



Social Media Follower Segments and Fan Engagement

Case: Finnish Ice Hockey League

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Abstract

The increasing role of social media in the sports industry has transformed the way how sports organizations engage with their fans. Knowing and understanding fans and segmenting them is essential for sports organizations. Having accurate data on the fans is necessary to gain engage fans effectively.

Finnish Ice Hockey League, Liiga, has commissioned the research. The research problem of the study was to identify Liiga's social media followers and to improve fan engagement. By researching the followers, it is possible to understand and recognize better the fans and followers with the ability to segment them. The research was implemented using a quantitative research approach. Totally 1075 responses were collected from the followers of Liiga's social media channels. After data collection, the results were analyzed and presented.

The findings showed that typical followers of Liiga's social media channels are regularly attending Liiga games and watching Liiga via CMORE. They are actively spending time on social media and following Liiga on various social media channels. They are identifying themselves strongly as Liiga fans but are considered passive followers. By analyzing the responses of all followers, the following segments and fan profiles were identified: age segments, single household segment, broadcasting segment, Liiga's social media channels segments, content creators, fantasy hockey players, social followers, die-hard fans, and memes and humor seekers.

After collecting and analyzing the results of the different segments, suggestions to improve Liiga's fan engagement were formed. Liiga can engage fans better on social media by producing high-quality content for different segments on different channels, communicating and interacting with fans directly through social media, encouraging fans to create and share Liiga-related content, adapting to new trends, and developing creative ways to create emotional connections with its fans.

As a conclusion of the study, understanding social media followers and analyzing data with high-quality are crucial to identify different segments to improve fan engagement on social media. Creating additional value for followers is necessary to keep them loyal and engaged. By keeping followers engaged, it is necessary to know what they want to consume, where they want to consume, and how they want to consume.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Sports business, social media, follower profile, segmentation, fan engagement, fan identification, Liiga

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

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1 Introduction

The increasing role of social media in the sports industry has transformed the way that sports brands, teams, and leagues engage with their fans. Different social media platforms offer an effective way to communicate with fans, promote the brand of sports teams and leagues, and increase fan engagement. Social media has become an essential marketing tool for different sports organizations, leagues, and athletes in recent years and it is growing rapidly. Social media networks are important tools in sports organizations' marketing because social media allows sports brands and organizations to connect and engage with their customers and fans. Social media is a powerful tool to grow fan engagement. Different social media platforms, especially Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, are used by sports organizations to create additional content for sports fans. Sports organizations use these social media channels as engagement platforms, to enhance their communication and marketing strategies, to develop relationships with fans and followers, and to communicate their brand image. (Abdourazakou & Deng, 2019; Greenfly, 2022a; Vale & Fernandez, 2018; Maderer et al., 2018.) Engaging fans through social media is relevant for sports organizations since they are worldwide known for valuable brands and engaging large fan bases (Annamalai et al., 2021.).

It is essential for sports organizations to know and understand their fan bases and to segment different fan groups. To gain effective fan engagement, it is necessary to have accurate data on the fans. (Deloitte, 2021.) Data and knowledge of the fans build the basis of communicating. It is not enough for sports organizations to make assumptions about what the fans want to consume. The organizations need to know exactly who their fans are, and what they want and provide that according to the data. (Global Sports, 2017.)

1.1 The Aim of the Thesis

The thesis aims to explore the different fan profiles and segments of Liiga's social media followers and identify ways to improve fan engagement on social media channels. This will improve the understanding of Liiga about their fans and followers so they can engage them better. This research will provide a better understanding for Liiga, who their fans are and what they want, based on the collected data. Improving fan engagement will help Liiga to understand fan behavior better, generate a better fan experience on social media, and potentially generate new revenue sources.

According to Deloitte (2021), it is crucial for sports organizations to truly understand their fans with the ability to segment different fan groups. This will help sports organizations to maximize opportunities in the field of fan engagement. The research problem of this study is to identify followers in Liiga's social media channels and to improve fan engagement.

Two research questions formulated for this study are the following:

1. Who are the social media followers of Liiga?
2. How can Liiga improve fan engagement on their social media channels?

To answer the research questions, this thesis will examine the following concepts in a theoretical framework: Social media marketing in sports, sports fan identification, social media fan engagement, customer and fan base data on social media marketing, uses and gratification theory, and COBRA framework.

1.2 Liiga and Its Social Media Platforms

The commissioner company of this thesis, Jääkiekon SM-Liiga Oy (Liiga), is the top professional ice hockey league in Finland. It was founded in 1975 to replace the old SM-sarja. 15 teams play in Liiga, and the winner of the season will be crowned as Finnish champion. (Liiga 2022.) According to the Communications Manager of Liiga, Tuomas Nyholm, there has not been research about the fans and followers of Liiga's social media or how to develop fan engagement on social media channels. Since the communication and marketing of Liiga is increasingly focused on social media, it is necessary to understand who their fans and followers are and what kind of content they are willing to consume. Liiga has hired a new Communication Manager and Social Media Producer in the summer of 2022 to develop their marketing and communication. These are completely new vacancies in the organization of the Liiga.

Ice hockey is the most popular sport and Liiga is the most popular sports league in Finland. (Kinnostus urheilusarjoihin, 2020.) Liiga has developed a strong presence on social media, using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn to promote the league and its teams, engage with fans, and share news and updates. As of the end of January 2023, Liiga has 380,000

followers combined across all platforms, with Twitter (154,000), Instagram (107,000), and Facebook (104,000) being the most popular channels. In comparison, the second most popular sports league in Finland, Veikkausliiga (the top football league), has around 57,000 followers combined in their social media channels as of the end of January 2023.

Facebook is the most popular platform among Finnish people aged 20-70, while Instagram is popular among younger people aged 15-30. LinkedIn is focused on working life and it is an effective platform to connect and network people from different industries. Twitter is a place for active conversation, interaction, and communication where it is important to take part in the conversations. TikTok and Snapchat are very popular social media platforms among teens and young adults. Generally, users of those platforms are aged 15-25. YouTube is becoming increasingly popular, especially among young people. Nowadays, lots of information is searched on YouTube and it has become the second most popular search engine in the world. To conclude, different social media platforms have their unique characteristics. It is important to understand where to reach the target audience on different social media platforms, and to share unique content on each platform. (Gosome, n.d.)

2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is divided into six different sections and themes. Firstly, social media marketing in sports is explained. The second section is about fan identification and the third section focuses on social media fan engagement. The fourth and fifth section explains the uses & gratifications theory and COBRA framework, which are used to help with research questions and are needed in the questionnaire. The last and sixth section of the theoretical framework focuses on customer and fanbase data on social media sport marketing.

2.1 Social Media Marketing in Sport

Sports organizations' marketing and communication strategies have focused more and more on social media in the past years. This is because the users of social media have been growing rapidly and is expected to keep growing. Globally, 2,95 billion people used social media in 2019 and that amount is predicted to grow to 3,4 billion by 2023. Focusing on social media marketing increases

the sports organizations' brand value and the effectiveness of their communication. (Kennedy et al., 2021.)

Social media is the most cost-effective way to reach potential customers. More than half of Finnish people use some social media platform daily thus it is easy to say that the customers of the brand are likely on social media. Marketing and communicating on social media are very effective because everything on social media can be measurable. (Gosome, n.d.)

Social media is one of the most important platforms for media and marketing in sports. Social media is used by sports brands and organizations to communicate the brand image and engage with fans. Athletes, teams, leagues, and other sports organizations use social media as a channel for marketing purposes, interacting and communicating with their fans and followers, brand promotion, news, updates, and athlete endorsements. People can follow their favorite athletes, teams, and sport, and get updated constantly with shared content. Different social media channels are used for different purposes like sharing news and information, uploading video and photo content, and promoting events. Social media is an effective way for sports organizations to make fans feel part of league experiences. Sports organizations can also collect feedback from fans through social media channels and build new revenue from partners and fans. (Hussain et al., 2021; Byon et al., 2022; Maderer et al., 2018; Greenfly, 2022a.)

Sports organizations have large a fan base, and their fandom is high-level, so social media is an ideal platform for sports organizations to engage fans and followers. The popularity of social media has created new ways for sports marketing. Social media platforms allow users to engage with sports organizations. Those different platforms allow fans to form virtual communities around their favorite teams, athletes, and leagues, allowing them to connect with like-minded individuals from all over the world. From a marketing point of view, social media inspires new possibilities for fandom and engagement with teams and organizations. For sports organizations, social media creates new possibilities to communicate and build stronger fan relationships. These possibilities have built social media as one of the main marketing channels to engaging and interacting. (Vale & Fernandes, 2018.)

The biggest sports are using social media effectively as a part of their marketing strategy. Especially top European football clubs are well-known worldwide, and they are among the most-followed brands globally on social media channels. Academic communities have also increased interest in social media marketing in sports because sports fans are using social media on a large scale and different sports organizations are using social media for their marketing purposes. (Maderer et al., 2018.)

Different social media channels, like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, provide analytical tools that create possibilities for brands to collect data and information about their customers. Social media channels have changed the way of marketing because the current and potential customers have the right to comment, express their opinions and share their thoughts straight with the brand's social media profile. Social media has had a massive role in the shift of sports followers' and fans' interaction with their favorite teams. This kind of interaction by the customer creates the need for the brand to understand its customers' needs and demands. Especially sport followers and fans have emotional connections with athletes, teams, leagues, and sports organizations which creates an even bigger need for knowing the fans. Eventually, sports brands have an opportunity to capitalize by creating more interaction and engagement with their fans. (Avnishkumar & Nulkar, 2022.)

Abdourazakou and Deng (2019) argue that sports organizations need a clear understanding of social media operations to create effective digital marketing strategies. Social media can be described as a platform that creates relationships, communication, and interaction activities between sports organizations and their stakeholders. The goal of social media marketing is usually focused on engaging followers with interactive content.

Machado et al. (2020) mention that social media platforms offer opportunities for sports organizations to connect with their fans and followers much deeper level than traditional marketing. They argue that Facebook and Instagram fan pages of sports brands and organizations should be at the center of marketing strategies. It is also necessary for sports brands to develop new ways to stimulate fan engagement in their social media channels. Hallbäck (2020) argues that social media enables sports organizations to connect with their fans and followers but also fans and followers can

easily communicate and engage with athletes and sports organizations. The ease of participation goes both ways in social media communication and marketing.

However, it is important to notice that sports fans have more choice than ever when consuming social media. It means that sports brands and sports organizations need to find unique ways to engage sports fans and stand out from many other social media accounts. The options to use social media are very wide and there are many ways to engage fans and followers. However, there is no exact way or formula to gain viral success. Rather than that, measuring performance on social media and understanding effective ways is more achievable. (Dixon, 2023.)

2.2 Sports Fan Identification

Fan identification can be defined as orienting oneself to other things, such as an individual or a group, resulting in feelings or emotions of close attachment. The degree of fan identification can range from casual interest to a deep emotional attachment. In the context of sports, this can be considered as a fan identifying oneself as an athlete or sport team for various reasons, such as geographic location, family tradition, or personal values. Highly identified fans are more likely to attend games but are also willing to support their favorite sports team indirectly. (Watanabe et al., 2018.) Sports fans invest lots of time, money, attention, and emotion with sport teams that they identify themselves. (Potter & Keene, 2012.) According to Kim et al. (2016), identification with sports team or athlete has a notable influence on fans' self-esteem, consumer behavior, commitment, and satisfaction.

Sports industry is facing constantly different issues nowadays. One important issue for sports organizations is to understand and recognize fan motives that why they are supporting their favorite athletes, teams, and leagues. For sports organizations, it is necessary to understand fan needs and increase their fan base's loyalty. Also, improving relationships with fans may benefit the economic status and well-being of sport organization. (Peden et al., 2015.)

According to Phua (2010), sports fans are strongly identified with the teams that they support. The fans aspire to achieve and maintain a positive social identity. Fans will achieve a positive social identity by differentiation from competing teams. When fans feel that they are identified by sports team, they experience depersonalization. The fans feel like being part of the group with other fans

and they are provided with different feelings like belonging and solidarity. Highly identified fans are more likely to socializing with other fans by participating in fan clubs, attending watch parties, and socialize with other fans to share their passion for their team. This will create an atmosphere of “us versus them”, and the fans feel like living with the team in winnings and defeats. Especially highly identified fans may have strong feelings and emotions that are attached to the team’s success on-field. The success of the sports team has also influence on fans’ self-esteem. If the team is successful, their fans have higher self-esteem and better mood compared to fans of the losing team. According to Potter and Keene (2012), the highly identified fans are emotional, and their social identity is partly depending on the performance of the sports team. If the team wins, the highly identified fan wins, and the opposite. Kim et al. (2016) also notice that highly identified sports fans are not just consuming sports experiences. In addition to that, they are also willing to engage actively by creating the best experiences for themselves and other fans by sharing their experiences and thoughts on social media.

In the context of social media and media consumption, sports fans use media to achieve and maintain a positive social identity. Social media channels enable fans to bond with other fans, and they will feel being part of the group where they can share values and emotions and create a shared identity while living with the team in wins and losses. It has a strong influence on their self-esteem and team identification. The importance of the Internet and social media for sports fans is huge. Therefore, it is necessary for sports organizations to focus on online and social media marketing to reach the large and rapidly growing segment of sports fans. (Phua, 2010.)

2.3 Social Media Fan Engagement

As mentioned earlier, the use of different social media platforms by sports organizations, teams, and athletes has rapidly grown. These platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, allow sports brands to engage with their followers and fans at low cost and high efficiency. Social media has an important role in strengthening relationships between sports brands and their fans and followers. Sport brands must engage with customers in a positively to create fan engagement. (Machado et al., 2020.) According to Santos et al. (2018), fan engagement refers to the connection that individuals develop with an organization based on their experiences with the organization's offerings and activities, as well as their interactive and co-creative experiences with other consumers.

Fan engagement on social media is a process to get sports fans actively participate and interact in everything that is related to the sports team or league on different social media channels. Fan engagement in sports can be defined as the emotional connection between sports fans and sports teams, brands, or leagues. Fan engagement on social media is about fans interacting and communicating with sports teams or sports organizations through social media platforms. (Greenfly, 2022b.)

According to Vale & Fernandes (2018), research on fan engagement in sports through social media is still limited. Also, Achen et al. (2020) discuss that there are lot of research on social media and sport, but it is still unclear how sports brands and organizations can engage their fans successfully. Additionally, research on how sports fans use social media to communicate with their favorite sports teams, as well as what kind of content creates engagement is limited. Practically, if sports organizations are willing to develop their communication, interaction, and relationships with fans on social media, it would be beneficial to understand what channels are preferred to use and what kind of content that engages fans the most should be created. A better understanding of the fans leads to more efficient marketing to meet organizational goals. According to Lindzon (2022), sports fans consider social media to be their preferred fan engagement platform. Kennedy et al. (2021) notice that assessing and determining fan engagement on social media is seen as a key interest for sports marketers.

In global sports, social media has a huge influence. It is continuously changing and developing fan engagement for athletes, teams, and leagues. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more fans are using platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Social media is developing much faster than TV broadcasts and traditional media. This will lead to the development of more business models in digital marketing, but it also makes it more difficult for sports organizations to gain fans' attention. Teams and leagues that can adapt to the new trends and create more engaging content on their social media channels will have a competitive advantage. Social media creates unique possibilities for sport fans to engage, react and feel more connected with their favorite athletes, teams, and leagues. This creates the need for organizations to create creative ways to promote them and build fan engagement. (Greenfly, 2022a.)

Even though it is important to create and share content that the fans enjoy but also to communicate and interact with them directly on social media channels. This creates a feeling for the fans that they are part of the organization and are more likely to express their loyalty. (Greenfly, 2022b.) To maximize fan engagement and monetization opportunities, athletes, teams, and leagues should be active on social media year-round. Deloitte's fan engagement survey found that if fans are engaged year-round on social media, they will be more likely to buy tickets and merchandise during the season. (Deloitte, 2021.) It is also necessary to understand that fan engagement is not just selling more tickets and merchandise but it's an effective way to connect with fans. (Greenfly, 2022b.)

On social media, sports organizations and brands share information in different forms of posts, and the followers and fans can see and engage with these posts by liking, commenting, and sharing. Different forms of posts are designed to catch the attention of the follower. Posts can be status updates, photos, videos, and links. (Byon et al., 2022.) However, meaningful fan engagement on social media is not just about metrics like clicks, number of followers, and likes. Interactions, comments, shares, and retweets can be described as meaningful engagement more accurately. Also, it is necessary to notice that the quality of content is key to a better engagement level. (Seymour & Blakey, 2020.) Santos et al. (2018) identified fan-to-fan relationships, team-to-fan relationships, and fan co-creation as the elements of fan engagement through social media. They also highlighted the importance of promoting interactions and co-creation opportunities for fans to enhance engagement with teams. They also discussed the role of social media networks in providing entertainment, information, and community-building opportunities to fans.

According to Laurell and Söderman (2017), storytelling is important and effective in social media fan engagement because it can help to create a deeper emotional connection between the sports organization and its fans. By storytelling, sports brands can express their values, mission, and personality in more engagingly and memorably than simply listing features and benefits. Stories also have the power to evoke emotions, trigger empathy, and inspire action. This makes them a powerful tool for building brand loyalty and advocacy. In addition to that, by involving the fans and followers in the story through user-generated content or interactive elements, sports brands can develop their community, and fan engagement that can increase their social media reach and brand awareness.

To effectively engage fans, it is essential to have knowledge and data of customers. This data is necessary to help sports organizations in communicating and marketing for their fans. Thus, it is easy to say that data and knowledge of the customers are the keys to fan engagement. (Global Sports, 2017.) However, Abdourazakou & Deng (2019) and Vale & Fernandes (2018) mention that sports organizations have a lack of effort to know and identify their fan base even though they are creating engaging content for the fans. Vale & Fernandes (2018) also argue that sports organizations are having problems because they want to control their brand but at the same time, they may potentially limit fan engagement by not understanding the needs of the fans.

