

# MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR SPORT SPECTATOR ATTENDANCE

Case: Ice Hockey

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Abstract <p>The purpose of this thesis was to research and compare international ice hockey fans and domestic, Finnish ice hockey fans concerning the factors that motivate them to attend ice hockey events. The thesis was assigned by Sport Business School Finland.</p> <p>The thesis was completed as a quantitative study. The sample was gathered during 2013 and 2014. The first sample was gathered at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships held in Stockholm, Sweden. The respondents were spectators randomly picked at the Globen Fan Zone. The second sample was gathered in February and March 2014 from the fans of a domestic ice hockey club JYP. The respondents in Jyväskylä, Finland were randomly selected spectators at the Synergia Arena. The samples were analyzed and categorized using Daniel Wann's theory of basic motivational factors to attend a sport event, and statistical methods.</p> <p>The results suggest that there are minor differences when comparing international and domestic ice hockey fans. The greatest difference was that international ice hockey fans are motivated by the entertainment at the events. They arrive at the events to enjoy their time whereas the fans of JYP appreciate aesthetic values and players' skills more than entertainment. The research also revealed that the factors motivating fans have changed and that experiences are seen as important motivational factors to attend an event nowadays.</p> <p>These results can be used to improve producing and marketing ice hockey events. In the near future the challenge in producing sport events will be related to media and it is important to continue researching the motivational factors to attend sport events.</p>		
Keywords Ice hockey, sport fan, motivational factors, spectator attendance, IIHF, JYP		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyössä tutkittiin ja vertailtiin kansainvälisten ja kotimaisten jääkiekko-otteluihin osallistuneiden henkilöiden perimmäisiä motiiveja osallistua näihin tapahtumiin. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja toimi Sport Business School Finland.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin kvantitatiivisena tutkimuksena. Aineisto kerättiin vuosien 2013 ja 2014 aikana. Ensimmäinen näyte kerättiin vuoden 2013 Tukholman jääkiekon maailmanmestaruuskilpailuihin saapuneilta katsojilta. Toinen näyte kerättiin helmikuussa ja maaliskuussa 2014 kotimaisen jyväskyläläisen liiga-jääkiekkjoukkue JYPin ottelutapahtumiin Synergia Areenalle saapuneilta katsojilta. Haastattelulomakkeissa katsojilta kysyttiin tärkeimpiä motiiveja osallistua juuri näihin urheilutapahtumiin. Näytteet luokiteltiin käyttäen Daniel Wannin teoriaa perinteisistä fanien motiiveista osallistua urheilutapahtumiin. Näytteet analysoitiin käyttäen tilastollisia menetelmiä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksesta kävi ilmi, että kotimaisten ja kansainvälisten jääkiekkofanien motiiveissa osallistua ottelutapahtumiin on pieniä eroja. Tapahtumien laatu toi omat vivahteensa, sillä runkosarjapelit ja jääkiekon maailmanmestaruuskilpailut ovat erilaisia tapahtumia. Merkittävä ero oli siinä, että jääkiekon maailmanmestaruuskilpailuihin saapuneet katsojat pitivät tärkeänä motiivina viihdettä, kun taas JYPin ottelutapahtumiin saapuneet katsojat pelin tasoa ja laatua. Tutkimus paljasti, että motiivit ovat vuosien saatossa muuttuneet ja että kokemukselliset motiivit ovat tärkeä tekijä, kun nykyajan jääkiekkofani punnitsee osallistumistaan tapahtumaan. Tuloksia hyödyntäen voidaan parantaa jääkiekko-tapahtuman tuottamista ja markkinointia. Tulevaisuudessa haasteena tapahtumien järjestämisessä tulee olemaan median luomat haasteet ja on erittäin tärkeää jatkaa katsojien motiivien tutkimista jatkuvasti.</p>		
Avainsanat (asiasanat)  Motiivit, motivaation lähteet, jääkiekko, jääkiekon mm-kilpailut, JYP, katsojat		
Muut tiedot		

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background of the research**

The background of this thesis dates back in the fall of 2011 the Sport Business School Finland decided to implement a study of the 2012 and 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships held in both Helsinki and Stockholm.

Sport Business School Finland had implemented a same kind of study one year earlier in Helsinki and in 2013 it was Stockholm's turn to be studied. Just like a year before, Helsinki and Stockholm halved the hosting for the 2013 championships also, but this time it was Stockholm's turn to host the final games.

This research is a comparative study in two parts with the first part conducted in the 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships in Stockholm. The second part was implemented in Jyväskylä, Finland with local ice hockey consumers and fans of the ice hockey club called JYP. The study with the fans and spectators of JYP was implemented in February and March 2014 at several JYP home games.

## **1.2 Purpose of the thesis**

The purpose of this thesis is to find out the common motivational factors which bring live audience to sport events and at the same time compare the opinions of the Ice Hockey World Championship spectators to those of the spectators of domestic Finnish ice hockey, more specifically fans of the ice hockey club JYP from Jyväskylä, Finland.

This thesis answers the following research questions:

1. Why does a spectator attend a sport event?
2. What are the common motivational factors behind attending an ice hockey event?

3. Is there a difference between sport consumers' motives when comparing international sport fans at an international event to domestic fans (In this case the Finnish fans) at a national level sport event?

This thesis also explores what types of fans attend ice hockey events and suggests some figures and percentages as the background information of the random ice hockey fans in both international competition and in domestic Finnish ice hockey competition. The fans of the Jyväskylä based ice hockey club JYP were also asked about the attributes that increase and decrease the willingness of spectators to attend ice hockey events.

### **1.3 Research project**

The commissioner of this research is the Sport Business School Finland (SBSF). SBSF was founded in 2011 in cooperation with Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences and HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences. SBSF's main task is to develop and also produce Finnish Sport management education and perform research and development projects with sport organizations in Finland and in other selected places around the world. The Sport Business School Finland is one of the founders of Sport Business School International. (Founders of Sport Business School Finland 2014.)

The actual research on the Ice Hockey World Championships took place in Stockholm, Sweden from 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 to 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. The exact location was the Stockholm Globe Arena and the fan zone that was built around the arena. The research on Ice Hockey World Championships focused on many aspects of International Ice Hockey fans, not just on motivational factors under study in this thesis.

The research of JYP fans and spectators was also a project of the Sport Business School Finland but it was not as extensive as the Ice Hockey World championships research. The JYP research had seven data collectors because the number of fans was also a lot smaller. The research on JYP fans took place at a few home games of JYP in February and March 2014. Both surveys were conducted as quantitative studies.

## 2 PROFESSIONAL ICE HOCKEY

Ice hockey is one of the most popular winter sports in the world and professional ice hockey is very popular especially in Europe and in North America. Professional ice hockey is nowadays a huge business and professional leagues achieve a lot of attention on the media and spectator-numbers are also rather high. National Hockey League (NHL) is the premier ice hockey league in the whole world and also the most famous one also. NHL's attendance numbers in the season of 2013-2014 were 17,292 spectators per game. (Jones 2014.) In Europe the Swiss elite league, National League A, is the largest league by spectator numbers with an average of 6872 spectators per game. German Deutsche Eishockey Liga is the second largest with an average of 6343 spectators per game. The third largest league by spectator numbers is the Swedish Hockey Liga with an average of 5978 spectators per game. (IIHF 2014.)

Ice hockey is also an Olympic sport and world championships are arranged annually by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF 2014). In Finland ice hockey is considered a national sport. It is by far the greatest and most followed sport in the country.

International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) was founded on 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1908 in Paris, France. Today the IIHF serves as an international government for ice hockey all over the world. As of year 2014 the IIHF has 72 countries' ice hockey associations as a member. The IIHF's executive body consists of 14 members including the chairman/president of the IIHF Rene Fasel from Switzerland. (IIHF The world governing body, 2014.)

One of the most important missions and events for the IIHF is to organize Ice Hockey World Championships annually. IIHF has arranged the World Championships ever since the first championships in 1930 which took place in Chamonix, Berlin, and Vienna. The world championships nowadays include best 16 teams from all around the world. (IIHF The world governing body, 2014.)



## **2.1 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships 2013**

The 77<sup>th</sup> IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships were held in 2013 in both Stockholm, Sweden and in Helsinki, Finland. It was the second year in a row that Helsinki and Stockholm hosted the games. In 2012 Helsinki had the privilege to arrange all the rounds from preliminary round to the Finals in Helsinki whereas Stockholm only arranged the preliminary round and quarterfinals. In 2013 it was Stockholm's turn to arrange the championships all the way to the finals. The 2013 championships started on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2013 and reached all the way to 19<sup>th</sup> of May. (IIHF 2014.)

## **2.2 Finnish professional ice hockey & JYP**

Finnish Ice Hockey Association controls the ice hockey scheme in Finland, led by the chairman of the association, Mr. Kalervo Kummola. The highest level of professional ice hockey in Finland is the league formerly known as "SM-liiga" but recently changed its name to just "Liiga". Liiga consists of 14 teams, all Finnish (Liiga 2014). Liiga is regarded as one of the best hockey leagues in Europe and it also has the fifth highest season average of attendance with 4974 spectators per game (IIHF 2014).

JYP (JYP Jyväskylä Oy) is a professional ice hockey club located in Jyväskylä, Finland and at the time is competing at the highest level of ice hockey in Finland, in a Finnish ice hockey league called "Liiga". JYP was founded in 1923. At first it was an organization for multiple sports including basketball, football and Finnish baseball. The club started to compete in ice hockey in the 1940s' and the ice hockey section of the club became independent and strictly a hockey club in 1977. JYP also has a women's team that plays at the highest level of female ice hockey in Finland. The third team of the organization is called JYP Akatemia (JYP Academy) which competes in the second highest level in men's ice hockey in Finland. JYP Academy serves as a minor league affiliate to the JYP Liiga team. (JYP 2014.)

JYP has been playing at the highest level of Finland ever since 1985. The club won its first Finnish championship in 2009 and the second one in 2012. In addition to these two championships the club has won two silver medals and two bronze medals. JYP is also the reigning European champion, as the club won the European Trophy-tournament in December 2013. (JYP 2014.)

