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Sports consumption and consumer behaviour at Aafk

A qualitative study of Aafk fans

Master's thesis in International Business and Marketing

Supervisor: Richard Glavee-Geo

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Abstract

The thesis investigates the consumer behaviour of the spectators attending the Aafk home matches. Aafk have experienced decreasing attendance numbers for some years for their home matches, being played at Color line stadium. When we collected the data, we used a qualitative method, and performed ten in-depth interviews with local supporters, football fans, supporter members, season tickets holders etc. From our data we identified five different factors which are affecting the spectator's willingness to attend the Aafk home matches. The five factors we identified are group affiliation, substitutes, team related, market related and external factors.

These five factors were used in a model, we developed based on our findings from the data, that explain how these factors affects the consumer behaviour and decision making towards participating the match. Further, the model also tries to explain how an increase in willingness to attend the match affects Aafk as a club positively in several ways. Our model shows that all the five factors combined, influence the consumers' willingness to attend the Aafk home matches. There is not one factor that stands out, having a significantly stronger impact on the consumer behaviour, rather it is the combination of the all five factors together that can best explain the consumer behaviour outcome. We also found that different types of spectators are affected to varying degrees by different factors.

This study explore how Aafk can influence their customers based on their sports consumer behaviour. We suggest several measures to increase the ticket sales based on our model. We also discussed in what ways the model can be transferred into an international context.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Motivation

The theme for this study is behaviour and motivation for purchasing tickets to Aalesund Fotball Club (Aafk) home games. Since the early 2000s Norwegian top division Eliteserien has experienced a decline in spectators. This has been a debated theme in the media and there is also some existing academic research on it. A research article from Melhus, studied what motivates spectators to attend football matches in a Norwegian context. He argued for only two dimensions of motives; Social motives and excitement dimension (Mehus, 2005).

Another study done by Kringstad and Solberg found that the higher the teams were ranked on the league table before the game, the more attendance the match attracted. These result support the significant attractiveness of sporting success. Other factors included distance between the two teams and matches between historical rivals also attracted more attendance (M. K. a. H. A. Solberg, 2012).

The director of Norsk Toppfotball, Leif Øverland, was worried about the decreasing numbers and wanted to make some specific measures to increase the interest among the supporters. After collecting feedback from the supporters, Øverland presented three measures; fanzones, lift of away supporters and a fantasy league for Eliteserien. This article was published in 2018 and looking at the numbers after the article was posted, it doesn't look like this was a huge success, at least not in relative to increase the audience numbers.

In 2019 Aftenposten, a Norwegian newspaper, posted an article about the trend of decreasing audience in the Eliteserien. In the article they present a graphical presentation of average audience attendance in Eliteserien; this shows that the highest average between 2005 to 2019 was reached in 2007 with an average of 10 516 spectators. The lowest average was in the same year as the publication of the article with only 5840 spectators at average. Since 2007 the average numbers of spectators have decreased for each year until 2019, this shows that there is without doubt a decreasing trend for audience attendance in Eliteserien (Bøyum, 2019).

Aafk has experienced the trend, but still achieved relatively high average attendance given the size of the city. When that is said it is still a main problem for Aafk with a declining attendance. Aafk had the biggest average audience attending in 2012 with around 10 000 supporters at the stadium in 2019 the number was around 3800 supporters at average. When Aafk got relegated from Eliteserien in 2017 the numbers decreased with 2205 supporters the following year, in 2018. In 2019, when Aafk still played at the second highest level in Norway after a disappointing season in 2018, the audience numbers decreased even more with 1000 supporters (Stenerud, 2019, May 6).

The purpose of the study is to give a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to find out what motivates the supporters of Aafk to patronize Aafk's sports events.

1.2 Sports categories

Consumption sports can be categorized into two categories. Direct and indirect consumption. Direct consumption sports refer to attending live sporting events or first-hand usage of sporting goods. Direct consumption is a valuable revenue stream for teams. A classic example is the stadium. The stadium triggers spending on complementary purchases such as food, beverage and merchandise. Indirect consumption sports include consuming sports through broadcast of sporting events, news and entertainment media, and interactions with other people. Indirect consumption is important to keep the fans engaged who cannot attend events, to attract new fans, and to maintain interest among fans (Talley, October 2013).

Another definition of sports consumption divides them into the following categories: material sports consumption, participatory sports consumption, and spectator sports consumption. Material sports consumption is personal consumption for sports apparel, shoes, hats, sports equipment etc. Participatory sports refer to the fee charged for sports contributions. Spectator sports means to purchase sports tickets and watch sports television (Chen, Qi, Shi, Jin, & Lin, 2012).

In recent years studies has focused on online sport consumption. Studies paid attention to online sport behaviour focusing on websites (Ahn, Hong, & Pedersen, 2014). Other study focuses on smartphone behaviour among sport fans (Ha, Kang, & Kim, 2017).

Consumption sports has experienced huge changes in the last two decades. In today's digital landscape, streaming services, on demand content and recording technology have largely changed the traditional tv viewing experience. Fans want to watch sports games live and in real time, but the broadcasters offer a broader product and not just the domestic league. When it comes to football, fans can watch live games from all the major leagues on their computer or smartphones. This means that fans are no longer confined to the home or local sports bar to watch their favourite teams. Fans are taking content on-the-go (Clinton, August 28, 2018).

1.2.1 Voluntary sports

Voluntary can be all kind of different sports; the common feature is that the organizations are created for and driven by volunteering. Small local clubs' main purpose is often just to be an alternative to leisure facilities to the local community, where people can socialize and be active together with a group. These types of organization have no big ambitions of making money or presentations on the pitch, the focus is the social part. These types of organizations are very dependent on voluntary zealots, that are working for the organization/club at their free time, just because they enjoy it or want to contribute to the organization for some reason. Factors that makes people work voluntarily could be social reasons, engagement for the club/society, affiliation, hobby activity etc.

1.2.2 Professional sports

Professional club's main purpose is to get good results both on the pitch and off the pitch with making profit. Like the voluntary sports, professional sports can also be every type of sport, but where the voluntary organizations are built on people's goodwill, professional organizations are built on paying employees to reach the goals that are set by the organization. These two factors are often very related, since good results on the pitch often provides more money to the club, and therefore increasing the financial results off pitch also. AAFK, which is our focus in this paper, is considered as a professional football club. Their focus is on

getting good results both on and off the pitch, and the people that are working for the club are paid for their duties.

1.3. Research problem and research objectives

Sports and especially sport organizations come in different forms, with different purposes. A sport club can be a big business or just voluntary for social purposes. It can also be in the purpose for representational reasons. We will distinguish between local clubs and professional clubs further in this paper.

The word spectator stems from the Latin word, meaning “to see” or “to watch” and emphasizes that a sports spectator might be a sophisticated watcher of the event, but will “remain passive in their interaction of the game” (Dobel, 2010). Wann defines a sports spectator as “one who is observing a sporting event” and therefore a spectator is more likely to analyse and examine than become actively involved in sharing their enthusiasm or spending their energy on the sport (Wann, 1995).

While comparing the definition with a sports fan, it's clear that there are some differences to the meaning of the two words. A sports fan can be defined as ‘ ‘one who is enthusiastic about a sport or athlete’ ’(Wann, 1995). Fans can actually have an impact on the outcome of the results of the sports even, as Doble highlighted it; *Fans matter so much that sports often has a home field advantage largely created by the fans in the stands, because enthusiastic sports fans are able to support and uplift athletes and players by transferring their energy and emotional support to them through cheering and chanting.* Also, the opposite is true when sports fans display competitiveness towards their rivals (Dobel, 2010).

Sport is something that has been an activity that brings people together. Milano and Chelladurai, quotes Kofi Annan; *sport is a universal language that can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status* (Milano & Chelladurai, 2011). Sports makes people forget about all their differences when attending a sports event to support their favourite team or athlete, creating the feeling of one great community that stands together.

There are several different factors, both social and psychological, that motivates spectators to attend an entertainment sport event including group affiliation, economic gains, escape from

daily routines/duties, eustress, aesthetics and family (Wiid & Cant, 2015). All or one of these factors, or most likely a combination of them; are affecting the spectators decision to purchase a ticket to attend an sport event, so it is just not about good supporters that want to support their team, there are different reasons to attend an sports event. Every consumers or groups consumer sports event for different reasons.

The motivation that lies behind a supporter´s decision to purchase tickets to football games is of course similar to the factor of general sports events, that are mentioned above. And we will look further at those factors when looking at the motivation for supporters to purchase match tickets.

Aafk are very active when it comes to their Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Including; sending regular emails to customers to keep them updated on the latest news and offers, daily updates on social media and own website, carrying out different projects to get more people to attend home matches, players calling direct to some random chosen customers to sell season cards etc.

In this study we will, as mentioned, focus on the spectators that are relevant in relation to Aafk. When we talk about relevant spectators in relation to Aafk, we mean supporters of the club, people attending the home matches, previous season cardholders, and general football supporters from the district. We have chosen to focus on the consumer behaviour when purchasing tickets to Aafk home matches.

In the research we are using qualitative design. We use qualitative methods to get into the depth of the problem, as we find few previous research that has tried to get in the depth of this research problem. After collecting the qualitative data, we will develop a model that will explain the phenomenon.

The reason why we will mainly focus on Aafk in this paper, is because we are doing this thesis in a cooperation together with Aafk. We are two students writing this thesis who are both studying at NTNU Campus Aalesund, and we want to investigate the consumer behaviour for the local supporters in this era.

When using the qualitative method, we will for the most part use one-to-one interviews. We will look at persons that has a connection with Aafk when we choose the persons we want to talk with. This means that the relevant persons can be either a supporter of Aafk, member of the fan club, employee at Aafk, or be involved with Aafk or the local football here in sunnmøre in general.

In this paper we want to find out more what lies behind the motivation for the spectator's decision to attend an Aafk home match. We will also want to investigate in what ways the behaviour of the supporters can be influenced to increase the consumption of tickets sales to the Aafk home matches. And last, we will present how the implications from our findings can contribute to the field of international business.

Therefore, we have made three different research questions we aim to answer in this paper.