To have the best possible fan engagement, sports organizations need the best possible data on their fans. This enables highly personalized interactions with fans. To find new ways to generate revenue opportunities and fan engagement, sports organizations need talent that can analyze the specific data of their fans. These skills are important to target specific fan segments. Segmentation helps sports organizations to target and recognize different fan groups based on their commitment and behaviors. Analyzing data creates sports organizations a better understanding of fan behavior. That develops better fan experience and new sources of revenue. (Deloitte, 2021.) To conclude, fan engagement is ultimately about developing a clear understanding of fan motivations, expectations, and behaviors, and creating services to improve the fan experience (Connolly, 2015).

2.4 Uses & Gratification Theory

Uses & Gratification Theory is a notable theory in the literature on social media in sports. It is widely used in sports to explain how consumers use social media. The theory explains why people use specific media types and what benefits they get for using that media. It also explores individuals' media usage from different perspectives. The theory supposes that consumers make a conscious decision about media use and look for a particular type of media to meet their social and psychological needs. Earlier research discuss that sports fans use the internet for personal utility, passing time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment that present different drivers of fan engagement. By using Uses & Gratification Theory in the context of social media, it helps to understand why people are using social media and why they enjoy using it. (Achen et al., 2020.) Avnishkumar & Nulkar (2022) explain that the theory helps to understand why people end up using particular media to fulfill their needs. This theory should be used to understand the motivation of sports consumers.

According to Whiting and Williams (2013), Uses & Gratifications Theory is relevant to social media research because it has roots in communications literature. Social media is an effective communication tool that enables users to communicate with a huge amount of people around the globe. Abdourazakou & Deng (2019) argue that the theory explains that individuals are active users of media and use specific media to satisfy their needs and desires. According to this theory, individuals are not passive recipients of messages in media but rather active participants who choose which media content to consume based on their specific goals and interests. It is one of the first theoretical approaches that explain consumers' active role in choosing media and using it to meet their specific needs. It discusses people's free will to make choices about content and media consumption. This theory is most relevant in studies that require high activity from social media users because the theory requires active participation by individuals.

In this study, the following Uses & Gratifications are used in the questionnaire to support answers for research questions as different drivers of fan engagement: entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, and reward. The choice of these themes was made after investigating previous studies and research and modifying them to be suitable for this study.

2.5 The COBRA Framework

Liking, commenting, sharing, interacting, and creating content are examples of brand-related activities in which consumers engage on social media. Muntinga et al. (2011) define these activities as consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs). COBRAs sort social media behaviors into three different dimensions; consuming, contributing, and creating. The different dimensions describe different levels of brand-related activities from lower levels of passive interaction to higher levels of active interaction.

In terms of passive interaction, the consuming dimension covers activities like viewing, listening, and watching different content, following online forums related to the brand, reading comments on social media, and playing branded online games. Consuming is considered the minimum level of brand-related activeness. Contributing is a mid-level type of COBRA, which includes user-to-content and user-to-user interactions about brands, such as engaging in branded conversations in online forums or social media channels, and commenting on videos, audios, pictures, etc. that are brand-related. Creating is the highest-level type of COBRA, which involves actively producing and

publishing brand-related content that other people can consume. Publishing video blogs, creating brand-related content, and writing articles is part of the creating dimension. (Muntinga et al., 2011.) Figure 1 presents the discussed COBRA framework.

	COBRA type	Brand-related social media use
Level of brand-related activiness ↓ Passive Active	Consuming	Viewing, listening and watching content (video, audio, pictures) Following brand-related online forums Reading comments on social media Playing branded online games
	Contributing	Engaging in branded conversations in online forums or social media channels Commenting brand-related content (video, audio, pictures)
	Creating	Publishing videoblogs Creating brand-related content (video, audio, pictures) Writing brand-related articles

Figure 1. COBRA types and examples of brand-related social media use (Muntinga e al., 2011).

2.6 Customer and Fan Base Data in Sports Marketing

Social networking and online communities have been growing rapidly lately. This trend has provided a wide range of opportunities for sports organizations and sports brands to investigate and research sports consumers and fans. New and innovative research opportunities focus on sports consumers' and sports fans' motivation to consume digital media and engage on social media channels. Sports fans are consuming and interacting in online environments such as different social media channels. That's why researchers need to focus on conducting research activities and collecting data online. (Ruihley & Hardin, 2014.) Researching customers and fans is relevant to understanding how sports customers and fans perceive the sport, why they engage with it, and what they think is important. It is important to understand the fans and customers and build strategies based on their insights, not assumptions. (Redtorch, 2023).

Digitally active sports organizations are in a data-rich environment. Digital technology creates possibilities for sports organizations to interact with their customers and develop engagement, for example, on social media channels. This allows organizations to gain a lot of data from their customers and followers. By gaining data through different collection methods, sports organizations can

develop and improve marketing activities on a more personal level. Customer data is essential for sports organizations in terms of business intelligence, consumer segmentation, fan engagement, and communication strategies. (Mamo et al., 2021.)

Although there are different products and software that help organizations in terms of profitability, academic research is needed to discover different ways to use data in segmentation, content creation, and customer behavior. The use of data in sports is essential to improve performance and make decisions on-and-off the field. In sports marketing, different data can be studied and used, for example, to research people who attend matches, research social media users and their reactions to marketing messages, or research fan behaviors. Overall, there are lots of opportunities in sports research to use data that will expand the understanding of exact phenomena and behaviors. Using data can benefit sports marketing, especially in segmentation and social media. This would help sports organizations to better understand the characteristics and behaviors of the followers and divide them into different groups, also on social media. However, there is a lack of sports literature and scholarly discussion on using data to test theories and answer research questions. (Watanabe et al., 2021.)

In terms of sports marketing, the key to using data for sports organizations is to understand in-depth who the consumers and fans are. In-depth knowledge allows sports organizations to understand their consumers' and fans' characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. By getting more information and data, sports organizations can interact with their consumers and fans more personally by segmenting them. The real value of gaining data and knowledge as much as possible of the consumers and fans is to understand their needs and predict their behavior in the future. This enables sports organizations to tailor their marketing actions to satisfy fans by fulfilling their expectations and engaging them. Overall, knowing and understanding their fan bases helps sports organizations build stronger connections with their fans. (Doxee, 2020.) According to Hallbäck (2020), sports organizations need to understand what their fans and followers like and what makes them like the organization. This creates the basis of the information and data to develop communication and marketing. In the best-case-scenario, sports organizations have a deep knowledge of how to deliver additional value to their fans and followers. More knowledge and data of the consumers enable the tailoring of content towards the fan bases and adding value for them.

The sports consumers and fans can't be characterized as a homogenous group; their fandom varies from passive to loyal. The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) pyramid places passive fans at the bottom and loyal fans at the top, see Figure 2. The goal of CRM is to move fans higher in the pyramid while also adding more fans to the base. This is achieved by acquiring data from the fans, analyzing it, and using the insights gained to engage with them more effectively. Passive fans at the bottom of the pyramid may have an interest in the sport or team but lack engagement or communication. The next level includes digitally engaged fans who follow the sport or team on social media but do not necessarily interact. Casual fans attend games a few times a season, buy merchandise from online stores, and watch games on TV. They interact directly on social media, and their behavior can be identified and collected for data analysis. Frequent fans do the same things as casual fans, but more often. At the top of the pyramid are the loyal fans, and the goal is to gain as many loyal fans as possible. (Green, 2019.)

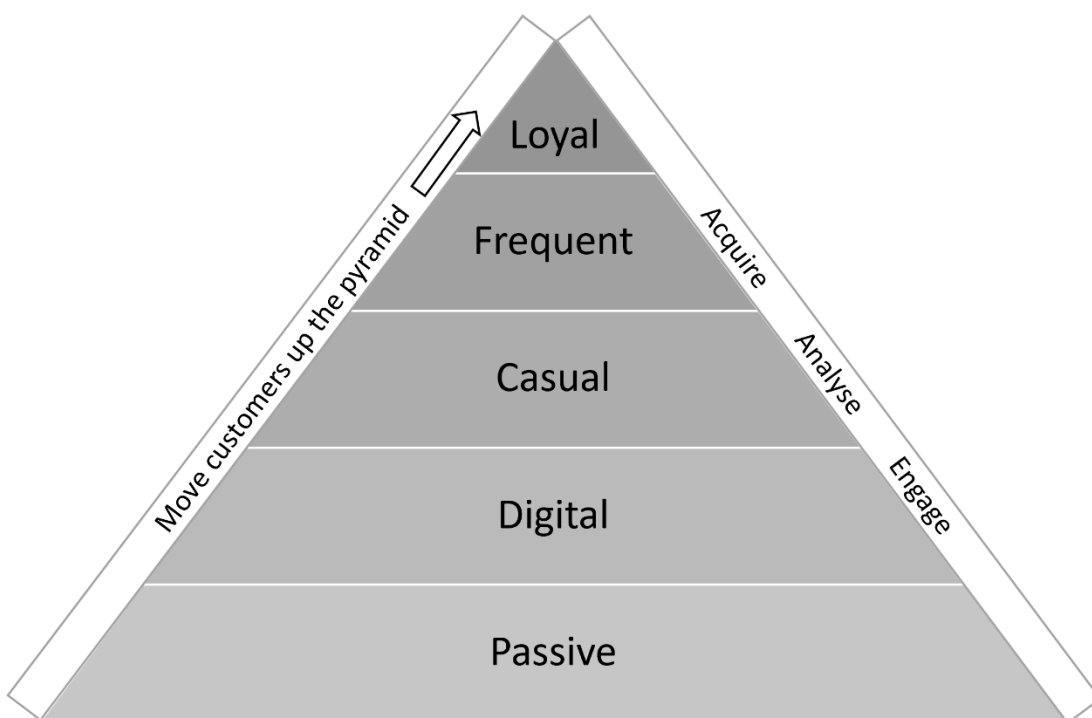


Figure 2. The CRM pyramid (Green, 2019).

The key idea behind CRM is to create a database that includes all customer and fan data - who

they are, how they behave, and what are their interests and needs. After centralizing the database, different customer and fan profiles can be created. This enables the sports organization to market and communicate more effectively and efficiently with its customers and fans. (Green, 2019.)

3 Research Implementation and Methods

The focus of this chapter is to present the research process. The data collection, questionnaire, and research method used in this thesis are presented in detail. As mentioned earlier, this study aims to explore the characteristics of Liiga's social media followers and how to improve fan engagement on social media channels. This study will improve Liiga's understanding of its fans and followers, enabling them to engage with them better.

The research problem of this study is to identify followers in Liiga's social media channels and to improve fan engagement. By researching the followers of Liiga's social media, it is possible to better understand and recognize the fans and followers, with the ability to segment them into different groups. This will enable Liiga to develop fan engagement in their social media channels and help them to maximize opportunities in the field of fan engagement.

Two research questions formulated for this study are the following:

1. Who are the social media followers of Liiga?
2. How can Liiga improve fan engagement on their social media channels?

After collecting answers to the first research question, who are the social media followers of Liiga, Liiga will receive valid information and data about their fans and followers, enabling them to understand and know their fans and followers better and dividing them into different segments. This data and information will help Liiga to understand what kind of content the fans and followers want to consume on Liiga's social media channels. This enables to answer the second research question, how can Liiga improve fan engagement on their social media channels.

The research process was started in the autumn of 2022 by finding the commissioner company. The author wanted to cooperate with a large and well-known Finnish sports organization. Discussion with the most popular sport league in Finland, Liiga was successful, and a common understanding of the justified and relevant research topic formed quickly. Personal experience in professional ice hockey and interest in social media marketing helped the researcher to focus on the research.

The theoretical framework for the thesis was designed and implemented at the end of the year 2022 and at the beginning of 2023. After carefully designing and planning the questionnaire, the data collection was accomplished by Webropol software between 13.4.2023 – 23.4.2023. Totally 1075 responses were collected while the researcher and Liiga set 1000 responses as a target number. The data collection was efficient because Liiga was actively sharing the link of the online survey for its social media followers across different social media platforms, and the traffic on Liiga's social media channels was busy due to the playoffs of Liiga.

3.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is about collecting and examining numerical data. Results of quantitative research can be generalized as results for large populations. Researchers can use online surveys, online polls, and questionnaires to collect information from current and potential customers. The results of quantitative research are logical, statistical, and unbiased. The results can be collected in large samples and they will represent the target group. It is necessary to collect a large number of answers to get reliable results that represent the population. (Fleetwood, n.d.)

The general idea of quantitative research is to answer to the question “what”. Quantitative research is interested in understanding a particular phenomenon that can be generalized to a large population as mentioned earlier. Quantitative methods use systematic observation to create generalized conclusions. Systematic observation in quantitative research means that the research is intentional, replicable, and valid. The results of the quantitative research will be shown in different statistics and tables to explain the phenomena. (Allen et al., 2008.)

Intentional means that without it, the researcher wouldn't know how to focus on observation. It is necessary to understand the intent of the study. Systematic observation needs to be replicable as

different researchers should get similar results by using similar methods. This leads to more credibility of the research. In addition to being intentional and replicable, the observation needs to be valid. Valid observation ensures that the correct phenomenon is observed correctly. (Allen et al., 2008.)

There are many advantages to using quantitative research. Quantitative research enables to collect reliable and accurate data. Data is collected, examined, and presented in numbers that lead to reliable results. Also, surveys as a research method are used to collect data and information from respondents that represent a large population of people. The process of collecting and analyzing quantitative data is easy and fast. In addition to that, statistics enables the wide scope of data analysis and collection. Finally, the quantitative research method eliminates bias by not allowing personal comments, for example. (Fleetwood, n.d.)

The primary goal of quantitative research is to create, expand and refine theory by observing hypothesized connections between variables systematically. The data of the research is collected by survey, and the researcher's role is to analyze data precisely. The key rule is that the conclusions of the research are based on the observed connections that should remain the same apart from the researcher. (Allen et al., 2008.)

There are a few unique characteristics linked with quantitative research that are used in this study. A questionnaire is used to collect data from respondents. The sample size needs to be large enough to represent the target group or the entire population. Close-ended questions help to collect quantitative data and are developed for the goal of the research. Different factors from prior studies that are connected to the research topic are studied. Quantitative data, which is expressed by tables and figures helps to understand the collected data. The results can be generalized to take correct actions for improvement. (Fleetwood, n.d.)

The research of this thesis is survey research. Survey research allows organizations to understand their customers' opinions about their products and services, collect data, and analyze it to produce numerical results. Surveys can be conducted using various types like online surveys, paper questionnaires, and web-intercept surveys. A cross-sectional survey is used in this research paper. It is a useful tool for researchers who want to gather data from a sample of the target population at a

specific point in time. This type of survey can be used to evaluate different variables and multiple samples can be analysed and compared. (Fleetwood, n.d.)

3.2 Data Collection and the Questionnaire

The target group of this research is the followers of Liiga's social media channels. The questionnaire was made by using Webropol software and it was written in Finnish to make sure that the majority of Liiga's fans and followers, who are Finnish, could understand the interview questions and answer in their native language. The questionnaire was sent to the Communications Manager of Liiga, the Chief Digital Officer of Liiga, and the Social Media Producer of Liiga. Then Liiga was actively sharing the information about the research and the link for the questionnaire on their Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. This allowed to get Liiga's social media followers to notice the questionnaire and raise awareness of the research. The participants were allowed to take part in a lottery with the possibility to win two tickets for a Liiga regular season game in the next season. A total of three two-person ticket packages were awarded. The purpose of the lottery and awards was to get more people willing to participate in a survey.

Since Liiga is the most popular sports league in Finland with a strong presence on social media it was expected to receive lots of responses to get valid and trustworthy data and information from the social media followers of Liiga. A total of 1075 respondents finalized the survey, and 779 respondents shared their contact information to take part in the lottery. The questionnaire was open from the 13th of April to the 24th of April.

Since there was no public research made before where a sports league was researching their fans and fan engagement on social media, extensive research was conducted from similar subjects of academic literature to create suitable research and questionnaire. The questionnaire and the questions were inspired by a few earlier studies. Machado et al. (2020) studied motives to engage with sports brands on Facebook and Instagram. Hussain et al. (2022) studied social media marketing in sports and using social media platforms for sports fan engagement. Kim et al. (2016) studied why young people use social media for sports: a uses and gratifications perspective. Vale and Fernandes (2018) studied social media and sports: driving fan engagement with football clubs on Facebook.

These surveys and research were critically evaluated and the questions for this research were inspired from the questionnaires of the mentioned studies. The questions were modified and developed based on the theme and the theoretical framework of this thesis.

The questionnaire had 51 questions that the participants were asked to answer. The survey consisted of seven main sections. Questions 1-9 were demographic questions. Questions 10-17 were about general interest and following ice hockey and Liiga. Questions 18-24 related to participants' use of social media and questions 25-28 to fan identification. Questions 29-40 were based on uses & gratifications theory whereas questions 29-32 focused on entertainment, 33-35 on information seeking, 36-39 on social interaction, and 40-41 on the reward. Questions 42-47 were based on the COBRA framework where 42-44 focused on consuming, 45-47 on contributing, and 48 on creating. Question 49 was about favorable content format in social media and the last two questions 50 and 51 asked participants about the content of Liiga's social media channels.

After answering the questions of the questionnaire, the respondents were directed to a new survey page where they were allowed to take part in the lottery by sharing their contact details. This was made to secure the anonymous answers for the survey. All the contact details were removed two weeks after the lottery to contact the winners.

The questionnaire structure and the questions were tested in advance by neutral participants who didn't take part in the actual research. The idea of the test session was to make sure that the respondents would understand the questions like the author of the thesis planned. The test session also provided an estimation of the length of the questionnaire.

3.3 Reliability, Validity, and Research Ethics

Reliability and validity are two dimensions that are considered when evaluating the quality and trustworthiness of the research. They are important considerations in all types of research. Reliability refers to the ability of the research findings to remain the same if the research were to be replicated. Validity means that the collected data must accurately reflect the phenomenon that has been researched. (Veal & Darcy 2014.)