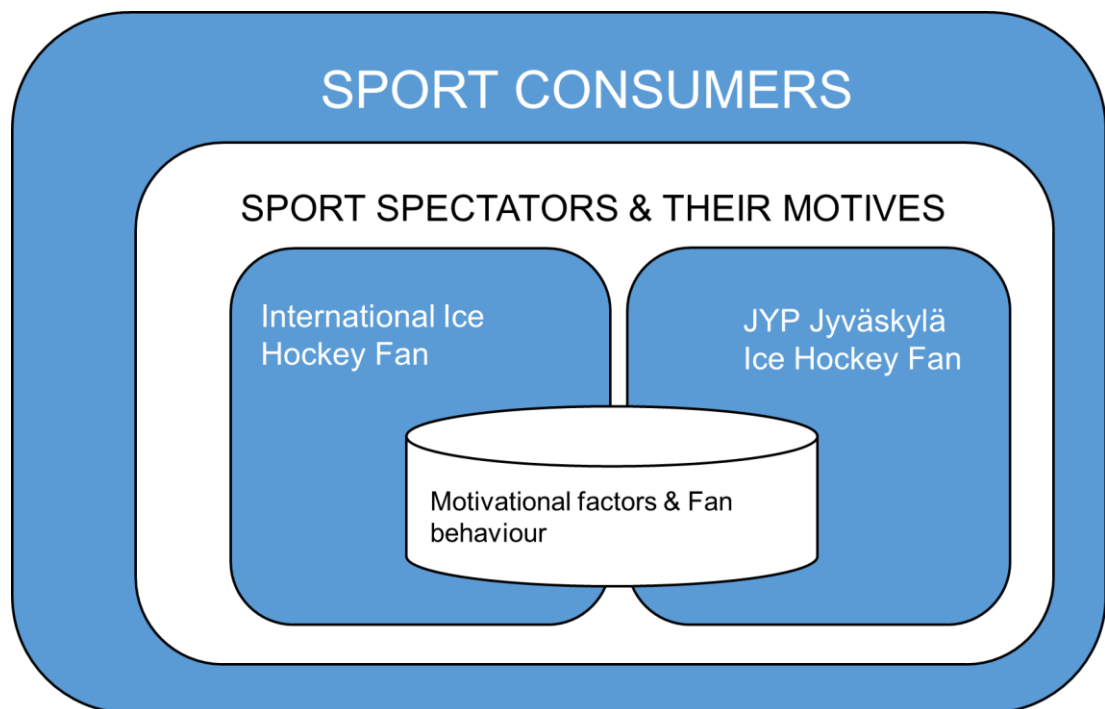
The venue where the team competes is called Synergia Arena. The venue was opened 1982 and the capacity of the arena is 4635. Although the arena is rather small the fans are not that active and the atmosphere is openly under discussion on social media. JYP fans have their own official fan club called Jyp Fan Club ry. (JYP 2014.) IIHF released the average attendance numbers in March 2014 and JYP is the 86<sup>th</sup> of the European hockey clubs with a spectator average of 3802 (IIHF 2014).

Fan behavior and fan culture in Finnish domestic ice hockey circles is rather unique. Finnish ice hockey event is not the most social event, spectators don't talk to each other whereas it is common in European professional sport events. The atmosphere in most of the professional ice hockey events is not bragging for. For example in the JYP home arena, Synergia Arena, the atmosphere has been humoristically described to as quiet as in church. Finnish ice hockey fans are also very demanding and protest easily for example to raises in ticket prices. In March 2014 two Finnish ice hockey clubs Tappara of Tampere and Lukko of Rauma were playing semifinal games in Finnish Liiga Playoffs and Tappara management decided to raise ticket prices which lead to season low spectator attendance with less than 50% of the capacity full. That particular event was a sad sight in Finnish professional ice hockey but the fact is that spectator numbers have fallen year by year in Finland and has been said earlier the domestic Liiga is only the fifth biggest in Europe when comparing spectator attendance with 4974 spectators per game. (IIHF 2014.)

### 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this thesis has four layers. The foundation of this study is the sport consumers. The second outer layer is all about sport spectators and their motives. The third layer deals with International ice hockey fans alongside with domestic Finnish ice hockey fans of the Jyväskylä based ice hockey club JYP. The inner layer, the puck of this ice hockey research, is the final layer and it gives a closer look into the main focus of the whole thesis, the motivational factors of the fan behavior included in the previous layers.

The theoretical framework is presented in figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework of the thesis

#### 3.1 Sport Industry

Sport industry consists of three basic elements: consumers, products and suppliers of the sport products. The consumers are of course the spectators and participants. The sport products include sport events, sporting goods and

sport information. The producers include the ones owning the sport organizations, the sanctioning bodies, the sponsors, media, agents and equipment manufacturers. (Shank 2009, 11.)

One of the key factors for sport industry are of course the sport events which attract sport consumers, spectators and also sport marketers and sport business players who have managed to develop sport industry into a multi-billion euro business and a great part of the entertainment industry as well. Sport events have always gathered great numbers of people as spectators, but the modern economy and extremely developing media has had their effects on sport industry and for example the spectator numbers have fallen. (Shank 2009, 13.)

### **The Sport Event**

An event is defined as a public or social occasion, or contest, which takes place in some location. Events can be planned or unplanned. There can be also unorganized and organized sporting events. Organized sport events, especially professional sport events are always planned; they are so called special events. (Taylor 2011, 538.) A sport event is an event where two teams or a varied number of individual athletes compete with each other. Sport events can be single or multi-sport events. A sport event is the main product of the entire sporting industry and thus makes it possible for other sport products to exist. (Shank 2009, 16.) There is no clear definition of a standard sport event because there are millions of different types and sizes of events. In this thesis the sport events under study are organized, professional, domestic and international team sport events, more specifically professional ice hockey events.

Sport events are important to spectators for many reasons. First, sport events are socially and culturally satisfying experiences. Events bring people together from various backgrounds and cultures. Second, sport events can be used as political tools. Third, sport events are development projects in many cases. Fourth, sport events are economically efficient and usually bring profit to event

organizers. Sport events also can be used as environmental tools and regeneration tools for hosting city or municipality. (Taylor 2011, 543—548.)

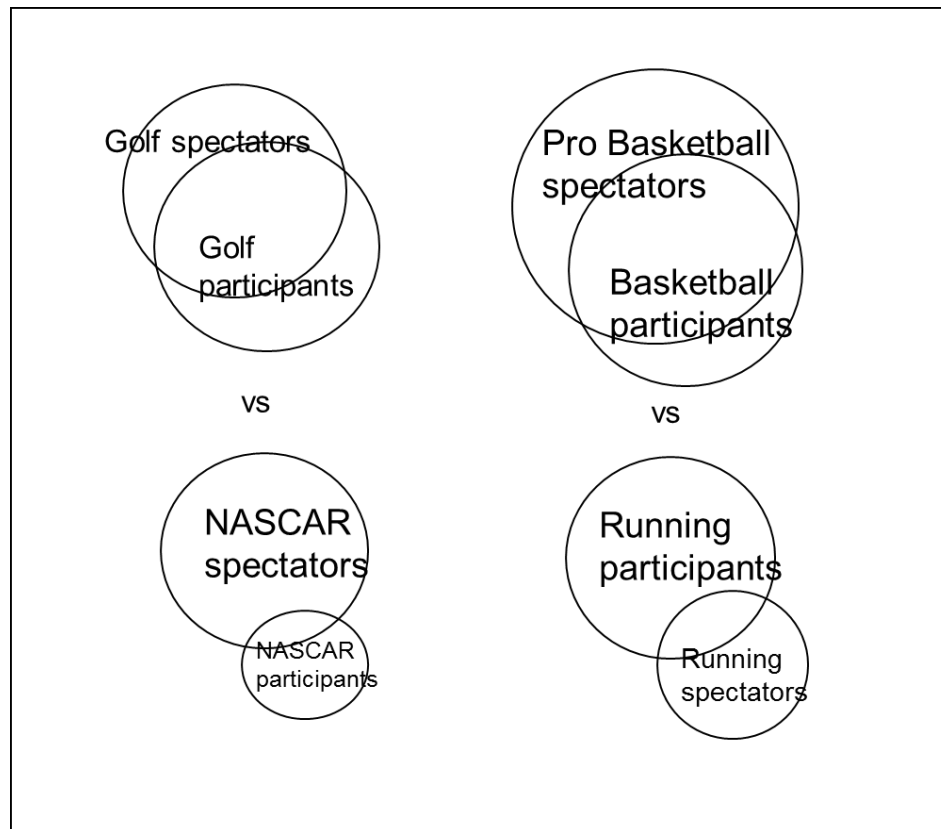
Professional ice hockey events are very much alike throughout the world no matter where the actual event is held. The most important thing is of course the ice rink and the players competing with each other. The stands for spectators, the scoreboard, referees and officials are also vital. The size of a professional hockey arena can vary from 1000 to even 30 000 spectators along with the comfort of the arena. Professional ice hockey is a multi million euro entertainment business these days and thus entertainment, refreshments and the overall well-being of the spectators is almost even more important than the game itself. The spectators are the ones who bring money to the table so that professional athletes can exist. (IIHF 2014.)

### **Sport Consumer**

Consumer is a term used to describe a person or a group of people who have bought, are buying and will buy products and services. Thus they are final users of some product. (Shank 2009, 11.) Through the years sport marketers have tried to understand the consuming behavior of sport consumers because it is a bit different from normal consumer behavior. A sport consumer is not necessarily a die-hard sport fanatic. Sport consumers are also normal consumers who consume sport, watch sport, play sports and use sport merchandises or even have a strong interest in sport. Not all sport consumers act alike, there are different behavioral types and different consumers. Some consumers are extremely loyal to a certain team and attend even their practice sessions, some attend games occasionally and some do not even attend games. (Shank 2009, 11—13.)

Different sports are also very different from the relationship between attending events and participating in sport point of view. Relationship between sport spectator and participant is showcased in figure 2. Figure 2 illustrates the differences between different sports and their participants. Golf and basketball represent sports which have large crossovers between participants and spectators. Running and NASCAR represent sports that no crossover

between participants and spectators and the reason for that is the difficulty to participate in NASCAR and the easiness to participate in running. (Shank 2009, 139). Sport consumers experience sport in a variety of ways and thus sport consumers can be divided to several subclasses. In this research the focus will be on the spectators who attend a team sport event. (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003.)



**Figure 2.** Relationship between attending events and participating in sports

### 3.2 Sport Spectators

Not all sport consumers are sport spectators and fans. Sport spectators are the audience who are present in the arena when sport event takes place. Spectators who are following the event through television or through other channel of media such as radio, internet or newspapers are called indirect sport spectators. (Loy & Kenyon 1969). Sport event spectators on the arena are the specific class who are under the microscope in this research. Every sport and every athlete as well as the whole sport industry need their

spectators and especially team sports need them to be successful financially. Spectators have numerous reasons and motives to attend sport events and to find out what those are and fulfill those expectations is a task for sport managers and marketers (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.)

Direct spectators can be divided into two consumer groups: individual spectators and corporate spectators. Individuals are of course the individual people but corporate spectators are the companies that have their own seats in every game or event and pay great sum of money for the sport organization. (Shank 2009, 12.)

Even though there are some minor speculations, the majority of sport spectators and active sport fans are men. There are hundreds of different estimations about the specific percentages of gender distribution. The distribution between male and female spectators is a lot different in various sports and it is hard to estimate the specific amount but is widely considered that male spectators have the majority presence in most professional sport events. Although female spectators are definitely a majority in many sports, such as women sports, also. (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End & Jacquemotte 2000.)