Our research questions are stated as follows:

RQ1. What are the motivations and barriers for attending home games of the Aafk?

RQ2. In what ways can the behaviour of the football fans and supporters be influenced to increase consumption of Aafk sporting activities?

RQ3. What are the implications of the findings for international business?

1.4. Organization of the study

We start with presenting previous literature that is relevant for this study in chapter 2, looking specifically into the subjects of consumer behaviour, motivation and segmentation especially regarding the field of sports.

Chapter three gives a relevant background knowledge of the subject. We will present domestic and international footballing governance. Short introduction of Aafk and their structure. Lastly will we look at Aalesund and the region of sunnmøre where most of their supporters are located. We present the current situation of both the league and Aafk regarding supporters.

Chapter four describes the method selection for the thesis. We present the procedures we have chosen, and assess the validity and reliability to our work and our results.

Further on will we be presenting the results and analysis of our in-depth interviews in chapter five. We are presenting our findings and use them to make a model that tries to explain the factors that influence the consumer behaviour and purchasing of tickets to Aafk home matches.

Finally, in chapter six, we present the discussion, implications and limitations of our study and discussing our contribution to the field of study and further research that can be studied.

2.0 Literature review and theory

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will look more into the theory that is relevant for this study. Starting with looking deeper into consumer behaviour, to get an overview over what previous literature tells us about behaviour of the consumers. The factors that influence people to attend sports events, is something that sports marketers have wanted to get a better understanding for a long time. Understanding this factor is expected to improve the marketing efficiency.

When more spectators are attending the stadium that means an increase in revenues in tickets of course, but also other indirect revenues such as parking, concessions and merchandise. Higher revenues mean a better economy for the club financial situation, and in today's football industry a good financial situation is often correlated with better performances on the field, because a good financial situation means that the club has the possibility to invest in the club by buying new players and better training facilities (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003).

Further we are looking at motivation, in the field of sport, and measurements of motivation, and last, in the end of the chapter we will talk about segmentation.

2.2 Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the study of consumers choices during searching, evaluating, purchasing, and using products and services that they believe would satisfy their needs (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

The sport industry has for long been one of the biggest businesses when it comes to entertainment, where football is one of the biggest contributors. In total it is estimated that the sport industry in general generates revenues between \$213 billion to \$441 billion annually.

There can be many reasons why sport has become big business with a lot of existing and potential customers, one reason can be the different types of benefits offered, including: health (stress reducing), entertainment, sociability and achievement (Earnhardt, 2011).

Football can create a unity between supporters of the same football club that creates a feeling of affiliation, and in the same way it can create a rivalry between two supporter groups from

different football clubs, which again can make the affiliation between the common supporters even stronger.

In an article from 2011 by Beaton they refer to a model called Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) that was developed by Funk and James back in 2001 (Beaton et al, 2011; Funk and James, 2001). PCM is describing the different stages that are needed to create a sport involvement for the possible participants. This model was developed in the context of passive sport participation and can therefore be very relevant in relation to our study. The PCM model consists of four different stages: awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance.

Awareness is a necessary step in the decision-making context, a person cannot attend an event if he or she is not even aware of the happening (Beaton et al, 2011). Like with any other products offered, the customer needs to be aware of what the product (sport) offers, for most segments in the sport industry, it is estimated that 70 percent of all customers are referred by word of mouth from existing customers. Family, friends, affiliation and environment seems to be some important factors of impact, when people choose which team, they want to support, a choice that is often taken in an early age (Mullin et al, 2007).

Attraction describes how personal, psychological and environmental determinants interact with awareness outcomes and leads to volition and emotional response. Attachment is when an individual assigns emotional, functional and symbolic meaning to an activity (Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, & Jordan, 2011).

Allegiance, the final stage, is when the activity has become integrated into the self-schema of the individual; the individual has become so involved and committed that the activity is a part of their own core-values and beliefs (Beaton et al, 2011).

In our case this means that individual would have relate him/herself to AAFK, and AAFK would be a part of the individual self-image of that person. Sports consumers are attracted of feeling a sense of personal achievement and increase their self-esteem and public image if their favourite team are performing good. When their favourite team wins, supporters often say that ``we won``, or ``we lost`` when the team is performing bad and losing matches (Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, & Gladden, 2002; Snyder, Lassegard and Ford, 1986).

Individuals are also more likely to pick a team that are successful as their own favourite team, because the feeling of vicarious achievements are higher when supporting a team that are

having success (Mahony et al, 2002; Brannscombe and Wann 1991; Mathony, Howard and Madrigal 200; Smith, Patterson, Williams and Hogg 1981).

These four stages show us how people get engaged in sports activities and what phases they are going through in the process when becoming more attached and engaged to the sport event. But work or other activities can make the schedule tight, and makes some people prefer to watch the game at home on their tv. This is can have an impact of the decreasing attendance of numbers we see at the stadium for clubs playing in the Norwegian Eliteserien.

Both environmental, internal and external factors influence the behaviour of sport consumers. Environmental factors may include family, friends and social norms. Direct and indirect factors can influence the behavioural outcomes of the customer and cause emotional reactions and personal predispositions of spectators. Cultural and social class structures include race, gender relations etc. And is also influencing the consumers. Other examples that can be worth to mention is self-concept, family cycle, learning, perception and the consumer decision making process (Earnhardt, 2011).

Each factor listed can have a positive or negative effect on the sport consumers behaviour. New research however shows that the internal and external factors only explain parts of the consumers behaviour related to sport, as they relate to attend sport venues rather than other alternatives (Earnhardt, 2011).

2.3 Motivation

Motivation is the driving force within individuals that impels them to act (Wisnblit, 2019). In other words, it is the set of processes that lead people to behave as they do. Motivation can be internally (intrinsic) or externally (extrinsic) generated. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself. Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Examples of extrinsic motivation are rewards like money, grades and threat of punishment (Earnhardt, 2011).

2.3.1 Sport fans motivation

Sport fans have multiple and often complex motives for consuming sport. This depends on what kind of sports consumption they prefer. Whether it is sports in a live venue or recorded sports in some media form. The understanding of the reasons to why fans watch sports is valuable and important for the management and marketing department of any sports team or athlete (Earnhardt, 2011). Kwon defines sports motivation as “the motives of sports fans and their attitudes and behaviour towards players and teams (Wiid & Cant, 2015; Kwon, 2001). According to the motivation for sports consumption theory, spectators of a specific sport have different underlying psychological motives as to why they follow and consume such sport (Stander & van Zyl, 2016). Since people are unique, their motives for following sport will differ (Stander & van Zyl, 2016).

Research explains that it is vital to understand the motivational behind, and the benefits individuals receive when attending live sporting events or supporting teams or athletes. These benefits are crucial as they encompass the main reasons why people become sports fans. (Wiid & Cant, 2015; Beech and Chadwich). According to Trail and James (2001) reasons to why a sport attracts them are: Vicarious achievement, Acquisition of knowledge, Aesthetics, drama, escape, physical attractiveness, physical skills and social interaction. Other studies have divided these motives into two categories. These are psycho-sociological (personal or individual) and behavioural (game) related factors. From this perspective the categories from Trail and James are sorted into the fitting category (Wiid & Cant, 2015).

The differentiation between personal or individual and game related consumption factors provide a structured means to understand the psychological attachment of spectators to the sport. These factors are directly related to buying behaviours because as a collective they primarily influence the decision of the spectator to consume sport (Stander & van Zyl, 2016).

2.3.2 Sport consumer Motivation Process

This process refers to the process that causes people to behave the way they do as consumers. The motivation process consists of 5 stages. Need recognition, Tension reduction, drive state, want pathway and goal behaviour. The basic level of sport consumer motivation reflects desires to satisfy an internal need or receive a benefit through acquisition (Funk, 2008).

Need recognition is the first basic stage. This need is created when a discrepancy exists between the individuals present state and some ideal state. This consists of biological and psychological need (internal and external) (Funk, 2008).

The second stage tension reduction is the discrepancy between the present state and the ideal state creates a feeling of tension. Tension is unpleasant and occurs when a need remains unfulfilled. Through consumption of products and services individuals can reduce tension (Funk, 2008).

The third stage drive state occurs when a person is aroused to reduce or eliminate an unpleasant state and restore balance. Drive state can develop from either biological need, cognitive needs or a combination of both. Sport consumption is driven by cognitive needs (Funk, 2008).

Want pathway is the fourth division. The want stage is the pathway toward a specific form of consumption the individual chooses to reduce the tension. There is no fixed way an individual chooses their pathway. This comes from a unique set of experiences, socio-cultural upbringing, benefits desired, personality. This represents the pull effect that draws the person to a product or service that gives the individual a desirable outcome (Funk, 2008).

Goal behaviour is the final point of the motivation process according to Funk. This final stage occurs through a consumption activity that fulfils the need and reduces tension (Funk, 2008).

The Push-Pull motivation concept illustrates a two-dimensional approach to motivation. The Push motivation represents the internal desire to eliminate an unpleasant state and reduce tension that initiates motivation. The pull motivation is the pathway providing the most benefits to restore balance directs motivation (Funk, 2008).

2.3.3 Measurement of motivations relating to sports.

The Motivation Scale for Sports Consumption (MSSC) is a measure of motivations relating to sports consumption (South Africa). The MSSC has been used to assess the motivation for spectator sports consumption in the last decade. The model has revealed valuable information about the motives that facilitate consumption of different types of sports (Stander & van Zyl, 2016; Shank & Lysberger).

A similar model developed by Wann, called Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS), includes eight constructs of fan motivation (Wann, Schrader & Wilson). The eight common motives are: eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic gains, aesthetic, group affiliation, and family (Wiid & Cant, 2015; Wann, 1995).

Eustress is defined as “positive stress” and the exciting atmosphere that is felt by the senses when watching a live sporting event. Studies show that eustress is “creating a feeling of psychological wellbeing” (Wiid & Cant, 2015). The desire excitement from the sporting event is important for the fan motivated by eustress. The next motive, self-esteem give the fans a sense of accomplishment. Especially when the team is doing well. This is also important for more casual fans that feel encouraged to attend sporting events when their team is performing well. The third motive is Entertainment. Entertainment as a social motive will drive sports fans to attend or watch sporting events for the amusement. It is the desire to be entertained by the sporting event or athlete (Wiid & Cant, 2015).