The reliability of the research refers to the repeatability of the measurement results so that the results are not due to chance. The reliability of the research is considered good when the results are not influenced by chance and would be consistent under the same circumstances if the research would be repeated. The questions need to be unambiguous and easily understood. (Hiltunen, 2009.) Reliability is difficult to estimate in social sciences, and it is not always possible to establish reliability by replicating research. References to literature and previous research can be relevant when attempting to replicate the research. However, human behavior is constantly changing over time and in different contexts, so the research findings may not always remain the same and cannot guarantee reliability. (Veal & Darcy, 2014.)

According to Heikkilä (2014), various details contribute to the reliability of the research. They include a clear and precisely defined research problem, a clearly defined basic population, a good research plan and questionnaire, a carefully chosen sampling method, a representative and sufficiently large sample, a suitable data collection method, a high response rate, control of statistical methods, and clear and objective report. By using mentioned details, the researcher needs to critically evaluate the reliability of the research and discuss issues that may negatively influence reliability.

Validity can be considered good when the research target group and questions are relevant and accurate. The data collected from the target group must accurately reflect the research phenomenon. The research is considered worthless if the validity is completely missing. In this situation, a completely different phenomenon is being studied than what was intended. When examining internal validity, it is necessary to determine if the results or differences between variables are caused by the factors that are intended to influence them. (Hiltunen, 2009.) Internal validity explains how accurately the characteristics of the studied phenomena are expressed by the used variables and collected data. External validity is relevant when considering the generalizability or representativeness of quantitative research results. This means whether the results can be generalized to the whole population beyond the sample of the research. (Veal & Darcy, 2014.)

In questionnaire-based data collection, like in this research, the questionnaire needs to be carefully designed to make sure validity. Questionnaires are designed to collect data and information from respondents about their characteristics, behavior, and attitudes. To gain valid data, the

questions need to be designed carefully so the collected data reflects accurately the studied phenomenon. (Veal & Darcy, 2014.)

The thesis has been conducted by the ethical principles of JAMK University of Applied Sciences. According to Veal & Darcy (2014), ethical principles need to be considered throughout the entire research process including design, data collection, data storage and handling, analysis and interpretation, and publication. Figure 3 illustrates different stages of the research process with different ethical issues to be considered, including the benefit of research to society, researcher competence, participants' freedom to participate or not, informed consent of participants, risk of harm to participants, and honesty in analysis, interpretation, and reporting.

Ethical issue	Stage in research process					
	Design	Data collection	Data analysis	Storing data during project	Reporting	Storing data after project
Social benefit	✘					
Researcher competence	✘					
Participants' freedom to participate or not		✘				
Participants informed consent		✘				
Risk of harm to participants – anonymous		✘				
Risk of harm to participants - identifiable		✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Honesty in analysis/interpretation			✘			
Honesty in reporting					✘	

Figure 3. Different stages of the research process with different ethical issues (Veal & Darcy, 2014).

4 Results

Totally 1075 respondents participated in this survey. The results of the survey are represented in various sections, each corresponding to a different part of the survey. Tables and figures are used to help the reader to understand the results better. This chapter has been split into two main sections. The first section presents the responses of all the respondents that participated in the study. The results are divided by different themes related to the questionnaire. The second section focuses on specific segments and fan profiles. The details that are presented among the segments and fan profiles present interesting differences compared to the results in the first part.

4.1 All respondents

4.1.1 Demographics

The first nine questions were demographic questions. The first question was about the gender distribution of the respondents. 62.2% of the respondents were men, while 37,2% were female. 0,5% didn't want to answer the question.

The second question asked the age of the respondents. Table 1 presents the age distribution of the respondents. The largest age group among the respondents was 25-34 years old which presents 25,1% of the total respondents. It's worth noticing that 62,2% of the respondents were under 35 years old.

Table 1. Age groups of the respondents

	n	%
15-17 years	181	16,8%
18-24 years	218	20,3%
25-34 years	270	25,1%
35-44 years	177	16,5%
45-54 years	125	11,6%
over 54 years	90	8,4%
I don't want to answer	14	1,3%

The third question asked about the regional distribution of the respondents' home locations. 29,7% of the respondents live in Pirkanmaa and 17,2% in Uusimaa. Notably, the regions without a Liiga team (Åland, Kainuu, South Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, Lapland, North Karelia, and foreign countries) had the least number of respondents. In addition to that, it's worth mentioning that two teams are based in the Pirkanmaa region. The survey responses were collected at the end of the playoffs when only four teams remained: Ilves and Tappara from Pirkanmaa, Pelicans from Päijät-Häme, and HIFK from Uusimaa. This probably influenced the answers to this particular question.

The fourth question asked the respondents about their highest completed degree. Table 2 presents the education level of the respondents. 19,5% of the respondents have completed comprehensive school, while 39,5% of the respondents have completed either vocational or general upper secondary school. In addition, 28,9% of the respondents have either a bachelor's or master's degree.

Table 2. The educational level of the respondents

	n	%
Comprehensive school	210	19,5%
Vocational school	280	26,0%
General upper secondary school	145	13,5%
Post-secondary level	84	7,8%
Bachelor's degree	222	20,7%
Master's degree	88	8,2%
Doctoral or Licentiate degrees	2	0,2%
I don't want to answer	44	4,1%

Table 3 presents the professional positions of the respondents. The largest group is employees (38,0%), followed by students (28,6%), and officers (15,1%). Those groups are the largest compared to the other groups.

Table 3. Professional positions of the respondents

	n	%
Manager	17	1,6%
Officer	162	15,1%
Employee	408	38,0%
Entrepreneur	40	3,7%
Student	308	28,6%
Pensioner	28	2,6%
Housewife/house husband	10	0,9%
Unemployed	48	4,5%
Something else	24	2,2%
I don't want to answer	30	2,8%

Table 4 presents the gross income of the respondents' households per year. 19,4% of the respondents reported the gross income of the household as 35 001 – 55 000€ per year. The data shows that the groups that earn less than 15 000€, 15 001-35 000€, and 55 000-80 000€ are close to each other. However, it's worth noticing that 19,5% of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

Table 4. Gross income of the household

	n	%
Less than 15 000€	151	14,1%
15 001 - 35 000€	166	15,4%
35 001 - 55 000€	209	19,4%
55 000 - 80 000€	176	16,4%
80 001 - 100 000€	102	9,5%
More than 100 000€	61	5,7%
I don't want to answer	210	19,5%

The majority of respondents (38,0%) were unmarried whereas 21,6% of the respondents were in cohabitation and 21,2% were married. The rest of the respondents either didn't want to answer, were divorced, or chose the option other. Table 5 presents the size of the household of the respondents. The majority of the respondents (27,5%) were living in a single household. 26,5% were living in households with two people, whereas 42,5% were living in a household with more than two people.

Table 5. Size of the household

	n	%
1 person	295	27,5%
2 people	285	26,5%
3 people	141	13,1%
4 people	199	18,5%
5 people	70	6,5%
more than 5 people	47	4,4%
I don't want to answer	38	3,5%

4.1.2 General Interest in Ice Hockey and Liiga

Questions 10-17 were about general interest and following in ice hockey and Liiga. Question 10 asked if the respondents practice or play ice hockey. The results show that 79,1% of the respondents don't practice or play ice hockey but 20,9% do.

Question 11 asked if the respondents own a season ticket for a Liiga team. 78,5% of the respondents don't have a season ticket but 21,5% do. Question 12 asked how many times respondents attend Liiga games per season. 42,0% of the respondents attend 1-5 Liiga games per season whereas 33,4% attend more than 10 times per season. About 20% of the respondents attend 6-10 Liiga games per season, while 5% of the respondents don't attend any Liiga games at all. Notably, nearly all of the respondents, 94.7%, are attending Liiga games during the season.

Question 13 asked if the respondents watch Liiga matches via CMore (pay channel), the official broadcaster of Liiga. The data shows that 82,1% of the respondents watch Liiga via CMore while

17,9% don't. Question 14 asked if the respondents watch Liiga via free channels. 50,5% of the respondents watch Liiga via free channels but 49,5% don't.

Table 6 presents different sources where the respondents follow Liiga-related content that was asked in question 14. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer. Over 90% of the respondents follow Liiga-related content on the Internet (93,2%) and on social media (91,6%). 72,1% follow Liiga-related content on television. Approximately 50% follow Liiga-related content on discussion forums (48,1%) and newspapers (45,4%).

Table 6. Sources to follow Liiga-related content.

	n	%
Internet	1002	93,2%
Television	775	72,1%
Newspapers	488	45,4%
Magazines	138	12,8%
Social media	985	91,6%
Text-tv	254	23,6%
Discussion forums	517	48,1%
Somewhere else	50	4,7%
I don't follow Liiga-related content	2	0,2%

Table 7 presents the respondents' favorite Liiga team. 22,3% of the respondents answered Tappara as their favorite team whereas 13,9% answered Ilves. It's worth mentioning that both of those teams are based in Tampere. Pelicans was the third most popular (10,1%), before HIFK (8,8%) and Kärpät (8,7%). The responses to the survey were collected at the end of playoffs when Tappara, Pelicans, Ilves, and HIFK were the only teams still playing. This probably influenced the answers to this question.

Table 7. Favorite Liiga team

	n	%
HIFK	95	8,8%
HPK	28	2,6%
Ilves	149	13,9%
Jukurit	21	2,0%
JYP	53	4,9%
KalPa	45	4,2%
KooKoo	24	2,2%
Kärpät	93	8,7%
Lukko	32	3,0%
Pelicans	109	10,1%
SaiPa	27	2,5%
Sport	11	1,0%
Tappara	240	22,3%
TPS	54	5,0%
Ässät	50	4,7%
I don't have favorite team	44	4,1%

The last question of this section, question 17 asked if the respondents play IS-Liigapörssi, a fantasy hockey game for Liiga. 85,1% of the respondents do not play IS-Liigapörssi whereas 14,9% play the game.

4.1.3 Use of Social Media

Questions 18-24 related to participants' use of social media. Table 8 presents different social media platforms that the respondents generally use in their everyday life. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer. Instagram is the most popular social media platform, among the respondents while 88,6% using it. The second most popular platform is Facebook, while 68,9% of the respondents are using it. YouTube (65,3%), Snapchat (52,1%), TikTok (47,1%), and Twitter (40,0%) were also popular among the respondents. 0,4% of the respondents don't use social media and their survey was completed on this question.

Table 8. Use of different social media channels generally in everyday life

	n	%
Facebook	741	68,9%
Twitter	430	40,0%
Instagram	952	88,6%
YouTube	702	65,3%
TikTok	506	47,1%
LinkedIn	148	13,8%
Snapchat	560	52,1%
Other	31	2,9%
I don't use social media	4	0,4%

Table 9 presents the duration that the respondents use social media daily. Totally 55,9% of the respondents use social media daily for 1-3 hours. Also, it is notable that 30% of the respondents use social media more than 3 hours per day.

Table 9. Daily use of social media

	n	%
Less than 30 minutes	12	1,1%
30 minutes - 1 hour	135	12,6%
1 - 2 hours	301	28,0%
2 - 3 hours	300	27,9%
3 - 4 hours	171	15,9%
More than 4 hours	152	14,1%
I don't use social media	4	0,4%

Table 10 presents how many times per day respondents look at social media per day. 47,7% of the respondents look at social media more than ten times a day. On the other hand, 20,4% of the respondents are looking at social media less than five times a day.

Table 10. Frequency to look at social media.

	n	%
Less than once a day	6	0,6%
Once a day	5	0,5%
2-5 times a day	208	19,3%
5 - 10 times a day	343	31,9%
More than 10 times a day	513	47,7%

Table 11 presents the different social media channels of Liiga that the respondents are following. They were allowed to choose more than one answer to this question. The data shows that Instagram is the most popular social media channel to follow Liiga with 77,3% of the respondents following Liiga on Instagram. Facebook is the second most popular channel (52,6%). Twitter users also actively follow Liiga on Twitter. However, the respondents that use YouTube and TikTok are not as active in following Liiga on those channels.

Table 11. Social media channels to follow Liiga

	n	%
Facebook	565	52,6%
Twitter	399	37,1%
Instagram	831	77,3%
YouTube	289	26,9%
TikTok	240	22,3%
LinkedIn	12	1,1%
I don't follow Liiga's social media channels	29	2,7%

Question 22 asked if respondents are following any Liiga team's account on social media. Almost everyone, 96,5% of the respondents is following at least one Liiga team on social media. Question 23 asked if respondents are following any Liiga player's social media account. 71,9% of the respondents are following at least one Liiga player on social media, but 28,1% are not. Notably,

almost all respondents are following a Liiga team on social media, but less than 75% are following a Liiga player.

Question 24 asked if the respondents are active on social media during Liiga games. The respondents answered fairly evenly to this question. 50,5% of the respondents are active on social media during Liiga games but 49,5% are not.

4.1.4 Fan Identification

Questions 25-28 of the questionnaire were related to fan identification. Table 12 presents how strongly respondents consider themselves as a fan of Liiga. The scale ranged from 1-5, where 1 indicated as “not at all”, and 5 indicated “very strongly”. Most of the respondents chose either 4 or 5 (72,1%), indicating a strong identification as a fan of Liiga. It can be concluded that they consider themselves fans of Liiga. Only 7,6% of the respondents chose 1 or 2, without identifying themselves as a fan of Liiga.

Table 12. Fan identification part 1

	1	2	3	4	5	Average, n= 1071
25. How strongly do you consider yourself a fan of Liiga	1,8%	5,8%	20,3%	33,0%	39,1%	4,0

Table 13 presents the responses to fan identification. Respondents used a scale from 1 to 5, where indicating “totally disagree”, and 5 indicating totally agree”. As Table 13 presents, most of the respondents, 62,1%, consider that being a Liiga fan is very important for them, as they chose 4 or 5. Similarly, 62,5% consider that they would feel a sense of loss if they would stop being a Liiga fan, by selecting 4 or 5. The responses are split in question 28. 33,5% are interested in what the important people to them think about Liiga (by choosing 4 or 5), but 34,1% are not interested (choosing 1 or 2).

Table 13. Fan identification part 2

	1	2	3	4	5	Average, n= 1071
26. Being a Liiga fan is very important to me	6,3%	9,9%	21,7%	26,5%	35,6%	3,8
27. I would feel a sense of loss if I stopped being a Liiga fan	10,7%	10,7%	16,1%	23,7%	38,8%	3,7
28. I am interested in what important people to me think about Liiga	16,1%	18,0%	32,4%	20,3%	13,2%	3,0

Based on the responses to questions about fan identification (25-28), the respondents identify themselves as Liiga fans and consider that it's very important to be a Liiga fan. Most of the respondents would feel a sense of loss if they would stop being a Liiga fan. However, the responses split if they consider that they are interested in what important people to them think about Liiga.

4.1.5 Uses & Gratifications Theory

Questions 29-41 are based on the uses & gratifications theory that presents different drivers of fan engagement. Questions 29-32 are focused on entertainment, 33-35 on information seeking, 36-39 on social interaction, and 40-41 on reward. Respondents answered on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "totally disagree" and 5 represents "totally agree". Table 14 presents the answers to questions 29-41 which are based on the uses & gratifications theory.

Table 14. Fan engagement drivers by uses & gratifications theory

Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	Average, n= 1071
29. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is pleasant	3,2%	10,1%	29,7%	35,1%	21,9%	3,6
30. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is entertaining	3,7%	11,7%	26,1%	34,8%	23,7%	3,6
31. I follow Liiga on social media to pass the time	14,8%	19,7%	33,4%	20,7%	11,4%	2,9
32. I find it interesting to interact with Liiga on its social media channels	14,6%	21,2%	30,6%	20,3%	13,3%	3,0
Information seeking						
33. I follow Liiga on social media to get information about...						
Teams	1,3%	2,8%	11,8%	35,6%	48,5%	4,3
Players	2,3%	4,6%	15,8%	33,6%	43,7%	4,1
Events	2,4%	6,6%	15,2%	31,1%	44,7%	4,1
Games	1,7%	3,3%	10,0%	27,1%	57,9%	4,4
34. Following Liiga's social media is a good way to find stories about hockey	3,7%	8,7%	20,4%	36,7%	30,5%	3,8
35. I follow Liiga on social media to learn new things	11,3%	18,3%	28,1%	22,7%	19,6%	3,2
Social interaction						
36. I follow Liiga on social media to see what other followers think	17,2%	20,4%	26,0%	23,8%	12,6%	2,9
37. I follow Liiga on social media to stay up to date about conversations and opinions	6,5%	13,1%	24,8%	33,4%	22,2%	3,5
38. I follow Liiga on social media to get to know people with similar interests to me	38,6%	24,8%	19,3%	10,4%	6,9%	2,2
39. I follow Liiga on social media to share my opinion, thoughts, and experience with other followers	40,1%	22,4%	21,5%	9,7%	6,3%	2,2
Reward						
40. I follow Liiga on social media to access discounts and campaigns	31,5%	23,8%	21,6%	14,4%	8,7%	2,5
41. I follow Liiga on social media so I can win free products or other special offers from contests or raffles	30,8%	21,9%	19,3%	16,3%	11,7%	2,6

Based on the results presented in Table 14, information seeking is the strongest form of engagement among the respondents, with an average score of 3,74. The respondents are especially interested in getting information about Liiga teams, players, events, and games. They also find it

interesting to find stories about ice hockey through Liiga’s social media channels. Entertainment is the second strongest form of engagement, with an average score of 3,28. The respondents especially consider Liiga’s social media content as pleasant and entertaining. The third strongest form is social interaction with an average score of 2,7, and the fourth strongest is reward with an average score of 2,55. In the context of social interaction, the respondents are more interested in following Liiga on social media to stay up to date about conversations and opinions rather than sharing their opinions, thoughts, and experiences with other followers or connecting people with similar interests. The reward is not a popular reason for the respondents to follow Liiga on social media.

4.1.6 COBRA Framework

Questions 42-48 were based on the COBRA framework where 42-44 focused on consuming, 45-47 on contributing, and 48 on creating. Table 15 presents the responses to those questions. Respondents answered on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 represents “not at all” and 5 represents “very much”. These questions were aimed at understanding consumer engagement behaviors on social media, specifically regarding Liiga's social media content.