Sport event participation has seen better days. In today's world the media owns the broadcasting rights for all major sports. Broadcasting has increased enormously during the last few decades and this has caused decrease in spectator numbers in the sport events. People have the mindset that they experience the same event from their own couch without physically going anywhere and without paying the ticket. Broadcasting has also allowed some features including highlights, replays, statistics, commentary which are critical for some sport consumers. Nowadays sport marketers and event producers face a lot of challenges concerning variation in spectator numbers which have decreased through the years. Atmosphere is still one of the big factors that can't be experienced that well via media. (Shank 2009, 13.)

### **3.2.1 Sport Fans**

The origin of the word “fan” comes from the English words fancy or fanatic. Being fanatic of especially boxing, made the other people call boxing fans “The Fancy”. The word was later changed to “fance” and then to fan and fanatic. Fans are also often called as aficionados and supporters. In the world of sports fans are characterized by having a strong interest and strong emotions towards their object of interest and they characterize themselves as a fan of certain athlete, team or sport. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

#### **History of a sport fan**

Sport events have always had spectators through times but the sport fan culture started to relish in England in the early football culture. Modern sport started to take its form from in the 1700’s and 1800’s especially in England where attitudes toward sporting events started to get stronger and create social behavior and culture around sports. This culture spread in Europe and found its way all the way across the ocean to North America. During the Victorian era, professional sport started to separate from amateur sport and in the early 1900’s spectator sport was already a concept and sport fandom can be seen to start taking its first steps. (Brianmac 2014.) The sport fan culture developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and nowadays the culture, behavior and traditions are of course obvious for most of the population in the western civilization. Sport fans tend to attend sport events often and watch as well as follow these events on TV and other media. At the events they wear their favorite team’s colors, cheer, chant support-songs and enjoy the event, the offerings of the arena and the entertainment it provides. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

Fans can also be classified into different types by the level of their dedication or loyalty to their object of fandom. Bob Stewart, Aaron C.T. Smith and



Matthew Nicholson (2003) state that there are three major typologies for sport fans: dualistic, tiered and multidimensional fan typologies.

**Dualistic fan typologies** mean that numerous sport marketing and psychology researchers have found out that there are two different types of fans. Type 1 fans are somewhat old, not old in age but their type of fandom is old. Type 1 fans are also genuine, traditional, expressive, irrational, symbolic and last but not least die-hard type of fans. Type 2 fans are a new type of fans. Adjectives to describe them are corporate, modern, submissive, rational, civic and less-loyal, than type 1 fans. (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003.)

**Tiered fan typologies** measure the intensity of team attachments and thus fans can be sorted by their beliefs and behavior. Tiered fan typologies consist of different tiers and the variables are primary and secondary focus of the fan considering the team. (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003.)

Tiered fan typologies have some limitations that have been addressed by **Multidimensional typologies** which use two or more dimensions simultaneously. Douglas Holt introduced one of the earliest multidimensional typologies in 1995. The model has four dimensions which focus on the experiences of consumers, how the consumers are integrated with the club, how experience classifies consumers' relationship to a club and how consumers express their sport experience with other consumers. (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003.)

### **3.2.2 Sport fan loyalty**

Sport fan loyalty is one of the most important concepts when it comes to sport marketing. Sport marketers are constantly trying to understand fans and casual spectators' attitudes and behavioral factors towards sport teams and other sport products. Sport fan loyalty is not that far from common customer brand loyalty. Fans are customers who are loyal to a certain brand which they have emotional bonds to. Sport organizations are trying to create a strong, positive and unique fan loyalty experience and brand image for their customers. Motivational factors and sport fan loyalty have a lot in common.

The motivational factors of fan loyalty are crucial in sport event attendance because the loyalty is one of the key factors that bring spectators to sport events. Fan loyalty can sometimes be seen as a motivational factor. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

The attitude towards a brand is nowadays under constant retrospect. The attitudinal dimension of fan loyalty is a rather important term when speaking about fan loyalty. Still, the phenomenon has only recently been examined throughout the world. The older and much more researched field of fan loyalty is called the behavioral dimension. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

The attitudinal dimension explains the psychological loyalty or commitment to an object of interest. Attitudes are important factors when talking about motivational factors to attend a certain event because attitudes heavily affect on motivational factors. Fans' commitment to a certain team is presented by numerous models. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler (2008) divide commitment into three levels: resistance, persistence and inner attachment. Inner attachment is of course the highest level of commitment of these three alternatives. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.) Funk and James (2006) represent the psychological continuum model, which has four hierarchical stages of commitment: awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. (Funk & James 2006.)

The Behavioral dimension explains the behavioral loyalty by behavioral intentions as well as past behavior. Past behavior represents fans' past behavior towards the object of interest such as watching games at a stadium, watching games on television, consuming media of the team, wearing and buying merchandise of the team for example. Intentional behavior stands for future behavior of the fans. It also represents the consuming behavior towards for example one's favorite team. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

Brand image can be seen as a predecessor to sport fan loyalty. Brand management is a crucial part of the overall management of professional sport organizations. In sport marketing brand value has a major role. With a superior or different brand an organization can separate themselves from the

crowd of organizations. Brand value can also be linked to financial success in the sport world. Brand value cannot be seen as motivational factor but as an aspect that also affects motivational factors. Brand equity is a key figure when it comes to measuring the value of sport brands as well as loyalty. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.)

### **3.3 Experience economy in sport industry**

The economy has changed through the years. Goods and services are no longer enough for the customers, the customers are seeking for a great experience from every product or service they spend their money to. Entertainment industry has been using experiences as a market force for many years. The same phenomenon is happening also in sport industry where spectators and consumers are looking for great experiences and that has changed the motivational factors to attend an event. Of course the elderly people might still have the same motivational factors that they used to have years ago, but the young adults motivational factors have modified via the experience economy. Most of the motivational factors to attend a sport event have something to do with experiences and that is the reason why experience economy is so important player when talking about motivational factors. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 9.)

The world today is full of decent goods and services but the thing that makes difference in today's economy is the experience while consuming the good or the service. The example shown by individual entrepreneurs and companies (such as Starbucks and Apple) prove the point. The enormous success of the experience innovators since the 1990's and the failure of rival companies, who got stuck in service economy, draws a quite clear message. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 12.)

The experience economy offers many new opportunities for sport organizations as well as other players. First, the production of goods should shift from mass production to mass-customized products. Second, the service mindset should change and companies should encourage their employees to

act the company's way which creates a different experience. Managers need to give employees a role to play which provides more characteristic customer service experience for example. Third, time is the currency of experience and that is why more offerings should be offered to consumers in exchange for their time. Sport event producers and marketers should take this under consideration. It is vital that in the near future, so that the experience economy could fully flourish, the events would be accessible only by small admission payment. Fourth, the companies should charge their consumers not for the time but for the change in experience resulting from the time they have spent their money in. All these opportunities will have effect on motivational factors to attend sport events now and in the future. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 13—18.)

The experiences have always been around, but the business world has ignored and thus failed to use them as a tool. The entertainment industry has always had the experiences right in their heart, from plays and concerts to TV and media, the entertainment industry has done a decent job using experiences as a marketing tool. The thanks for the experience economy trace all the way back to one man and to his company, called Walt Disney. Walt Disney has been the pioneer in this field for many years. Disneyland is a great example of experiences brought to life. Entertainment is only one aspect of experience economy. Companies stage an experience for consumers every time “they *engage* customers and connect with them in personal memorable way”. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 5.)

This new method is called “**Engagement**”, which is rather new term, used often in entertainment industry, where companies engage their consumers with experiences. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 5.) Engagement is a term that should be common term soon is sport industry as well. The main product of sport industry, sport event, is all about the experience. Sport marketers are opening their eyes to this economy but the change is slow, at least in the beginning. In North America the change has been faster but the European sport industry is not quite there yet. One example is the pricing of the sport events: some sport events cost hundreds of euros these days and that is for the cheap seats. In search of a great experience sport consumers will have to pay hundreds of

euros for their time and for many people that is too much money compared to time and experience they are receiving. Pricing in sport events should be designed specifically to encounter the experience and this would *engage* the spectators using their personal memories to invest their money over and over again to sport events. Engagement would have a positive effect on motivational factors also and would make it easier to attend sport events. Price is not the only thing that could be improved in sport events. Sport events have to offer such entertaining experience that the spectators rather be present in the event itself than watch it from television or from other media. The atmosphere among other things that make the sport event entertaining should be taken under study and use time and money to improve them. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 93.)

Many sport franchises have even built new stadiums to improve fan experience. Successful sport franchises have sold out stadiums as well as electronic broadcasts and online subscriptions for their fans. There is also a third-place opportunity for sports developing in the world. Some sport organizations are already charging their fans for an opportunity to gather as a group and watch their favorite teams away games in a place specifically designed for that occasion. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 62—63.)

### **3.4 Motivational factors**

Spectators have very different reasons to attend a certain sport event. Competitive sports have always draw attention and spectators around them and there's no wonder why. Athletes have always been the ones taking human body to its limit. Competition among athletes has always been entertaining for sport consumers. A lot of researches have studied sport consumers motives to attend sport events through the years using for example Abraham Maslow's work hierarchy of needs and Seppo Iso-ahola's escape-seeking model. Psychologists have created numerous different theories to explain spectators' and fans' attending motivation (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.) Motivational factors to attend an event have also

changed in recent years prior to the change in economy from the service economy to the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 3).

### 3.4.1 Factors motivating the fans

Defining the motives of spectators is of course a difficult task. Individuals have their own set of mind, own personalities and own values of course. Fans and casual spectators have numerous different motivational reasons to attend sport events. Galen T. Trail stated in 2005 that there are nine basic motives why people consume sport. Daniel Wann instead noted that there are eight basic motives for sport spectating. Wann and Trail both noted that most of these motives are based on social and psychological needs of consumers. Wann's eight basic motives for sport spectating are listed below and these eight basic motives are used in this thesis to analyze and categorize the motivational factors of the fans of JYP and the fans in IIHF ice hockey world championships. (Shank 2009, 142.)

#### 1. Self-esteem enhancement

**Success, achievements** and winning are one of the most important sides of sport and thus a big factor that athletes become athletes and spectators come and see them to compete. It is odd that spectators get pleasure from someone else's success, but for quite some time it has been so.

Apparently spectators associate themselves with something positive and thus they will be more positive. (Sloan 1989, 193.) Most of the spectators feel some kind of respect towards the competing athletes and this *esteem* in many cases creates enough attention to bring spectators to sport event. Esteem is parallel to motives such as self-esteem, group connection achievement and community support (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.) Many spectators are also participants in same sport themselves so they fulfill their need for achievements through supporting their favorite team for example. BIRGing is a term used to describe a situation where a

fan enhances or maintains self-esteem by associating with winning teams and Basks In Reflected Glory (Shank 2009, 143).

