

# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND WILLINGNESS TO RECOMMEND AN EVENT

Case: Neste Oil Rally 2012

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Abstract <p>The Bachelors' thesis was assigned by Sport Business School Finland and AKK Sports Oy. The purpose of the thesis was to examine the levels of satisfaction in Neste Oil Rally Finland and willingness to recommend the event to others. The study method that was used in the research was quantitative. There were two research questions: What is the overall customer satisfaction with the event and the services provided and what is the potential of word-of-mouth marketing of spectators and its' effect on the customers' willingness to recommend the event to others?</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the study consisted of three different theories: customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth-marketing and customer satisfaction in sports. The study was conducted in Neste Oil Rally Finland in 2012 in three different special stages. 331 respondents were interviewed using Ipads and printed questionnaires. Four different respondent groups were compared in the results in order to have a more accurate image of rally visitors' opinions. The groups were: 'men', 'women', 'first timers' and 'rally fans' The results show that the visitors were highly satisfied with the event and they were highly willing to recommend the event to others. There were no major differences between different respondent groups. The atmosphere in the special stage had the highest satisfaction grade. The staff members' quality of service in the special stages had the biggest impact with the customer satisfaction and with the willingness to recommend the event. By utilizing the findings in the thesis, it is possible for the rally organizer to help maintain the strengths and do away the weaknesses of the event.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana oli Sport Business School Finland AKK Sports Oy. Tavoitteena oli selvittää kuinka tyytyväisiä Neste Oil Ralli Finlandin kävijät olivat tapahtumaan ja kuinka halukkaita he olivat suosittelemaan tapahtumaa muille. Tutkimus oli kvantitatiivinen tutkimus. Tutkimusongelmasta johdettiin kaksi tutkimuskysymystä: Kuinka tyytyväisiä kävijät ovat tapahtumaan ja sen eri osa-alueisiin ja kuinka halukkaita asiakkaat ovat suosittelemaan tapahtumaa muille.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyö teoreettinen viitekehys koostui kolmesta pääteoriasta: Asiakastyytyväisyydestä, word-of-mouth-markkinoinnista sekä asiakastyytyväisyydestä urheilussa. Tutkimus toteutettiin Neste Oil Ralli Finland- tapahtumassa vuoden 2012 elokuussa. Vastauksia kerättiin yhteensä 331, kolmella eri erikoiskokeella. Vastaukset kerättiin Ipad-taulutietokoneisiin ja paperisiin kyselylomakkeisiin.</p> <p>Vastaajat ryhmiteltiin neljään eri ryhmään, jotta tutkimuksen tuloksia voitaisiin hyödyntää mahdollisimman tarkasti. Vastaajaryhmät olivat: miehet, naiset, ensikertalaiset ja rallifanit. Tulosten perusteella rallikatsojat olivat erittäin tyytyväisiä tapahtumaan. He olivat myös erittäin halukkaita suosittelemaan tapahtumaa muille ihmisille. Tyytyväisimpiä rallivieraat olivat tapahtuman tunnelmaan. Ristiintaulukoiden avulla saatui selville, että suurin yksittäinen tekijä, joka vaikutti sekä tapahtuman asiakastyytyväisyyteen että vieraiden haluun suositella tapahtuma muille, oli erikoiskokeen henkilökunnan palvelun taso. Tutkimuksen tuloksia hyödyntämällä tapahtuman järjestäjät voivat edelleen kehittää tapahtumaa ja varmistaa, että se säilyy suosittuna myös tulevaisuudessa.</p>		
Avainsanat (asiasanat) Neste Oil Rally Finland, Asiakastyytyväisyyys, Urheilutapahtuma		
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Sport Business School Finland conducted several research projects during the WRC Neste Oil Rally Finland -event in Jyväskylä in 2011 and 2012. The aim of these researches was to collect in-depth information about customer satisfaction of different types of spectators and participating teams. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to define the overall spectators customer satisfaction with the event and the services provided and to examine the word-of-mouth marketing potential of the respondents by measuring the willingness to recommend the event to other consumers. This thesis concentrates particularly on the results of customer satisfaction surveys and aims to deepen the understanding of the correlation between customer satisfaction and their willingness to recommend the rally event. (Ahonen & Rasku 2013).

Data was collected during the WRC Rally Finland in August 2012. Structured survey questionnaire with Likert scale determinants was used in person to person interviews. Interviews were conducted by using iPad tablets and paper questionnaires in Special Stages during the event. Data was processed in Webropol survey data system. The overall number of respondents in this survey was 331.

The subject is highly important for the employee for this thesis due to the fact that it is vital for any sport event producer to be aware of the factors that affects customer satisfaction. Sport is highly popular phenomenon in Finland; sport events are watched both from television and in place and it gains a lot of media attention. However there are only few types of sport events which are popular amongst large group of spectators. Neste Oil Rally, which is driven every year in city of jyväskylä, is one of those most popular sporting events in Finland.

It is vital for the organizer of the Neste Oil Rally, that they are aware of their customers' satisfaction level. It is never certain that there will be same amount of customers in the future. The organizer needs to identify, what are the characteristics that affect

the customer satisfaction both in order to keep their customers and improve services in the future. The Bachelor's thesis is assigned by AKK Motorsport Ltd and Sport Business School Finland.

## **1.2 Purpose of the thesis**

The Pre-hypothesis of this thesis was that customers are satisfied with the event and they are willing to recommend the event to others. This hypothesis is based on the number of visitors that the Neste Oil Rally has had in the recent future and the previous research findings.

The goal of this thesis is to find out the key factors that affects customer satisfaction of visitors in Neste Oil Rally. After finding out the key factors, the second goal is to identify what are the key factors that affect customers' willingness to recommend the event to others. By solving these two main issues, it is possible to create customer satisfaction model for Neste Oil Rally event, which is the final aim of this thesis.

Aim of this thesis being to find vital information about customers and their satisfaction in Neste Oil Rally event, the employee can benefit directly from the results and improve the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of its customer services. The organizer can define the strategic strengths of the event from customers' point of view and to optimize the resources and future investments.

The research problem can be divided into two research questions:

- What is the overall customer satisfaction with the event and the services provided?
- What is the potential of word-of-mouth marketing of spectators and its' effect on the customers willingness to recommend the event to others?

Earlier has been several studies about customers' satisfaction with the Neste Oil Rally event and its correlation to how the customers would recommend the event to oth-

ers. The author is going to continue this research by exploring the marketing potential of word-of-mouth of rally visitors.

### **1.3 AKK Sports Oy**

AKK Sport Ltd is a marketing company owned by the AKK Motorsport registered association. The company was established in 1993 as there appeared a need for an organization that can practice business and gain profits to its owner. Mission of the company is to organize high-level motorsport events. Annually the biggest project of AKK Sport Ltd is to organize the Neste Oil Rally Finland. The second biggest event for AKK Sports is the national Finnish Rally Series organized every year. (AKK Sports Oy 2011.)

The company employs 16 persons and its' head quarter locates in the city of Vantaa. Annual revenue was 4.8 million euros and equity ratio was 91% in 2012. (AKK Sports Oy, taloudelliset tiedot 2012.)

AKK Sport Ltd is a member of FIA (International federation of automobile), which is the governing body for motorsports worldwide. FIA brings together more than 230 national motoring and sporting organizations from more than 135 countries on five continents. FIA is responsible of developing the motor sport worldwide. (About the FIA)

### **1.4 Sport Business School Finland**

Sport Business School Finland was founded in 2011 by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki and JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä..Sport Business School Finland (later SBSF) is a concept that offers study programs in sport management and sport marketing. Sport Business School Finland offers Bachelor, Master, Short Term and Specialized Study Programs both in Finnish and in English.

Their target is to combine studying with the practical cases from real life. (SBSF Finland 2013)

Sport Business School Finland is country's leading sport business research and development institute and a strategic partner to several Universities and Institutions around the world. SBSF's mission is to promote and organize all activities that help Sport organizations to improve both their operational and economic performance. (Ahonen 2013)

## **1.5 Neste Oil Rally finland**

Early steps of Neste Oil Rally were taken in 1951 in a meeting in Casino of Hanko. A group of people who had visited the Rally Monte Carlo shared a thought that there should be a similar kind of competition in Finland. Popularity of rallying in Finland had risen and there was a need for a competition. Official organizer of first rally event in Jyväskylä was Car Club's Central-Finland division. Name of the first rally event was Tuhansien järvien ajo (Rally of the thousand lakes). However the name was changed quickly to Jyväskylän Suurajot (1000 lakes rally). The rules of the rally were almost similar with the Rally Monte Carlo. Length of the rally was 1666 kilometres and it was driven on two different special stages. (Ralli kansainvälisen mallin mukaan 2011.)

Rally event received its European Championship status in 1959. World Championship status was given to rally in Jyväskylä in 1973. Year 1973 was first year when rally was competed worldwide. During the years 1973 to 1978 only car manufacturers were competing against each other. After 1979 also individual drivers started to compete against each other. (Suurajojen aikakausi 2011.)

Prefix Neste was used first time in the name of the rally in 1994. After AKK Sport Ltd took the organizing responsibility in 1997, the name was changed to Neste Rally. Year 1997 was a major change to the event. AKK sport Ltd had a goal to improve the

event vastly. They put a lot of effort into safety, marketing and overall status. And it was worth it. Already after the first rally organized by AKK Sport Ltd they received a price “Award of excellence” as a result of well-organized safety planning. And the prizes kept on coming. The next year event was named the best rally event of the year. And a year after they received again the “Award of excellence” reward as a result of their marketing efforts. Later on the event won the best rally event of the year title three times. Neste Oil Rally Finland is the only event that has won the best rally of the year title four times. (Uuteen aikaa 2011.)

## **1.6 What Is World Rally Series?**

Neste Oil Rally Finland is part of the grand prix series organized across the globe. The series includes 13 different events in 13 different countries. The series is driven on ice, snow, asphalt or gravel. As its current format, the world rally series has been driven since 1973. Each individual event is divided from 15 to 25 different “special stages” which are closed from public driving. The rules are simple; the one, who passes the stages with the fastest time, wins. There is always a driver and a co-driver in each car. Co-drivers task is to read notes to the driver and guide him through the stages.

For 2012 there were four different classes in World Rally series based on different kinds of cars. The highest class was World Rally Cars which are the most powerful ones. There was also WRC-2, WRC-3 and Junior WRC classes.