Table 15. Fan engagement behaviors by COBRA Framework

Consuming	1	2	3	4	5	Average, n= 1071
42. I’m interested in watching videos on Liiga’s social media channels	1,9%	3,8%	16,1%	36,8%	41,4%	4,1
43. I’m interested in looking at pictures on Liiga’s social media channels	3,1%	8,6%	19,7%	36,0%	32,6%	3,9
44. I’m interested in reading posts and comments on Liiga’s social media channels	3,4%	7,7%	24,0%	37,5%	27,4%	3,8
Contributing						
45. I take part in the conversations on Liiga’s social media channels by commenting on posts or other user’s comments	41,8%	24,0%	17,9%	10,4%	5,9%	2,1
46. I share or retweet content posted by Liiga on social media	53,4%	21,5%	14,6%	7,1%	3,4%	1,9
47. I “like” content posted by Liiga on social media	6,0%	9,3%	26,0%	35,5%	23,2%	3,6
Creating						
48. I post Liiga-related content (pictures, videos, text) on my social media channels	58,4%	16,6%	13,0%	7,2%	4,8%	1,8

Based on data in Table 15, the respondents are very passive followers of Liiga’s social media channels. The respondents show a high-level interest in consuming dimensions such as watching videos, looking at pictures, and reading posts and comments. The average score for consuming is 3,93.

In terms of contribution, the respondents are not very interested in commenting post or other user’s comments on Liiga’s social media channels. Also, sharing or retweeting content posted by Liiga is not popular among respondents. However, they do engage in “liking” content posted by Liiga. The average score for contributing is 2,5.

Creating is the least popular type of engagement. The majority of the respondents, 75%, do not post Liiga-related content on their social media channels. The average score for creating is 1,8. In conclusion, the majority of Liiga’s social media followers can be classified as passive consumers in terms of brand-related-activeness. Only a minor part of the followers actively contribute or create Liiga-related content.

4.1.7 Social Media Content of Liiga

Question 49 was about the most preferred content format in social media among the respondents. The last two questions, 50 and 51, asked the respondents about their interest in the content of Liiga’s social media channels. Table 16 presents the respondents’ most preferred form of content on Liiga’s social media channels. Question 49 asked the respondents to put the following options, picture, text, and video, in order of what they prefer the most. 47,9% of the respondents chose video as the most preferred content. Picture was the second most preferred content while text was the third most preferred content.

Table 16. The most preferred form of content on Liiga’s social media channels

n= 1071	1	2	3
Picture	29,2%	44,4%	26,4%
Text	22,9%	33,1%	44,0%
Video	47,9%	22,5%	29,6%

Figure 4 presents what kind of content the respondents would like to see on Liiga's social media channels. The respondents were able to choose more than one option. 85% of the respondents want to see highlights on Liiga's social media channels. News and updates about teams (73,80%), behind-the-scenes material (71,80%), player interviews (67,80%), and news and updates about players (62,60%) were also very popular among the respondents.

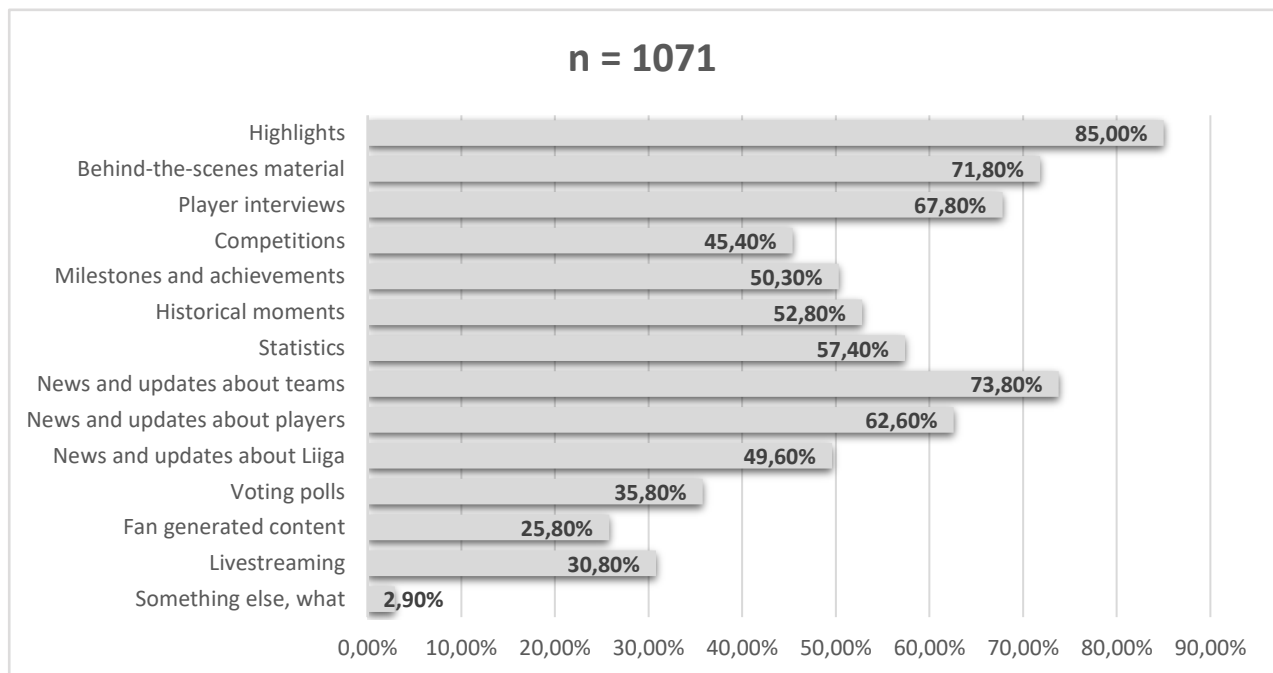


Figure 4. Content that followers would like to see on Liiga's social media.

Figure 5 presents what kind of content the respondents have seen on Liiga's social media channels. The respondents were able to choose more than one option. 79,50% responded that they had seen highlights. In addition to that, 72,70% had seen player interviews, 70,60% had seen news and updates about teams, 65% had seen statistics, 63,20% had seen news and updates about Liiga, and 61,60% had seen news and updates about players.

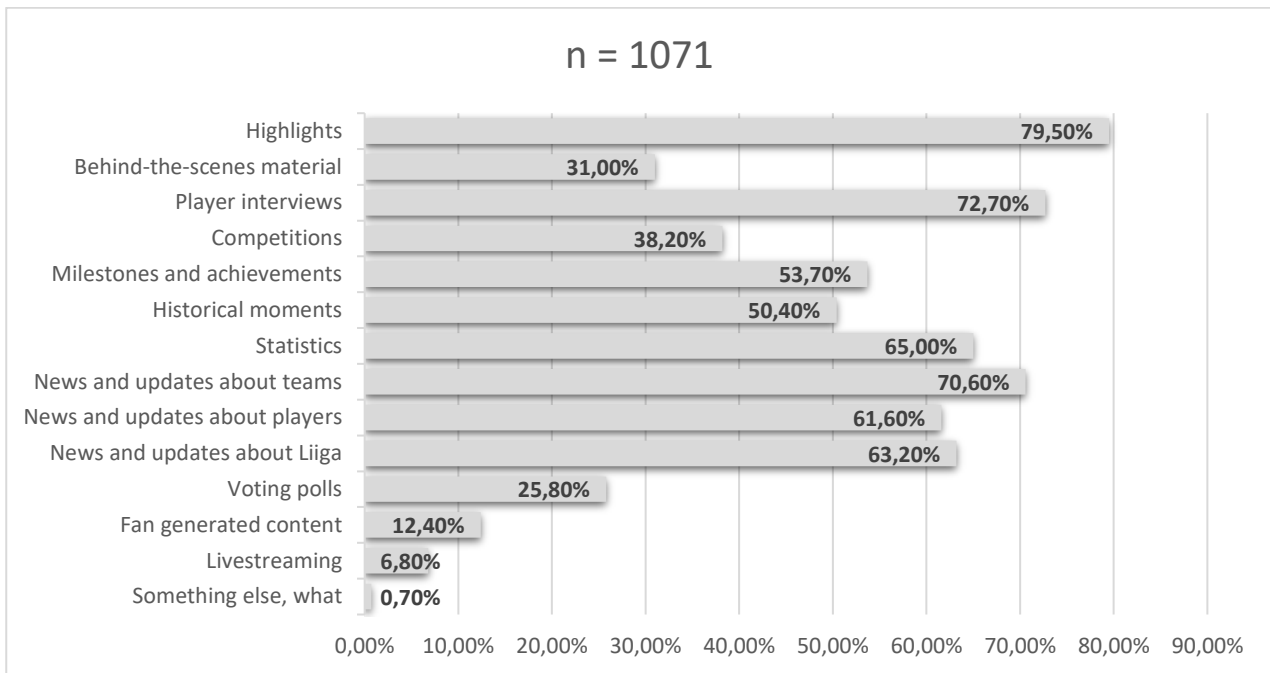


Figure 5. Content that followers have seen on Liiga's social media.

According to the data, there are notable differences between the content preferences of the respondents and the actual content they have seen and noticed. More than 70% of the respondents would like to see behind-the-scenes material, but only 31% have seen that. Respondents would like to see more fan-generated content and livestreaming comparing what they have seen. However, respondents have seen more content about statistics, and news and updates about Liiga compared to the percentage that would like to see them.

4.2 Different Segments and Fan Profiles

This part of the results discusses interesting findings related to different segments and fan profiles. The following findings have been identified by cross-tabulation on Webropol. Deloitte (2021) states that sports organizations must segment their fans to maximize fan engagement opportunities. Segmentation helps recognize fan groups based on their commitment and behavior, leading to a better understanding of fan behavior and a better fan experience. By gathering more data, sports organizations can interact with their fans more personally through segmentation (Doxee, 2020).

4.2.1 Age Segments

15-17-year-old followers are deeply knowledgeable about ice hockey, with 36 % playing at some level. This percentage is 24% for 18-24-year-olds and 19% for 25-34-year-olds. For the rest age groups, the percentage is between 10% and 16%.

The largest percentage of season ticket holders is the age group over 54 years old, with 30% having a season ticket. About every fourth of respondents in the age group 35-54 years old have a season ticket, while about every fifth of respondents in the age group 15-34 years old have one.

There are major differences in the social media channels used by different age groups, as presented in Figure 6. Facebook is a very popular channel among over 25 years old. 43-48% of the respondents over 18 years old are using Twitter. Instagram is very popular among 15-44-year-olds but followers over 45 years old are also very active users of Instagram. YouTube and TikTok are especially popular among 15-24 years old followers. In addition to that, most of the followers aged 25-54 also use YouTube. About 20-25% of followers over 25 years old use LinkedIn. Snapchat is a very popular social media platform among 15-24-year-old followers.

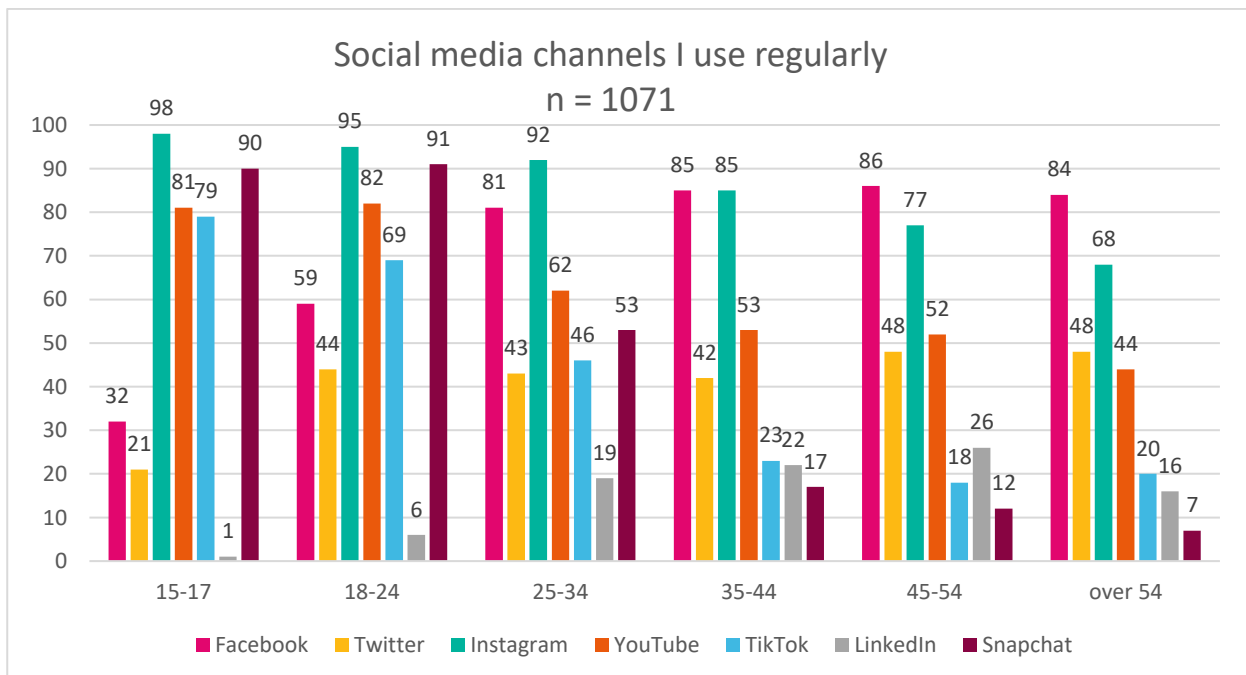


Figure 6. Social media channels that followers use regularly.

Figure 7 presents the popularity of different social media channels of Liiga among different age groups. Among 15-17-year-olds, Instagram (96%), TikTok (56%), and YouTube (53%) are the most popular social media channels to follow Liiga. In the age group of 18-24, Instagram is the most popular platform (88%) and the only platform with over 50% of followers. In the age group of 25-34, Instagram is also the most popular platform (76%), followed by Facebook (62%) and Twitter (40%). Among followers over 45 years old, Facebook is the most popular social media platform to follow Liiga, followed by Instagram and Twitter.

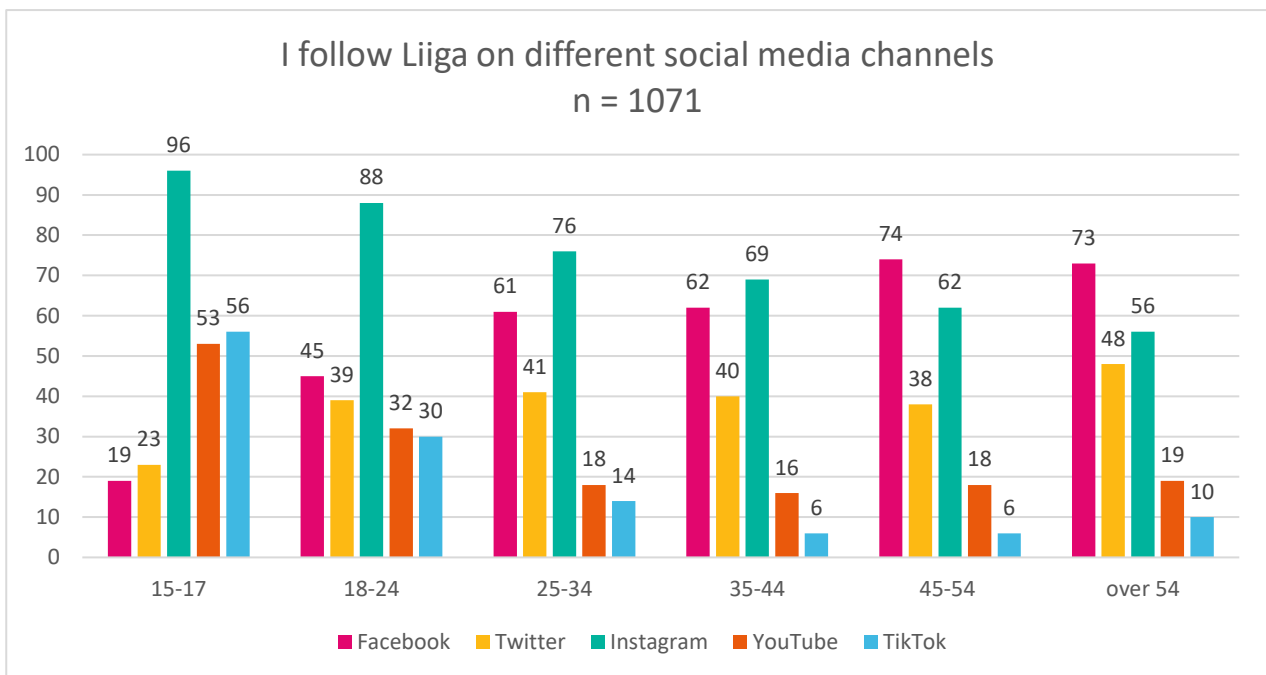


Figure 7. Social media channels that followers use to follow Liiga.

As seen in Figure 7, Instagram is a very popular platform among all age groups. Younger followers prefer using YouTube and TikTok to follow Liiga, but they don't prefer Facebook and Twitter compared to others. Facebook is more popular among older Liiga followers, whereas Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok lose popularity when the age increases.

Every age group enjoys following a Liiga team on social media, but younger followers are more interested in following a Liiga player compared to older followers. 90% of 15-17-year olds and 81% of 18-24 year-olds follow at least one Liiga player on social media. In the age group 25-34, 69% of

followers follow a Liiga player, while in the age group 35-44, the number is 65%. However, less than 60% of followers over 45 years old do the same.

Young followers are more active on social media during the day. 53% of 15-17-year-old followers and 51% of 18-24-year-old followers use social media for more than three hours a day. On the other hand, 20% or less of the remaining age groups use social media for more than three hours a day. The older the followers are, the less they use social media. Young followers also responded that they are active on social media during Liiga games. 73% of 15-17-year-old followers use social media during Liiga games but only 46% of the rest do the same.

In terms of fan identification, young followers in the age group 15-17 identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans compared to the rest of the followers. Table 17 presents the average level of fan identification for every age group. Age groups 18-24 and over 54 also identify themselves strongly as fans of Liiga. However, 25-54-year-old followers don't identify themselves as strongly as Liiga fans compared to others.