## 2. Diversion from everyday life

**Healthful** and salubrious effects theories state that people want to get involved in sport events because it brings pleasure and wellbeing. Most common theories in this category are Recreation theory and Diversion theory. Recreation theory states that people *restore their fatigue and energy* by the positive experience they get from sport events. Diversion theory states that people want to *escape from normal routines* and hassles of life and forget their problems for a moment. (Sloan 1989, 184.) These spectators also come to sport events *to socialize* with their friends and family and of course with other spectators. This fact means that sport spectators are eager to attend sporting events to enhance their personal human relationships by external interactions with family, friends, crowds and other social networks. According to one American stereotype especially young men tend to go to sport events to *relax* with their friends and enjoy a few beers and have fun. (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.)

Sport events can be seen as escaping experience as well. In many entertainment events as well as professional sport events the participants not only pursue for escape from normal routines but also voyage to specific place worth of their time. (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 96.)

### 3. Entertainment value

**Entertainment** - Sport events are one of the most entertaining events of the whole entertainment business. Nowadays sport is a huge multi-billion dollar business especially in America but also in Europe, Russia and in Asia. Entertainment is these days one of the biggest motivation factors in people's everyday life not just in sport world. People seek entertainment constantly and they are linked to entertainment the entire time they are awake through social media etc. One of the aspects that make sport entertaining is its spontaneous and uncontrollable characteristic. Emotions in sporting event are unpredictable and that makes sport entertaining and pleasurable. (Shank 2009, 4.) *Excitement* is one big factor that controls the motives of spectators. Consumers seek experiences from sport events which provide unique experience of mental action and exploration in sport atmosphere. Excitement alone can produce a lot of smaller motives for spectators to attend an event. Such factors are for example celebrity attraction, eustress, drama and wholesome environment. (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.).

Sport events have one big advantage against broadcasted sport: the **atmosphere**. Television, radio, internet streams and other forms of media are good ways to watch sport and they are also an entertaining way to witness sport events, but these forms have nothing to offer against the actual atmosphere that occurs in the real event. Atmosphere is a factor that can be included to nearly all of these theories but the entertaining value is quite critical for spectators. (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.)

**The Outcome** of an entire event means a lot to spectators. Winning is, of course a big factor but the spectators are also seeking for all-in-all a good event for their money's worth. Thus, a spectator somehow takes a "risk" when attending an event and the process of taking the risk arouses them. (Sloan 1989, 185—186.)

**Catharsis** and aggression theories are one of the earliest theories to explain doing sports and also attending sport events. In too many sad



cases, *violence* has been regarded as a motivational factor for sport spectator attendance. The fact that sport fanatics are aggressive can be explained by catharsis and aggression theories. Catharsis which means the reduction of aggression levels occurs during participation in sports or watching it from the stands, especially when the athletes behave aggressively. According to the frustration-aggression theory the fans get aggressive due the losing outcome of the event and the aggression motivates them to re-attend a similar event. In some sport cultures, for example in the British football culture, aggressive behavior and *hooliganism* are common reasons for sporting events for some group of spectators. (Sloan 1989, 187.)

#### 4. Eustress

**Stress and stimulation seeking** is also a key motivational factor for many spectators. Psychologist S.Z. Klausner notes that people who do not feel stressed in their normal lives, seek situations that really makes them stress and worry about something which sport events most definitely are. Sport creates stress in its spectators and the more extreme the sport is the more stress it brings. This pleasure seeking stress is called “**eustress**” (pleasant stress). Eustress is a common term in motivation psychology is seen as a positive and healthy force for people. (Sloan 1989, 185.)

#### 5. Economic factors

Sport fans and spectators can also be present in the event to make money or they are motivated for example by free or cheap tickets. These spectators who smell potential to make money for example by **gambling** get motivational boost for investing money. Sport spectators who have lost the spark from normal sport events usually gamble to make the event more

interesting. Sport clubs are also an investment for many people. Especially in Germany the model where fans are stakeholders and owners of the sport club is coming even more popular. (Shank 2009, 147.)

Economic factors of the whole world are also very crucial. Sport marketing world aspects are controllable factors, such as ticket prices and perceived value of the event. Uncontrollable factors are economic situation of the world, average income of the population and overall situation of the country. (Shank 2009, 147.)

#### 6. Aesthetic value – performance

**Performance** is one key factor in spectators' minds. The spectators come to witness the purest form of athleticism possibly in the whole world. Events provide excellence, dominance, creativity and beauty in motion for the spectators' eyes. Each athlete is unique like every situation in sport event also. That is one of the main reasons for people to witness it and be around when something spectacular happens. (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.)

#### 7. Need for Affiliation

**Affiliation** and need for belonging is one key factor also. Largely, a spectator's involvement can be explained by the fact that the spectator shows a strong empathy toward to a competing athlete. Spectator sport also creates an impact so effective that the spectator experiences a strong **identification** with situations happening in the arena. Spectators may also get aroused of **being a part of the crowd**. For many people it is a significant experience to yell and cheer for their team and act as a part of the loud crowd. (Sloan 1989, 186.)

## 8. Family ties

One key customer segment when it comes to socialization in sport events is of course the **interest group and family ties** of the athletes who are competing; their families, friends and acquaintances who attend the events supporting only one particular athlete. (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard 2009.)

### 3.4.2 Other factors

1. All the games are not as attractive as others. **Game attractiveness** is a factor that is affected by a certain day, week, opponent, records and league standings and also the fact if a certain game is a special event such as opening of the season. (Shank 2009, 147.)
2. **Competitive** factors can be divided to direct (other sport events) and indirect (other entertainment) competition. **Demographic** factors are also an influence. Population, age, gender, education, occupation and ethnic background are important variables for sport event attendance. (Shank 2009, 147.)
3. **Venue** is extremely important factor. Location, access, newness, facility aesthetics and overall comfort of the arena are seen as positively relating factors to attendance numbers. (Shank 2009, 148.)
4. Sport is important for the community. Sport can be seen creating **value to the community**, especially professional sports are seen as boosts for communities. (Shank 2009, 149.)

## **Summary of the theories**

The Sport industry is a vast concept and most important parts of the entire sport industry considering this thesis are the sport events and the sport consumers attending these events. Sport spectators are not alike and there are many typologies of fans who all behave differently. Sport spectators, fans of the certain sport and the loyalty towards the object of their interest is also an important part when approaching the motivational factors to attend sport events.

Experience economy is an important term to mention when speaking about sport event attendance because the experience economy is affecting on sport more and more. Motivational factors and especially motivational factors of the sport spectators are by far the most important part of the entire theoretical framework. Fan motivational factors have been categorized differently throughout the years but this particular thesis will follow Daniel Wann's theory about fan motivational factors. The theory includes eight basic fan motives and additional motives which are not categorized strictly as fan motives but will always have an effect on attending sport events.

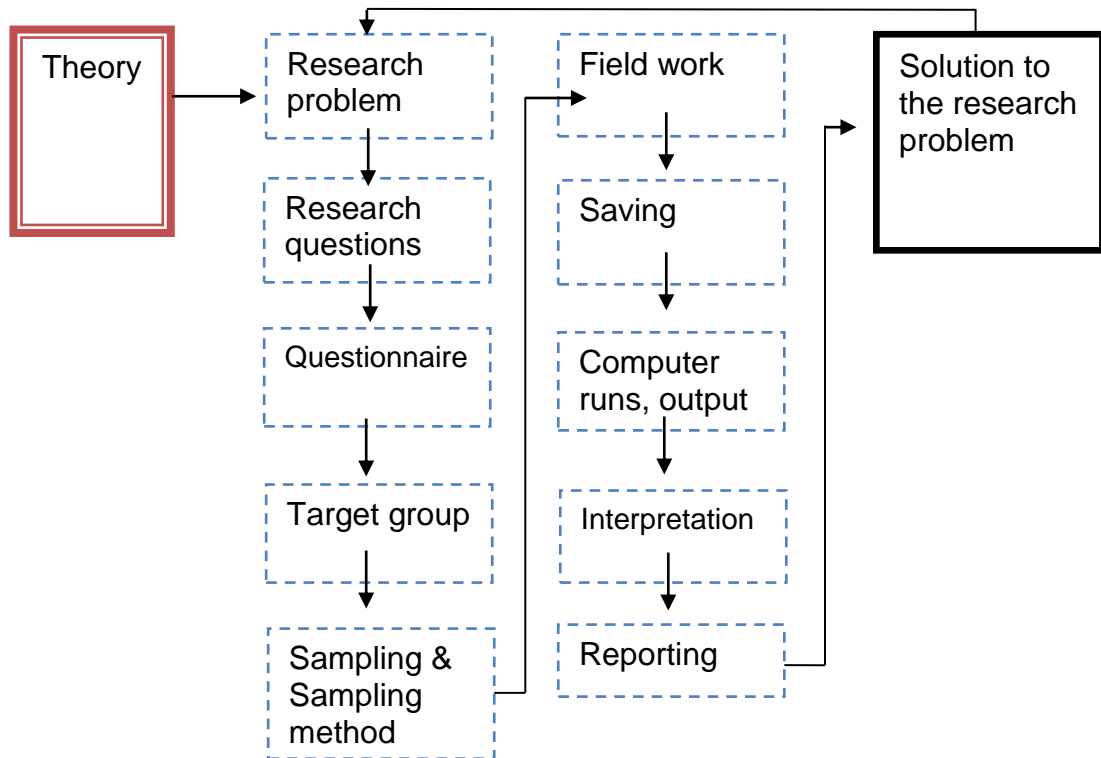
## **4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the research done in this thesis. Research can be either qualitative or quantitative, but the research done in this thesis is quantitative. However, some open ended answers are analyzed rather thoroughly which may resemble qualitative research but that is not the case. (Kananen 2011, 35.)

### **4.1 Quantitative research**

Like every research the quantitative research starts with a research problem. A research problem is used to create research questions which are supposed to help to solve the original research problem. Data collection in quantitative research is usually done using questionnaires with various questions concerning the phenomenon under study. When constructing a questionnaire it is important to have knowledge of the theories concerning the field researched. Using existing theories and models it is easy to find out what kind of results the collected material offers. The material collected provides answers to the research questions and that is why the questionnaire and the data collection need to be carried out in the right way. The questionnaire needs to be tested before the data collection using for example a sample group as a test group. There is no room for mistakes in quantitative research because if the data is not valid, the whole process needs to be started from the beginning. The most important things in quantitative research are: the respondent is willing to answer the questions, the respondent understands the questions and that the respondent has the knowledge to answer to the questions. (Kananen 2011, 72.)

Figure 3 demonstrates the entire process of quantitative research and how it usually proceeds. In this thesis the process was also quite similar with very little difference. (Kananen 2011, 72.)