According to research is the escape motive closely related with the entertainment motive as it gives people with the chance to escape or break away from their daily life. The aesthetic motive can be reflected by the “high level of skill and competence” demonstrated by athletes and teams. Studies show that in general are individuals attracted to the “grace and beauty” that can be found in sports, such as ballet or gymnastics (Wiid & Cant, 2015).

The motive economic gains are referred to activities such as gambling and sport betting. This can be the reason to why some people become active sport fans. On the other hand, has research shown that people that is motivated by economic gains may not be fans of the sport but is involved for personal gain (Wiid & Cant, 2015).

The seventh motive group affiliation is explained by studies as the need to “strengthen and maintain social links through shared experience of attending sports events.” That comes down to the need to spend time with social groups or friends as driver for sport consumption.

The last motive, family motives, is the desire to spend time with family members and sport consumption will fulfil the desire. Attending sport events be an activity such as family bonding and spending time with loved ones (Wiid & Cant, 2015).

2.4 Segmentation

Market segmentation can be described as classification of consumers within a market that share needs and establish related purchasing behavioural habits (Martin, 2011). When selecting a targeted segment, there are three important factors to consider; A segment should be identifiable, profitable and reachable (Wisensblit, 2019).

Segmentation makes the marketing more effective because its targeting consumers with similar needs or preferences and can therefore customize their marketing to the specific segment. The customers in the same segment has similar needs, but that does not mean that they are or need to be identical (Martin, 2011; Kotler, 2001). It can for example be that the persons live in the same area, shares the same hobby, same age etc.

Segmentation can therefore be sorted in by geographies, demographics (age, gender, households, social standing, ethnicity etc.) and psychographic (Martin, 2011).

Aafk has segmented their tickets sale into adults, kids, retiree and students. They also offer 2+2 on season tickets, a price offer for 2 adults with 2 kids/retiree/students. This segmentation is done, first, in order to adjust the prices for each group to set the price at level which makes it available to each segment. When the ticket is bought there is no differences for the product. The price of the tickets can vary regarding the seating at the stadium, because of popularity, view, availability etc.

Aafk also offers VIP-tickets, a type of tickets that includes more than an ordinary ticket and therefore also a higher price. A VIP-ticket at Aafk includes dinner and lodging. VIP is focusing on customers that wants something more to the experience then just watching the match and experience the match under more comfortable facilities. A VIP-ticket is something that can be related to a luxurious segmentation.

VIP tickets is often especially relevant to firm events, and AAFK offers company packages where the firm also gets promoted at the match, as a part of the deal when buying the specific package.

3.0 History and structure of football as a sport

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter will we look at football governance at different levels. This includes worldwide and national. Give a brief introduction of Aalesund FK, with the structure of the organization, important supporter unions and the sunnmøre region in general. In the end will we discuss marketing research on the audience attendance.

3.2 Worldwide football governance

Football is a worldwide sport and considered the most popular of them all. Football is also big business. The FIFA world cup is extremely popular with 3,5 billion viewers in the latest WC in Russia in 2018 (Fifa, 2018). This accounts for half of the world's population and the final alone brought 1,1 billion viewers. The "big five" refers to the top-tier football leagues of England (Premier league), Germany (Bundesliga), Spain (La Liga), France (Ligue 1) and Italy (serie A) Europe have the best leagues both in quality and financial which attract all the best players from all around the world. International football is regulated and governed by FIFA. FIFA has six intercontinental governing bodies: Africa (CAF), Asia (AFC), Europe UEFA, North, Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF), Oceania (OFC) and South America (CONMEBOL) (Fifa, 2020).

3.2.1 National football governance

Football is among the biggest sport in Norway. NFF (Norges fotballforbund) is the main football association in Norway and is a member of FIFA and UEFA. It consists of 18 fotballkretser and is nationwide. In 2017 had the association 1837 member clubs and 372 000 active players (Flem, 2012). The topflight in Norway is named Eliteserien and consist of sixteen teams. It recently changed the name from Tippeligaen in 2017. The second division is named OBOS-Ligaen.

Eliteserien is a small league compared with the big five in Europe. In today's modern football is Champions League dominated by teams from the big five leagues with a few exceptions. The best teams in Eliteserien have an overall goal to compete in Europe league and go as far

as possible. Europe League is the second-best tournament for club teams in Europe. The last time a Norwegian team attended CL was in 2007/2008. Since then the financial gap has increased and made it more difficult for teams from small leagues to compete with the giants. The biggest team in Norway is Rosenborg BK and dominated the league for a long time, especially in the 90s. They have also dominated the Norwegian participation in the champions league and has entered the group stage 11 times. Even though Eliteserien is one of the smallest leagues it has a high ranking in attendance in proportion to population.

On the other hand, is Eliteserien experiencing a negative trend of the overall attendance in the league especially in 2018 (Farnell, 2019). This trend is the case for most of the clubs and shows that the competition to attract supporters is increasing. The average attendance in Eliteserien has been decreasing since 2009. In 2018 the average attendance was 5 864 vs 8 966 in 2009. The biggest change in income have been the increase of media and league sponsor. This has compensated for the loss of ticket income. Overall, has Eliteserien's total income been relatively stable since 2009, with a total increase with 5% (Farnell, 2019).

3.2. Aalesund FK

Aalesund football club was founded 25th June 1914. The city of Aalesund got introduced to football by Germans who guested the city and two clubs where founded in 1914. The other one, Sportsklubben Rollon where founded 20th February. Before the second world war the league system was structured quite different from today's standard. There was no national league, but AAFK was ranked as the 10th best team in Norway by the newspaper Sportsmanden. The period 1925 to 1929 was a proud part of the club's history. Aafk played some incredible games both domestically and internationally and they had Norway's best goalkeeper named Ingvald Frøysa. Frøysa was until 2010 the only Aafk payer with matches for Norways first team.

Before 2003 the highest level Aafk had played was in the second tier of Norwegian football and was a challenger for the biggest team in the sunnmøre region behind Hødd. They played a short period in 1998 to 2000s in the third level of Norwegian football. The year 2002 was a key year in Aafks history. For the first time in the club's history they were promoted to the top tier of Norwegian football then called Tippeligaen (Aafk, 2016). The happiness was short lived, and they got relegated one year later.

Despite the relegation the team was backed by the whole city and the region around, and they had sky high attendance. The city was hungry for football and in 2004 they were back at the topflight. 2005 marked another important shift in the club. Their home ground Kråmyra which they had played on since 1977 was changed to a brand-new stadium. The stadium Colorline stadium marked that the club has outgrown their old stadium and made it clear that Aafk was ready to establish themselves in the top of Norwegian football.

The years after the opening of the stadium was the golden days of the club so far. The stadium was always full, and the city was breathing football. They had solid support both from the whole region and local commercial partners. Aafk has never won Eliteserien but they have won the Norwegian national cup three times. First in 1962 against Kvik. The second time was against their main rivals Molde FK and then again in 2011 against Brann FK. Aafk has also played in Europa league but never managed to be qualified to the group stage. Their best result in Eliteserien is 4th place which they achieved in 2010 and 2013 season (Aafk, 2016). The club got relegated in 2017 and played two seasons in the second flight then called Obosligaen. Aafk is back at the highest level of Norwegian football and is playing in Eliteserien for the 2020 season.

3.3. Structure of Aalesund FK

The structure of Aalesund as a business consists of an administration department, a marketing department, event department, sport department, development department and an operating department. Aafk is also depending on several volunteers that works on matchdays. This can be as stewards or operating the kiosk. The sport operations of Aafk consist of a first team plus development teams. Aafk`s first team includes 27 players and coaching staff of eight that works with the team. Aafks development department consist primarily of the second team which plays in the 3rd division, the boys 19 and a boys 16 team.

3.4. Supporter Union(s)

Aalesund FK official supporter union is called Stormen. Stormen is an important part of Aafk and makes a great atmosphere on matchdays both home and away. Stormen is where you find

the most hardcore supporters of Aafk which will follow the club in ups and downs. They give an amazing frame on matchdays both visual and sound wise. Stormen was founded in 2002 and was a result of two previous unions called Myrtrolla and Jugendklanen that decided to combine. In the first season they had 100-200 members, but it had a solid increase at the end of the season.

In 2003 was Stormen named Årets AaFK`er (Aafk, 2019). This symbolize the fantastic job they are doing for the club. Stormen has arguably the most faithful supporters of Aafk. In 2004 when the club got relegated the membership of Stormen doubled. Stormen is well known not only in the region but also all over the country and has a good reputation. Stormen has three under groups of Stormen that are in different parts of the country. These are Stormen Bergen, Stormen Stavanger and Stormen Oslo. Stormen also operates their own supporter shop where you can buy Aafk merchandise. They also have a key part in organizing away trips for the supporters.

In addition to the Stormen, there exist one, independent, additional supporter club as well that is named ``Aalesund support``. This supporter clubs, states on their own Facebook page, that their goal is to support Aafk Football club on the pitch. They also state that they are not affiliated with the Stormen supporter club, but that they cooperate when necessary. Aalesund support wants to increase the number singing supporters at Color Line Stadium, but also on the away matches. With the goal to build up the atmosphere on the stadium in order to support Aafk.

3.5. Sunnmøre region

The Sunnmøre region is where you naturally find most of the Supporters of Aafk. The region is in the south west part of the county Møre og Romsdal. According to SSB there is a total of 145 732 residents in Sunnmøre. Ålesund is the biggest city in sunnmøre with 48 568 people. Aafk want to be the main club in the region and consider themselves as the pride of the region. Previously Hødd was the biggest club in the region.

They have a long history and in some parts of the region they are still the main team. Aafks main goal is to be a team for the whole region. This is essential when it comes to filling up the stadium. By widen their profile as a team for region instead of the city of Aalesund they can target more customers.