The WRC series is controlled by worldwide motorsport organization FIA. Most of the WRC events follow the same pattern. During Tuesday and Wednesday the drivers and co-drivers have an opportunity to get familiar with special stages. The actual rally competition is typically driven from Thursday to Sunday. However, driving the special stages is not the only thing during the event for the teams. Big part of the competition takes place also in the service park. Four technicians are allowed to fix the cars followed by certain rules and time limits. From each competition, drivers and teams collect grand prix points. The scale goes 25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1 where the fastest

driver gets 25 points and so on. Teams also gain points with a similar scale. The one, who has collected the highest amount of points at the end of the WRC series, wins the World Championship title. (What is WRC? 2013.)

## 1.7 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis can be demonstrated as follows:

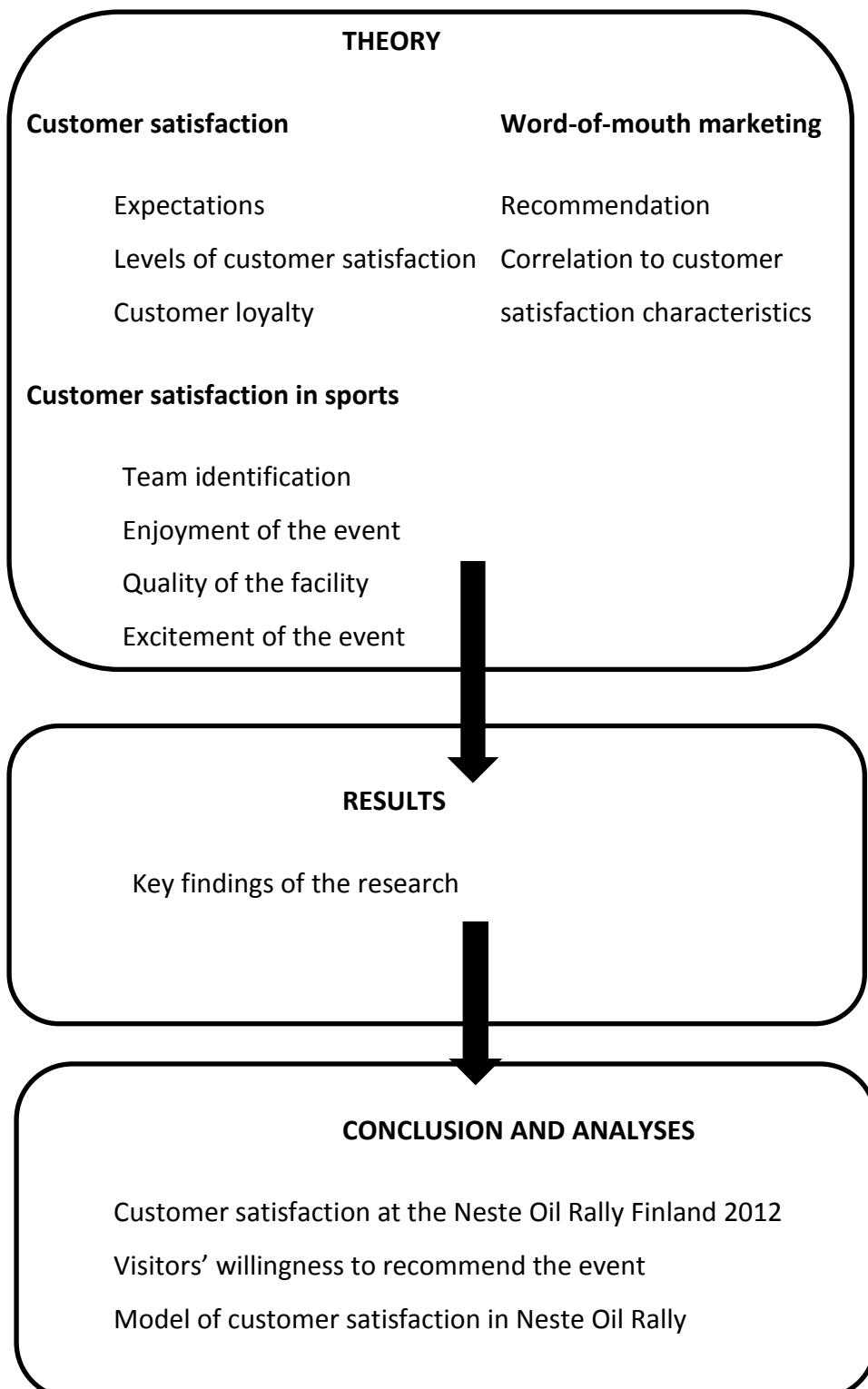


Figure 1. Structure of the thesis.

Structure of the thesis consists of three major components; theory, results and analyses and conclusion. There are three leading theories in this thesis; First, customer satisfaction, which consists of customer expectations, level of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and secondly, word-of-mouth marketing including recommendation. Third theory is customer satisfaction in sports which consists of team identification, enjoyment of the event, quality of the facility and excitement of the event. Results section consists of key findings of the research. Final section, conclusions and analyses, contains the answers to research questions; Customer satisfaction in Neste Oil Rally Finland 2012 and visitors' willingness to recommend the event. Also a model of customer satisfaction in Neste Oil Rally Finland is presented as an outcome of these results.

## 1.8 Key concepts

**Customer satisfaction:** Customer satisfaction is made up of: expectations, perceived performance and disconfirmation. (Oliver 1980.)

**Word-of-mouth marketing:** When customers share information of a company's product or service it is called word-of-mouth marketing. (Kotler et al. 2009, 703.)

**Customer satisfaction in sports:** Customer satisfaction in sports forms from team identification, enjoyment of the event and excitement of the sport.

**Customer loyalty:** Customer loyalty is a deep relationship with a customer and a company. Companies gain a lot of benefit if they have loyal customers.

**Rally Fan:** Rally fan is a person who has been earlier in Neste Oil Rally Finland.

**First-timer:** First-timer is a person who has never been in Neste Oil Rally Finland earlier.

**Special Stage:** Rally event is driven on several Special Stages.

**Spectator:** A person who has come to watch an event.

**Rally visitor:** A person who has bought a ticket and come to watch Neste Oil Rally Finland.

## 2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

### 2.1 Introduction to the theoretical framework

The Theoretical framework of this study consists of three major theories: customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth marketing's role in customers' willingness to recommend the event. Due to the special subject of this thesis, there is also need to observe the customer satisfaction especially in sports. The theoretical part of customer satisfaction consists of a definition of customer satisfaction, levels of customer satisfaction, how to measure customer satisfaction and how to create loyal customers.

### 2.2 Three steps to customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction forms from three key factors which are expectations, perceived performance and disconfirmation. At first, a customer has some sort of expectations of the product or service which he or she is about to experience. After the customer has bought the product or used the service, he or she has perceived some kind of performance. After that the customer compares the experience with the expectations. After the process, the customer can have three different kinds of disconfirmation: negative disconfirmation, zero disconfirmation or positive disconfirmation. The customer satisfaction has been formed.

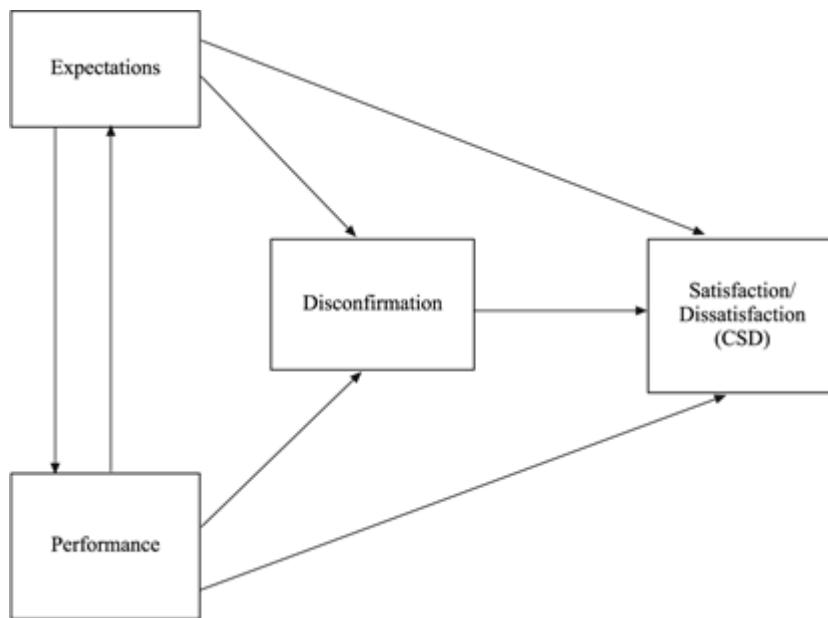


Figure 2. Determinants of customer satisfaction (see the original figure Oliver, 1980)

### **Customers' expectations**

There are four different aspects which forms the expectations:

- from products that a customer has bought earlier
- from friends
- from colleagues' advice
- from promises and information set by others companies

It is a two-bladed sword when creating expectations for customers. If the expectations are set too low, no interest will be raised. On the other hand, if the expectations are set too high, the customer is likely to be disappointed. (Kotler et al. 2009, 389.)

According to Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 103-104), customers can have different kind of expectations:

- Ideal expectations

- Expected expectation
- Minimum tolerable expectations
- Deserved expectations

Expectations can also have an effect on the perceived performance. When the expectations are high, customer evaluates the perceived performance also higher. (Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 105.)

### **Perceived performance**

Customer satisfaction is highly related to the quality of a product or quality of a service that the customer buys or uses. However, it does not mean that the higher the quality is, the higher the satisfaction will be. Luxury products, which have higher quality, can have as satisfied customers as lower quality products. The key point is to fulfill the promises of the product or service. For example, if the product has a lower price, the customer will not expect that much from quality. The customer will be satisfied if the products fulfill their expectations. (Kotler&Keller 2006, 147.)

According to Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 106), perceived performance has the highest impact on customer satisfaction. Higher quality and higher perceived performance of a product or a service has also significant impact on companies' profitability. The higher the quality is, the higher the satisfaction of the customer will be. Highly satisfied customers don't pay so much attention to pricing so the company certainly profits from higher quality. (Kotler&Keller 2009, 393.)