**Figure 3.** Quantitative research process

Variables are the foundation of the quantitative research. They are the objects of measurement and the names of subjects which can have one or various characteristics. Quantitative variables are for example age, weight and height whereas gender and hair color are qualitative variables. Statistical research is always founded on measurements. Variables can be measured and measurements always create different values. Scales are used to measure variables and there are nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scales in use in quantitative research. (Kananen 2011, 76.)

The questionnaire consists of background data and questions. The background data is usually placed at the end of the questionnaire. The order of the questions is from the general to the particular nature, because it is a lot easier for respondents to answer to general questions first. The layout of the questionnaire should be clear, grouped functionally and simple enough so the reading and answering would be easier. (Kananen 2011, 90—93.)

A sample collected from the target group should be similar to the population. A minimum requirement for size of a sample gathered in a geographical area should be 100. There are different types of sampling methods. Sampling methods can be divided into non-probability sampling methods and probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling methods can be then divided into judgment, quota and convenience sampling whereas probability sampling methods can be divided to simple random, systematic random, stratified and cluster sampling. (Kananen 2011, 94—95.)

The results in quantitative research are presented by using tables and statistics. Frequency distributions and cross tabulations are the most common tables used in the quantitative research. Especially cross tabulation is popular due to its simple nature. In cross tabulation two overlapping variables are examined. (Kananen 2011, 101—103.)

## **4.2 Implementation of the study**

This thesis was carried out as a quantitative study gathering data from two segment groups, the international ice hockey fans at the 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships held in Stockholm, Sweden and from the fans and spectators of a Finnish professional ice hockey club JYP. The phenomenon under study is the willingness to attend ice hockey events and the motivational factors behind attending. The data was collected by interviewing individual spectators at both the events. Sampling method used was simple random sampling from the crowd. Random sampling means that the respondents were selected randomly. In Stockholm, Sweden the average was every 10th oncoming ice hockey fan were interviewed. In Jyväskylä, Finland the attendance was smaller than in Stockholm and thus every fifth randomly oncoming ice hockey fan was interviewed.

The IIHF questionnaire was built around the variables and it consisted of four sections; basic information, values and brand questions with the final part about the motivational reasons for attending an event. The variables in this

research are the motivational factors to attend ice hockey events at both the international level at the domestic professional level. The background variables are age, gender, nationality (only in international surveys) and place of domicile (only in Finnish surveys). Nationality/municipality and gender were measured on a nominal scale. In the survey age was asked about in the form of an open question. Thus, it was possible to regroup the answers by age. (Kananen 2008, 21—23). The questions in the interviews were open-ended questions giving a possibility to answer more freely and without restrictions (Kananen 2011, 55). The sections dealing with the motivational factors were not long which is why the sample was rather large for qualitative research so the sample is processed by quantitative methods.

The questionnaire of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships was a little bit longer and different than the one used in the JYP research. The reason for this is that the research done in Stockholm originally focused on ice hockey values and the section about motivational factors was only a small part of the entire research. In the JYP research the questionnaire, which was modified from the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships questionnaire, was constructed from the motivational factors point of view and the section about motivational factors was exactly the same as the questionnaire used at the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships. The questionnaire used for the fans of JYP was conducted in Finnish because almost 100% of the fans are Finnish and by using their native tongue it was possible to get better and diverse answers.

As mentioned the motivational factors were asked in the IIHF questionnaire using an open ended question:

*What are 3 most motivating reasons for you to come to the Ice Hockey World Championships fan zone today?*

In the questionnaire used to study fans of the ice hockey club JYP had the same question and also few extra questions about attending motivation:



1. *Mention three most motivating reasons, why you decided to come and watch JYP game today?*
2. *Mention three most motivating reasons, why you come to JYP games in general?*
3. *Which attributes increase your willingness to attend JYP's home games?*
4. *Which attributes decrease your willingness to attend JYP's home games?*

The reason for extra questions is that the ice hockey club JYP wanted to know a little bit more about their fans than just three most motivating reasons to attend. Attributes that increase the willingness to attend JYP's home games was analyzed in the results but the decreasing attributes were not relative and thus left unanalyzed in this thesis.

The background variables, which usually consist of the personal information of the respondent, are often placed at the end of a questionnaire, but in this particular research the questions about personal information were located in the beginning due to the nature of the questions (Kananen 2008, 33).

The data was collected using Apple iPad's and a survey tool called webropol which provides an easy way to transfer data straight to an internet website where the data can be easily analyzed (Webropol 2014).

### **4.3 Reliability and validity of the research**

Reliability and validity are extremely important issues in scientific research. After successful reliability and validity evaluation the true quality of the research can be stated. In order to implement a high-class research, reliability and validity issues need to be concerned in the planning of the whole research. (Kananen 2011, 125.)

Reliability in this research means the constancy and stability of results, in other words, if the researches would be done all over again the results conducted would be the same as the previous time (Kananen 2011, 125). Stability means of course the quality of being stable and in these researches it refers to stability in time (Kananen 2008, 129). The best to make sure that the research is reliable is to repeat the measurement. Constancy is hard to measure, because the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships are not held in Stockholm, Sweden that often whereas the JYP research part could be conducted more often and consistently. (Kananen 2011, 126.) Similar researches as the one done in IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships have been conducted few times already to different segments and the results have been somewhat similar. The similarity can be seen from the thesis done under the tutelage of the Sport Business School Finland. Use of Webropol surveys also increases the reliability because the computer does not make errors that humans usually indulge in (Webropol 2014).

Reliability does not necessary guarantee validity. Validity of this research points out the fact that the research is corresponding for the research questions presented in the introduction. Also validity measures the fact the data collected is true and valid. Validity has two sub categories which are internal and external validity. Validity demonstrates that the data collected from the respondents' provides an answer to research problem. (Kananen 2010, 129—130.) External validity is by far the most important sub-category. External validity, also known as generalizability, means that the results gathered are transferable to other similar picture. Content validity means that the measuring that is used measures what is supposed to measure. (Kananen 2011, 127.)

It was hard to measure during the research in both Stockholm and in Jyväskylä, but after each data collection the project leaders and people responsible for the study informed the collectors which kind of persons to seek in order to get reliable and valid information.

## 5 RESULTS

The results of this study are presented starting from the basic information of the respondent followed by actual responses to questions. The results combine the answers of the two separate groups studied presenting the responses from the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships fans and the reflective data from JYP fans.

### 5.1 Background variables

**Table 1.** Age

<b>Globen Fan Zone</b>			<b>Synergia Arena</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
18-24	119	27 %	18-24	24	20 %
25-34	149	34 %	25-34	40	34 %
35-44	117	26 %	35-44	20	17 %
45-54	45	10 %	45-54	15	13 %
55-64	11	2 %	55-64	10	8 %
65-	3	1 %	65-	9	8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The sample gathered at Globen suggests that more than one third (149 respondents or 34 %) of the sample were young adults aged 25 to 34 years old. The second largest age group consisted of 18- to 24-year-olds who were 27 % of all respondents. 35 to 44 year-old respondents were the third highest group with 26% of the respondents. The rest of the respondents represented 13% of the respondents.

The Synergia Arena had somewhat similar numbers and the largest age group was also young adults aged between 25 to 34 years with a total of 40 respondents (34 %). The second largest group of the sample gathered at the Synergia Arena was the age group of those between 18 to 24 years with 20 %. The third largest group was also the same as at Globen, age group from

35 to 44 with 17 %. The rest of the age groups amounted to 29 % of the total number of respondents.

**Table 2. Gender**

<b>Globen Fan Zone</b>			<b>Synergia Arena</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	318	76 %	Male	86	72 %
Female	101	24 %	Female	33	28 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Globen Fan Zone sample states that from a grand total of 419 answered in gender section 101 (24 %) were female spectators and 318 (76 %) male spectators.

Synergia Arena sample is quite similar. Total answers were 119 and 86 of this sample (72 %) were male respondents. 33 respondents (28 %) of the sample were female respondents.

**Table 3. Nationality/Home location**

<b>Globen Fan Zone</b>			<b>Synergia Arena</b>		
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Home location</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Belarus	7	2 %	Central of the city	21	18 %
British	5	1 %	Pappilanrinne	10	8 %
Canada	12	3 %	Huhtasuo	7	6 %
Czech Republic	18	4 %	Keljonkangas	7	6 %
Denmark	40	9 %	Jyskä	6	5 %
Finland	3	1 %	Keltinmäki	6	5 %
France	8	2 %	Mannila-taulumäki	5	4 %
Germany	15	3 %	Mäki-Matti	5	4 %
Hungary	4	1 %	Kortepohja	5	4 %
Italy	4	1 %	Petäjävesi	5	4 %
Norway	40	9 %		77	65 %
Russia	6	1 %	Other small locations	42	35 %
Slovenia	11	3 %			
Sweden	180	41 %			
Switzerland	85	19 %			
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The IIHF Ice Hockey World Champions research tallied a total of 438 answers about nationality. The games were held in Stockholm, Sweden and it is big reason why 180 of the respondents (41 %) were Swedish. Table 3 demonstrates which nationalities were present in the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships 2013. Switzerland had a total of 85 respondents (19 %). The neighboring countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark both had 40 respondents and each had a total of 9 % of the answers. Rest of the nationalities did not have significant percentages. The nationalities that had only 1 respondent were not count in the analysis.

The research to the fans of JYP did not have a question about nationality because every respondent was Finnish. Instead, the fans of JYP were asked the postal code of the area they live in and thus it is possible to see where the fans come from. 18 % of the respondents answered that they live in the central of the city of Jyväskylä. The second largest group was Pappilanrinne, which is located also rather close to the central of the city. Pappilanrinne had a total of 8 % of the answers. After these two groups the rest were pretty equal. Most of the locations were nearby central of the city but there was also some surprises which are results of the visiting teams.

## **5.2 Motivational factors**

The question about motivational factors in the IIHF Ice Hockey World championships asked about three most motivating reasons for the respondents to visit Globen Fan Zone that day. The respondents' answers were given in order of importance first factor of course being the most important.