Aafk has previously been successful with this strategy, especially when Aafk got promoted to the first division and the stadium where built. In these glory days people from all over the region attended games. The whole region was football mad. The region was well known to breathe football and was considered a region that was passionate about their main team, Aafk. The region was hungry for football at the topflight of Eliterserien. In recent years this engagement especially from the district outside of the city core has been declining. This is something that we will research in this paper.

3.6 Marketing research

Aafk marketing division has done several researches on their audience. This has been done to map out the people's opinion on Aafk. We have gained access to their audience examination from 2016-2019. This is survey-based research with a data of approximately 1000 people each year. The key numbers from these examinations indicates good trust in the administration and the leaders of Aafk. Other positives from the reports included that the audience meant that Aafk was a unifying club. The most important factors for attending the match where attacking football, exciting players and an interesting opponent. The audience stated that the most important reason for not buying a season ticket was that they were rarely on match.

In addition to inhouse audience research from Aafk have we got access to an audience survey done by Mindshare for Norsk toppfotball. According to this research the biggest driver to attend a match was the weather. The barriers for not attending the match was other activities with friends or family. Other interesting findings where that the audience was looking at the opponent their team was playing. The research indicated that if the opponent was irrelevant or was among the smaller teams in the league the willingness to attend the match decreased.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Research design

This thesis is mainly based on an Exploratory research design. This approach fits well with our main goal which is to map out the underlining motivations on going to Aafk home games and their consumer behaviour. The Exploratory approach gives the possibility to gain knowledge about the theme and sport industry on the way. This gives the possibility of adjusting which areas to focus on, as we get more insight. The Exploratory approach has been especially useful under the obtaining of secondary data. The research method has some elements of descriptive research as well. This is mainly the secondary data in form of the surveys done by third parties.

4.2 Reasoning on choice of method(s)

In this thesis we have chosen to do a qualitative research method to get an in-depth insight into our topic. One reason for this is that there already exists some quantitative research on similar topics within the theme this paper is about, while we haven't found as many qualitative researches about the topic. The second reason is that we want to find out something about the customers psychological purchasing behaviour when it comes to purchasing tickets to AAFKs home matches, and we think that qualitative method is a better way to gain in-depth insight compared to quantitative methods.

To gather the qualitative information we needed, we have used semi-structured interviews. The interviews have been done in person and some of the interviews has been by Skype, since the Corona situation made it a bit difficult to meet people some persons physically.

4.3 Data acquisition

4.3.1. Secondary data

The data acquisition started with a first phase where we gathered data through a desk research. There are several types of secondary data. We mainly used newspaper articles and research data. We can split them into three which are: Newspaper articles, research data and

bibliography data. Newspaper articles is a result of the activity of the society and gives useful insight to the football industry. Research data is data gathered and produced by other researchers. Bibliography data is bibliographic record that contains the data elements necessary to help users identify and retrieve that resource, as well as additional supporting information, presented in a formalized bibliographic format.

We have gathered different articles by doing a comprehensive search of newspaper articles online. This was done to get an impression of the topicality of going to home games in the Norwegian Eliteserien. This gave us a general overview of the current trends of Aafk and Eliteserien. We have also gathered research data on relevant academical literature. Furthermore, have we gathered quantitative data from Norsk Toppfotball and marketing research that is done by Aafk themselves.

4.3.2 Primary data

The main part of our data consists of semi structured interviews. We made an interview guide which consisted of 13 questions that laid the foundation for our interviews with the participants. The questions where sent in advance to each interview object so that they could prepare themselves for the interview. During each interview, follow up questions was done where it was natural, and we felt that interview object had more knowledge about the subject. Our main goal with this research was to get a deeper understanding of the trend of the decreasing attendance at Aafk home games and why this is happening. The interview objects that we selected included a broad demographic of Aafk`s attendance. This was done because Aafk doesn`t have one core customer. The following interview objects is interviewed in this research:

- Event Manager at Aafk
- One season-ticketholders that are non filiated with supporter unions
- Four non season-ticketholders
- Two previous season ticketholders
- Two members of Stormen Support
- One member of Aalesund Support

We have done interviews with people that have some connection to AAFK Football Club in varying degrees, from football interested locals, AAFK supporters, current and previous season ticket holders. The age demographic varies from 17 to 60. This conscious choice was done to get different views from the different demographic customers.

In addition to we added an extra interview we have done with the arrangement responsible at AAFK, to get her views and thoughts on the spectator situation for AAFK. The interview guide can be found in the appendix in this paper, labelled 4.1 Interview guide: Aafk home match consumer behaviour.

4.4 Evaluation of data material

4.4.1 Secondary data

In this paragraph will we consider the reliability, both internally and externally validity of the collected data. The basis of the process data can be quite hard to check the validity. We as researchers has limited access to check the journalist sources. We have therefore found several data that describes the similar thing. This is important when it comes to subjective meaning for example the reason behind the negative trend in Eliteserien. On the other hand, are several of the sources easy to verify, for example the attendance in Eliteserien are declining. This is a well-known fact. The objective of the process data is to get an overview of the theme and is not used directly in the thesis. Overall is the process data satisfactory.

The research data is gathered from sources that are more trustworthy than the process data. They are all gathered from the NTNU database of research papers. The main part of the data consists of motivation and consumer behaviour inside of sport science. We have tried to find the latest research and is for the most part not older than 10 years. The research papers we gathered are all checked for credibility and is done by academical researchers. Therefore, will we say that the validity for the data as good.

4.4.2. Primary data

The semi structured interviews are the most demanding data source of this thesis. We have done several measures to strengthen reliability and validity of the interviews. Most of the interviews are done digitally because of the current pandemic. We have used both Skype and

Microsoft teams when we conducted the interviews. The interviews have been recorded with consent from the interview object. This included both video and audio.

Thereafter have we transcribed the interviews. We have also given the interview objects the opportunity some time to prepare themselves and seen the core questions before the interviews. This can reduce the risk of bad answers or assumptions and will give the objects better time to come up with their own opinion. This also reduce the risk of leaning answers from the interviewer.

5.0 Analysis and Results

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter will we present the different themes that we found during the interviews. We will present a general model that shows how motivation/barriers, external factors and intention are affecting actual behaviour which in turn affect the performance. Lastly will we present our findings in our analysis.

5.2 Conceptual Framework

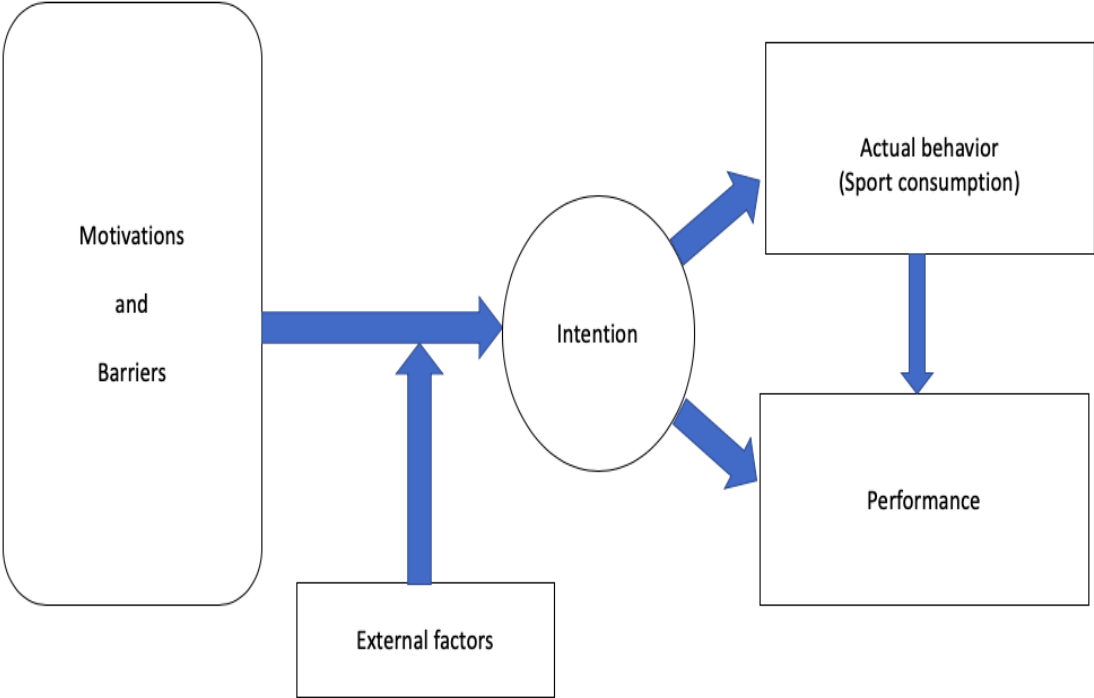
From the data we have gathered from the interviews, have we made a model that will explain the most important factors that we found from the data we collected from our sources.

The different factors we have identified from our interviews are used to develop this model, to explain what factors that are most crucial when it comes to the spectator's decision to attend or not attend, the AAFK home games.

The general conceptual model that is presented under, is a more general model, that shows how motivation and barriers connects with the intention and leads to actual behaviour, which in this case is consumption of live sports.

Intention and actual behaviour are both connected to performance. In addition, external factors contribute to influence intention next to motivation and barriers. Later in this chapter will we present a more in-depth model that is built on the concept model, but is more specific related to our data, analysis and findings.

Figure 5.1 - General intention of sport consumption (conceptual model)



5.3. Factors that influences the decision making to attending an AAFK home match

We have identified five different factors from our dataset, that are important for the evaluation of attending the AAFK home match or not. We have named these four different factors:

- group affiliation,
- substitutes,
- team related
- market related
- external factors.

In addition, we have added a fifth factor that we have named external factors.

We used these five factors that we identified from our data to develop our model, that we are presenting later in this chapter.

5.3.1. Group affiliation

Group affiliation refers to both the importance of commitment and community by going to a match together to support their common team, but in this factor, we have also included the importance of the socialization aspect when going to a match together with friends, family etc. Cunningham and Kwon reported that less than two percent of colligate and professional spectators attend events alone, and that people are motivated to attend a sports event because of group affiliation needs(Cunningham & Kwon, 2003).