### **2.3 Definition of customer satisfaction**

Customer is dissatisfied if the product or service did not reply to their expectations. The customer is satisfied if the product or service replied to their expectations. The customer is highly satisfied if the product or service was more what he or she expected. As a result it can be pointed out that customer satisfaction is highly linked to customers' pre assumptions. From companies' point of view it is important to have strong and positive brand image. Brand image effects on customers' expectations

and if the brand image is strong, their pre assumptions are more favorable. (Kotler et al. 2009, 389.)

It is vital for the companies to have satisfied customers. According to Kotler & Keller (2009, 390) companies gain plenty of benefits if the customers were satisfied:

- Highly satisfied customers have longer relationships with companies.
- Highly satisfied customers buy more.
- Satisfied customers are more willing to promote the companies.
- Satisfied customers pay less attention to competitors.
- Satisfied customers do not care about the price so much.
- Satisfied customers are cheaper from marketing perspective.
- The company gains lower risk in stock markets if they have satisfied customers.

Customers have always some kind of expectation when they are planning to purchase a product or when they are about to use different kind of services. If customers' expectations are fulfilled, customer is satisfied. On the other hand if customers' expectations are not fulfilled, customer is dissatisfied. When aim for satisfied customers, one should not try to make high quality product or services. The aim should be in achieving loyal and satisfied client. To be able to fulfill customers' needs, one should get to know their likes and dislikes, their needs and what they expect from ones products or services. (Gerson 1993, 5, 6, 15.)

Customer Satisfaction scale 1-5.

1. Not at all satisfied – Customers are likely to abandon the company
2. Slightly satisfied – Customer find it easy to switch the company
3. Moderately satisfied – Customer find it easy to switch the company
4. Very satisfied – Customer find it easy to switch the company
5. Completely satisfied – Very likely to buy more and recommend for others

(Kotler et al. 2009, 390.)

All companies should target to fulfill the needs of customers and aim to have as much as possible highly satisfied customers. Creating satisfied customer is all about being aware of customers' need and expectations. Once the company has an understanding of those two matters, getting satisfied customers should be a major issue.

## 2.4 Measuring customers satisfaction

First of all, companies should measure their customer satisfaction frequently. They should be aware if the satisfaction levels were lowering. When measuring satisfaction frequently, companies can react faster if the satisfaction rates were getting lower. There are few ways to measure customer satisfaction. In periodic surveys, company sends questionnaire to their customers. This action can be repeated few times a year and is an easy way to find out customers' satisfaction. Another way to find out about customer satisfaction is to follow customers' loss rate. If the customer has suddenly stopped buying company's products, the company should find out why this has happened. Usually there is something wrong with the product or service. If the company cannot get that information from the former customer, they can use mystery shoppers. In mystery shopping company sends a customer to buy products or use services. After visiting the company, the mystery shopper reports the management how they experienced the quality of the services. Mystery shoppers can also be sent to competitor to find out how they are operating. (Kotler&Keller 2006, 145-146.)

Customer satisfaction should be monitored frequently. It should be part of the daily processes in the companies and in the minds of all the employees. There can be deeper surveys of customer satisfaction few times a year but it should also be controlled more often. Customer's shares feedback constantly. Employees should deliver that message to supervisors in order to keep them up-to-date. Only that way the companies can ensure the fast reaction for possible issues they might be facing.

## 2.5 Customer loyalty

It is vital for companies to have satisfied customers. Szwarc (2005, 12) argues that satisfied customers are more willing to recommend the company to others. Nevertheless loyal customers are more profitable for the companies. The difference for satisfied customers is that loyal customers will more likely buy additional products.

Customers can be satisfied but they still can go shopping somewhere else for the lower price. Loyal customers are less willing to do that.

Loyal customers are the ones that companies should aim at. ‘A highly satisfied’ customer, which can also said to be loyal customers, have six time higher loyalty rates than ‘satisfied’ customers. (Szwarc 2005, 9.)

There are two popular ways for companies to reward their loyal customers. ‘Frequency programs’ goal is to offer rewards for the customers who buys a lot. Form of the program can be for example regular customers’ card or customers can receive custom made publication offered by the company. Discounts can also be included when the customer is in the frequency program. Company can also benefit from frequency programs. It is common that they use it to collect customer purchasing data. (Kotler et al. 2009, 402-403.)

Another way the company can pay attention to their loyal customer or attract more loyal customers is to create ‘club membership programs’. The programs can be open to everyone who has done business with them or it can have a small extra fee. (Kotler et al. 2009, 405.)

## 2.6 Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Word-of-Mouth marketing is one of the most useful tools in the field of marketing. When customers share information or a company’s product or service it is called word-of-mouth marketing. The information shared can be either positive or negative. Studies have shown that positive word-of-mouth marketing can have a significant role when aiming at a growth in sales. The role of word-of-mouth marketing has become even more important after social networks have started to play a bigger role in peoples’ daily activities. Positive or negative experiences of the relationships with companies spread rapidly via social networks. Nowadays it’s common that word-of-mouth marketing is being controlled by the companies. (Kotler et al. 2009, 703.)

Companies have two different kinds of tools to encourage customers to use word-of-mouth marketing. In **buzz marketing**, company shares information of their new product with only a small group of people. That small group of people consist of heavy clients who have a huge impact on others potential customers and who are willing to recommend the company's new product or service to others. (Kotler et al. 2009, 703-704.)

**Viral marketing's** goal is to encourage people to share a company's offers with the others online. For example, a company can create an advertisement so amusing that the potential customer shares the ad with friends and colleagues. Or, the ad can include such particular information that the 'viral marketer' wants to share it. (Kotler et al. 2009, 704.)

Szwarc (2005, 12) argues that satisfied customers are more willing to recommend their experiences with others. On the other hand, Kotler et al. (2009, 337-388) refers to a study in their book conducted by Marriot and British Telecom which claims that the highest level of word-to-mouth recommendation did not come from the clients who were satisfied with their service. Instead, it came from the clients who had had some sort of problems, which were solved exemplary. So it is fair to say that the companies should not only aim at 'perfect' products and services but they should also focus on customers' feedback.

## 2.7 Customer satisfaction in sports

Sport is a complex issue. It cannot be compared to average business due to the fact that it has much more variables than just buying a product using a service.

It is very important for the sport organizations to have satisfied customers. However, very little literature has been made in this field of science (Van Leeuwen, Quick & Kerry 2002, 100). To have a better understanding how the customer satisfaction forms within the sport consumers, there is a need to clarify the special factors related to sports.

According to a study conducted by Madrigal (2005), 'basking in reflected glory', team identification, quality of opponent and enjoyment of the game was highly linked when measuring customer satisfaction in sports. Another study conducted by Wakefield and Blodgett (1994) found out that quality of facility where the sport event is situated was linked to customer satisfaction. They also found out that excitement of the sport, crowding and enduring involvement reflected to customer satisfaction. (Van Leeuwen et al. 2002, 100-102.)

Customer satisfaction in sport is quite complex and more determinants should be taken into count when measuring it. As mentioned above, different studies have been made concerning customer satisfaction in sports. Two if these studies were conducted by Madrigal (1995) and Wakefield&Blodgett (1994.) According to these studies, the special factors that reflect to customer satisfaction in sports are:

- basking in reflected glory
- team identification
- quality of opponent
- enjoyment of the game/event
- quality of facility
- excitement of the sport
- crowding
- enduring involvement

(Van Leeuwen et al. 2002, 102.)

## 2.8 Sport spectator satisfaction model

Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 119) used the original customer satisfaction model and combined it with the studies conducted by Madrigal (1995) and Wakefield&Blodgett (1994). As a result they created special satisfaction model for sport

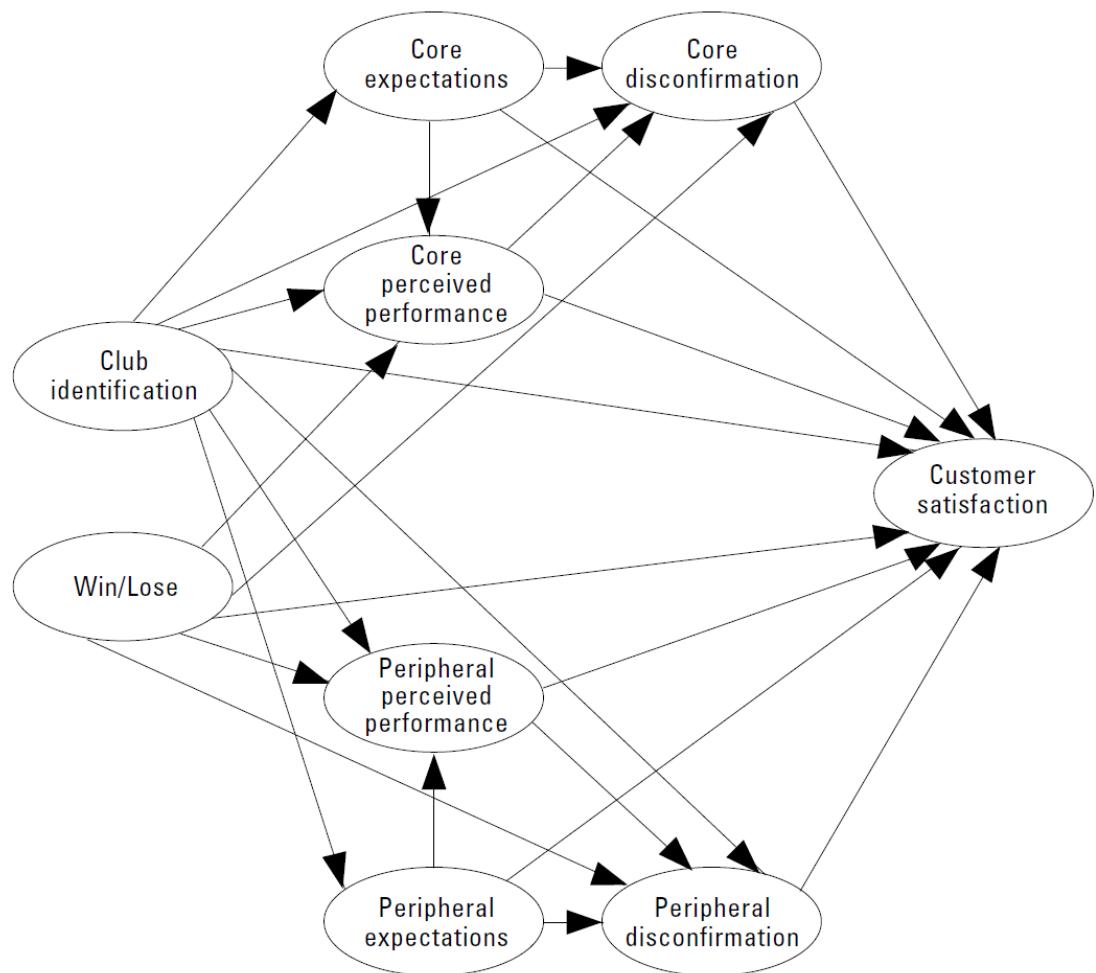


Figure 3. Determinants of customer satisfaction in sports. (See original figure Van Leeuwen et al. 2002, 119.)