The most important questions in Synergia Arena to the fans of JYP was also about three most motivating reasons to attend JYP home game that day. The other questions about motivational factors in the home games of JYP were:

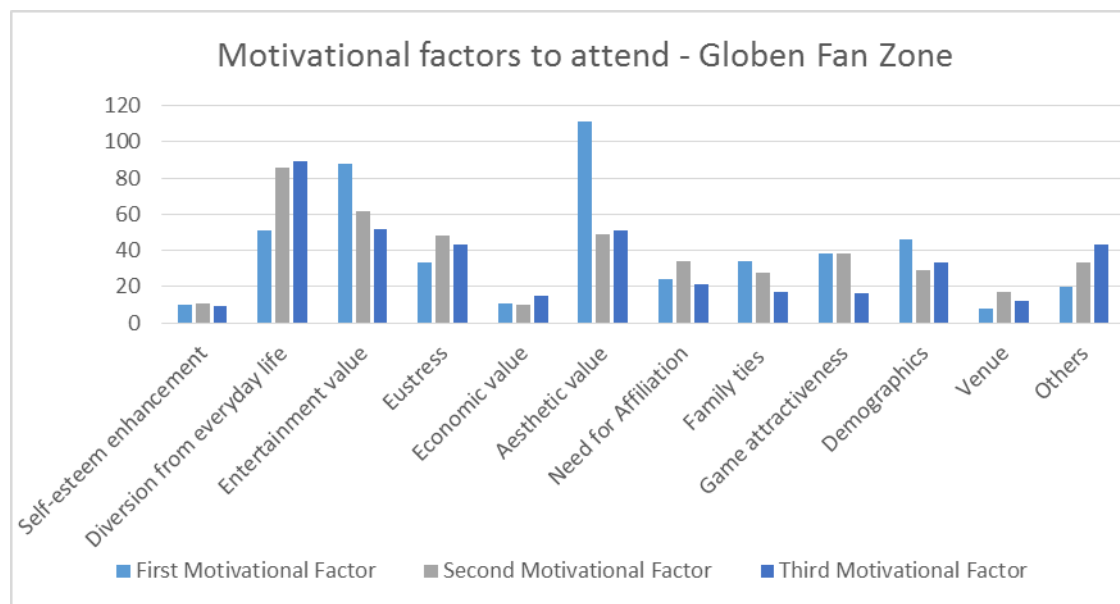
*“Mention three most motivating reasons, why you come to JYP games in general?” and “Which attributes increase your willingness to attend JYP’s home games?”.*

All the answers gathered from international ice hockey fans as well as from the domestic ice hockey fans, were categorized using the same fan motivational factors as Matthew D. Shank’s model did. Also other motives to attend sport events that Matthew D. Shank listed are used to analyze the sample but not all of his suggested motives were found nor used analyzing this particular sample. Table 4 represents the typical answers in each of the motivational factor categories. (Shank 2009, 142.)

**Table 4.** Examples of typical answers in each category

<b>Motivational factor</b>	<b>Typical answers include:</b>
Self-esteem enhancement	"Support", "Supporting X", "Success", "Winning"
Diversion from everyday life	"Socialize", "Meet friends", "Something new", "To take time of from school and work"
Entertainment value	"Hockey is fun", "Entertaining", "Fights", "Great experience", "Awesome event",
Eustress	"Exciting", "Exciting atmosphere", "I love the pulse both inside and outside of the arena"
Economic factors	"Cheap tickets", "Free tickets", "Betting on the game",
Aesthetic value – performance	"Ice hockey", "great players", "best players", "high level of hockey"
Need for Affiliation	"Fan of hockey", "Being with fans", "Meeting and seeing other fans", "Fan mercandice"
Family ties	"Here with my family", "Son is playing", "Activity for kids"
Game attractiveness	"Important game", "End of regular season", "World championships",
Demographics	"My nation", "My hometown team",
Venue	"To see globen/Synergia Arena", "Easy access", "Nice venue"
Others	Answers that were not relative. "To solve the Middle East conflict"

## Motivational factors in Globen Fan Zone



**Figure 4.** Most motivating factors to attend - IIHF

### Primary factors

The most important motivational factors for the international ice hockey fans were aesthetic values (111 answers) which means that the fans researched were really fascinated about the game of ice hockey itself. Respondents answered continuously that they have arrived to witness one of the best players in the world and that they have passion for hockey. Competitive games and separate players were also mentioned. The second most motivating factors were the entertainment values that ice hockey offers (88 answers). Ice hockey was seen as a great form of entertainment and visiting the world championships as a great new experience. Most common answers included words such as “fun” and “experience”. Third most motivating factor to attend was to get a diversion from everyday life (51 answers). Respondents noted that they wanted to come and relax from normal routines, spend time with their friends, socialize and enjoy few drinks. Social atmosphere, enjoying the time and escape from routines were the most common answers as well as the fact that respondents wanted enjoy few beers.

Fourth most motivating reasons to attend were the demographic factors (46 answers). Demographic factors state that the respondents are proud of their nation and they have arrived to cheer for their own country. The fifth factor was the game attractiveness. World Championships are of course held only annually so the event is somewhat special and it is not that often held in same country. That was also noted by the respondents. The sixth and the seventh factors were family ties and eustress. Respondents stated that they have arrived to spend time with their families and watch the game. Eustress factors were explained that they want to see something exciting and enjoy the atmosphere. The eighth factor, need for affiliation, also correlates with the atmosphere because the respondents answered that they have arrived to spend time with other fans, enjoy the atmosphere, buy fan merchandise and to be part of the crowd.

### **Secondary factors**

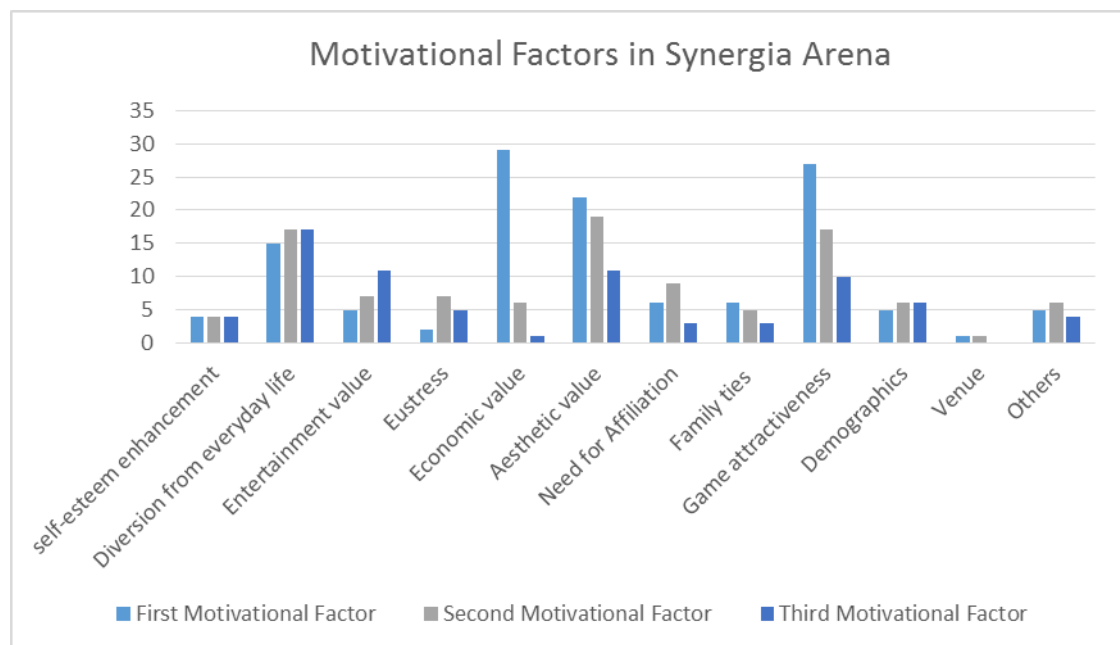
After the first motivational factors mentioned, the fans answered for the second most motivational factors to attend Globen Fan Zone that day. The second motivational factors were a lot different than the first ones and there was not that much dispersion as in the first motivational factors. Diversion from everyday life was clearly the biggest factor with 86 answers. The respondents stated that the second most motivating reason for attendance were example "spending holiday", "doing something new", "socializing" and "relax from work with few beers". The second most common reasons were about entertainment value of the event with 62 answers. For example fights were seen as entertaining motivational reasons. Third most common factors were aesthetic values (49 answers) which were the biggest reason in the previous category of the first motivational factors. Eustress was the fourth most common second motivational reason to attend with 48 answers. Game attractiveness had 38, need for affiliation 34, demographics 29, family ties 28, venue 17, self-esteem enhancement 11, economic value 10 answers. Others section grew a little bit from 20 to 33 answers that were not good enough to categorize.



### Tertiary factors

Third motivational factors to attend Globen Fan Zone at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Champions were somewhat similar than the second motivational factors. Diversion from everyday life was the most common group with 89 overall answers. Holiday, escape from routines, meeting friends, relaxing and to get positive energy were common answers. Entertainment value was yet again the second largest group with 52 answers. Aesthetic value was the third largest group also in third motivational factors with a total of 51 answers. The rest were a bit smaller groups; Eustress had 43, demographics 33, need for affiliation 21, family ties 17, game attractiveness 16, economic value 15, the venue 12 and self-esteem enhancement 9 answers. Others section grew up to 43 answers that were not good enough to categorize.

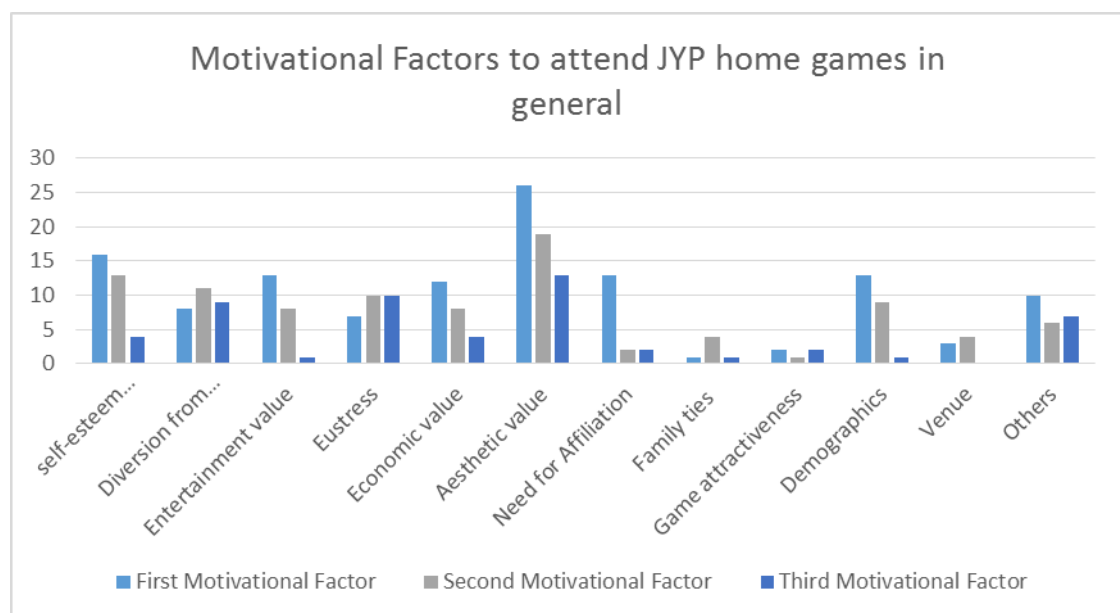
### Motivational factors in Synergia Arena