The local community of Aalesund and the local district is also an important part of the group affiliation factor, previous research has found that the relationship between the team and the community is important and that spectators often picked the team representing their home town as their favourite team (Mahony et al., 2002).

The quotes from the table under shows the importance for the spectators to attend the game together with people they care for and to experience the atmosphere that the supporters create at the stadium.

This factor can be linked together with the market related factor and the external factor. From the data set we found out that people that are members of one of the two supporter unions, will always go to the match and gather a bunch of other supporter members when AAFK is playing a home game, so they will always have someone to go to the match together with. The weather conditions seem to be irrelevant to the decision if the supporter members are going to the match, they will attend anyway.

Season ticket holder's decision to attend the match does not seem to be dependent on getting some to join them. Often, they have friends or family that also has a season ticket that they travel together with on every home match of the season, and even if they were alone it seems like they would go to the match anyway.

People that are not a member of any of the two supporter unions or is a season ticket holder, do not always plan to go every match. Therefore, they are dependent on two additional factors, market related and external factors.

The spectators that are only attending some of the home matches in one season, seems often to take the decision to go to the match very spontaneously. If the weather is good, and they manage to gather a group of friends to travel with, then they may attend the match. Then if it very important that they get aware that AAFK is playing on that day, and that the weather conditions are so good that it won't make it an extra barrier to travel to the match. It also seems that if the weather is pretty good, then it can increase the possibility for this type of spectators to gather a group of friends and travel together to the match.

For the supporter union members and season ticket holders, external factors like weather and the market related factor may not have a to big effect on their decision to attend. But for the spectators that are just going to a match now and then these factors seem to really affect their decision making when it comes to attend the match or not.

The following quotes to illustrate the role of group affiliation shows the importance of unity among friends, family and supporters when going to the match.

Table 5.1: Quotes from the factor, group affiliation, Norwegian transcription and English translation.

<p><i>``...det viktigste er atmosfæren, man h�rer supportere, musikk, speaker ogs� videre. Det gj�r det til en opplevelse enn bare dei 2 timene. En kamp p� tv sitter du bare � ser p� 90 min og du kommer ikke lett innp�. Du f�r en utvida komplett opplevelse.``</i></p>	<p><i>``.... The most important part is the atmosphere, you can hear the supporters, music, speaker etc. This makes it to an experience more than just the two hours of football. When you watch a match on tv, you don't get the same close up experience. Overall, you get an extended experience (when watching the game at the stadium).``</i></p>
<p><i>``For meg er det sosiale aspektet ved � g� p� kamp, ganske viktig. Om jeg drar p� AAFK hjemmekamp er det ofte like mye for � v�re sosial og gj�re noe g�y. Da vil man gjerne v�re der med folk man liker og har det g�y sammen med``.</i></p>	<p><i>``For me the social aspect to attend a match, is very important. If I go to an AAFK home match it is often just as much about being social and do something fun. Then you would like to be there with people you like and are having fun together with``.</i></p>
<p><i>``Det som gj�r at jeg velger � dra p� AAFK sine hjemmekamper, m� v�re at vi er noen som drar p� kamp sammen og har det som en sosial greie rund det. Ellers kan jeg like godt se kampen i stua (p� tv)``.</i></p>	<p><i>``When I choose to go to an AAFK home match, it must be because we are a group that gathers and makes a social event around it. If not, I might as well just watch the match from my own living room (on tv)``.</i></p>
<p><i>``Jeg synes fotball er best live, f�r mer stemning og hele pakka. Kan dra sammen med venner eller familie, noe som er kjekkere enn � se kamp alene foran tven.``</i></p>	<p><i>``I think football is best watching live, you get more of the atmosphere and the total package. You can watch it together with family or friend, something that is more fun than watching the game alone in front of the tv.``</i></p>

<p><i>``(Det sosiale aspektet er) svært viktig. Det å være på stadion med kompiser, ha felles interesser og se på det vi er fan av sammen, er en del av den viktige totalpakken. Og det er også som det første møtet med stadion og klubben kan være med far eller familien som skaper en tilhørighet og samhold. ``</i></p>	<p><i>``The social aspect is very important. To be on the station together with friends, having common interests and watch the team we are supporting together, is an important part of the whole package. The first meeting with the home stadium and the club together with your family can create affiliation and unity. ``</i></p>
<p><i>``.kan sitte på jobb å plutselig finne ut at ``oi det er kamp i dag``, da kan det være aktuelt å reise på kamp avhengig av værforhold og om vennegjengen er med.</i></p>	<p><i>``I can be at work and suddenly find out that ``oh its match today``, then it may be relevant to go to the match depending on the weather conditions and if some friends are joining me.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Har vært med i motgang og medgang. Stor tilknytning (til Aafk). ``</i></p>	<p><i>`` Have been there in both adversity and prosperity. Big affiliation (to Aafk).``</i></p>
<p><i>``Aafk er det beste du kan se av fotball i nærområdet. Man kommer seg ut i frisk luft etter mye inne tid. Det er sosialt, og man får være med venner. Der man kan prate om alt eller ingen ting. Ta seg en kjøttpølse i pausa``.</i></p>	<p><i>`` Aafk is the best you can watch of football in the local area. You get fresh air after spending time inside. It is social, and you get to be together with friends. You can talk about everything or nothing. You can buy a hot dog in the break (in the match). ``</i></p>
<p><i>``Det er selvfølgelig viktig hvem man drar på kamp med, kamp sammen med venner og familie er det kjekkeste. Men det sosiale aspektet er ikke det aller viktigste, er andre plasser som er bedre når det gjelder sosialisering.</i></p>	<p><i>`` It is of course important who you attend the match with, attending the match together with friends and family is most fun. But the social aspect is not the most important part, there are other places that are better to be when it comes to socialization. ``</i></p>

5.3.2. Substitutes

When people are deciding if they are going to attend the AAFK home match or not, they often consider it against other activities that are available for them. In today's society there are lot of

channels to choose between when it comes to entertainment from Netflix to concerts, hiking, cinema, family activities etc. This creates a competition when it comes to create awareness and generate interests for the AAFK home matches.

Beaton et al stated that personal determinants such as gender, age, socio-economic status, can stimulate attraction to engage in an activity. Psychological determinants such as hedonic needs can stimulate experimental-based interests. Environmental determinants explain why people are attracted to modes of recreational experience including situational contexts. As personal, environmental and psychological determinants trigger a desire to meet a need or seek a benefit from participation, individuals evaluate alternatives within their consideration set. The outcome of attraction process is a relatively unstable psychological connection based on the pleasure derived from the activity. Some individuals may remain in the attraction stage for long periods of time; however, they would be susceptible to seeking alternative activities where they may derive pleasure as well (Beaton et al., 2011).

From our data we wanted to find out how often substitutes to AAFK home matches made people not attend the match, and how big impact other substitutes have when it comes to the spectator's decision to attend or not attend the matches. Especially the big increase in availability of watching the AAFK games from home on the tv, and the competition with international football on tv that can be very related to the numbers of spectators attending the AAFK home matches.

Supporter union members seem for the most to attend the match regardless of other activities that are available. One member of Stormen supporter club stated *“only funeral can be an obstacle (for not attending the AAFK match)”*. It seems like substitutes will not affect supporter members decision to attend, AAFKs home matches are the first choice regardless of the other substitutes.

This finding is not surprising though, when looking at previous studies in the field. The attachment to the team has been examined in several ways. Spectators that has a strong psychological commitment to their favourite team had attitudes that were resistant to change and predictive of behaviour. Spectators who scores high on Wann and Branscombe's (1993) identified with their favourite team and saw themselves as one with the team. Individuals who team importance highly also placed more psychological significance on their relationship with the team (Mahony et al., 2002).

For Season ticket holders the situation is a bit similar as the supporter members, but maybe not as strict. Most likely they will prefer to go to the AAFK home match over any other activities, but family activities and other activities that is family related can be prioritized instead of an AAFK match.

Then again, the type of spectators that are only participating in some of the AAFK home matches, the substitutes can have a big effect on their decision making. If the weather is bad, they may just watch the match from home on tv or doing something completely else. It is also important that they are aware of the match being played at the specific time, so they can consider going to the match alternatively to other activities or substitutes. Awareness of the match being played, the time the match is going to be played, manage to gathering a group of friends going to the match together and the weather conditions is important factors that effects these types of spectators decision making of attending the match, instead participate in other activities.

The following quotes shows the different kind of substitutes and alternatives which may or may not be preferred instead on going to the Aafk match on matchday.

Table 5.2: Quotes from the group substitutes translations, Norwegian transcription and English translation

<p>`` (Mulige aktiviteter jeg foretrekker fremfor å gå på AAFK kamp er) for eksempel å trene selv, spille kamper, se fotball på høyere nivå på tv, se en breddefotballkamp der jeg kjenner de som spiller. Det er mye jeg velger over å dra på AAFK kamp, kanskje har dette noe å gjøre med at jeg ikke kommer på å bestille meg en billett til AAFK kamp.``</p> <p>``.. Med mindre der er en spesiell grunn til å dra på AAFK kamp så velger jeg heller å se en Premier League kamp på TV.``</p>	<p>``(Activities I could prefer instead of going to an AAFK match) is for example to go to training myself, play football matches, see football at a higher level on tv, see local matches at a lower level there I know some players that are playing. It is a lot of activities I choose to do then go to an AAFK match, maybe this has to do with that I am not aware of buying tickets for an AAFK match.``</p> <p>``If there is no special reason to go to an AAFK match, I would rather watch Premier League football on tv``.</p>
<p>``Alternativene til å gå på AAFK kamp kan være annen lokal fotball (på lavere nivå), besøke eller ha besøk av venner, fjelltur/båttur med familien.``</p>	<p>``The alternatives to go to an AAFK can be to see local football (on a lower level), be with friends, or hiking/boat trip with my family.``</p>
<p>``Alternativene til å dra på AAFK kamp) kan være alt mulig og aafk har stor konkurranse fra mange forskjellige ting. For min egen del velger jeg aafk men det kan være alt fra finne på andre ting med venner og familie.``</p>	<p>``There is a lot of alternatives (substitutes) when it comes to go to an AAFK match and AAFK have a lot of competition from different types of activities. For my own sake I will choose to go to an AAFK match, but the alternatives can be everything else for example to hang out with friends and family.``</p>
<p>``For meg liker jeg så pass godt produktet norsk fotball for man har en tilhørighet som</p>	<p>``Personal I kind of like the product Norsk football has to offer good enough, because</p>