The figure three above illustrates the formation of customer satisfaction in sports. As it can be seen from the figure, customer satisfaction of sports consists of many more variables than the customer satisfaction of average business. Such factors like winning and losing or club identification need to be carefully considered when targeting for satisfied customer in sports.

### **Club identification**

According to Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 107) club identification can be defined as *"the psychological orientation of the self, such that the individual defines him- or herself as part of the club."*

It has been researched that club identification has an influence to spectators' expectations. Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 110) refers to a study conducted by Wann&Branscombe (1993) which argued that students who had high identification with the team had also high hopes for the future of the team.

Club identifications' effect on perceived performance has also been studied. Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 111) refers to a study conducted by Dietz-Uhler&Mulle (1999) who discovered in their study that a spectator who has high identification with the team has evaluates the perceived performance more favorable. According to (Van Leeuwen et al. 2002, 112-113) several studies have proven that club identification has positive effect on satisfaction of the spectator.

### **Win-lose phenomenon**

Win-lose phenomenon has been proven to have strong impact to perceived performance, disconfirmation and customer satisfaction. Hirt et al. (1992) found out that result of a game affected to evaluation of the team performance, quality of the game and evaluation of the individual players' performance. Due to the fact that win-lose phenomenon affects to perceived performance of the spectator it likely that it also effects to disconfirmation of the spectator. As the disconfirmation is positive, it is also very likely that the win-lose phenomenon affects also to customer satisfaction. (Van Leeuwen et al. 2002, 115-117.)

### 3 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The Purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research was made, what kind of research method was used and to prove that the research fulfilled the requirements of validity and reliability.

#### 3.1 Conducting the study

This quantitative research was conducted at the Neste Oil Rally Finland Jyväskylä in august 2012. As Kananen (2011, 72) points out, the research method should be quantitative if the phenomenon is plain and well identified, and if the correlation and variables are well-known, which is the case in this study. The research data was collected by a group of students from Sport Business School Finland at three different special stages; Koukunmaa special stage in Lahti, Mökkiperä special stage and Ouninpohja 1 special stage. The study was conducted in a closed area where only paying customers had access to. By this kind of cropping it was confirmed that only the rally visitors were interviewed. Sampling method used in the research was random sampling. Researchers interviewed randomly special stage visitors inside the grandstand area. According to Szwarc (2005, 113) probability sample means that everyone has equal odds to be selected for the interview. This method is also known as random sampling. There were 331 responses. The respondents were asked to answer 27 different questions (see questionnaire attached). The Amount of time used by one answerer was approximately 10 minutes. The Research data was collected by using Ipads and printed questionnaires. The printed questionnaires were lately also entered to the Webropol database where the information from iPad answers went online.

The first eight questions of the inquiry dealt with the basic information for the visitor such as; which special stage, age, gender, education, professional status, nationality, size of the group and type of relation of certain group. The purpose of these questions was to find out what kinds of people the visitors were.

Questions nine and ten related to information about the respondents' answerer's accommodation during the event. The Aim of these questions was to discover if the visitor was using an accommodation facility during the visit. Questions from 11 to 19 included basic information of the consumer behavior of spectators in this event, such as previous visits, reasons to come back to event, first impression, source of information, source of ticket, type of ticket and which other of the Neste Oil Rally the respondent was going to visit

The final seven questions inquired a customer's satisfaction with the event. First, the respondents were asked to evaluate ten different aspects of the event. The scale was from 1, being very dissatisfied, to 5, being very satisfied. After that, the respondents were asked about services, top three positive matters and top three negative matters, the overall satisfaction of the event and willingness to recommend the event. The last question polled if the visitor was planning to come back the next year.

### 3.2 Research method

**Quantitative research method** is used when the phenomenon is known and there are theories that can be used to measure the research object. The pattern of quantitative research is equal that of qualitative research. However, the tools differ. The quantitative research process in this study can be described as follows:

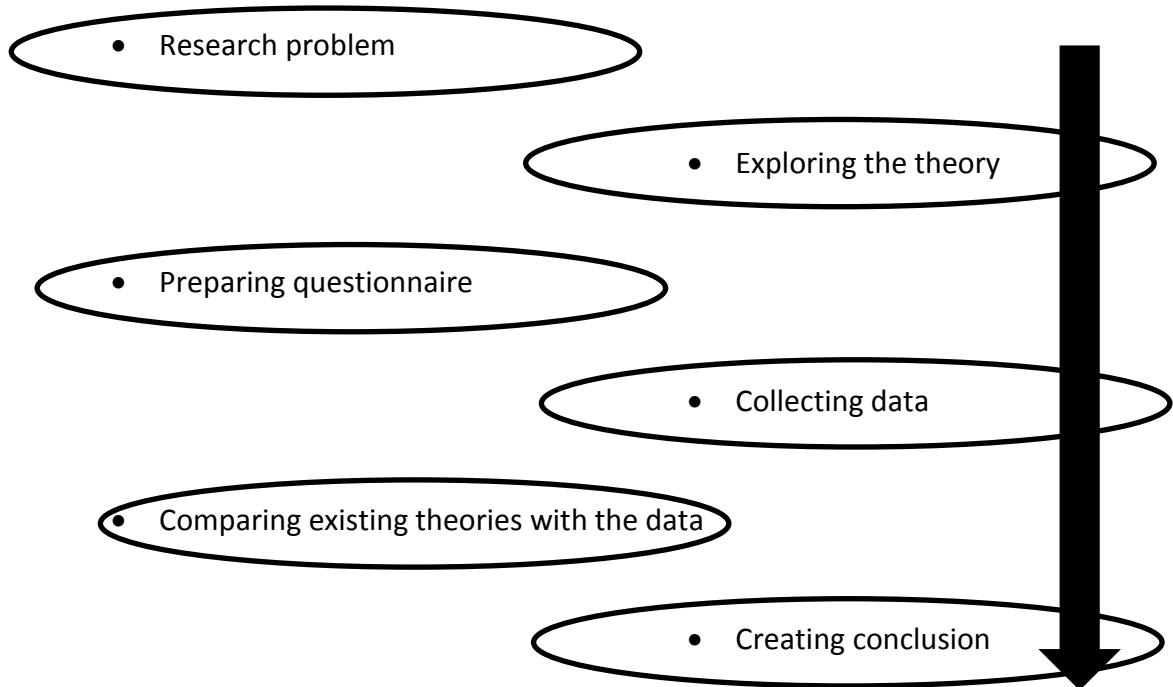


Figure 4. Structure of the quantitative research process.

The research question should be asking “how much” and “why”. In order to be able to answer the previous questions, the researcher must create a questionnaire, which gathers numerical data related to the phenomenon being studied. The questionnaire ought to be as simple as possible to make it effortless to answer. The questions should be numbered in order to ease the analyzing process. The questions should be presented to a group that is related to the subject. If the population of the target group is less than 100, all the people should be interviewed. On the other hand, if the target group consists of more than 100 persons, the researcher can create a ‘sample’ that represents the whole population. There are seven different sampling methods that are divided into two different major groups. (Kananen 2011, 72-74,90-94)

### **Non-probability sampling**

1. Judgment sampling
2. Quota sampling
3. Convenience sampling

## **Probability sampling**

1. Simple random sampling
2. Systematic random sampling
3. stratified sampling
4. Cluster sampling

(Kananen 2011, 95)

After gathering the data, it should be analyzed with statistical methods. Once the analyzing is done, the researcher should test the answers with existing theories. Final part of the research is to state the results and draw the conclusions. The results should be presented in table formats. There are a few kinds of different tables.

1. Frequency distribution
  - Presents how the answer are divided between different alternatives
  - Can be either numerical or percentual.
2. Cross tabulation
  - Includes two different variable which are compared
  - Typically presented in percentage

(Kananen 2011, 101-103.)

In this study the total amount of spectators in these three special stages is not available, since the organizer of the Neste Oil Rally, AKK Sports Oy can't provide the actual amount of tickets sold due to a fact that they have different kinds of tickets of which with spectators can freely move in different special stages. The total amount of answers being 331 from these three areas, more than a 100 each, the amount of answers should be enough. The respondents were chosen randomly, but by using the online data possibility in Webropol system, the amount of male and female spectators as well as different age groups were checked during the data gathering. Data collectors were advised to estimate the relationship between males and females answerers and to make sure that they interviewed both groups.

### **3.3 Reliability and validity of the study**

Purpose of this chapter is to prove that the research fulfills the demands of reliability and validity. Aim of this study is to produce valuable information to the organizer of Neste Oil Rally Finland. The information is very valuable for the organizer in order to improve its services in the future. That is why the information that is arisen from this research should be as accurate as possible.

#### **Reliability**

Reliability in quantitative research signifies the coherence of the research results. Reliability can be proven only by repeating the measurement. However the reliability can't be always proven by new measurement due to the fact that the phenomenon may change. Stability of the research means that the measurement doesn't vary over the time. Consistency means that the research measures the same matter. (Kananen 2011, 126.)

The similar kind of research was done in 2011 in Neste Oil Rally event and the results from that research were very similar to this year. It proves that the research can be repeated. The event, where the research was conducted, will be arranged in a yearly basis in the future also. Due to the fact, that the biggest share of the respondents answered the questionnaire using Ipads, humane errors were minimized. Only small share of the questionnaires were answered using paper version followed by a process where researcher entered the data to Webropol database. The program calculates the results automatically so humane errors doesn't occur during analyze of the results.