**Figure 5.** Motivational factors to attend JYP home game today

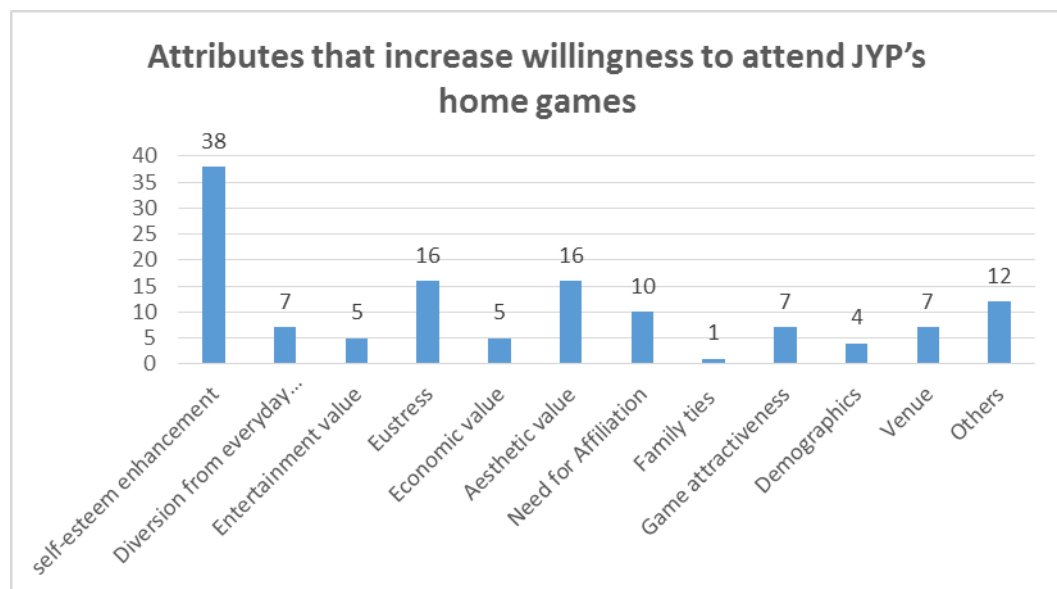
Figure 5 demonstrates the motivational factors to attend JYP home game the day that the data was collected. The sample gathered from the fans of JYP suggests that the **first most motivating reason** for their attendance were economic factors. 29 of the answers were connected to the fact that the respondents' most motivating reason to arrive was either cheap or free tickets or a season ticket. **Second most motivating reason** of the first group was game attractiveness with 27 answers. "Important game" and "the ending of the regular season" were typical answers. With 22 answers considering aesthetic value of the event, this was the **third highest motivational factor**. Content of the answers was about performance, individual players and of course the tough opponent. Rest of the groups did not have significant numbers except the diversion from everyday life which had 15 answers.

Second most motivating factors presented a whole different situation. Economic value was no longer important but aesthetic value, game attractiveness and diversion from everyday life kept their place. Third most motivating factors were also very equal and the same three categories held their position and entertainment value was also seen as a rather important motivational factor.



**Figure 6.** Motivational factors to attend JYP home games in general

In general the fans of JYP felt that the aesthetic value of the ice hockey events is the most important factor by far. In every single motivational factor the respondents' answers included answers suggesting that ice hockey is their favorite sport as well as the most interesting sport in whole Finland. Many of the respondents were ice hockey participants and former ice hockey players themselves. Second most favored answers were about self-esteem enhancement, especially in first and second reasons to attend these events in general. Supporting their local team and success were one of the most common answers in this category. Diversion from everyday life and Eustress were the third and fourth most motivating reasons to attend JYP home games in general. Escape from daily routines few times a week was a common diversion reason for respondents. Eustress factors in general were about "unique and exciting atmosphere".

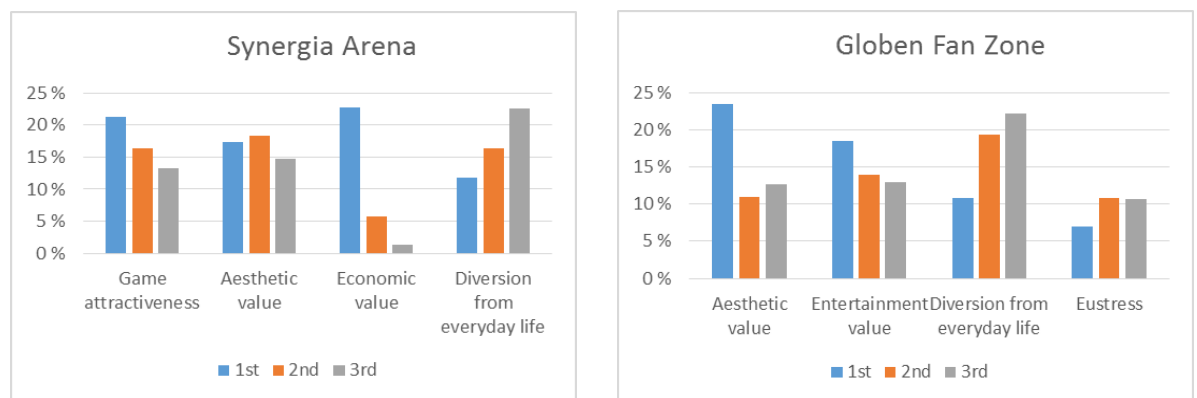


**Figure 7.** Attributes that increase willingness to attend JYP's home games

Attributes that increase willingness to attend JYP home games were also categorized using Matthew D. Shank's model although these attributes are not necessarily motivational factors. Figure 7 demonstrates these attributes. Self-

esteem enhancement and more particularly success of the team were seen as attributes that most often increase willingness to attend. Eustress as in exciting atmosphere and aesthetic value as in level of the overall performance were the second highest attributes. Need for affiliation was the fourth largest attribute group whereas “other” answers had 12 overall but those answers were not able to categorize.

### Comparing the motivational factors of the Globen Fan Zone and Synergia Arena



**Figure 8.** Comparison of the most important motivational factors

Figure 8 demonstrates the similarities and differences of the most important motivational factors for both, international and domestic ice hockey fans. The percentages in these tables consist from giving values to different factors. 1<sup>st</sup> motivational factors were given value of three, the second were given value of two and the third motivational factors were given a value of 1.

The sample gathered from the fans of Finnish ice hockey club JYP suggest that JYP fans most motivating factor is game attractiveness, second is aesthetic value, the third is economic value and fourth diversion from everyday life.

The sample gathered from international ice hockey fans suggest that when attending Ice Hockey World Championships, aesthetic value is the most important motivational factor, entertainment value is the second, diversion from everyday life the third and eustress the fourth most motivational factor.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis was carried out as a quantitative study. The data was gathered from two segment groups, the international ice hockey fans at the 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships held in Stockholm, Sweden and from the fans and spectators of a Finnish professional ice hockey club JYP. This section is about conclusion that I made while analyzing of the results.

### 6.1 Background variables

There were some differences in age distribution. The numbers spot out that international ice hockey fans were younger than domestic ice hockey fans. The phenomenon can be explained by the fact that most of the fans that travel to another country to watch world championships of any sport do not necessarily have a family back home and they are probably not busy in their normal lives as older, more career-oriented people. Also because the IIHF world championships are international event and the older people do not necessarily speak that good English as the younger people, due to globalization and development in overall education throughout the world, they were a little bit shy to be interviewed in Stockholm for example.

The age construction of JYP fans is known to be old. There are spectators who are young of course but the majority is old JYP supporters who have attended the games for decades as a tradition. Ticket prices in Finnish domestic ice hockey games are rather high for example students and young families and thus the spectators tend to be older people with more balanced economic situation.

The two fan groups, the international ice hockey fans and the Finnish domestic fans fit perfectly to **Dualistic fan typologies**. By observing the results especially in open ended questions it can be easily stated that the Finnish domestic ice hockey fans are definitely Type 1 fans. They are somewhat old, not elderly old but their type of fandom is old. Type 1 fans are also genuine, traditional, expressive, irrational, symbolic and last but not least

die-hard type of fans. The international ice hockey fans in IIHF world championships Type 2 fans are a new type of fans. Adjectives to describe them are corporate, modern, submissive, rational, civic and less-loyal, than type 1 fans.

Gender distribution was rather constant and if these numbers would be compared to other professional ice hockey event's spectators the numbers should be almost the same. Ice hockey is aggressive sport and suits better for male spectators. Most of the ice hockey participants all around the world are men whereas women's ice hockey is still a growing sport and this is one factor that male spectators are a majority in these events.

Nationalities in the Globen Fan Zone were somewhat predicable as the neighboring countries and the host country had the majority of respondents. The big surprise was Swiss fans. Switzerland is enjoying a hockey fever at the moment and their domestic spectator numbers are also biggest in whole Europe. Swiss ice hockey and popularity is most definitely at the moment the most interesting aspect in ice hockey circles and many other leagues and organizations should take cue from their management.

The fans of JYP were asked where they arrived from to watch the game. Most of respondents answered that they came from destinations that are close to the venue and of course there were some more exotic answers as well. The sample in this research can't be used to demonstrate whereabouts of all JYP fans because the sample was just too small. These figures demonstrate only the respondents' home locations not for all of the fans of JYP.

## **6.2 Motivational factors**

There was a hunch that domestic Finnish fans of a certain club and international ice hockey fans are different and have different motivational factors and this research has most definitely made it clear. Of course both groups have many things in common because after all they should not be that different. Almost all respondents were European or from North America. Their values are somewhat the same. Culture, tradition and overall fan behavior

also affect to results of motivational factors. The situation was also a little different Finnish domestic ice hockey fans were watching normal regular season games in their home city whereas the international ice hockey fans had arrived to world championships which are held annually.

### **JYP fans**

The results state that the spectators in JYP home games are hungry for success, great performance and high level of ice hockey. They are also more motivated when the ticket prices are lower and the team has good players to represent them. The spectators in JYP home games are working people and they have their families and homes to be taken care of. That is why most of them seek for escape from normal routines by coming to JYP home games. The ice hockey season is also played in Finland during winter when it is always dark and cold outside and it is one reason why people are seeking for something different from everyday life few times a week.

The JYP fans would also like to get some more entertainment to the stands because the event is seen as very dull experience. The whole event itself is very simple for a professional ice hockey event. First, the announcer in the games does not get the crowd cheer for their home team at all. Some personality was asked for from the announcer in many answers. Also, the crowd would like to be more active and they should be activated in Jyväskylä Synergia Arena. Second, the club does not have cheerleaders in the game as every other professional hockey team in the highest level of Finland does. Third, the entertainment using music, lights and jumbo screen is not that that entertaining as it could be. Fourth, halftime is a waste of time in Synergia Arena. People just wait the game to be started instead that they would enjoy themselves using activities what should be provided by the Arena. Fifth, the food and drinks are unvaried and there is not that great selections although there are numerous places to order from. Few respondents asked for different and healthier food instead of sausage and hot dogs. Sixth, the event is not very social event. The spectators don't talk to each other and for example social media should be taken advantage. Twitter wall is familiar in sport events



these days and also other applications that activate the crowd. Crowd activation can be seen as the biggest challenge for the club.