<p><i>Man ikke har til f.eks. Engelsk fotball. Dermed er det samme om kampene spilles på mandag og sanne ting, men visst det konkurrer så går Liverpool på mobilen og AAFK prioriteres på stadion. Dette er med nærheten til norsk fotball.``</i></p> <p><i>``Jeg tror absolutt at nå i senere tid har f.eks PL blitt såpass lett tilgjengelig at det er lett å bli hjemme. Ej tror supportere som er vokst opp med Aafk har ett tettere bånd til klubben enn de som bare interesserer seg for fotball.``</i></p>	<p><i>you get an affiliation you don't get with for example English football. So for me it doesn't matter if the (AAFK) matches is on a monday or another day, but if it crashes with a Liverpool match, then I will watch the Liverpool game on my phone simultaneously with being on the stadium and watch AAFK.``</i></p> <p><i>``I absolutely believe that in recent times that for example Premier League is so easy to access on tv that it is easy to stay at home. I think supporters that has been growing up with AAFK has gotten a stronger relationship to the club than those who are just generally interested in football.``</i></p>
<p><i>...``jeg drar heller på en AAFK kamp enn å se en (Manchester) United kamp eller en annen internasjonal kamp på tv..``</i></p> <p><i>``Jeg har ingen spesielle aktiviteter jeg prioriterer foran AAFK kamp, uten om det normale livet. For eksempel hadde noen av barna mine spilt kamp, så velger jeg heller det enn å reise på en AAFK kamp, men jeg velger ikke en fjelltur istedefor en AAFK kamp.``</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>``Aafk er alltid første prioritert, uansett om det skulle være større kamper samtidig i utenlandske ligaer.``</i></p>	<p><i>``I would rather go to an AAFK match then watch a (Manchester) United match or another international match on tv.``</i></p> <p><i>``I have no special activities that I prefer instead of an AAFK match, without the normal life. For example, if some of my children was going to be playing a match, then I would rather go there then to an AAFK match. But I do not choose to go to a hiking trip instead of going to an AAFK match.``</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>``AAFk is always priority, even if there should be bigger matches being played at the same time in foreign leagues.``</i></p>

<p><i>``Det er avhengig av hvilke kamper som spilles på internasjonalt nivå, og hvem AAFK møter. Som Liverpool supporter velger jeg en Liverpool kamp over en AAFK kamp.``</i></p> <p><i>``(Andre alternative aktiviteter kan være) andre fotballkamper, «obligatoriske» fotballtreninger, selskap/fest, korte reiser som hyttetur eller lignende. Kan være å henge med venner eller slappe av hjemme.``</i></p>	<p><i>``It depends on which matches are played at international level and who AAFK are going to play against. As a Liverpool supporter, I choose Liverpool matches over AAFK matches.``</i></p> <p><i>``(Other alternative activities could be) watching other football matches, compulsory football trainings, parties, short trips. Can also be to just hang out with friends or chill at home.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Jeg er Leeds supporter, men velger alltid å gå på AAFK kamp, bare begravelse kan være en hindring...``</i></p> <p><i>`` Ingen (andre aktiviteter blir foretrukket foran en AAFK hjemmekamp)``</i></p>	<p><i>``I am a Leeds supporter, but I always choose going to AAFK matches, only funerals can be an obstacle``</i></p>

5.3.3. Team related

Team related factors refer to game related factors by Stander and van Zyl (Stander & van Zyl, 2016). This is what happens on the field and the sporting operations. Underlining factors within team related factors are results and the level of success. This includes the team squad and the combination of player profiles, quality, local players and head manager.

This creates the competitiveness of the team. Studies show that high grade of competitiveness will attract more live audience on match day (H. A. Solberg & Mehus, 2014). This is typical for all kinds of sport including football. All these team related factors will also affect the entertainment product for the team.

From recent results to the importance of playing in the Eliteserien (the highest level) instead of playing in the OBOS League (second highest level). The importance of the players playing for the team is also a relevant subject under this factor, local players and star players.

With local players we mean players that has a local affiliation with the club, either by going the grades from the AAFK young teams and taking the step up to the A-team, or other local players that AAFK has retrieved from other local clubs and having an affiliation with the local district.

A star player is a player that is an important player for the team and is often entertaining to watch because he can offer and do the little extra for both the team and to sprinkle up the atmosphere in the stadium.

In this conceptual model is entertainment not listed has an own category or factor but included in team related as an underlining factor. The way the team performs on the pitch and the squad composition has a direct link with the entertainment value.

Aafk are in the entertainment business and most of the audience go to match for the entertainment. The entertainment factor is not strictly linked with results. It can for instance be if the team has an offensive and entertaining tactic or playing style.

Other team related factors that creates positive entertainment is the players. This can be in form of a star player. A star player can attract the audience despite bad results. Players that shows passion on the field can also create positive entertainment, this includes both local, foreign and domestic players.

The following quotes shows the various degrees of importance for the spectators, when it comes to local players, star players, tactics and other team related factors.

The table under showcases some of the answers related to the team related category in our model. Some of the participants meant that local players were important. This give the team a local identity and the audience can relate to them.

When the customers decide if they want to attend the match can the local player aspect influence them. Especially for the fans that are from the outskirts of the city. If the audience know them personally or maybe know their family, it gives the match experience an added value. This creates repercussions in the area where the player where born and raised.

If a player from the sunnmøre region performs well, it can create a positive culture for attending matches that previously chose to not attend. This will give Aafk new customers. It is important to specify that this effect is not strictly for the area where the player is from and can create this effect for the whole region, but our data indicates that there is a stronger effect in that specific area where the player are from.

Another important finding is that even though local players are important the balance of the squad and results on the field is more essential for the audience. The participants are coherent that local players are a positive thing, but not essential.

Some argued that if Aafk only played local players the overall quality and competitiveness will decline. This will again create a negative spiral and the willingness to attend the match will decline. Therefore, it's important that the team is competitive and performs well over time.

Some participants stated that their willingness to attend the match declined drastically when Aafk got relegated. The percipients stated that they lost interest when the competitiveness off the team declined. This indicates that results are an important underlining factor for the team related category, which is in line with previous findings.

Mahony et al stated that attachment to the team and vicarious achievement related to team success led to increased behavioural support by sport spectators, including increased attendance. They found in their own study, when examining frequency of attendance, that team attachment and vicarious achievement significantly and positively related to attendance (Mahony et al., 2002).

The final factor inside of the team related category is tactics and the playing style of the team. Here the participants are not coherent. One side meant that is was important and something that played a big part in the motivation of attending the match. They stressed the importance of being entertained and that they wanted to see attractive football.

On the other hand, some stated that the tactics played a minor role. They argued for that if the players and manager had project that they believed and showed their passion for the fans they

would back the team. This can vary from fan segment and type of fan. This will be discussed further in the next part of the chapter.

Table 5.3: Quotes from the team related translations, Norwegian transcription and English translation.

<p><i>``Det er veldig viktig å ha lokale spillere på laget, i tillegg er det også et stort pluss å ha en profil på laget, rett og slett popstjerna, den kan gjerne komme utenfra.``</i></p>	<p><i>``It is a very important factor to have local players in the team, in addition it is a big plus to have a profile on the team, the popstar, he can gladly come from outside (the club).``</i></p>
<p><i>``Fra første sesongen de kom på Color Line har jeg hatt sesongkort og var der hver kamp. De siste to årene har jeg ikke hatt sesongkort, men har vært der endel når jeg feks har fått kampbilletter med jobben. Når de rykte ned, ble det ikke så attraktivt å gå på kamp, har sett flere kamper på tven.</i></p> <p><i>``Det er ikke viktig for meg i det hele tatt at AAFK har lokale spillere i stallen. Det er kanskje kjekt at det er noen lokale, men jeg synes det er mye viktigere med gode spillere, selv om de kommer fra utlandet. Det er AAFK jeg holder med. Så om spissen som scorer 30 mål kommer fra Aalesund eller Brasil spiller ingen rolle.``</i></p>	<p><i>``From the first season when they started to play at the Color Line (stadium), I have had season tickets and been to every match. The last two years, I have not purchased a season ticket, but I have been going to some matches when I for example have gotten tickets from my job. When they relegated (down to the OBOS League), it was not as attractive to go to the matches, so then I have seen more matches from home on the tv.``</i></p> <p><i>``It is not important for me at all, that there are local players in the AAFK squad. It may be that it is fun that there are some locals, but I think it is more important that there are good players playing, even if they are coming from outside the country. It is AAFK as a team that I support. So, if the striker that scores 30 goals in a season comes from Aalesund or Brasil is not important for me.``</i></p>
	<p><i>``.. It is very important with local players. The more the merrier. It is very fun to watch</i></p>