#### **External validity**

External validity defines how well the results can be generalized to the whole population. Sample must be chosen in a way that it represents the whole population in every way. (Kananen 2011, 126.)

In this research the sample was chosen carefully. The study was done in a closed area where only the paying customers had access to. By doing so, it was ensured that only people related to the event were questioned. The respondents were chosen randomly inside the closed area with researchers' strict consideration.

### **Content validity**

Content validity considers the accuracy of the measure and how the measured matters responds to what was supposed to be measured. (Kananen 2011, 127.)

Aim of this research was to find out visitors satisfaction and willingness to recommend the event. The satisfaction of the visitors was inquired from many different points of views so there is a firm belief that the criteria of the content validity were fulfilled. Willingness to recommend was asked by using the Likert scale and further analysed by searching those satisfaction characteristics that affected the willingness to recommend mostly. This was done by using the Webropol analysis program.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

In the first part of the results, the purpose is to present the background information of the respondents. To be able to specify more accurately, the results of different segments of visitors, the respondents are divided into four different segments;

- Men
- Women
- First timers
- Rally fans

A ‘first timer’ means a visitor who has never visited a Neste Oil Rally Finland before.

A ‘rally fan’ means a visitor who has visited the Neste Oil rally once or often.

After the background information, the findings of the customer satisfaction of the event will be presented.. Third part of the results aims to state the willingness to recommend the event to others.

### 4.2 Background information of the visitors

The number of respondents in this survey was 331. The purpose of background information is to demonstrate an overall picture of the respondents. To achieve this goal, the following facts will be presented: gender, age, size of party and the number of visits to the Neste Oil rally.

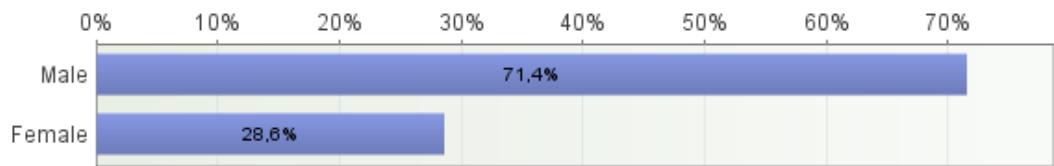


Figure 5. Ratio between male and female respondents. (N=329)

As shown by figure 5, the number of male answerers was significantly larger than that of female answerers. 235 (71,4%) males makes up the group 'men' and 94 (28,6%) female makes up the group 'women'.

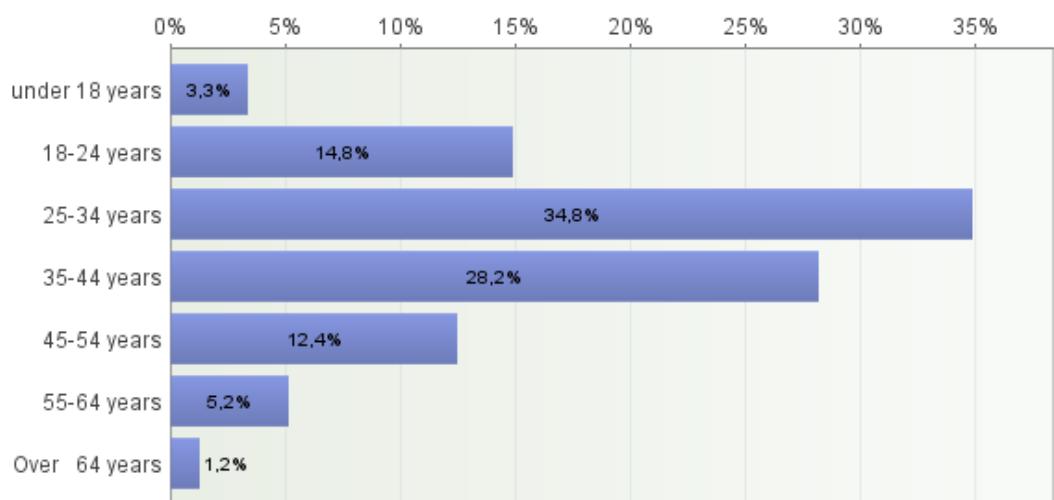


Figure 6. Respondents age distribution (N=330)

Figure shows that the largest age group of the respondents was from 25 to 34 years old. Over half of all the respondents (63%) were aged between 25 and 44 years.

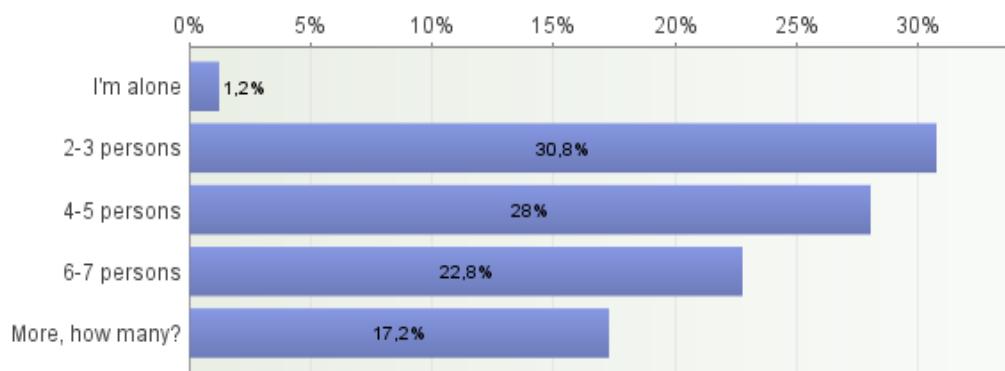


Figure 7. Number of party (N=325)

Figure 7 shows that most of the visitors came at least in a party of two or more. The majority of the respondents, 30,8% (100), was with a party of two to three persons. Only 1.2% (4) off the visitors came alone.

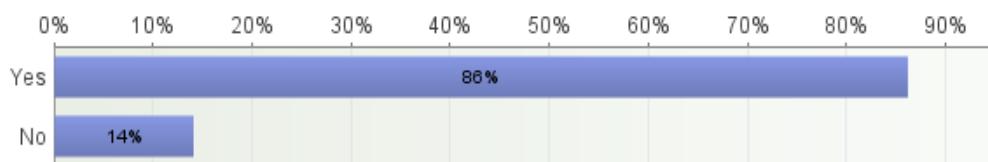


Figure 8. Previously visits in Neste Oil Rally Finland (N=322)

Figure 8 shows that as many as 86% (261) of all the respondents has earlier visited the Neste Oil Rally Finland. This Group named as 'rally fans' consists of 261 visitors. The share of people who have never been to the Neste Oil rally earlier, also known as the 'first timers', is only 14% (26) of the respondents.

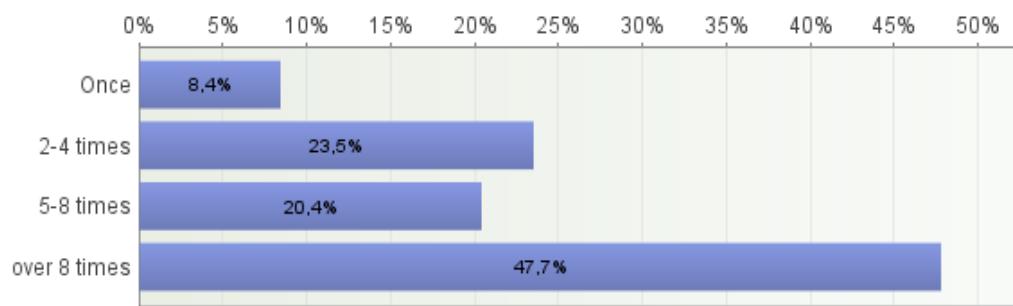


Figure 9. Number of previous visits (N=285)

As shown by figure 9 above, The neste Oil rally event is an important tradition for a lot of people. 47, 7% of all the respondents had visited in Neste Oil rally more than 8 times.

#### 4.3 Customer satisfaction of Neste Oil Rally Finland

This chapter discovers the key finding related to customer satisfaction with the event. In question 20, the respondents were asked to evaluate the services provided at the Neste Oil Rally event. The scale to evaluate the event was from 1 being very dissatisfied to 5 being very satisfied.

	1	2	3	4	5	N	Average
Atmosphere in the Special Stage	0.0%	0.3%	8.3%	42.5%	48.9%	315	4.4
Moving at the Special Stage	0.9%	1.3%	15.8%	42.6%	39.4%	317	4.2
Parking awareness and efficiency	1.9%	2.6%	14.7%	38.3%	42.5%	313	4.2
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area	0.0%	3.2%	16.9%	44.4%	35.5%	313	4.1
Special Stage staff members' quality of service	1.3%	1.6%	17.9%	43.6%	35.5%	307	4.1
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage	1.6%	5.4%	16.1%	40.7%	36.3%	317	4.0
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage	2.9%	6.7%	19.7%	38.4%	32.4%	315	3.9
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage	2.0%	13.0%	33.2%	34.4%	17.4%	253	3.5
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	3.7%	14.3%	31.1%	34.0%	16.8%	244	3.5
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	4.6%	13.1%	35.0%	30.0%	17.3%	237	3.4

Table 1. Customer satisfaction in different aspects of the event.

As shown by table one, the atmosphere becomes the most important factor that the visitors were satisfied with. 48.9% of all the respondents were highly satisfied with the atmosphere at the special stages. The Average value given to atmosphere at the special stage was 4.4. The Second highest satisfaction rating was given to parking awareness and efficiency and to moving around at special stage. Both factors received a value of 4.2. The third highest satisfaction rate was given to spectator guidance in the special stage area and to special stage staff members' quality of service. The respondents gave the average of 4.1 to these factors.

As shown by table 1, five highest graded factors were:

- Atmosphere in the special stage (4,4)
- Parking awareness and efficiency (4,2)
- Moving at the special stage (4,2)
- Spectator guidance in the special stage (4,1)
- Special stage staff members' quality of service (4,1)

The three lowest grades were given to:

- Food selection for sale at the special stage (3,5)
- The quantity of non-racing programs in the special stage (3,5)
- The quality of non-racing programs in the special stage (3,4)

To be able to get better understanding of the customer satisfaction in different services provided, there is a need to examine it via different respondent segments. In

the table two below, the segments are women and male respondents. Three best evaluated and three worst evaluated matters are listed in the table.