Table 17. The average level of fan identification among age groups

	15-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	over 54 years
25. How strongly do you consider yourself a fan of Liiga	4,3	4,1	3,8	3,8	4,0	4,3
26. Being a Liiga fan is very important to me	4,2	3,9	3,4	3,5	3,7	3,9
27. I would feel a sense of loss if I stopped being a Liiga fan	4,2	3,9	3,5	3,3	3,5	3,8
28. I am interested in what the people who are important to me think about Liiga	3,5	3,1	2,8	2,5	2,8	3,0
AVERAGE, n= 1071	4,1	3,8	3,4	3,3	3,5	3,8

In terms of engagement forms, the differences between age groups are presented in Table 18. These engagement forms are based on Uses & Gratifications theory. All age groups consider information-seeking as the strongest form of engagement, followed by entertainment, social interaction, and reward.

Table 18. The average level of engagement forms among age groups

Entertainment	15-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	Over 54 years
29. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is pleasant	4,3	3,7	3,4	3,3	3,6	3,5
30. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is entertaining	4,3	3,7	3,3	3,3	3,7	3,7
31. I follow Liiga on social media to pass the time	3,0	3,0	3,0	2,9	2,9	2,7
32. I find it interesting to interact with Liiga on its social media channels	3,9	3,1	2,6	2,5	2,8	3,1
AVERAGE, n= 1071	3,9	3,4	3,1	3,0	3,3	3,3
Information seeking						
33. I follow Liiga on social media to get information about...						
Teams	4,4	4,3	4,2	4,1	4,2	4,3
Players	4,4	4,2	4,1	3,9	4,0	4,2
Events	4,5	4,0	4,0	3,8	4,1	4,2
Games	4,6	4,3	4,3	4,1	4,3	4,4
34. Following Liiga's social media is a good way to find stories about hockey	4,2	3,8	3,7	3,5	3,8	3,9
35. I follow Liiga on social media to learn new things	3,8	3,4	3,1	2,8	3,0	3,0
AVERAGE, n= 1071	4,2	3,8	3,7	3,4	3,7	3,7
Social interaction						
36. I follow Liiga on social media to see what other followers think	3,4	3,3	2,7	2,6	2,8	3,0
37. I follow Liiga on social media to stay up to date about conversations and opinions	4,0	3,8	3,3	3,1	3,3	3,6
38. I follow Liiga on social media to get to know people with similar interests to me	2,8	2,1	2,0	1,9	2,2	2,6
39. I follow Liiga on social media to share my opinion, thoughts, and experience with other followers	2,7	2,1	2,0	2,0	2,1	2,6
AVERAGE, n= 1071	3,2	2,8	2,5	2,4	2,6	3,0
Reward						
40. I follow Liiga on social media to access discounts and campaigns	2,6	2,4	2,4	2,3	2,6	2,3
41. I follow Liiga on social media so I can win free products or other special offers from contests or raffles	3,0	2,5	2,5	2,4	2,6	2,2
AVERAGE, n= 1071	2,8	2,5	2,5	2,4	2,6	2,3

As seen in the Table 18, the age group of 15-17-year-old followers is the most engaged age group, followed by the 18-24 age group, and over 54-year-old followers. 15-17-year-old followers are

very interested in information-seeking and entertainment as forms of engagement. In overall, engagement numbers are not very large. However, it's worth noticing that among followers over 54 years old, social interaction is considered important.

Consuming, contributing, and creating represent consumer engagement behaviors on social media, based on the COBRA framework. As Table 19 presents, all age groups express passive follower behavior on Liiga's social media channels. 15-17-year-old followers are the most interested in consuming content, before the 18-24 age group. They are also more interested in contributing and creating. Over 54 years old followers are the second in terms of interest in contributing and creating.

Table 19. The average level of fan engagement behaviors among age groups

	15-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	Over 54 years
Consuming						
42. I'm interested in watching videos on Liiga's social media channels	4,5	4,2	4,1	4,0	3,8	3,9
43. I'm interested in looking at pictures on Liiga's social media channels	4,4	4,0	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,6
44. I'm interested in reading posts and comments on Liiga's social media channels	4,3	3,9	3,5	3,5	3,7	3,9
AVERAGE, n= 1071	4,4	4,0	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,8
Contributing						
45. I take part in the conversations on Liiga's social media channels by commenting on posts or other user's comments	2,6	2,0	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,6
46. I share or retweet content posted by Liiga on social media	2,1	1,7	1,6	1,8	2,0	2,2
47. I "like" content posted by Liiga on social media	4,4	3,7	3,3	3,3	3,5	3,4
AVERAGE, n= 1071	3,0	2,5	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,7
Creating						
48. I post Liiga-related content (pictures, videos, text) on my social media channels	2,1	1,7	1,7	1,8	1,8	2,0

In terms of content, video is the most enjoyable form of content for all age groups. Additionally, all age groups consider picture as the second most enjoyable form, followed by text, except the age group 45-54 considers text as the second most enjoyable and picture as the third most enjoyable.

Table 20 presents the different forms of content that Liiga’s social media followers would like to see on Liiga’s social media channels. Green color represents the five most popular forms of content among all age groups. Highlights, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about teams are among the top five for every age group. 15-17-year-old followers would like to see statistics, while 35-44-year-old followers would like to see historical moments in their top five. Other groups prefer news and updates about players.

Table 20. Different content that followers want to see among age groups.

n= 1071	15-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	over 54 years
Highlights	89,0%	89,4%	88,9%	79,1%	75,0%	78,2%
Behind-the-scenes material	76,2%	81,2%	78,5%	71,2%	54,0%	47,1%
Player interviews	73,5%	71,6%	68,1%	65,0%	65,3%	60,9%
Competitions	52,5%	44,0%	43,7%	49,7%	49,2%	25,3%
Milestones and achievements	51,4%	58,3%	55,6%	39,0%	45,2%	46,0%
Historical moments	58,6%	47,7%	56,3%	59,3%	49,2%	39,1%
Statistics	69,6%	67,9%	58,9%	46,9%	44,4%	42,5%
News and updates about teams	72,4%	75,7%	73,3%	71,8%	75,0%	78,2%
News and updates about players	67,4%	71,1%	64,1%	53,7%	50,8%	63,2%
News and updates about Liiga	60,2%	55,0%	51,1%	36,7%	42,7%	46,0%
Voting polls	48,1%	45,4%	35,2%	28,8%	29,0%	12,6%
Fan generated content	39,2%	30,3%	24,1%	22,0%	12,9%	16,1%
Livestreaming	38,7%	34,9%	26,3%	29,4%	21,0%	34,5%

There are some mentionable differences among the forms of content. Followers over 54 years old are not very interested in competitions or historical moments. Statistics, news and updates about Liiga, and voting polls are more popular among 15-34-year-old followers compared to older than 35. Followers over 45 years old are not interested in fan-generated content. About 35% of followers aged 15-24 and over 54 years old would like to see livestreaming.

4.2.2 Single Household Segments

This segment focuses on single households. Among the respondents, 295 answered that they live in a single household. The majority of these respondents (63%) are between 18-34 years old, while 33% of respondents living in single households are over 35 years old.

In terms of education, 37% of the respondents living in single households have a bachelor's or master's degree. In comparison, 27% of the other respondents have a bachelor's or master's degree, so respondents living in single households are more educated than the rest. In terms of gross income, 31% of the respondents in single households earn less than 15 000€ per year. Also, 31% answered their income between 15 001 and 35 000€ per year, while 22% answered an income between 35 001 and 55 000€.

Respondents living in single households use Twitter (51%) more actively than the other respondents (37%). Also, they are more active users of social media, while 19% spend more than four hours per day on social media, compared to the rest of the respondents that 12% spend more than four hours per day on social media. Instagram is the most popular platform to follow Liiga among the single households respondents. However, they follow Liiga more on Facebook and Twitter but less on YouTube and TikTok compared to the other respondents.

4.2.3 Broadcasting Segments

This part focuses on the segment of respondents who watch Liiga via CMore, a pay channel. 883 individuals (82,1%) responded that they watch Liiga via CMore. Among the respondents that watch Liiga via CMore, 24% have a season ticket for a Liiga team's matches. In comparison, only 10% of respondents who don't watch Liiga via CMore have a season ticket.

Respondents that watch Liiga via Cmore are more actively engaged with Liiga on all social media channels compared to the respondents that don't watch CMore. The biggest differences are especially on TikTok and Twitter. They are also more active on social media during Liiga games compared to respondents that don't have CMore.

In terms of fan identification, respondents that watch Liiga via CMore identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans than other respondents. On average, CMore viewers rate their fan identification as 3.7, compared to an average of 3,2 among the rest. Regarding fan engagement, respondents that watch Liiga via CMore are more engaged than other followers, by analyzing the results related to Uses & Gratifications theory and COBRA framework.

4.2.4 Liiga's Social Media Channels Segments

This segment focuses on respondents that follow Liiga on different social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Only 1,1% of the respondents follow Liiga on LinkedIn so it has not been considered in this section at all. 565 respondents follow Liiga on Facebook, 399 on Twitter, 831 on Instagram, 289 on YouTube, and 240 on TikTok.

Men are the dominant gender among respondents that follow Liiga on social media. The data shows that there are differences observed across different social media platforms. Among Liiga's followers on Twitter and YouTube, over 70% are men. On TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook around 60% of the followers are men.

When considering the age of Liiga's followers, there are interesting differences to note. Figure 8 presents percentages of followers from different age groups on Liiga's social media channels. It's worth noticing that the largest age segment of TikTok and YouTube followers consists of 15-17-year-olds. These social media channels are also popular among the 18-24 and 25-34 age segments. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the majority of the followers are 25-34 years old. Only a minor part of Liiga's Facebook followers is 15-17 years old, and a minor part of Instagram followers are more than 54 years old.

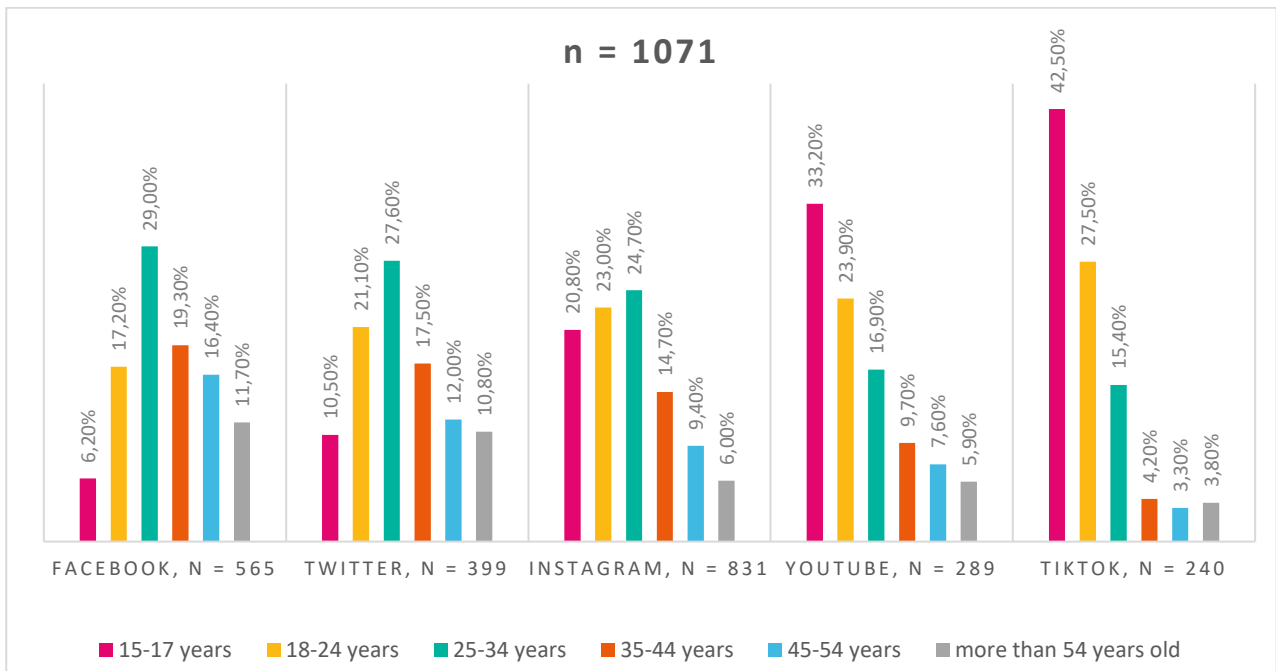


Figure 8. Followers of Liiga’s social media channels divided by age groups

In question 10, the respondents were asked if they practice or play ice hockey at any level. 31% of Liiga’s YouTube followers and 27% of TikTok followers answered yes to this question. Around 20% of Twitter and Instagram followers gave the same response, while 16% of Facebook followers did the same.

The respondents were asked in question 19 about their daily time spent on social media. Figure 9 presents the level of activity on social media among the respondents. Those who follow Liiga on TikTok are the most active social media users, with over 50% of them spending more than 3 hours per day on social media. Followers of Liiga’s YouTube channel are the second most active social media users, followed by Liiga’s Instagram followers. Most of Liiga’s Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram followers spend 1-3 hours per day on social media.

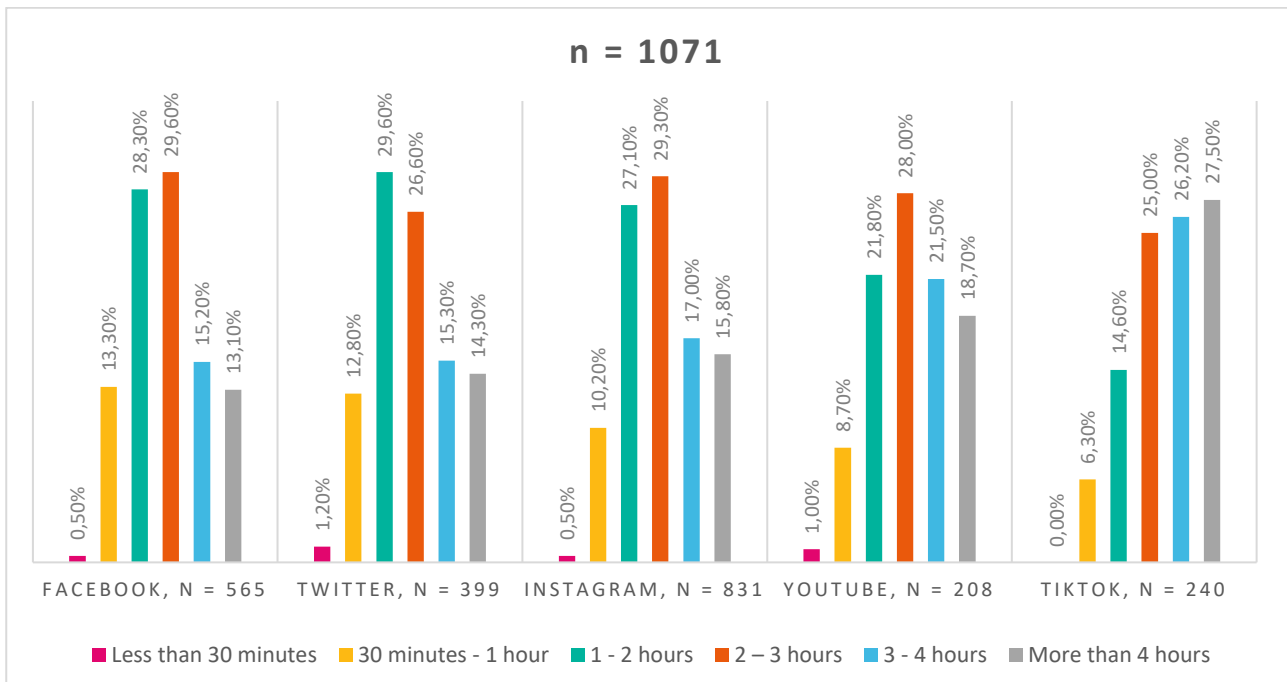


Figure 9. Level of activity on social media channels among the respondents

In question 23, the respondents were asked if they follow a Liiga player on social media. About 90% of Liiga's followers on TikTok and YouTube responded that they follow a Liiga player. About 80% of Liiga's Instagram and Twitter followers answered the same, but only 70% of Liiga's Facebook followers.

Question 24 was about if the respondent is active on social media during Liiga games. 72% of Liiga's TikTok followers and 64% of YouTube followers answered that they are active on social media during Liiga games. 55% of Liiga's Instagram followers answered the same, and about 50% of Facebook and Twitter followers did so.

Regarding fan identification, followers of Liiga's social media channels were segmented. Table 21 presents that those who follow Liiga on TikTok and YouTube identify themselves as fans of Liiga more strongly compared to followers of Liiga's other social media platforms.

Table 21. Fan identification segmented by different social media channels.

	Facebook, n = 565	Twitter, n = 399	Instagram n = 831	YouTube, n = 289	TikTok, n = 240
25. How strongly do you consider yourself a fan of Liiga	4,2	4,1	4,1	4,4	4,4
26. Being a Liiga fan is very important to me	3,9	3,8	3,9	4,2	4,3
27. I would feel a sense of loss if I stopped being a Liiga fan	3,7	3,8	3,8	4,1	4,2
28. I am interested in what the people who are important to me think about Liiga	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,4	3,5
AVERAGE	3,7	3,7	3,7	4,0	4,1

In terms of engagement forms, followers of Liiga's social media channels are segmented and presented in Table 24. These engagement forms are based on Uses & Gratifications theory. Regardless of the social media channel, information seeking is the most popular engagement form among Liiga's social media followers. Liiga's TikTok followers are more interested in learning new things about hockey through Liiga's social media compared to other followers. In terms of entertainment, respondents who follow Liiga on TikTok responded that they find the content on Liiga's social media more pleasant and entertaining than other followers. Twitter followers value pleasant and entertaining content the least. Followers who engage with Liiga on TikTok and YouTube express a greater interest in social interaction as an engagement form compared to followers on other social media channels.

Table 22. Engagement forms segmented by different social media channels.