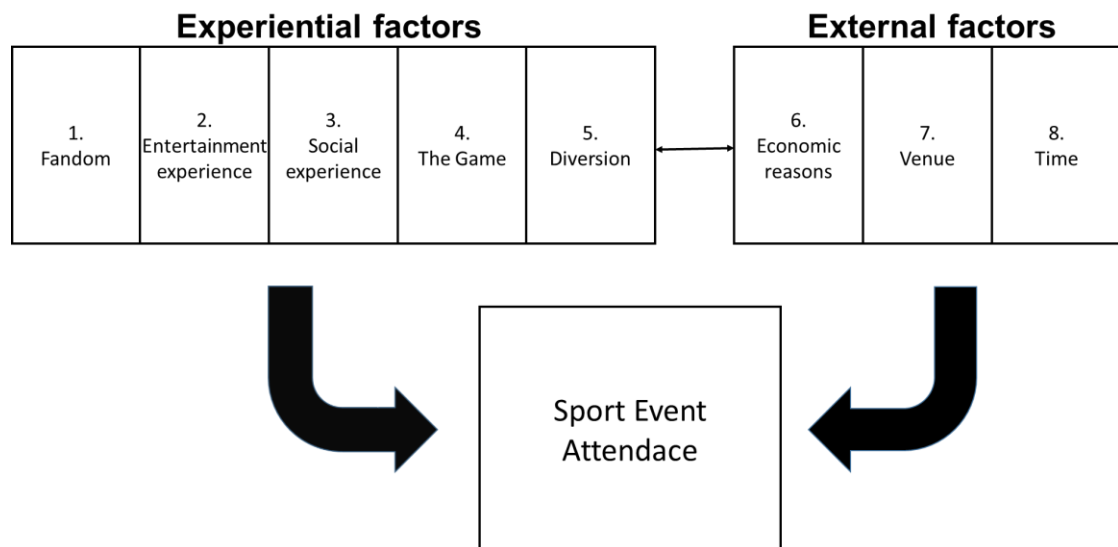
### **IIHF fans**

International ice hockey fans have arrived to support their own home countries and some even arrived from across the world. Aesthetic values were the biggest factor for them and it can be said that most of them came to watch the best nations and the best players play. After all, it is a lot cheaper to attend IIHF World Championships held in Europe than travel all the way to North America to witness National Hockey League games. Entertainment was big factor for international fans. International events are entertaining of course and there were a lot better premises in Globen Dome for entertaining event than in Synergia Arena for example. Globen Fan Zone offered entertainment also outside the arena and many fans came to witness the atmosphere of the Globen Fan Zone. The attendance to IIHF World championships was also a diversion normal routines for many spectators as they connected tourism and sports by attending. Some fans even wanted to come and socialize with other countries' fans.

## **6.3 Theory about motivational factors**

Daniel Wann's, Matthew D. Shank's and Galen T. Trails theories about the basic motivational factors are still valid. These theories can be used to analyze fan motivational factors but Wann's theory has too many motivational factors that are almost the same and that can create big misunderstandings in analyze stage. For example, categories like Eustress and Diversion from everyday life are too much alike. Eustress is also very close to entertainment. Also, Aesthetic value –category is close to game attractiveness as well as self-esteem enhancement. Family ties are also too close to Diversion from everyday life just because friends are big factor in diversion as well as socializing.

While I was working with this research, with today's ice hockey fans and with new literature about experience economy which we are living in I started to sketch my own model about basic motivational factors that I myself came across. Wann's and Trail's theories offer great assumptions but these assumptions need to be updated to modern day sport spectator behavior. The economy and consuming habits change all the time and for example experiences are seen as big motivational factors. Ice hockey fans who responded and their answers in the research of this thesis draw out a clear model of their basic motivational reasons to attend ice hockey events. The motivational factors can be divided to two sub-categories; experiential factors and external factors. Even though these are different categories they usually affect to each other profusely.



**Figure 9.** Mikko Hirvonen's Model of Ice Hockey Fans' Motivational Factors

### **Experiential factors**

**Fandom** and being a fan is important for many spectators. This category includes reasons linked to fan values. One of the biggest reasons is the affiliation to something (in this case, a team) that competes creates positive eustress and creates various experiences from sport events. Success is a factor that is in every fans mind. Team's success enhances supporters' self-

esteem and creates continuity to attending team's games. Sport events are also ritual for fans, they can wear the colors and act the way they usually probably do not. Season ticket is a reason to attend almost every game so the fans get everything out of the expensive ticket. Reason for fandom can also be that the competing team is from their hometown or country, or is their own national team.

**Entertainment experience** is one of the common experiences people seek when attending professional sport events. People want to be amused all the time these days and they expect that the sport event will entertain them and will be worth of their time and money. Refreshments and delicious food, show factors, partying and having good time are significant reasons of this category.

Sport events are also a **social experience** for many spectators. They come to socialize with their family and friends and create social memories that can be reminisced together.

**The game**, in this case, ice hockey and everything linked to the game itself is the backbone of this category. Many spectators attend sport events just because of the purity of the game. Atmosphere, level of play, tradition, and sport culture are key factors for these fans. Many of these fans are participants of the same sport themselves.

**Diversions** from normal routines is surprisingly important for many spectators. These spectators seek for escape experience. Sometimes routines are not the case but instead there is nothing else to do and sport event is seen as a diversion also.

### **External factors**

Even though a potential spectator would have a strong experiential factor to attend an event he/she might not attend because of the external factors. External factors can also affect the other way around and increase the willingness to attend.

**Economic reasons** include free or cheap tickets, business reasons or gambling reasons to attend. Ticket price can be seen as the strongest reason with most effect on willingness to attend.

People are extremely busy with their lives these days. People do not have too much free **time** and using free time is appropriately is key factor and people are often willing to use their time to attend sport events. Game schedules also need to match with attendees own personal schedules.

**Venue** with its own fascinating factors as well as location and accessibility are major factors for spectators who are not quite sure about whether attend an event or not. The venue's accessibility is also heavily affected, especially in northern hemisphere countries, by weather conditions. Cruel, stormy weather does not motivate to participate in sport event as much as does nice sunny weather.

## **6.4 Future research & recommendations**

The Sport Business School Finland is also going to carry out similar research projects in the future also. SBSF also carries out similar researches in other fields of sports such as football, field hockey, volleyball and rally and there will also be ice hockey researches also in the future. JYP is a local team in Jyväskylä. Thus, the cooperation with these two organization will continue, probably already in the next season (season 2014-2015).

In the upcoming research projects sport business school is not necessarily going to study exactly the same areas as done before but the direction will be almost the same. In my opinion, the subject of the researches, especially when studying consumer behavior in the sport field, should more concentrate to the experiential part of the behavior.

The interview part is also an experience, which is why the interview should be shorter and more compact. The questionnaire used at Globen Fan Zone was

definitely too long and spectator's focus always decreased toward the end of an interview and there were more empty answers and answers such as: "to solve the middle east conflict".

The respondents give some of their time to answer these questions and they should get some kind of a reward for the time used. For example, at the 2013 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships, we could have given cardboard Skoda ice hockey helmets as rewards because these items were handed out free in the fan zone. These rewards would not be necessary if the questionnaires were shorter and if there were many short questionnaires to be answered. Different interviewers would ask different things. Thus, no fan would be able to reject the interview by saying: "I already answered the questions on that questionnaire".

The analysis of the gathered data was very slow because the Webropol application did not have too many tools to use and Microsoft Office Excel was a necessary tool almost in every example table that was used in this thesis.

Spelling mistakes also caused a speed bump in analyzing the gathered data because the Webropol did not "understand" the misspelled words. If a sample includes respondents with bad English skills, some sort of autocorrect spelling program would ease the analysis of the data.

All in all, it is important to continue studying sport spectators and fans, especially in Finland because the sport business is still elementary here if compared for example to the neighboring countries Sweden or Russia. The Sport Business School Finland is a pioneer in Finland considering sport business. Hopefully the Finnish sport business will finally start to flourish as in the neighboring countries.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire in Stockholm, Sweden



### VALUES BEHIND ICE HOCKEY

We are conducting a survey important for future of international sport events. The aim here is to collect data related to ice hockey brand and values behind ice hockey.

Your answers are very important to us! Please note that all the answers will be kept confidential and presented anonymously and scientifically. The survey is organized and conducted by Sport Business School Finland.

Thank you for your participation!

#### 1. Nationality:

- Austria
- Belarus
- Belgium
- British
- Canada



- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hungary
- Italy
- Japan
- Latvia
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Russia
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- USA
- Missing

**2. Age:**







6. What are 3 most motivating reasons for you to come to the Ice Hockey World Championships fan zone today?

1.

2.

3.

(1 of 1 pages)

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire in Finland



### KATSOJAKYSELY

Arvoisa vastaaja,

kaksi Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun urheiluliiketoiminnan opiskelijaa toteuttavat katsojille suunnatun kyselyn JYPin kotiottelun aikana. Kerätty tutkimusaineisto toimii opiskelijoiden opinnäytetyön aineistona.

Ole hyvä ja vastaa lyhyesti alla esitettyihin kysymyksiin. Vastaaminen tapahtuu nimettömänä ja aineistoa käsitellään kokonaisaineistona.

Kiitos osallistumisestanne!

Lisätietoja:

Mikko Hirvonen, tradenomiopiskelija  
g2542@student.jamk.fi

Taneli Maasalo, tradenomiopiskelija  
f0992@student.jamk.fi

1. Ikä?

2. Sukupuoli?

Mies

Nainen

3. Kotiosoitteenne postinumero?

postinumero

4. Kuinka monta kertaa olet osallistunut JYPin kotiotteluun kuluvalle kaudella?

Olen ensimmäistä kertaa

2-5 kertaa

0-10 kertaa

11-20 kertaa

yli 20 kertaa

**5. Luettele kolme tärkeintä syytä, miksi päätit tulla katsomaan JYPin ottelua tänään?**

Voit mainita 1-3 tekijää.

1.

2.

3.

**6. Luettele kolme tärkeintä syytä, miksi tulet katsomaan JYPin ottelua yleensä?**

Voit mainita 1-3 tekijää.

1.

2.

3.

**7. Mitkä tekijät lisäävät halukkuuttasi tulla katsomaan JYPin kotiottelua?**

Mainitse lyhyesti muutamia tekijöitä.

**8. Mitkä tekijät vähentävät halukkuuttasi tulla katsomaan JYPin kotiottelua?**

Mainitse lyhyesti muutama tekijä.