport tourism, being a growing niche market, is very interesting and potential. Not many realize that with doing a stadium tour, visiting a local sports bar or visiting a sport related museum, they are actually taking part on a nostalgia sport tourism related activity. Stadium tours are promoted by the football clubs but it is not taken fully advantage of.

For further topic of study there could be more study of the importance of nostalgic sport tourism and how much value it holds to tourists. It is a small niche market but it is an interesting one with lots of opportunities. In addition, some further study on the topic of football tourism for other European leagues and further study of an average fans and tourist are suggested by the writer.

## 11 Reflection

The research method was chosen accordingly to what would be the best and easiest way to conduct a questionnaire among football fans. Thinking about it later on, some modifications to the questionnaire would have been made. The writer was afraid if she would do too a too extensive questionnaire, no one would bother answering it. As the questionnaire was answered by so many, it could have been more thorough.

An interview from a member or a chairman of a fan club could have been an interesting addition as well since it would have provided the thesis with much more insights to the organization and functions of the fan clubs.

All in all, the writing process of this thesis has been a long but a rewarding one. The writer learned a lot of new theory, interesting facts about football and football tourism and how to conduct a proper research. The writing process has been helpful and educational considering both academic writing and academic research. There are so many interesting topics of research out there waiting to be made but this thesis could only be about one. The writer hopes that this thesis would inspire more research on the topic.



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- e) Sosiaalinen kokemus (esim. ottelun kokeminen ystävien tai perheen kanssa)
- f) Kaikki edellä mainitut

9. Jos et ole käynyt ikinä katsomassa paikan päällä peliä, miksi et?

- a) Ei rahaa
- b) Ei aikaa
- c) Ei kiinnostusta
- d) Kaikki edellä mainitut

10. Jos sinulle tarjoutuisi mahdollisuus lähteä seuraamaan jalkapallo-ottelua Englantiin paikan päälle, lähtisitkö?

Vastaa vain, jos et ole käynyt katsomassa ottelua paikan päällä.

- a) Kyllä
- b) En

11. Ikä?

- a) 22 tai nuorempi
- b) 23-30
- c) 31-40
- d) 41-50
- e) 50 tai vanhempi

12. Sukupuoli?

- a) Mies
- b) Nainen

13. Kannattamasi seura?