Entertainment	Facebook, n = 565	Twitter, n = 399	Instagram n = 831	YouTube, n = 289	TikTok, n = 240
29. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is pleasant	3,7	3,5	3,8	3,9	4,2
30. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is entertaining	3,7	3,4	3,8	3,9	4,2
31. I follow Liiga on social media to pass the time	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,2
32. I find it interesting to interact with Liiga on its social media channels	3,0	2,9	3,1	3,5	3,7
Information seeking					
33. I follow Liiga on social media to get information about...					
Teams	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,5
Players	4,2	4,1	4,2	4,4	4,4
Events	4,2	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,5
Games	4,4	4,3	4,4	4,5	4,6
34. Following Liiga's social media is a good way to find stories about hockey	3,9	3,7	3,9	4,0	4,2
35. I follow Liiga on social media to learn new things	3,2	3,1	3,4	3,5	3,8
Social interaction					
36. I follow Liiga on social media to see what other followers think	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,2	3,5
37. I follow Liiga on social media to stay up to date about conversations and opinions	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,8	4,0
38. I follow Liiga on social media to get to know people to similar interests with me	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,6	2,7
39. I follow Liiga on social media to share my opinion, thoughts, and experience with other followers	2,3	2,3	2,2	2,6	2,8
Reward					
40. I follow Liiga on social media to access discounts and campaigns	2,6	2,3	2,5	2,6	2,8
41. I follow Liiga on social media so I can win free products or other special offers from contests or raffles	2,7	2,3	2,7	2,7	3,0

Table 23 presents the preferences of respondents regarding the content they would like to see on Liiga's social media channels. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. The green color represents choices selected by over 60% of the respondents. Those choices are nearly identical across platforms, except for Facebook users that show less interest in statistics compared to others. The most popular content that followers among different social media channels like to

see are highlights, news and updates about teams, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about players.

Table 23. Content that followers would like to see.

	Facebook, n = 565	Twitter, n = 399	Instagram n = 831	YouTube, n = 289	TikTok, n = 240
Highlights	85,3%	85,2%	87,5%	87,9%	89,2%
Behind-the-scenes material	69,2%	73,4%	74,8%	76,5%	75,8%
Player interviews	70,6%	68,7%	71,2%	71,6%	76,3%
Competitions	48,8%	39,3%	48,0%	51,2%	51,2%
Milestones and achievements	51,0%	54,1%	54,0%	57,4%	58,3%
Historical moments	53,5%	56,6%	55,6%	57,4%	59,6%
Statistics	54,7%	61,2%	60,8%	65,4%	68,3%
News and updates about teams	76,6%	76,7%	76,1%	75,8%	76,7%
News and updates about players	64,2%	61,7%	68,2%	70,9%	70,4%
News and updates about Liiga	50,3%	50,6%	53,2%	59,5%	58,3%
Voting polls	34,0%	32,3%	39,5%	41,5%	47,1%
Fan generated content	27,4%	26,3%	28,9%	34,9%	38,8%
Livestreaming	31,9%	32,3%	33,5%	40,8%	44,6%

The blue color highlights differences among the different social media platforms if the followers want to see the content more than others. Liiga's YouTube and TikTok followers (around 60%) want to see more news and updates about Liiga compared to other followers (around 50%). YouTube and TikTok followers also show a greater interest in livestreaming compared to other followers. Additionally, Liiga's TikTok followers want to see more voting polls and fan-generated content compared to others. On the other hand, the red color highlights differences among social media platforms where followers are less interested in that content compared to others. Liiga's Twitter followers show lower interest in competitions compared to others. Liiga's Facebook and Twitter followers are less interested in voting polls compared to followers on other platforms.

4.2.5 Content Creators

According to Muntinga et al. (2011), creating brand-related content is considered the highest-level type of COBRA, involving actively producing and sharing content that others can consume.

(Muntinga et al., 2011.) They can also be considered as loyal fans who are at the top of the CRM pyramid (Green, 2019). Out of the total respondents, 129 individuals (12%) responded that they publish Liiga-related content on their social media channels, selecting a rating of 4 or 5.

Among the content creators, 63% are under 35 years old. They actively attend Liiga games, while only 2% are not attending any games. Additionally, 65% of content creators are attending more than five games in a season, while among the other respondents, 51% attend more than five games. They also follow Liiga more on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok compared to non-creators. 87% of content creators follow at least one Liiga player on social media, whereas 70% of the other respondents share the same response. Furthermore, 81% of the content creators actively use social media during Liiga games, while 47% of the others reported the same behavior.

In terms of fan identification, content creators identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans across all levels compared to other followers, as Table 24 expresses.

Table 24. Fan identification of content creators

	Average of content creators, n = 129	Average of the rest, n= 942
25. How strongly do you consider yourself a fan of Liiga	4,5	4,0
26. Being a Liiga fan is very important to me	4,4	3,7
27. I would feel a sense of loss if I stopped being a Liiga fan	4,2	3,6
28. I am interested in what the people who are important to me think about Liiga	3,6	2,9

The content creators express a strong self-identification as fans of Liiga, considering it very important to them. They would feel a strong sense of loss if they stopped being a Liiga fan, and they show interest in the opinions of people who are important to them.

In terms of engagement forms, Table 25 highlights the differences between content creators and other respondents. The engagement forms are based on the framework of the Uses & Gratifications theory.

Table 25. Engagement forms of content creators

Entertainment	Average of content creators, n = 129	Average of the rest, n = 942
29. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is pleasant	4,1	3,6
30. I follow Liiga on social media because its content is entertaining	4,1	3,6
31. I follow Liiga on social media to pass the time	3,4	2,9
32. I find it interesting to interact with Liiga on its social media channels	3,9	2,8
Information seeking		
33. I follow Liiga on social media to get information about...		
Teams	4,5	4,2
Players	4,4	4,1
Events	4,4	4,0
Games	4,6	4,3
34. Following Liiga's social media is a good way to find stories about hockey	4,3	3,7
35. I follow Liiga on social media to learn new things	3,7	3,1
Social interaction		
36. I follow Liiga on social media to see what other followers think	3,3	2,9
37. I follow Liiga on social media to stay up to date about conversations and opinions	3,9	3,5
38. I follow Liiga on social media to get to know people with similar interests with me	3,2	2,1
39. I follow Liiga on social media to share my opinion, thoughts, and experience with other followers	3,3	2,0
Reward		
40. I follow Liiga on social media to access discounts and campaigns	2,9	2,4
41. I follow Liiga on social media so I can win free products or other special offers from contests or raffles	3,0	2,5

As seen in Table 25, there is a notable difference in the perception of entertainment as a form of engagement between the content creators and other followers. Content creators consider information-seeking forms of higher importance compared to other followers, even though it remains the most popular form among both groups. They also consider social interaction as a more important form of engagement compared to the rest of the followers, especially in getting to know people with similar interests and to share their own opinions, thoughts, and experiences with other followers.

Consumer engagement behaviors on social media include consuming, contributing, and creating as defined by the COBRA framework. Table 26 presents that content creators show a strong interest in consuming different types of content on Liiga's social media channels. They are also much more interested in contributing to Liiga's social media compared to other followers.

Table 26. Engagement behaviors of content creators

Consuming	Average of content creators, n = 192	Average of the rest, n = 942
42. I'm interested in watching videos on Liiga's social media channels	4,4	4,1
43. I'm interested in looking at pictures on Liiga's social media channels	4,3	3,8
44. I'm interested in reading posts and comments on Liiga's social media channels	4,2	3,7
Contributing		
45. I take part in the conversations on Liiga's social media channels by commenting on posts or other user's comments	3,2	2,0
46. I share or retweet content posted by Liiga on social media	2,8	1,7
47. I "like" content posted by Liiga on social media	4,3	3,5
Creating		
48. I post Liiga-related content (pictures, videos, text) on my social media channels	4,4	1,5

The content creators consider picture and video content equally as the most pleasant content on Liiga's social media channels. Among the other respondents, video content is considered the most pleasant, followed by pictures and text.

4.2.6 Fantasy Hockey Players

This segment focuses on Liiga’s social media fans who participate in the fantasy hockey league called IS Liigapörssi. Totally 160 individuals responded as IS Liigapörssi players. Among these fans, 86% are men, and 56% are between the ages of 18 and 34.

IS Liigapörssi players are more actively involved in ice hockey by practicing or playing ice hockey at any level compared to others. 29% of them play or practice ice hockey, whereas 19% of others do the same. Also, 28% of fantasy players have a season ticket and attend Liiga games more often, while 64% attend more than six games per season. In comparison, 20% of others have a season ticket, and 51% attend more than six games per season. Among fantasy players, 89% watch Liiga via CMore, while 81% of the others do the same. Fantasy players are also more active (61%) to follow discussion forums compared to others (46%).

IS Liigapörssi players are more active followers of Liiga’s social media channels compared to respondents who don’t play IS Liigapörssi. As Table 27 presents, Liiga’s social media followers that play IS Liigapörssi have a higher tendency to follow Liiga especially on Twitter but also on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok than followers that don’t play the game.

Table 27. IS Liigapörssi players divided by different social media channels.

n = 160	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	TikTok
I play IS Liigapörssi	55%	45%	83%	33%	28%
I don’t play IS Liigapörssi	52%	36%	76%	26%	21%

Fantasy players are more likely to follow Liiga players on social media compared to non-players. Among respondents that play IS Liigapörssi, 83% follow at least one Liiga player on social media, while 70% of non-players do the same. Additionally, fantasy players identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans compared to non-fantasy players. On average, fantasy players rate their fan identification with Liiga at 3,9, while non-fantasy players have an average rating of 3,6. There are no notable differences to mention in terms of fan engagement between the two groups.

It's worth noticing that there are some differences in the content preferences of fantasy hockey players compared to others on Liiga's social media channels. Followers that play IS Liigapörssi are more interested in seeing behind-the-scenes material (78% vs 71%), historical moments (61% vs 51%), statistics (69% vs 55%), news and updates about players (70% vs 61%), and news and updates about Liiga (56% vs 49%) compared to non-players. Especially the differences in statistics, and news and updates about players are influenced by their desire to succeed in their fantasy teams.

4.2.7 Social Followers

The segment of social followers consists of passionate individuals who are actively engaged in social causes. They enjoy sharing and commenting on their opinions, thoughts, and experiences, as well as interacting with other followers. This segment was identified based on their responses to two questions. This segment composes of those who answered either 4 or 5 in question 39, "I follow Liiga on social media to share my opinion, thoughts, and experience with other followers," and in question 45, "I take part in conversations on Liiga's social media channels by commenting on posts or other users' comments."

Totally 117 respondents are identified as social followers. Among them, 31% are between the ages of 15-17, and 23% are between 25-34 years old. 31% of social followers have a season ticket and actively attend Liiga games, with 98% of them attending at least one game per season. They are very active on social media, with 72% spending more than two hours a day on social media, and 87% being active on social media during Liiga games.

Instagram is the most popular social media platform for social followers to follow Liiga (84%). Facebook (60%), YouTube (44%), TikTok (44%), and Twitter (42%) are the next most popular platforms, although they are less used. Also, 88% of social followers follow at least one Liiga player on social media.

Social followers strongly identify themselves as fans of Liiga, with an average rating of 4,4. In terms of engagement forms, they consider information-seeking as the strongest form of engagement (4,4). However, they also value social interaction (4,2) as a very strong form, followed by

entertainment (4,1), which is also considered a strong form of engagement. Reward (3,4) is considered a meaningful form of engagement in this segment.

In addition to consuming content (4,5), social followers are highly interested in contributing (4,0) to Liiga's social media channels by commenting on updates and comments, sharing or retweeting content, and liking Liiga's social media updates. They are also interested in creating (3,1) Liiga-related content on their personal social media channels.

4.2.8 Die-Hard Fans

The segment of die-hard fans is highly engaged, passionate, and loyal supporters of Liiga. They actively follow games, players, and team news. These fans actively participate in discussions, share Liiga-related content, and strongly identify themselves as Liiga fans. The die-hard fan segment was identified based on five questions. Respondents are considered die-hard fans if they have a season ticket, watch Liiga via CMore, and answer either 4 or 5 in the following questions: (25.) "How strongly do you consider yourself as a fan of Liiga", (26.) "Being a Liiga fan is very important to me", and (48.) "I post Liiga-related content (pictures, videos, text) on my social media channels".

30 individuals were identified as die-hard fans. Among them, 54% are between the ages of 15-24. 87% attend more than 10 games per season. They actively follow Liiga-related content through various channels, including the Internet, television, social media, newspapers, and discussion forums. A major part (77%) of die-hard fans spends more than two hours a day on social media, and nearly 90% are active on social media during Liiga games. Instagram is the most popular social media platform among this segment to follow Liiga (90%), and they actively follow a Liiga team (97%) and a Liiga player (90%) on social media.

Die-hard fans strongly identify themselves as fans of Liiga with an average rating of 4,6. They enjoy interacting with Liiga (4,3) on social media and believe that following Liiga on social media is an excellent way to find interesting stories about ice hockey. They value social interaction with other followers on Liiga's social media channels and show a high level of interest in different content produced by Liiga. In terms of content preferences, die-hard fans consider pictures as the most pleasant content on Liiga's social media channels, followed by video and text. They express a stronger interest in livestreaming and fan-generated content compared to the average follower.

4.2.9 Memes and Humor Seekers

The segment of memes and humor seekers consists of fans who primarily seek entertainment and humor on social media. These fans enjoy Liiga-related memes, as well as humorous and pleasant content. Respondents that answered four or five in questions (29.) “I follow Liiga on social media because its content is pleasant” and (30.) “I follow Liiga on social media because its content is entertaining” are considered memes and humor seekers.

Totally 550 respondents were identified as memes and humor seekers. Among them, 52% are men and 47% are women. The majority of this segment (67%) is under 35 years old. They are active social media users, with 57% spending more than two hours per day on social media and 63% being active on social media during Liiga games. Instagram is the most popular social media platform among memes and humor seekers, with 87% following Liiga on this platform. They also show higher interest on YouTube and TikTok compared to other followers, but less on Twitter.

In terms of fan identification, memes and humor seekers strongly consider themselves fans of Liiga with an average rating of 4,0. Information seeking (4,2), entertainment (3,9), and social interaction (3,1) are the most important terms of engagement forms. They enjoy watching various Liiga-related content, are interested in comments and discussions, and express strong appreciation for Liiga’s social media updates.

Video is the most pleasant form of content, followed by pictures and text. More than 70% of memes and humor seekers would like to see highlights, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about teams and players on Liiga’s social media channels.

5 Conclusion

The idea of the conclusion is to summarize the theoretical framework of the thesis and the results from the previous chapter. The research problem of this study was to identify followers of Liiga’s social media channels and to improve fan engagement. By researching the followers of Liiga’s social media, a deeper understanding and recognition of the fans and followers could be achieved, with the ability to segment them into different groups. Segmentation would enable Liiga to

develop fan engagement for their social media channels and help Liiga to maximize fan engagement opportunities. The findings of this thesis tried to answer the two research questions:

1. Who are the social media followers of Liiga?
2. How can Liiga improve fan engagement on their social media channels?

To answer the research questions, various sections of the theoretical framework were used to support and justify the findings.

Liiga's social media followers

It is not enough for sports organizations to make assumptions about what fans want to consume. Instead, the organizations need to know exactly who their fans are, and what they want and provide that according to the data. (Global Sports, 2017.) According to Deloitte (2021), sports organizations need to understand and segment their fan bases. Segmentation helps sports organizations to target and recognize different fan groups based on their commitment and behaviors.

For Liiga, a deep understanding of their fans and followers is crucial since the communication and marketing of Liiga is increasingly focused on social media. Even though different social media platforms provide analytical tools for data collection and customer information, additional research such as this thesis are needed to gain more accurate and deeper data and information about the followers. According to Mamo et al. (2021), customer data is essential for sports organizations in terms of consumer segmentation and fan engagement.

In sports marketing, different data can be studied and used. For example, data can be used to research people who attend matches, analyze social media users and their reactions to marketing messages, and explore fan behaviors. Overall, there are lots of opportunities in sports research to use data that will expand the understanding of exact phenomena and behaviors. Using data can benefit sports marketing, especially in terms of segmentation and social media engagement. This would help sports organizations to better understand the characteristics and behaviors of their followers and divide them into different groups. (Watanabe et al., 2021.)

In terms of sports marketing, the key to using data for sports organizations is to gain an in-depth understanding of who their consumers and fans are. In-depth knowledge allows to understand their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. By getting more information and data, sports organizations can personalize their interactions with consumers and fans more personally through segmentation. The real value of gaining data and knowledge as much as possible of the consumers and fans is to understand their needs and predict their behavior in the future. (Doxee, 2020.) According to Hallbäck (2020) in the best-case scenario, sports organizations have a deep knowledge of how to provide additional value to their fans and followers. More knowledge and data of the consumers enable the tailoring of content towards the fan bases and adding value for them.

The sports fans' level of fandom varies from passive to loyal. The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) pyramid categorizes passive fans at the bottom and loyal fans at the top. The goal of CRM is to elevate fans higher in the pyramid while also adding more fans to the base. This is achieved by acquiring data from the fans, analyzing it, and using the insights gained to engage with them more effectively. Passive fans at the bottom of the pyramid may have an interest in the sport or team but lack engagement or communication. The next level includes digitally engaged fans who follow the sport or team on social media but do not necessarily interact. Casual fans attend games a few times a season, buy merchandise from online stores, and watch games on TV. They interact directly on social media, and their behavior can be identified and collected for data analysis. Frequent fans do the same things as casual fans, but more often. At the top of the pyramid are the loyal fans, and the goal is to gain as many loyal fans as possible. (Green, 2019.)

The key idea behind CRM is to create a database that includes all customer and fan data - who they are, how they behave, and what are their interests and needs. After centralizing the database, different customer and fan profiles can be created. This enables the sports organization to market and communicate more effectively and efficiently with its customers and fans. (Green, 2019.)