<b>Women</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Top three positive aspects</b>							
Atmosphere in the Special Stage	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	39.1%	56.5%	92	4.5
Moving at the Special Stage	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	40.2%	46.7%	92	4.3
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area	0.0%	1.1%	11.1%	45.6%	42.2%	90	4.3
<b>Top three negative aspects</b>							
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage	1.3%	10.5%	34.2%	30.3%	23.7%	76	3.6
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	3.2%	11.1%	36.5%	27.0%	22.2%	63	3.5
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	4.6%	13.8%	30.8%	30.8%	20.0%	65	3.5
<b>Men</b>							
<b>Top three positive aspects</b>							
Atmosphere in the Special Stage	0.0%	0.5%	9.5%	43.9%	46.2%	221	4.4
Parking awareness and efficiency	1.8%	2.7%	15.0%	39.5%	40.9%	220	4.2
Moving at the Special Stage	1.3%	1.8%	16.6%	43.9%	36.3%	223	4.1
<b>Top three negative aspects</b>							
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage	2.3%	14.2%	32.4%	36.4%	14.8%	176	3.5
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	3.4%	14.0%	31.5%	35.4%	15.7%	178	3.5
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	5.2%	13.3%	34.7%	31.2%	15.6%	173	3.4

Table 2. Customer satisfaction in different aspects: Women/Men

Both men and women gave best grade to atmosphere in the special stage. Women gave the average of 4.5 and men gave the average of 4.4 to atmosphere. Women gave second and third higher grade to moving at the special stage (4.3) and to spectator guidance in the special stage area (4.3). Men gave second and third highest grade to parking awareness and efficiency (4.2) and to moving at the special stage (4.1).

Both respondent groups shared the thoughts about negative matters in the event. Men and women evaluated the food selection for sale at the special stage, the quantity of non-racing program in the special stage and quality of non-racing programs in the special stage with the lowest grades.

In the table three below, the different aspects of the event are evaluated by 'rally fans' and 'first-timers'. Three best evaluated and three worst evaluated aspects are listed in the table.

Rally fans	1	2	3	4	5	N	Average
<b>Top three positive aspects</b>							
Atmosphere in the Special Stage							
0.0%	0.4%	8.1%	41.1%	50.4%	270	4.4	
Moving at the Special Stage	1.1%	1.5%	14.7%	43.8%	39.0%	272	4.2
Parking awareness and efficiency	2.2%	2.6%	14.9%	37.7%	42.5%	268	4.2
<b>Top three negative aspects</b>							
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage							
1.8%	12.4%	35.9%	32.7%	17.1%	217	3.5	
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	3.8%	15.6%	30.8%	34.6%	15.2%	211	3.4
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	5.4%	14.7%	34.8%	29.9%	15.2%	204	3.3
<b>First-timer</b>							
<b>Top three positive aspects</b>							
Atmosphere in the Special Stage							
0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	55.0%	37.5%	40	4.3	
Parking awareness and efficiency	0.0%	2.5%	12.5%	42.5%	42.5%	40	4.3
Moving at the Special Stage	0.0%	0.0%	22.0%	34.1%	43.9%	41	4.2
<b>Top three negative aspects</b>							
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage							
0.0%	3.6%	35.7%	32.1%	28.6%	28	3.9	
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	3.6%	7.1%	28.6%	35.7%	25.0%	28	3.7
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage	3.1%	18.8%	18.8%	40.6%	18.8%	32	3.5

Table 3. Customer satisfaction in different aspects: Rally Fan/First-timer

'Rally fans' and 'first-timers' had a same opinion of the best three aspects in the event. Atmosphere in the special stage, moving at the special stage and parking awareness received the best grades. Both respondent groups gave the best grade to atmosphere in the special stage.

They also shared an opinion of the worst three aspects in the event. The quality and quantity of non-racing programs in the special stage and food selection for sale in the special stage was evaluated with the lowest grades by both respondent groups.

In question 25, the respondents were asked to evaluate the event by using the school grading scale in Finland (4-10), based on their experience. The answers are shown in figure 10 below.

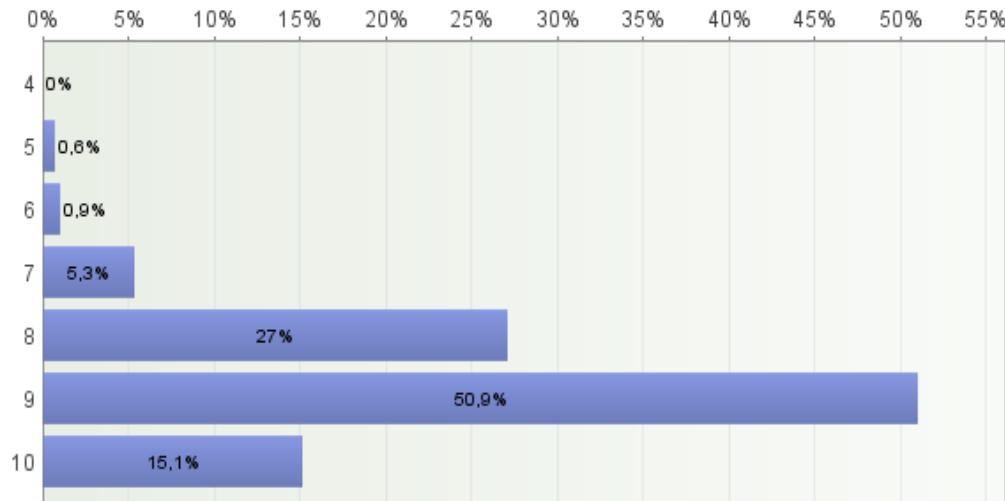


Figure 10. Overall customer satisfaction of the event. Scale 4-10

The scale to evaluate the event is from 4 to 10, four being poor and ten being excellent. As shown in figure 10 above, as many as 93% of the respondents gave the event grade 8 or higher. Average grade that was given to the event was 8.7. None of the respondents gave grade 4 to the event.

Table four below shows the grades given by first-timers, men, women and rally fans.

	<b>First-timers</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Rally fans</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>271</b>
4	0.0%	0%	0%	0%
5	0.0%	0%	<b>2,2%</b>	0,7%
6	0.0%	<b>1,3%</b>	0%	1,1%
7	7,1%	<b>5,4%</b>	<b>5,4%</b>	5,2%
8	<b>33,3%</b>	30,8%	17,4%	26,6%
9	45,2%	48,7%	<b>56,5%</b>	51,3%
10	14,3%	13,8%	<b>18,5%</b>	15,1%
<b>Average grade</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>

Table 4. Overall satisfaction of the event. First-timers/Men/Women/Rally fans/

There were no major differences between different respondent groups in the overall evaluation of the event. Group 'women' gave the best grade (8.8) to the event.

It is vital information for organizer of the event to be aware of the factors that affects to overall satisfaction of the customers. In question 20 the respondents were asked to evaluate ten different aspects of the event. In question 25 the respondents were asked to grade the event based on their experience. Using cross tabulation it is possible to examine what are the factors that affect the most to overall satisfaction of the event. In the table 5 below, three most and three less correlative aspects are listed.

Correlation coefficient can have a value between -1 and 1. If the value is -1, there is not any dependence between variables. If the value is 1, the different variables are fully dependent from each other. (KvantimOTV 2013.)

All respondents	Correlation coefficient
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=307)	0,43
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=315)	0,37
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage (N=253)	0,37
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=317)	0,32
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=244)	0,32
Moving at the Special Stage (N=317)	0,29

Table 5. Correlation between different services provided and customer satisfaction of the event. All respondents.

Table five shows that special stage staff members' quality of service had the highest impact on customer satisfaction. The correlation coefficient was 0.43. Second highest correlation, 0.37, was in traffic arrangements when arriving in special stage. Third highest correlation, 0.37, was in food selection for sale at the special stage.

Three the less correlating aspects with the customers satisfaction was spectator guidance when entering the special stage (0.32), the quantity of non-racing programs in the special stage area (0.32) and moving at the special stage (0.29).

The differences between correlation values are quite small. It means that none of the aspects has significantly large impact in customer satisfaction.

In order to get a better and more accurate understanding of correlation between different aspects of the event and customer satisfaction, there is a need to examine the correlation through different respondent groups. In the table six below, the correlation is examined through 'first-timers' and 'rally fans'.

<b>First-timers</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=28)	0,59
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=28)	0,56
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=40)	0,55
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=39)	0,32
Moving at the Special Stage (N=41)	0,23
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=40)	0,16
<b>Rally fans</b>	
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=265)	0,42
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=271)	0,38
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=267)	0,35
Moving at the Special Stage (N=272)	0,3
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=204)	0,29
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=211)	0,28

Table 6. Correlation between different aspects and customer satisfaction of the event. First-timers/Rally fans.

The quality (0.59) and quantity (0.56) of non-racing programs in the special stage area had the largest impact to customer satisfaction in first-timers' respondent group. There is a large difference due to the fact that the same aspects gain lowest correlation coefficient in rally fans' respondent group. Rally fans' highest correlation coefficient was special stage staff members' quality of service (0.42), traffic arrangements when arriving to special stage (0.38) and spectator guidance in the special stage (0.35). First-timers' lowest correlation coefficient was in traffic arrangements when arriving to special stage (0.32), moving at the special stage (0.23) and parking awareness and efficiency (0.16).

<b>Men</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=222)	0,38
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=217)	0,37
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=221)	0,37
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=173)	0,33
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=178)	0,32
Moving at the Special Stage (N=223)	0,27
<b>Women</b>	
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=88)	0,57
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage (N=76)	0,42
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=91)	0,36
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=63)	0,32
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=92)	0,25
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=91)	0,25

**Table 7. Correlation between different services provided and customer satisfaction of the event. Men/Women**

Table seven above, compares the respondents groups 'men' and 'female'. Traffic arrangement when arriving to special stage (0.38), special stage staff members' quality of service (0.37) and spectator guidance in the special stage (0.37) had the highest correlation coefficient. Likewise in respondent group men, in the respondent group 'women', traffic arrangements when arriving to special stage (0.36) and special stage staff members' quality of service (0.57) was within three highest correlation aspects. Third aspect that had high correlation coefficient was food selection for sale at the special stage (0.42).

In respondent group 'men', three lowest correlative aspects were the quality and quantity of non-racing programs in the special stage and moving at the special stage. 'Women' had also the quality of non-racing programs in the special stage within three less correlative aspects. Other two were spectator guidance when entering the special stage and parking awareness and efficiency.