<p><i>``..det er veldig viktig med lokale spillere. Jo fler jo bedre. Det er veldig kjekt å se unge. Det må være en balanse. Om han er fra oslo eller nigeria spiller ingen rolle så lenge han scorer mål. At de brenner for drakta og bryr seg er viktig..``</i></p> <p><i>``Måten de spiller fotball på er viktig. Og visst de taper og taper og spiller dårlig fotball orker ikke folk. Resultat er viktig. Du drar på kamp for å bli underholdt..``</i></p>	<p><i>young local players. But there needs to be a balance. If the player is from Nigeria or Oslo it's not important if he scores goals. It is very important that the player cares for the club. ``</i></p> <p><i>``The style of playing football is important. If they lose and lose in addition to play bad football, then people will stop going to the matches. The results are important. You go to the matches to be entertained...``</i></p>
<p><i>``Viktig med lokale spillere som trekker supportere fra sin lokale krets..``</i></p> <p><i>``unge spillere som kan bli solgt videre til større klubber senere. Godt med balanse i en tropp mellom unge lokale og andre.``</i></p> <p><i>AFFK sin spillestil er ikke viktig, kamp møter man opp på uansett hvilken taktikk laget spiller.</i></p>	<p><i>Important to have local players that attracts supporters from their local circuit...``</i></p> <p><i>``young players can be sold to bigger clubs later. Good to have a balance between young local players and others. ``</i></p> <p><i>``AAFks playing style is not important, you meet up at match regardless of the tactics the team plays. ``</i></p>
<p><i>``Aafk sin spillestil og taktikk er ikke avgjørende (om jeg velger å gå på kamp eller ikke). Men om de spiller offensiv og angripende fotball så er det selvfølgelig mye mer underholdende enn å sitte å se på et lag som ligger lavt. Men i bunn og grunn er ikke det noen avgjørende faktor.``</i></p>	<p><i>``Aafks playing style and tactics are not crucial (to if I choose to attend the match or not). If they play offensive and attacking football then it is of course more entertaining than watching a team that are defending. But basically, that is not a deciding factor.``</i></p>

<p><i>``Aafk har hatt synkende resultater. De har (tidligere og i nyere tid) rykket ned og er ikke like gode som de var for 10 år siden.``</i></p>	<p><i>``Aafk has had declining results. They have (previous and in recent times) been relegated and is not as good as they were before.``</i></p>
<p><i>`` (Når det kommer til taktikk) vil de lærde alltid strides, så dette spiller ingen rolle for meg.``</i></p>	<p><i>`` (When it comes to tactics) the scholars will always disagree, so this does not matter for me.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Det som gjør det attraktivt for meg å gå på AAFK kamp er om de har spillere som gjør er interessant for meg å se spille. Det er nok med en spiller det som er bedre enn de fleste på laget. Jeg tenker at det viser, at når f.eks. Dede (tidligere Aafk spiss) spilte, da var det fulle tribuner. Han var prikken over ien, han kunne gjøre ting på egenhånd. Også når de hadde kjente trenere, som hadde gjort det bra tidligere, har ambisjoner og er aktiv i media; som går høyt ut med sine mål. Når klubben ikke ambisjoner, og uttaler at de bare skal havne midt på tabellen, da er det ikke interessant lenger. De rette spillerne og trenere er viktig for å tiltrekke folk (til stadion.). ``</i></p>	<p><i>`` What makes it attractive for me to go to an Aafk match is wheter they have players who are interesting for me to watch playing. It is enough with one player that is better than the rest of the team. I think it shows that when e.g. Dede (previous Aafk striker) played, then the stadium was sold out. He was the finishing touch and could do things on his own. Even when they had famous coaches, who have had some good results from previous in their career, had ambitions and was active in the media; going out high with their gaols. When the club has no ambitions and are just saying that the goal is to end up in the middle of the table, then it is not as interesting anymore. The right players and coaches are important to attract people (to the stadium). ``</i></p>

5.3.4. Market related

Trying to explain the importance of the marketing part when it comes to AAFK and their home matches. This means which level the club manages to be visible and create general

awareness about the club in the local community. Also, more specific marketing and creating awareness toward when they are playing their home matches. As Beaton et al previous stated; *one cannot choose to partake in an activity if one is not aware of the opportunity to do so* (Beaton et al., 2011).

It also includes what AAFK is offering at the match day, measures that can make the experience of an AAFK home match to something more than the 90 minutes that the match lasts, to create a total package and better overall experience for the spectators.

In addition to the marketing operations this factor also includes how the administration and Aafk as an organization are targeting and influence their customers. According to the sport consumer motivation Process explained in chapter two. The team related factor can be linked with Funk, 2008 motivation process. Aafk must trigger some of these stages to gain willingness to attend the match. If all the five stages are successful it will create a loyal customer base.

An important part of sport marketing is to start the motivational process for the customers. Aafk as an organization must communicate the pathways or experiences offered. Aafk must communicate the positive attributes and benefits of attending a home game.

This is essential in the push and pull motivational theory explained by Funk (Funk, 2008). Aafk want to pull or affect their customers along a specific pathway towards buying a season ticket or attend a match. In addition to the marketing operation, administration and Aafk as an organization we have categorized media as an underlining factor for the Marketing related factors.

Media can affect the customers in both ways. If Aafk plays an essential part in the news both locally and nationally will people be influenced. The media can both have a positive or negative effect on the customers. If the media has a negative attitude towards Aafk and only has a negative angle to gain clicks, then the customers will gain a negative association towards Aafk. This will give a positive effect on the customers if the media coverage has a positive profile towards Aafk. Overall if the category team related is strong the willingness to attend Aafk home games will increase.

These quotes show what the spectator thinks about the importance of the club being visible in the local community, what they think Aafk have done right and can do better, among other opinions on the market related factor.

The data indicates that the participant had different views on the marketing related factor. Most of the participants meant that Aafk had to improve their visibility in the local areas around Aalesund. This indicated that the participants were missing that the players of the team where more active in the local areas. This can for instance be to participate in local teams' practices for the youth. This could either be professional players or representatives from the club. Some meant that they were too narrow in their focus on own club and stadium and stated that they felt unseen or forgotten. They stated that they only profiled themselves in the immediate area.

Some stated that Aafks marketing towards awareness had declined in recent years. This could be in form of players that was a profile outside of the pitch and used to connect with the supporters. On the positive site stated some participants that they liked the new initiative that current players trained young players. Aafk`s social media is an important tool to create awareness.

Our data indicates that this is some of Aafks strengths when it comes to marketing and creating awareness. They have a solid online platform and is active. This includes various social media from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Some participants stated that this was something Aafk did well. They really liked the various interviews from the players on the stories on Instagram and used it to stay updated on Aafk related news. Even though they stated that they had a strong online profile they still meant that Aafk could be better at creating hype towards the next match.

For instance, one participant meant that they waited too long to create awareness towards the next game. He meant that the local newspaper where one factor that worked against Aafk. According to this participant was inside media not enough and felt that the local newspaper only wrote negative articles about Aafk. This can be hard for Aafk to do something about, but they can work on their image.

Table 5.4: Quotes from the market related, Norwegian transcription and English translation.

<p><i>``Dei siste åra he Aafk blitt mye mindre synlige i distriktet, dette har vel med at</i></p>	<p><i>``The last couple of years AAFK has become less visible, I think this has to do with that Bohinen (the coach at AAFK) is holding his</i></p>
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<p><i>Bohinen skjerna spillerne mye mere enn andre trenere tidligere ... ``</i></p> <p><i>``Merker meg også at det er de samme spillerne som blir intervjuet etter kampene. Vi får alt får liten mulighet å bli kjent med spillerstallen generelt. ``</i></p>	<p><i>players more away from the media than previous trainers...``</i></p> <p><i>``Have noticed that it is often the same players that are being interviewed after the matches. We don't get a good chance to get to know other players in the squad generally. ``</i></p>
<p><i>``Må mer ut blant breddeklubbene. Tror mange av tilskuerne som har forsvunnet er folk som er involvert i breddeklubbene i Sunnmøre.``</i></p> <p><i>``Dårligere å profilere seg på lokale breddeklubbene enn de var før. Har for stort fokus på seg selv og egen stadion, klarer ikke å se utenfor. Halvparten av tilskuerne de har mistet er fra distriktet. Viktig å komme seg ut. Viktig å stille opp på fotballskoler for å skaffe nye supportere.``</i></p> <p><i>``Aafk har enkelte profiler i troppen som stiller opp. Stiller opp for unge og gamle. Og viser at de setter pris på supporterne.``</i></p>	<p><i>``Need to reach more out to the smaller clubs in the district. Think that many of the spectators that has been lost is people that are involved with smaller clubs around Sunnmøre.``</i></p> <p><i>``Has become worse to market themselves on smaller local football clubs than they were before. Is mainly just focusing on themselves, and do not manage to see themselves from the outside of the club. Half of the spectators they have lost is from the district. Important to reach out, to line up with football schools to get new supporters.``</i></p> <p><i>``AAFk has some profiles in their squad that lines up for both youngster and old people. Showing that they care for their supporters.``</i></p>
<p><i>``..kunne gjerne vært mer synlig spesielt spillerne.``</i></p> <p><i>``jeg likte initiativet med at spillerne dro rundt og trente unge spillera. Det tror jeg er</i></p>	<p><i>``.. Would like to see that the club was more visible, especially the players.``</i></p>

<p><i>ganske viktig å involvere de unge ganske tidlig. Dette er ikke noe de har blitt dårligere på den senere tiden og det har blitt enklere med sosiale medier. F.eks de involverer spillerne på instagram story og lignende. Dette er noe de kan ha mer av.``</i></p>	<p><i>``I liked the initiative when players were traveling around and helped training young player around the district. I think it is very important to involve the youngsters early. I don't think they have gotten any worse at this in the previous years and it is also easier to follow them on social media. For example, they involve their players on Instagram story and that kind of stuff. This is something they could do more of.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Når det kommer til å skape blest rundt kommende kamper synst jeg det er litt svakt. Der er man avhengig av lokalavisen som pusha i stedet for klubben sjøl. Selv om aafk er flinke på nettsiden er ikke det en nettside folk bruker aktivt.``</i></p>	<p><i>``When it comes to create attention around upcoming home matches it is a bit weak. They are more dependent on their local newspaper are doing the job, instead of themselves. They are doing a good job with their homepage but that is not something people use on a regular basis.``</i></p>
<p><i>``..har massivt forbedrings potensiale til å være Sunnmøres stolthet. De profilerer seg kun i nærområdet i Ålesund. Ingen fotballskole, sessions, eller noe annet i andre deler av Sunnmøre.``</i></p>	<p><i>``... has a lot of potential when it comes to be Sunnmøres pride. They only profiles themselves in the immediate era. No football schools, sessions etc. in other parts of the region.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Jeg synes de er gode på blant annet sosiale medier, hvor de legger ut mye om spillere, treninger, kamper og lignende. De er også med på forskjellige aktiviteter som idrettsarrangement. Har blant annet erfart at det har møtt opp AAFK spillere hos min egen breddeklubb, og at det har vært spillere på fotballskolen som arrangeres av klubben.``</i></p>	<p><i>``I think they are good with social media, where they share player profiler, trainings, matches etc. They also participate in different kind of activities like different sports events. Have experienced that AAFK players did meet up at my own local club, and also that there have been AAFK players at football schools that is arranged by the club.``</i></p>