Since there was no public research made before on a sports league researching their fans and fan engagement on social media, extensive research was conducted using relative academic literature to develop a suitable research framework and questionnaire. The questionnaire and its questions were inspired by several earlier studies. Machado et al. (2020) studied motives to engage with

sports brands on Facebook and Instagram. Hussain et al. (2022) studied social media marketing in sports and using social media platforms for sports fan engagement. Kim et al. (2016) studied why young people use social media for sports: a uses and gratifications perspective. Vale and Fernandes (2018) studied social media and sports: driving fan engagement with football clubs on Facebook.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research, the questionnaire was developed to gain a deep understanding of the followers of Liiga's social media. Firstly, the results from all respondents were presented in section 4.1. To explore who are the social media followers of Liiga, the results were divided into the following sections: demographics, general interest in ice hockey and Liiga, use of social media, fan identification, uses & gratifications theory, COBRA framework, and social media content of Liiga. Totally 1075 respondents participated in this survey, ensuring reliable, accurate, and in-depth data and information about different followers of Liiga.

To answer the first research question, who are the social media followers of Liiga, more accurate and deeper data and information about the followers are presented. The different characteristics and behaviors of Liiga's social media followers are explored and divided into different segments.

The typical follower of Liiga is under 35 years old and lives in a region with a Liiga team, likely in Pirkanmaa or Uusimaa. They have completed either comprehensive school or second-degree education and live in a household of one or two people. The typical follower regularly attends Liiga games and watches Liiga via Cmore. They actively follow Liiga-related content especially on the Internet, on social media, and television. Furthermore, the typical follower is a highly active social media user, especially following Liiga on Instagram and Facebook.

The typical Liiga followers strongly identify themselves as Liiga fans. Information seeking and entertainment are the forms of engagement in which they are especially interested. However, the typical followers are considered passive followers who enjoy consuming several types of content but are not interested in interacting or communicating on Liiga's social media channels. According to the CRM pyramid (Green, 2019), typical Liiga followers can be considered as digitally engaged fans or casual fans.

In terms of content preferences, the typical followers prefer video as the most preferred content, followed by pictures and text. Highlights, news and updates about teams, behind-the-scenes material, and player interviews are the most popular types of content that typical followers would like to see on Liiga' social media channels.

By analyzing the responses of all followers, various segments and fan profiles were identified by using Webropol software. As mentioned earlier, identifying different segments is necessary for sports organizations like Liiga as it helps them to gain a better understanding of the characteristics and behaviors of the followers. This enables Liiga to interact with its fans more personally, deliver additional value to them, and to communicate more effectively and efficiently.

Through cross-tabulation on Webropol, the following segments and fan profiles were identified: age segments, single household segment, broadcasting segments, Liiga's social media channels segments, content creators, fantasy hockey players, social followers, die-hard fans, and memes and humor seekers. The results presented interesting findings and differences within these segments and fan profiles compared to other groups.

In the **age segments**, the respondents were divided into different age groups to explore notable or interesting differences. Older age groups have a higher percentage to have a season ticket compared to younger age groups. Instagram is the most popular social media platform to follow Liiga among under 45-year-olds, while Facebook is the most popular among followers over 45. YouTube and TikTok are popular among followers under 25-year-olds but lose popularity as age increases. For over 18-year-old Liiga followers, Facebook and Twitter are also popular social media platforms. These results are similar to Gosome's (n.d) findings on the popularity of social media platforms among Finnish people.

Young followers are more active on social media throughout the day compared to older followers. Young followers also responded by being more active on social media during Liiga games compared to older followers. While followers of all age groups enjoy following a Liiga team on social media, younger followers show more interest in following individual Liiga players. This suggests that Liiga fans identify themselves with their favorite teams.

In terms of fan identification, followers in the age group 15-17 identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans compared to other age groups. The age groups of 18-24 and over 54 also show strong fan identification. However, followers between 25-54-years don't identify themselves as strongly as Liiga fans compared to others. It is interesting to notice that both young followers and older followers express strong fan identification, but working-age adults don't identify themselves so strongly as Liiga fans.

In terms of engagement forms, all age groups consider information-seeking as the strongest form of engagement, followed by entertainment, social interaction, and reward. These engagement forms are based on the uses & gratifications theory. The age group of 15-17 is the most engaged, followed by the 18-24 age group, and followers over 54 years old. The 15-17 age group shows particular interest in information-seeking and entertainment as forms of engagement. Overall, the engagement numbers are not very high. It's worth noticing that social interaction is considered important among followers over 54 years old. In terms of social interaction, Phua (2010) stated that social media channels enable fans to bond with other fans, and they will feel being part of the group where they can share values and emotions and create a shared identity.

Based on the COBRA framework, all age groups express passive follower behavior on Liiga's social media channels. The 15-17 age group shows the most interest in consuming content, followed by the 18-24 age group. Additionally, the 15-17 age group is more interested in contributing and creating. Followers over 54 years old rank second in terms of interest in contributing and creating. In terms of CRM, no specific age groups can be considered at the top of the CRM pyramid.

In terms of content preferences, video is the most enjoyable form of content for all age groups. Additionally, all age groups consider the picture as the second most enjoyable form, followed by text, except for the age group 45-54, which considers text as the second most enjoyable and picture as the third. Highlights, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about teams are among the top five content preferences for every age group. 15-17-year-old followers express interest in statistics, while 35-44-year-old followers would like to see historical moments in their top five. Other groups prefer news and updates about players. Statistics, news and updates about Liiga, and voting polls are more popular among followers aged 15-34 compared to

those over 35. About 35% of followers aged 15-24 and over 54 years old would like to see livestreaming content.

The single household segment focuses on individuals living in single-person households. The majority of these individuals are between 18-34-year-olds and are highly educated, with either bachelor' or master's degrees. However, their income varies widely. Respondents living in single-person households are active social media users. While Instagram is the most popular social media platform to follow Liiga, they are also active users of Twitter and Facebook. However, they use less YouTube and TikTok compared to other respondents.

The broadcasting segment focuses on respondents that watch Liiga on television via CMore. Fans in this segment are more likely to have a season ticket for a Liiga team matches compared to non-viewers. They are actively engaged with Liiga on all social media channels. Compared to other respondents, they like to engage more with Liiga on TikTok and Twitter. They are also active on social media during Liiga games. Regarding fan identification, respondents that watch Liiga via CMore identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans. In terms of fan engagement, they are more engaged with Liiga compared to other followers.

Liiga's social media channels segment focuses on Liiga's different social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, and examines the followers of each channel. LinkedIn was not considered in this section because the number of followers was minimal, and by observing Liiga's social media channels, it was noticed that Liiga has not published anything on LinkedIn thus far.

Men are the dominant gender among respondents that follow Liiga on social media across all platforms. Liiga's Twitter and YouTube followers are predominantly men compared to TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. The largest age segment for TikTok and YouTube followers consists of 15-17-year-olds, with popularity extending to the 18-24 and 25-34 age segments. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the majority of followers are in the 25-34 age group. Only a small portion of Liiga's Facebook followers are 15-17 years old, and a minority of Instagram followers are more than 54 years old. These results align with the findings suggested by Gosome (n.d) regarding the popularity of social media platforms among Finnish people.

When analyzing the daily time spent on social media, it is observed that those who follow Liiga on TikTok are the most active social media users. Followers of Liiga's YouTube channel are the second most active social media users, followed by Instagram followers. Most of Liiga's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram followers spend 1-3 hours per day on social media.

Nearly all of Liiga's TikTok and YouTube followers follow a Liiga player on social media, followed by Instagram and Twitter, and then Facebook followers. Also, being active on social media during Liiga games is very popular among TikTok and YouTube followers. While most of the respondents identify themselves with a Liiga team, it can be noticed that especially TikTok and YouTube followers are very interested also in players and their personal social media content.

Regarding fan identification, those who follow Liiga on TikTok and YouTube identify themselves as fans of Liiga more strongly compared to followers of Liiga's other social media platforms. Regardless of the social media channel, information seeking is the most popular engagement form among Liiga's social media followers. TikTok followers express a greater interest in learning new things about hockey through Liiga's social media compared to other followers. In terms of entertainment, Liiga's TikTok followers find the content on Liiga's social media more pleasant and entertaining compared to other followers, while Twitter followers value pleasant and entertaining content the least. TikTok and YouTube followers show a greater interest in social interaction as an engagement form compared to followers on other social media channels.

In terms of content preferences, the most popular content among followers across different social media channels includes highlights, news and updates about teams, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about players. Liiga's YouTube and TikTok followers show a greater interest in livestreaming and want to see more voting polls and fan-generated content compared to others.

The content creators segment focuses on followers of Liiga who actively publish Liiga-related content on their social media channels. According to Muntinga et al. (2011), creating brand-related content is considered the highest-level type of COBRA, involving actively producing and sharing content that others can consume. Content creators can also be considered as loyal fans who are at the top of the CRM pyramid (Green, 2019).

Most of the content creators are under 35 years old and actively attend Liiga games during the season. They follow Liiga more on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok compared to non-creators. Additionally, content creators are very active on social media, especially during Liiga games.

In terms of fan identification, content creators strongly identify themselves as Liiga fans compared to other followers. They consider it especially important to be a fan of Liiga and would feel a strong sense of loss if they stopped being Liiga fans. They also value the opinions of people who are important to them.

There is a notable difference in the perception of entertainment as a form of engagement between content creators and other followers. Content creators consider information seeking as more important compared to other followers, although it remains the most popular form of engagement among both groups. They also consider social interaction, especially getting to know people with similar interests and sharing their opinions, thoughts, and experiences with other followers, as more important compared to other followers. According to Kim et al. (2016), sports fans willing to engage actively by creating the best experiences for themselves and other fans by sharing their experiences and thoughts on social media.

In terms of consumer engagement behaviors on social media, content creators show a strong interest not only in creating Liiga-related content but also in consuming different types of content on Liiga's social media channels. They are also much more interested in contributing to Liiga's social media compared to other followers. Content creators consider picture and video content equally as the most pleasant content on Liiga's social media channels. Among other respondents, video content is considered the most pleasant, followed by picture and text.

The fantasy hockey players segment focuses on Liiga's social media fans who participate in the fantasy hockey league called IS Liigapörssi. Among fantasy hockey players, almost everyone is men, and most of them are between the ages of 18 and 34.

Fantasy hockey players are more actively involved in ice hockey by practicing or playing at any level compared to others. They are more likely to have a season ticket and attend more Liiga games in a season. Interestingly, they are also active followers of discussion forums.

Liiga's social media followers that play IS Liigapörssi have a higher tendency to follow Liiga, especially on Twitter, but also on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, compared to other followers that don't play the game. Fantasy players are also more likely to follow Liiga players on social media compared to non-players.

Additionally, fantasy players identify themselves more strongly as Liiga fans compared to non-fantasy players. There are no notable differences in terms of fan engagement between the two groups. However, the content preferences of fantasy hockey players differ, especially in their desire for statistics, and news and updates about players, which are likely influenced by their desire to succeed in their fantasy teams.

The segment of social followers consists of passionate individuals who actively engage in social causes. They enjoy sharing their opinions, thoughts, and experiences, as well as interacting with other followers. According to Muntinga et al. (2011), contributing is a mid-level type of COBRA, which includes user-to-content and user-to-user interactions about brands, such as engaging in branded conversations in online forums or social media channels, and commenting videos, audio, pictures, etc. that are brand-related.

The followers in this segment are identified if they follow Liiga on social media to share opinions, thoughts, and experiences with other followers and if they take part in conversations on Liiga's social media channels by commenting on posts or other users' comments. Most of these social followers are under 35 years old. They are highly active both to attend Liiga games and on social media platforms, especially during Liiga games. Instagram is the most popular social media platform for them to follow Liiga.

Social followers strongly identify themselves as fans of Liiga and engage with the content in different forms. They consider information-seeking as the strongest form of engagement, followed closely by social interaction and entertainment. In addition to consuming content, social followers are highly interested in contributing to Liiga's social media channels. They actively comment on updates and other users' comments, share or retweet content, and like Liiga's social media updates. They are also interested in creating Liiga-related content on their social media channels. In terms of the CRM pyramid, social followers can be considered as frequent, if not loyal, fans

(Green, 2019). As Kim et al. (2016) presented, highly identified sports fans are not just consuming sports experiences. In addition to that, they are also willing to engage actively by creating the best experiences for themselves and other fans by sharing their experiences and thoughts on social media. As Phua (2010) stated about social interaction, social media channels enable fans to bond with other fans, and they will feel being part of the group where they can share values and emotions and create a shared identity.

The segment of die-hard fans comprises highly engaged, passionate, and loyal supporters of Liiga. These fans actively follow games, players, and team news, actively participate in discussions, share Liiga-related content, and strongly identify themselves as Liiga fans. Die-hard fans are identified based on specific criteria, including having a season ticket, watching Liiga via CMore, considering themselves as fans of Liiga, placing high importance on being a Liiga fan and posting Liiga-related content on their own social media channels.

Most die-hard fans are between the ages of 15-24, and nearly all of them attend more than 10 games per season. They actively follow Liiga-related content through various channels, including the Internet, television, social media, newspapers, and discussion forums. They spend a significant amount of time on social media and are particularly active during Liiga games. Instagram is the most popular social media platform among this segment for following Liiga. Die-hard fans also follow a Liiga team and a Liiga player on social media. According to Watanabe, et al. (2018), highly identified fans are more likely to attend games but are also willing to support their favorite sports team indirectly.

Die-hard fans strongly identify themselves as fans of Liiga and enjoy interacting with Liiga on social media. They believe that following Liiga on social media is an excellent way to find interesting stories about ice hockey. They value social interaction with other followers on Liiga's social media channels and show a strong interest in different content produced by Liiga. In terms of content preferences, die-hard fans consider pictures as the most pleasant content, followed by video and text. They express a greater interest in livestreaming and fan-generated content compared to a typical follower. However, the number of die-hard fans among the respondents is low, so the results among this segment may be questionable.

The segment of memes and humor seekers consists of fans who primarily seek entertainment and humor on social media. These fans enjoy Liiga-related memes, as well as humorous and pleasant content. They are identified based on their preference for following Liiga on social media due to its pleasant and entertaining content.

Among memes and humor seekers, the gender distribution is nearly even, and most of them are under 35 years old. They are active social media users in general and particularly during Liiga games. Instagram is the most popular social media platform among memes and humor seekers, but they also show higher interest on YouTube and TikTok compared to other followers, while Twitter is less popular among this segment.

In terms of fan identification, memes and humor seekers strongly consider themselves fans of Liiga. Information seeking, entertainment, and social interaction are the most important terms of engagement forms. They enjoy watching various Liiga-related content, are interested in comments and discussions, and appreciate Liiga's social media updates. Video is the most pleasant form of content, followed by pictures and text. Most of the memes and humor seekers would like to see highlights, behind-the-scenes material, player interviews, and news and updates about teams and players on Liiga's social media channels. Santos et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of the role of social media networks in providing entertainment, information, and community-building opportunities to fans.

Fan engagement

After collecting answers to the first research question, who are the social media followers of Liiga, Liiga will receive valid information and data about their fans and followers, enabling them to understand and know their fans and followers better and dividing them into different segments. This enables to answer the second research question, how can Liiga improve fan engagement on their social media channels. According to Deloitte (2021), to have the best possible fan engagement, sports organizations need the best possible data on their fans. This enables highly personalized interactions with fans.

Fan engagement on social media is a process to get sports fans actively participate and interact in everything that is related to the sports team or league on different social media channels. Fan

engagement on social media is about the emotional connection between fans and sport organizations by interacting and communicating through social media platforms. (Greenfly, 2022b.) Sports teams and leagues that can adapt to the new trends and create more engaging content on their social media channels will have a competitive advantage. Social media creates unique possibilities for sports fans to engage, react and feel more connected with sports brands. This creates the need for sports organizations to develop creative ways to build fan engagement. (Greenfly, 2022a.)

Even though it is important to create and share content that the fans enjoy but also to communicate and interact with them directly on social media channels. This creates a feeling for the fans that they are part of the organization and are more likely to express their loyalty. (Greenfly, 2022b.) To maximize fan engagement opportunities, athletes, teams, and leagues should be active on social media year-round. (Deloitte, 2021.) Liking, commenting, sharing, interacting, and creating content are examples of brand-related activities in which consumers engage on social media.). (Muntinga et al., 2011)

However, meaningful fan engagement on social media is not just about metrics like clicks, number of followers, and likes. Interactions, for example, comments, shares, and retweets can be described as meaningful engagement more accurately. Also, it is necessary to notice that the quality of content is key to a better engagement level. (Seymour & Blakey, 2020.) Santos et al. (2018) identified fan-to-fan relationships, team-to-fan relationships, and fan co-creation as the elements of fan engagement through social media.

According to Laurell and Söderman (2017), storytelling is important and effective in social media fan engagement because it can help to create a deeper emotional connection between the sports organization and its fans. By storytelling, sports brands can express their values, mission, and personality more engagingly and memorably than simply listing features and benefits. Stories also have the power to evoke emotions, trigger empathy, and inspire action. This makes them a powerful tool for building brand loyalty and advocacy. In addition to that, by involving the fans and followers in the story through user-generated content or interactive elements, sports brands can develop their community, and fan engagement that can increase their social media reach and brand awareness. According to Connolly (2015), fan engagement is ultimately about developing a clear understanding of fan motivations, expectations, and behaviors, and creating services to improve

the fan experience. According to Green (2019), the goal of customer relationship management is to move fans higher in the CRM pyramid while also adding more fans to the base. This is achieved by acquiring data from the fans, analyzing it, and using the insights gained to engage with them more effectively.

According to the theoretical framework and the findings about the different segments, Liiga can improve fan engagement on social media in various ways. Firstly, Liiga should post content that the fans in different segments enjoy and want to see through social media channels. Content should be high-quality that satisfy the needs of fans.

The content creators are the most engaged fans of Liiga. Encouraging fans to create and share content related to Liiga, such as photos, videos, and stories, can significantly boost engagement and lift fans higher in the CRM pyramid.

Social followers are also engaged with Liiga's social media. Liiga should focus on interacting and communicating through their social media channels to create an emotional connection between fans and Liiga. It's important to communicate and interact with the fans directly on social media channels to create a feeling for the fans that they are part of the organization and are more likely to express their loyalty. Responding to comments, messages, and mentions on different social media channels demonstrates that Liiga values their input and creates a sense of community.