#### 4.4 Willingness to recommend the event

One goal of this thesis was to research how willing the visitors are to recommend the event to others. Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most effective tools of spreading the word.

In question 16, the respondents were asked where they found information of the event. Figure 11 below shows that “from friend” was the second highest source of information. 27.7% of the respondents had had information from a friend. The highest source of information (49.55%) was from the event website. The official program magazine (25.9%) and radio were also popular source of information.

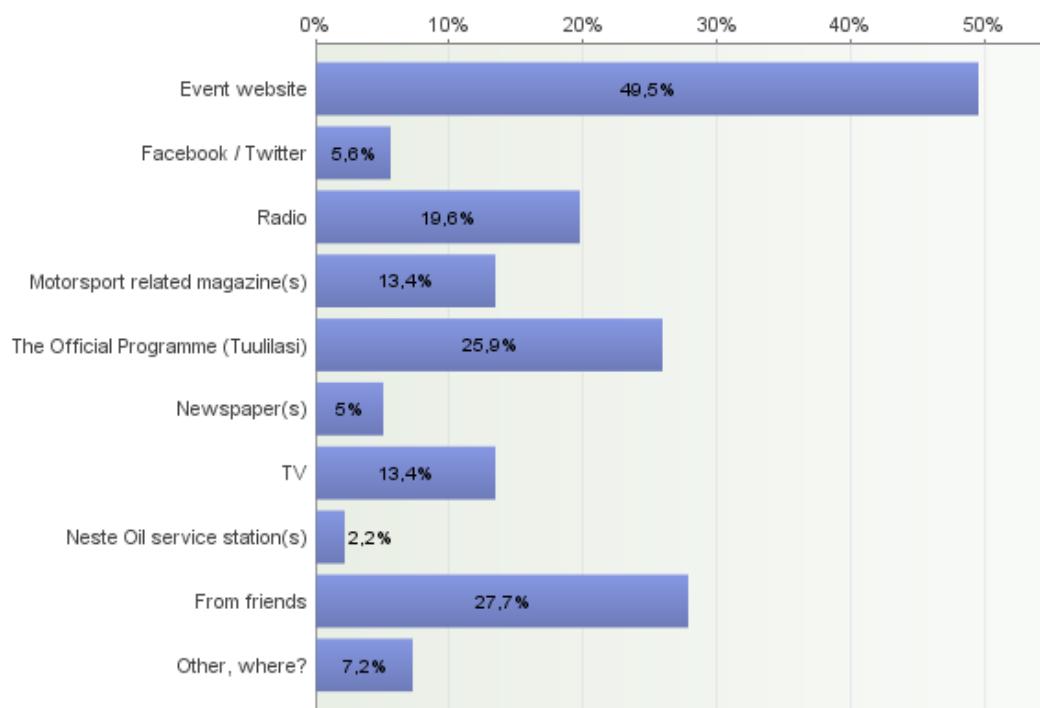


Figure 11. Visitors source of information of the event

Table eight below indicates that the visitors of the Neste Oil Rally Finland were very highly motivated to recommend the event to others. Regarding all the respondents, the average value given to recommendation was as high as 4.7. Groups ‘women’ and ‘rally fans’ were most willing to recommend the event with an average of 4.8. All the respondent groups gave at least 4.6 average.

Absolutely not	1	2	3	4	5	Yes, absolutely	N	Average
<b>Men</b>	0.0%	0.5%	2.7%	22.1%	74.8%		222	4.7
<b>Women</b>	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	17.2%	80.6%		93	4.8
<b>Rally Fans</b>	0.0%	0.4%	2.2%	19.3%	78.1%		270	4.8
<b>First-timers</b>	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	31.0%	64.3%		42	4.6
<b>All respondents</b>	0.0%	0.3%	2.5%	20.8%	76.3%		317	4.7

Table 8. Willingness to recommend the event to others. (Different groups)

Different aspects of the event were cross tabulated with the willingness to recommend the event. The aspects are listed below in the table nine.

All respondents	Correlation coefficient
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=313)	0.30
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=307)	0.27
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage (N=315)	0.25
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=237)	0.24
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=244)	0.24
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=313)	0.22
Moving at the Special Stage (N=317)	0.22
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage (N=253)	0.19
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=315)	0.18
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=317)	0.18

Table 9. Correlation coefficient of different aspects in willingness to recommend the event

Spectator guidance in the special stage area had the highest correlation (0.3) of the aspects. Second highest correlation was in special stage staff members' quality of service (0.27). Third highest correlation was in traffic arrangement when arriving to special stage (0.25). Three lowest correlation coefficient was in food selection for sale at the special stage (0.19), atmosphere in the special stage (0.18) and spectator guidance when entering the special stage (0.18).

To have a more specific understanding from where the willingness to recommend the event consists, the aspects that effects to willingness to recommend the event

should be examined through different respondent groups. Table 10 below indicates the respondent groups 'men' and 'women'.

<b>Men</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=221)	0.33
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=178)	0.26
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage N=222)	0.25
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=223)	0.20
Special Stage staff members' quality of service(N=217)	0.19
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=221)	0.15
<b>Women</b>	
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=88)	0.45
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=91)	0.27
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=92)	0.26
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=90)	0.15
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage(N=76)	0.11
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=92)	0.06

Table 10. Three most and least correlative aspects in willingness to recommend the event. Men/Women

Spectator guidance in the special stage (0.33) had the greatest impact in willingness to recommend the event in the respondent group 'men'. The second highest correlation coefficient was in the quantity of non-racing programs in the special stage (0.26). Third highest correlation coefficient was in traffic arrangement when arriving to special stage (0.25). Atmosphere in the special stage had the lowest correlation coefficient (0.15). Second lowest impact was in spectator staff members' quality of service (0.19) and third lowest correlation coefficient was in spectator guidance when entering the special stage (0.2)

There is quite a large difference between men and women respondents. Special stage staff members' quality of service (0.45) and atmosphere in the special stage (0.26) had highest and third highest correlation coefficient. The aspects mentioned had lowest and second lowest correlation coefficient within men respondents. Three lowest correlation coefficients was in spectator guidance in the special stage area (0.15), food selection for sale at the special stage (0.11) and spectator guidance when entering the special stage (0.06).

<b>Rally fans</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=265)	0.26
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=268)	0.25
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage (N=204)	0.25
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=270)	0.15
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage (N=272)	0.15
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage (N=217)	0.14
<b>First-timers</b>	
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area (N=41)	0.56
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage (N=32)	0.44
Atmosphere in the Special Stage (N=40)	0.34
Special Stage staff members' quality of service (N=37)	0.29
Moving at the Special Stage (N=41)	0.03
Parking awareness and efficiency (N=40)	0.01

Table 11. Three most and least correlative aspects in willingness to recommend the event. Rally Fans/First-timers

As table 11 illustrates, there are quite significant differences between 'rally fans' and 'first-timers'. Rally fans' highest correlation aspect was in special stage members' quality of service (0.26), while the same aspect had third lowest correlation (0.29) within the group first-timers. Second highest correlation coefficient was in parking awareness and efficiency (0.25) within the group of rally fans while the same aspect had the lowest correlation (0.01) within the group first-timers.

Spectator guidance in the special stage area had a major influence in willingness to recommend the event with a correlation coefficient of (0.56). Also food selection for sale at the special stage had quite high correlation coefficient. (0.44)

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSES

### 5.1 Customer satisfaction

Results of the research indicate that rally visitors were highly satisfied to the event. Average grade of 8.7 in the scale of 4 to 10 was given to the event. There were no significant differences in the overall satisfaction between men, women, rally fan or first-timers. It can be argued that each groups' expectations were fulfilled.

There were some differences with the aspects that affected in the formation of customer satisfaction. Within the group 'first-timers', quality and quantity of non-racing programs had the biggest correlation coefficient to customer satisfaction. Whereas these aspects mentioned had a minor effect to customer satisfaction within the groups men, women and rally fans. This finding can be related to the fact that the history of the event is very long. Probably the first-timers are not interested in rallying so much because they have not participated in the event earlier. That is why they might value the non-racing programs higher than the others. Based on this assumption, the organizer should put more effort in the non-racing programs. It might be a good way to attract more people to come to see the event.

Groups men, women and rally fans all shared a thought that quality of staff in the special stage is very important. As mentioned in chapter 2.2, perceived performance is one of the key factors in formation of customer satisfaction. If the staff members' quality of service is first-class, the customers' perceived performance is likely to be positive. Whatever issues the customers might meet during the event, staff members should be able to handle those problems. Staff members' quality of service was given the average grade of 4.1. This aspect could still be improved in the future.

## 5.2 Willingness to recommend the event

Results of this study indicate that there is a strong correlation between certain measured customer satisfaction determinants, like the frequency of attendance and provided service quality, and customer's willingness to recommend the rally event. However, it can also be shown that different types of customers consider different aspects of their experience important when recommending the event to other consumers. On the other hand, the results also suggest that the high level of customer satisfaction includes some risks, as the most satisfied customers might promote the event in a way that the expectations of new customers end up being extremely high.

### 5.3 Customer satisfaction model of Neste Oil Rally Finland

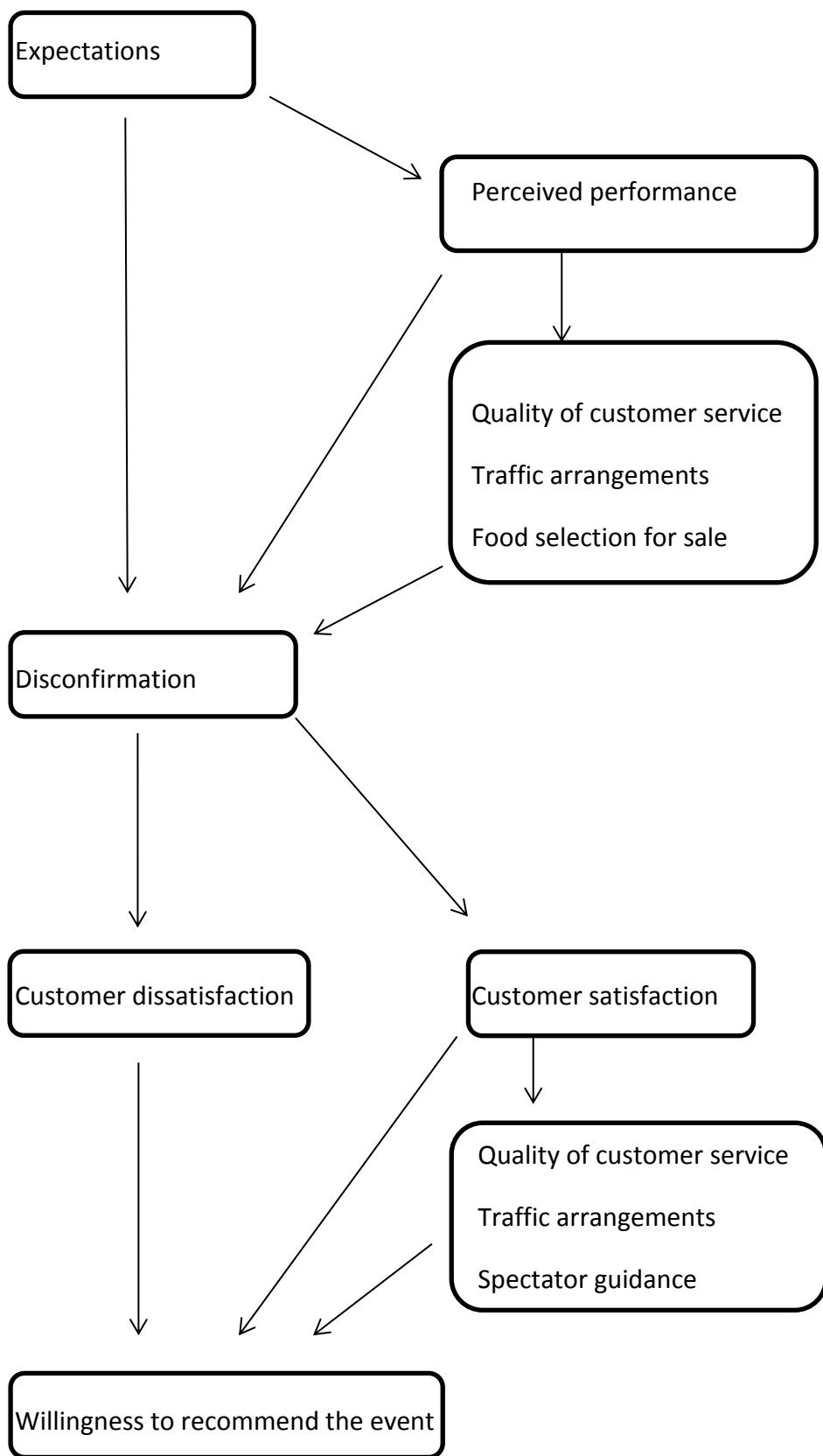


Figure 12. Customer satisfaction model of Neste Oil Rally

Figure 12 above illustrates the build up of customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend the event in Neste Oil Rally Finland. Before the event, a customer has different kind of expectations. The expectations are consisted of previous visits, information received from other people and information received from the organizer. According to the research, quality of customer service, traffic arrangements and food selection for sale had the biggest impact in the formation of customer satisfaction. During the event, a visitor experiences different kind of attractions. Those attractions are assimilated with the expectations. A visitor compares the expectations and perceived performance. If the expectations of the event are fulfilled, the customer is satisfied and if the expectations are not fulfilled, the customer is dissatisfied. Depending on the level of customer satisfaction, the rally visitor might promote the event to others. If the customer is highly satisfied, he or she is more likely to promote the event to others. According to the research, quality of service, traffic arrangements and spectator guidance had the biggest impact in customers' willingness to recommend the event to others.

#### 5.4 Future research

Van Leeuwen et al. (2002, 115-117) points out that winning and losing of the team that the spectator supports, has an impact when the spectator evaluates the event. This same subject should be examined in Neste Oil Rally event. Finnish drivers have had a significant history in succeeding in world rally series. It has increased the popularity of the rallying. During the past ten years, the Finnish drivers have not succeeded so well. It can create a threat to the future of the Neste Oil Rally Finland. By examining this matter, organizer would discover how important the success of Finnish drivers is and if there should be some action to be made.

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## APPENDICE

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire in Neste Oil Rally Finland 2012

#### Neste Oil Rally Finland 2012

#### Special Stage Spectator Survey

##### 1. Which Special Stage (SS)?

Mark here on which Special Stage the questionnaire is conducted.

- Ruuhimäki
- Koukunmaa
- Mikkiperä
- Ouninpohja

##### 2. Gender?

- Male
- Female

##### 3. Age?

- under 18 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- Over 64 years

##### 4. Education?

Please choose the highest level of education you have acquired from below.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Primary/ Elementary school | <input type="radio"/> College of further education / trade or vocational school |
| <input type="radio"/> Secondary/ High School     | <input type="radio"/> Technical college   |
| <input type="radio"/> Polytechnic                | <input type="radio"/> University  |
| <input type="radio"/> Other,<br>what? _____      |   |

**5. Professional status?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Executive position                           | <input type="radio"/> Entrepreneur          |
| <input type="radio"/> Managerial employee / Senior clerical worker | <input type="radio"/> Junior clerical staff |
| <input type="radio"/> Employee / Workman                           | <input type="radio"/> Student               |
| <input type="radio"/> Unemployed                                   | <input type="radio"/> Retired               |
| <input type="radio"/> Other _____                                  |   |

**6. Respondents nationality?**

Please write down your nationality to open field below.

---

**7. How many persons are there in your spectator group?**

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> I'm alone             | <input type="radio"/> 2-3 persons |
| <input type="radio"/> 4-5 persons           | <input type="radio"/> 6-7 persons |
| <input type="radio"/> More, how many? _____ |                                   |

**8. My spectator group includes:**

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family members     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workmates          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others, who? _____ |

**9. Accommodation during Neste Oil Rally Finland?**

You can choose one or more of the alternatives. Please specify the number of nights spent  
at each accommodation.

1      2      3 +

night    nights    nights

I do not use any accommodation services (outside of home)  
during the event

**9.1 Where are you staying in the Jyväskylä area during the event?**

- |  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a hotel  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a motel  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In private accommodation                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a campsite   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In an RV / camper van or caravan                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, what? _____                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not staying in the Jyväskylä area during the event | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**9.2 Where are you staying in the Lahti area during the event?**

- |  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a hotel  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a motel  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In private accommodation                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a campsite                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In an RV / camper van or caravan                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, what? _____                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not staying in the Lahti area during the event | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**10. Have you previously taken part in Rally Finland?**

If you have not taken part in Rally Finland previously, please move on to question number 13 after answering this one!

Yes  No

11. How many times have you been at Rally Finland?

- Once
  - 2-4 times
  - 5-8 times
  - over 8 times

12. What makes you come back to the event? Please name 1-3 things.

Please move on to question number 15 after answering this one!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

13. Why did you choose to come to the Neste Oil Rally Finland as a spectator this year?

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14. What are your first impressions about how this Special Stage was organized?

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15. Where did you find information about the event?

Please choose 2 most used alternatives from the list below:

- Event website       Facebook / Twitter  
 Radio       Motorsport related magazine(s)  
 The Official Programme (Tuulilasi)       Newspaper(s)  
 TV       Neste Oil service station(s)  
  
 From friends       Other, where?

16. Where did you get your ticket to this Special Stage?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Neste Oil service station                    | <input type="radio"/> Lippupalvelu -box office          |
| <input type="radio"/> Special stage                                | <input type="radio"/> I'm a corporate guest             |
| <input type="radio"/> Event website                                | <input type="radio"/> Jyväskylän matkailu -travel agent |
| <input type="radio"/> Neste Oil Rally Finland box office Jyväskylä | <input type="radio"/> Other, where? _____               |

17. What kind of a ticket do you have?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> RallyPass              | <input type="radio"/> Biker's Pass        |
| <input type="radio"/> Single ticket          | <input type="radio"/> Residents clearance |
| <input type="radio"/> VIP ticket             | <input type="radio"/> Some other ticket   |
| <input type="radio"/> I do not have a ticket |   |

18. Which events have you, or plan to take part in during the Neste Oil RallyFinland 2012?

You can choose more than one alternative!

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruuhimäki Qualifying                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lahti Harbour events                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday's Special Stages                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Super Special Stage Jokimaa in Lahti               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday's Special Stages                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Super Special Stage Killeri in Jyväskylä           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday's Special Stages                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Rally HQ weekend events at Paviljonki in Jyväskylä |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Podium ceremonies at Paviljonki in Jyväskylä |   |

**19. How would you rate the different aspects of this Special Stage event?**

Please evaluate the different aspects of the event below and how well they work in the Special Stage. You may add your own opinion in the open field if you wish.

SCALE: 1 = VERY DISSATISFIED... 5 = VERY SATISFIED

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Atmosphere in the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
Special Stage staff members' quality of service	<input type="radio"/>					
Traffic arrangements when arriving to Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
Spectator guidance when entering the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
Parking awareness and efficiency	<input type="radio"/>					
Moving at the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
Spectator guidance in the Special Stage area	<input type="radio"/>					
Food selection for sale at the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
The quantity of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
The quality of non-racing programs in the Special Stage	<input type="radio"/>					
Other, what? _____	<input type="radio"/>					

**20. What kind of services (food, beverages, fan related products) would you like to be available in this Special Stage event?**

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**21.** Which of the following information channels do you use to follow Neste Oil Rally Finland at this Special Stage?

You may choose several options if you wish.

- Rally Radio
- The Official Programme of Neste Oil Rally (Tuulilasi)
- Internet-radio
- Website(s) (for example, wrc.com or nesteoilrallyfinland.fi)
- Sporttimobiili-application
- Katsomo.fi Internet-tv
- Some else, what? \_\_\_\_\_

**22.** Please name 1-3 things in this Special Stage event that you have been happy with?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**23.** Please name 1-3 things in this Special Stage event you have been unhappy with?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**24.** Based on your experiences, how would you grade this event on a scale of 4 to 10?

SCALE: 4= Poor grade... 10= Excellent grade

- 4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**25.** Would you recommend the Special Stage event to your friends?

1 2 3 4 5

Absolutely not      Yes, absolutely

26. Are you planning to come next year again?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Thank you for your answers!**