Personalized messages, offers, and recommendations create a more personalized experience, increasing fan engagement and loyalty. Personalized content can be delivered to specific fan groups after segmenting the fan base into different sections. This can be made by analyzing the content that specific segments would like to consume and delivering that.

To improve fan engagement, Liiga needs to adapt to the new trends and develop creative ways to create emotional connections with its fans to gain a competitive advantage. Keeping up with trends and evolving fan preferences ensures that Liiga remains relevant and continuously improves fan engagement. It is also important for Liiga to be active and engage fans on social media year-round to maximize fan engagement opportunities.

To conclude, Liiga can engage fans better by creating high-quality content for different segments on different channels, communicating and interacting with fans and followers through social media, and encouraging fans and followers to create and share Liiga-related content. Liiga has a very strong presence on social media with followers that strongly identify themselves as Liiga fans. Implementing these engagement strategies will help Liiga to develop an engaging and interactive social media presence, strengthen the relationship with fans, and grow a vibrant online community centered around their love for ice hockey. This will bring new followers for Liiga and evolve passive fans into more active fans and move them higher toward loyal fans.

5.1 Discussion

This quantitative research aimed to explore the different fan profiles and segments of Liiga's social media followers and identify ways to improve fan engagement on social media channels. This study was conducted to improve the understanding of Liiga about their fans and followers so they can engage them better by collecting data and information about followers of their social media channels. This research will provide a better understanding to Liiga who their fans are and what they want, based on the collected data. Improving fan engagement will help Liiga to understand fan behavior better and to generate a better fan experience on social media. Liiga has not researched fans and followers of their social media channels before. Additionally, academic research on the topic is limited so this research also fills the gap in studying fan engagement on social media. This study also offers relevant and modern academic information in terms of segmenting and engaging sports fans on social media.

The theoretical references of this research were found from various international academic publications, reliable online articles, and e-books by using the online library of JAMK. The research process took longer than expected because of the author's working life, and the busyness of Liiga. However, the process was successful and carefully executed. Since Liiga's strong presence in social media, the number of respondents was large, and they can be considered to reliably represent the entire population of Liiga's social media followers.

The research process was slower than planned at the beginning of the process. Various challenges influenced to stay on the timetable. For example, finding carefully and critically chosen academic literature was difficult to find due to the lack of academic information on the research topic. Also

planning the theoretical framework was challenging to match exactly with the determined research problem and research questions to get a valid and reliable theoretical background. However, after careful and critical research, all the needed preferences were found and enabled to delimit the topic. Communication was smooth with the thesis supervisor, and staff of the commissioner company considering the busy working schedules of each party. Planning the questionnaire and collecting data was smooth. After data was collected, the data analysis was done accurately to get correct results and to identify various segments. Liiga was satisfied of the results by getting more detailed information of their social media followers and different segments. Liiga sees that the data and results will be beneficial in their future marketing actions on social media. To conclude, after a slow beginning the entire process went smoothly and the author was satisfied with the result.

As this survey proved, a deep understanding of social media followers and quality analysis of data are crucial to identify and formulate different segments. This enables improved fan engagement on social media. Social media is full of content from various sources and that's why it is necessary to create additional value for followers to keep them loyal and engaged. At the same time, it is not enough to gain lots of followers or lots of reactions from the followers, but also communicating and interacting with the followers is necessary to keep them satisfied and have a feeling of being important. Deeper knowledge of the followers enables to serve them better. There is no need to have a mindset to suppose what they want to consume. To keep followers satisfied and engaged, it is necessary to know what they want to consume, where they want to consume, and how they want to consume. By understanding all this, it is possible to create a vibrant online community.

5.2 Validity, Reliability, and Ethics of the Research

Reliability and validity are two dimensions that are considered when evaluating the quality and trustworthiness of the research. They are important considerations in all types of research.

The reliability of this survey is considered by various details that Heikkilä (2014) discussed. The research problem of this thesis is defined clearly and precisely. The basic population, followers of Liiga's social media channels, is defined clearly. The research plan and the questionnaire are considered good because of the clearly defined theoretical framework and questionnaire based on that and previous research that are related to the research. The sample is representative and large,

with 1075 respondents, and the sample is justified to represent the whole population of Liiga's social media followers. The data collection method was suitable by using Webropol and it provided quality statistics and information on high response rate to produce the clear and objective report. However, it's worth noticing that in some questions relatively many respondents decided to use their right to not answer the exact question, so those questions are cannot be used to make accurate conclusions. In addition, the number of individuals in the segment of die-hard fans is relatively low, so accurate conclusions are not worthwhile to conclude.

Reliability of the research also refers to the repeatability of the measurement results, so that the results are not due to chance. This can be evaluated if the research would be repeated. The researcher tried to explain the research process as well as possible to make the repetition of the research possible. However, related to this research, human behavior is changing over time and in different contexts, so the research findings may not always remain the same. The followers of Liiga may change their thinking about Liiga and its social media. In addition, Liiga may develop and improve its presence on social media so that may potentially influence on future results.

The validity of this survey is considered by various details that Hiltunen (2009) and Veal & Darcy (2014) discussed. In this survey, the research target group and questions are relevant and accurate. The questionnaire and its questions are designed carefully to gain valid data. The collected data reflects the research phenomenon and the answers for the research questions were determined. In terms of internal validity, the characteristics of the studied phenomena are expressed accurately. In terms of external validity, the result can be generalized to the whole population beyond the sample of the research. To conclude, the validity of this research can be justified good.

In terms of **ethics**, the thesis has been conducted per the ethical principles of JAMK University of Applied Sciences. According to Veal & Darcy (2014), ethical principles need to be considered throughout the entire research process including design, data collection, data storage and handling, analysis and interpretation, and publication.

This research is beneficial for the commissioner company of the thesis. They can use the results in multiple ways in their social media marketing. The researcher in this survey is qualified to conduct the research as a master's degree student and was supervised by a thesis tutor. Participation in

this study was completely voluntary and the participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were informed of the purpose of the research and the commissioner of the study. Participants were informed that the study was completely anonymous, and their data would be collected, analyzed, and reported anonymously. They were also informed that respondents had to be at least 15 years old to take part in the research. If respondents had any comments or questions about the research, they were able to contact the author of the study by email. If the participants were interested in taking part in the lottery, they were asked to fill out a separate form with their contact details. They were informed that the personal details would only be used in the lottery and contacting the winners and that the contact details would be removed two weeks after the lottery.

The risk of harm to participants was eliminated at different stages of the research process. Participating in the research was anonymous and conducted online using Webropol software. The data was collected, analyzed, reported, and stored completely anonymously, and respondents were not identifiable. The author of the thesis was honest and neutral in the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of the data to get trustworthy and relevant results.

5.3 Future Recommendations

In the future, to further explore the topic of this thesis, it would be interesting to assess whether Liiga has managed to develop its fan engagement by repeating the study for example in a few years. Additionally, one potential study would be to investigate more deeply and accurately specific segments. This study could be easily adapted to various sports leagues or sports teams. As this study proved, it is essential to identify different segments and develop fan engagement among them. In addition to Liiga, this concerns also other sports leagues and sports teams. In addition, Liiga has huge potential with hundreds of thousands of followers across social media channels. By using the data and knowledge from this survey, Liiga may develop its potential on social media for various commercial, marketing, and monetizing purposes that may lead to significant extra income.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Lottery form



Tutkimus Liigan sosiaalisen median seuraajista Arvontalomake

Pakolliset kysymykset merkitty tähdellä (*)

Kiitos vastauksistasi!

Mikäli haluat osallistua lippupaketin arvontaan Liigan ensi kauden runkosarjaan, täytähän yhteystietosi alla ja paina lopuksi 'Lähetä'.

Tiedot arvontaa varten

Etunimi *

Sukunimi *

Matkapuhelin

Sähköposti *

Arvontaa varten kerättyjä henkilötietoja käytetään vain arvonnin suorittamiseksi ja voittajan tavoittelemiseksi. Voittajalle ilmoitetaan henkilökohtaisesti Jääkiekon SM-Liiga Oy:n toimesta. Kaikki arvontaa varten kerätyt tiedot poistetaan tietojärjestelmästä 2 viikkoa arvonnin suorittamisen jälkeen. Henkilötietoja ei voida yhdistää kyselytutkimuksen aineistoon [Lue lisää Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun tietosuojasta](#).

Arvonnin säännöt: Arvonnin palkinnot on hyväksyttävä sellaisenaan eikä palkintoja vaihdeta rahaksi. Palkinnot ovat henkilökohtaisia ja ne on käytettävä henkilökohtaisesti. Arvonta suoritetaan korkeintaan yksi viikko kyselyn vastausajan päättymisen jälkeen. Arvontaan voi osallistua vain kerran. Osallistuja vastaa ilmoittamiensa tietojen oikeellisuudesta. Molempia palkintoja arvotaan 1 kpl. Jääkiekon SM-Liiga Oy:n henkilökunta ei voi osallistua arvontaan. Voittajille ilmoitetaan henkilökohtaisesti.

Hyväksyntä henkilötietojen käyttämiseksi arvonnin suorittamiseksi sekä arvonnin sääntöjen hyväksyminen * *

Ymmärrän henkilötietojeni käsittelyn ja hyväksyn yllä ilmoittamieni henkilötietojen käyttämisen arvontaa varten. Hyväksyn myös arvonnin säännöt ja sitoudun noudattamaan niitä.

Appendix 2. Questionnaire form



Tutkimus Liigan sosiaalisen median seuraajista

Hei!

Teen opinnäytetyönä tutkimusta Liigan sosiaalisen median seuraajista osana Jyväskylän ammatti-
korkeakoulun Master of Sport Business Management -opintojani yhteistyössä Jääkiekon SM-Liiga
Oy:n kanssa. Tuloksia käsitellään anonymisti läpi aineiston keruun, analysoinnin ja raportoinnin.
Lomakkeen lopuksi voit halutessasi osallistua arvontaan, jossa palkintona on kolme kahden hen-
gen lippupakettia Liigan ensi kauden runkosarjaan. Sinut ohjataan vastaamisen jälkeen automaat-
tisesti arvontalomakkeelle. Kysely on suunnattu 15 vuotta täyttäneille ja sitä vanhemmille. Kyse-
lyyn vastaaminen vie noin 5 minuuttia.

Jos sinulla on kysyttävää tai kommentoitavaa tutkimuksesta, voit ottaa yhteyttä sähköpostilla
osoitteeseen N3754@student.jamk.fi. Kysely sulkeutuu 23.4. klo 23.59.

Kiitos!

Juuso Pulli

1. Sukupuoli *

Mies

Nainen

Muu

En halua vastata

2. Ikä *

15-17 v

18-24 v

25-34 v

35-44 v

45-54 v

yli 54 v

En halua sanoa

3. Valitse maakunta jossa asut *

Ahvenanmaa

Etelä-Karjala

Etelä-Pohjanmaa

Etelä-Savo

Kainuu

Kanta-Häme

Keski-Pohjanmaa

Keski-Suomi

Kymenlaakso

Lappi

Pirkanmaa

Pohjanmaa

Pohjois-Karjala

Pohjois-Pohjanmaa

Pohjois-Savo

Päijät-Häme

Satakunta

Uusimaa

Varsinais-Suomi

Ulkomaat

4. Ylin suorittama tutkintoaste *

Peruskoulu

Ammattikoulu

Lukio

Opistotutkinto / opistoaste

Alempi korkeakoulututkinto

Ylempi korkeakoulututkinto

Tohtorin tai lisensiaatin tutkinto

En halua vastata

5. Ammattiasema*

Johtaja

Toimihenkilö

Työntekijä

Yrittäjä

Opiskelija

Eläkeläinen

Kotiäiti / -isä

Työtön

Jokin muu

En halua vastata

6. Toimiala, jolla työskentelet*

Energia

IT

Julkinen sektori

Kauppa

Kuljetus

Majoitus ja matkailu

Palvelu

Rakentaminen

Teollisuus

Muu, mikä _____

En halua vastata

7. Kotitalouden bruttotulot vuodessa *

(Bruttotulot = tulot veroja vähentämättä)

Alle 15 000€

15 001 - 35 000€

35 001 - 55 000€

55 000 - 80 000€

80 001 - 100 000€

Yli 100 000€

En halua vastata

8. Perheasema ja siviilisäätty *

Naimaton

Avoliitossa

Avoliitossa

Eronnut

Leski

Muu

En halua vastata

9. Kotitalouden koko *

1 hlö

2 hlö

3 hlö

4 hlö

5 hlö

yli 5 hlö

en halua vastata

10. Harrastan tai pelaan itse jääkiekkoa *

Kyllä

Ei

11. Minulla on kausikortti Liiga-joukkueen peleihin *

Kyllä

Ei

12. Käyn paikanpäällä seuraamassa Liigaa *

0 kertaa kaudessa

1-5 kertaa kaudessa

6-10 kertaa kaudessa

Yli 10 kertaa kaudessa

13. Katson Liigaa C Moresta *

Kyllä

Ei

14. Katson Liigaa ilmaiskanavilta *

Kyllä

Ei

15. Seuraan Liiga-aiheista sisältöä*

(Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.)

Internet

Televisio

Sanomalehdet

Aikakauslehdet

Sosiaalinen media

Teksti-tv

Keskustelufoorumit

Joku muu

En seuraa Liiga-aiheista sisältöä

16. Suosikkijoukkueeni Liigassa on *

HIFK

HPK

Ilves

Jukurit

JYP

KalPa

KooKoo

Kärpät

Lukko

Pelicans

SaiPa

Sport

Tappara

TPS

Ässät

Minulla ei ole suosikkijoukkuetta

17. Pelaan IS-Liigapörssiä *

Kyllä

Ei

18. Käytän seuraavia sosiaalisen median kanavia arjessa yleisesti*

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

TikTok

LinkedIn

Snapchat

Muu

En käytä sosiaalista mediaa

19. Käytän sosiaalista mediaa päivässä *

Alle 30 minuuttia

30 minuuttia - 1 tunti

1 - 2 tuntia

2 - 3 tuntia

3 - 4 tuntia

Yli 4 tuntia

En käytä sosiaalista mediaa

20. Kuinka useasti päivässä katsot sosiaalista mediaa *

Harvemmin kuin kerran päivässä

Kerran päivässä

2 - 5 kertaa päivässä

5 - 10 kertaa päivässä

Yli 10 kertaa päivässä

21. Seuraan Liigaa seuraavissa sosiaalisen median kanavissa *

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

TikTok

LinkedIn

En seuraa Liigaa sosiaalisen median kanavissa

22. Seuraan jotain Liiga-joukkuetta sosiaalisessa mediassa *

Kyllä

Ei

23. Seuraan jotain Liiga-pelaajaa sosiaalisessa mediassa *

Kyllä

Ei

24. Oletko aktiivinen sosiaalisessa mediassa Liiga-pelien aikana *

Kyllä

Ei

25. Kuinka vahvasti koet olevasi Liigan fani? *

1= En ollenkaan, 5= Todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

26. Minulle on hyvin tärkeää olla Liiga-fani *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

27. Kokisin menetyksen tunnetta, jos lopettaisin olemasta Liiga-fani *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

28. Olen kiinnostunut siitä, mitä minulle tärkeät ihmiset ajattelevat Liigasta *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

29. Seuraan Liigaa sosiaalisessa mediassa, koska sen sisältö on miellyttävää *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

30. Seuraan Liigaa sosiaalisessa mediassa, koska sen sisältö on viihdyttävää *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

31. Seuraan Liigaa sosiaalisessa mediassa kuluttaakseni aikaa *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

32. Minusta on mielenkiintoista olla vuorovaikutuksessa Liigan kanssa sen sosiaalisen median kanavissa *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

40. Seuraan Liigaa sosiaalisessa mediassa päästäkseni alennuksiin ja kampanjoihin *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

41. Seuraan Liigaa sosiaalisessa mediassa, jotta voin voittaa kilpailuista tai arvonnoista ilmaisia tuotteita tai muita erikoistarjouksia *

1= Täysin eri mieltä, 5= Täysin samaa mieltä

1 2 3 4 5

42. Olen kiinnostunut videoiden katselusta Liigan somekanavissa *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

43. Olen kiinnostunut kuvien katselusta Liigan somekanavissa *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

44. Olen kiinnostunut julkaisujen lukemisesta ja niiden kommenteista Liigan somekanavissa *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

45. Osallistun keskusteluihin Liigan somekanavissa, esim. kommentoimalla päivityksiä tai muiden käyttäjien kommentteja *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

46. Jaan tai uudelleentwiittaan Liigan somepäivityksiä *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

47. Tykkään Liigan somepäivityksistä *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1 2 3 4 5

48. Tuotan Liiga-aiheista sisältöä (kuvia, videoita, tekstiä) omille sosiaalisen median kanaville *

1= en ollenkaan, 5= todella paljon

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

49. Minulle mieluisin sisältömuoto Liigan sosiaalisen median kanavissa on

(Valitse vaihtoehtoista mieluisin numerolla 1, vähiten mieluisin numerolla 3.)

Kuva	1	2	3
Teksti	1	2	3
Video	1	2	3

50. Millaista sisältöä toivoisit näkeväsi Liigan sosiaalisen median kanavissa*

Huippuhetkiä

Behind-the-scenes materiaalia

Pelaajahaastatteluja

Kilpailuja

Merkipaaluja ja saavutuksia

Historiallisia hetkiä

Tilastoja

Uutisia ja päivityksiä joukkueista

Uutisia ja päivityksiä pelaajista

Uutisia ja päivityksiä Liigasta

Äänestyksiä

Faniin tuottamia päivityksiä

Livestriimausta

Jotain muuta, mitä

51. Millaista sisältöä olet nähnyt Liigan sosiaalisen median kanavissa*

Huippuhetkiä

Behind-the-scenes materiaalia

Pelaajahaastatteluja

Kilpailuja

Merkkipaaluja ja saavutuksia

Historiallisia hetkiä

Tilastoja

Uutisia ja päivityksiä joukkueista

Uutisia ja päivityksiä pelaajista

Uutisia ja päivityksiä Liigasta

Äänestyksiä

Fanien tuottamia päivityksiä

Livestriimausta

Jotain muuta, mitä