<p><i>``Til tider har enkelte (spillere og trenere) vært flinke (til å profilere seg og være synlig rundt om i det lokale distriktet). De kan sikkert bli enda bedre, men jeg synes egentlig de gjør en ganske god jobb der og har en fin relasjon til de mindre klubbene rundt om i Ålesund kommune og de andre kommunene i nærheten. ``</i></p>	<p><i>``At times, some (players and trainers) have been good (at profile themselves and being visible in the local community). There are maybe some potential to do better, but I really think they are doing a good job there and has a good relationship with the smaller clubs in the local district around Aalesund. ``</i></p>
<p><i>``Aafk har vært fraværende med Tango TV som har ligget brakk i mange år. Ved å lage innslag rundt laget og andre ting rundt klubben som intervju av gamle 'stjerner', gå litt i historiebøkene å fortelle de gode historiene, treffe mannen i gata, besøke bedrifter, gjøre sponsorer synlige, mye man kan ta tak i her. ``</i></p>	<p><i>``Aafk has been absent with Tango tv (previous Aafk channel) which has been broke for many years. By making contributions around the team and other things around the club, such as interviewing old stars, look into the history books to tell the good stories, meet the man in the street, visit businesses, make sponsors visible etc., a lot to get hold of (to make it more attractive to attend the Aafk matches).``</i></p>
<p><i>``Klubben er usynlig, administrasjon og styre har rett og slett ikke puls.``</i></p>	<p><i>``The club is invisible, the administration and the board (of Aafk) simply have no pulse.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Om kampen går lørdag begynner de å bygge opp kampen på søndag, bør begynne tidligere. Savner oppbyggingen av spennings engasjement. Savner musikk og stemning før kamp... Ledelsen finner ikke roten til den vanlige supporteren. Pressen må ver mer støttende.``</i></p>	<p><i>``If the match is being played on Saturday they start to build up to the match on Sunday, the should start earlier. Missing the buildup of excitement... Missing the music and the good mood before the match. The management does not manage to find the root for the normal supporters. The press needs to support the club more.``</i></p>

5.3.5. External factor.

The fifth and final variable have we categorized as an external factor. This external factor is the weather. Previous audience examination done by Aafk and especially norsk toppfotball indicates that weather is an important factor for the fans to attend the match at the stadium. The research done by Norsk Toppfotball indicated that the weather was one of the strongest barriers for not attending live matches. Bad weather can have a negative impact on match attendance for Aafk. Naturally the climate in Norway can be quite harsh for outdoor sports.

The sunnmøre region is known for the weather and it can be quite rainy and windy on a typical matchday. This affects the audience since they for the most part is sitting still during the match. The facilities at the stadium has a good standard and is one of the better stadiums in a Norwegian context. The audience is sheltered by the roof, but some parts of the stadium can be quite windy. Weather is categorized as an external factor because it is unchangeable, but some measures can be done to reduce the impact. For instance, the match schedule or sheltering.

The following quotations shows how external factors can affect the consumers purchasing decision of buying tickets to the Aafk match.

The quotes from the interviews in table 5.5 shows that weather is a decisive factor for some of the interview objects. The above quotes showed that weather is one variable in combination with other variables that plays a role when the audience decides if they are going to attend the match. None of the interviews showed that weather was the only reason for attending matches. It was always mentioned in combination with the variables group affiliation, team related and substitutes. Therefore, can we say that weather is an indirect variable with the variables mentioned above.

The weather condition gives different outcomes for the buy threshold for the customers. If the weather is nice and the sun is shining it will give a positive impact on the attendances. This gives an added value for the matchday experience and can create a boost in atmosphere around the stadium.

When the customers decide if they will attend the match or not attend, can nice weather be the tipping point for attending the match. On the other hand, can bad weather have a negative effect for the match day audience. If it's cold, windy or rainy can this tip the other way. The different barriers will then become stronger and different barriers can come into play. The

variable substitutes will increase, and the customers can for instance choose to watch the game at home.

The table under show that bad weather in combination with the team related variable can give a negative effect. The participant stated that if the team performed poorly or the team was in a bad situation in the league, and the weather was bad he will not attend the match. The strength of the external factor weather can vary depending on different segments.

Of the supporter union fans no one mentioned the weather as a factor for not attend the match, but some stated that they thought it can have an effect for other segments of fans.

Table 5.5: Quotes from the external factor, Norwegian transcription and English translation.

<p><i>``Fint vær, ingen andre planer og en god gjeng som går på kamp i lag.``</i></p>	<p><i>``Nice weather, no other plans and a group of friends that goes to match together.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Å se live fotball er selvfølgelig mye gøyere og mer givende en å se den i stua på TV. Noen ganger legger AAFK ut billigere billetter og været er fint. Da synes jeg det er gøy å ta seg en tur og se kamp med venner. eller familie.``</i></p>	<p><i>``To see live football is of course a better experience and give something more than to see it at the Livingroom. Sometimes there are a discount on the tickets and the weather is nice. Then it's fun to see a match with friends or family.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Været kan spille en viktig rolle for mange når det gjelder å fare på hjemmekamp.``</i></p>	<p><i>``The weather can play an important role for many when it comes to attending live matches.``</i></p>
<p><i>``Det har mye å si hvilket lag de spiller mot, været osv. Hvilken situasjon laget er i.``</i></p>	<p><i>``The opposition has a lot to say and then weather. The situation of the team.``</i></p>

5.4. Additional interview

In addition to the interviews we have done with supporter union members, season ticketholders and other spectators, we made also made an additional interview with the Event manager at AAFK.

The data we collected from this interview is not included in the model above. The reason is that the Event manager cannot be an independent and neutral spectator. But the inside insight and opinions of the event manager is anyway very relevant and exciting in relation to the research questions in this paper. We wanted to see if there was any validity to our findings, or if there were any factors we had missed out on.

Therefore, we want to present some of the insight we gained from this interview, before we present the findings and results, we gained from the data used in the model that is presented above.

The interview was done under the Corona pandemic, so it was a special to talk about football and tickets sales under these circumstances, so we agreed on beforehand of this interview that we made reservations about a normal situation.

We talked about what makes it attractive for spectators to attend the AAFK home matches, the changes that have happened over the last 10 years, and what AAFK could do better to attract the spectators to attend the matches.

When we talked about what makes it attractive for spectators to attend the AAFK matches instead of just watch them on tv from home, the event manger stated:

“In order for people to watch the match at the stadium instead of TV, which is a big reason why people don't attend the match at the stadium, we have to offer an experience for the spectators that they won't get when watching the match from home at the tv, which is more comfortable when it comes replays, home comfort and experts commentating the match etc. We have to build up on the atmosphere you experience when you attend the match at the stadium, so it is very important for us to have a cooperation with the two supporter unions of AAFK, called Stormen and Aalesund Support, and make sure that they get along and attracts the other supporters to the match. We try to bring out to the people that it's a whole other

experience to watch the match at the stadium together with friends and family, instead of watching it alone from home on tv. On the stadium the spectators are able to share and get their feelings out together with friends, family and other supporters who attends the match, so yet again, it is important to communicate the experience of unity you get when watching the match at the stadium, out to the people.``

She did also bring up the important role that Aafk as a club plays in the local district, and how they are working with making sure that the locals identity attached to Aafk, is something that can be used to make people want to attend the matches and support the team, instead of just watching the matches on tv.

``AAFK is all about football, culture and dedication. We created a new strategy for the club last year, in-depth interviews we did shows that affiliation regarding AAFK as a club is a very important aspect for the supporters and people from the region around the club. We try to make sure that this engagement is not just linked up to the local newspaper and watching the matches on tv, but that the supporters and locals meets up at the stadium in order to support the team. ``

Aafk has over seen decreasing numbers when it comes to spectators attending their home matches. But despite the negative numbers over the last years, the event manager pointed out the importance of everything is not being black and white, and stated that there are some positive things, form the current spectator situation, to bring forward.

``Despite declining audience numbers the last years, it is very important that we recognize the positive aspects of the current situation and not just compare it against the best years when the stadium was sold out. There are clubs from bigger cities than Aalesund that has lower spectator number than AAFK, so if we compare at us with the normal spectator standard in Norway, AAFK is doing good when it comes to supporters attending the home matches. Important to highlight the spectators that is going to the stadium to support the team, we really apricate the supporters that are already supporting the team at the stadium. ``

When it comes to the last 10 years, as mentioned, both AAFK as an individual club and the rest of the Norwegian football clubs playing in the top division(s) have experienced steadily decreasing attendance numbers. When it comes to this situation the event manger talked about the increasing number of tv-matches, both AAFK and higher competition with the availability

of international football. Increasing number of other substitutes available and the possibility of being entertained everywhere, has made it harder to get people's attention.

`` The availability to watch (the AAFK) matches on tv has become a lot bigger. Remember when AAFK was playing at the second highest level and was meeting Vaalerenga Fotball Club in the semi-finals of the Norwegian football cup, and the match was being showed on tv. At that time, it was a big event that an AAFK match was being televised, another situation now, where all the AAFK matches is being sent on tv. ``

Talking about what have changed, since the stadium was sold out, the event manager pointed out that we live in a different time now than we did for around ten years ago.

``We live in a different time now, than for just 10 years ago. People are being entertained everywhere. A lot of activities available and a lot of things happening all the time. Aalesund as a city for example has become a lot better as a cultural city, which of course is something positive. But people have become more aware of what they are spending their time on, and when you attend a football match at the stadium you often use some extra time than just the 90 minutes plus 15 min break the match lasts. You also spend time for preparing to go to the match and traveling to and home after the match. It is a major intervention in the day, and we are competing with a lot of substitutes like for example hiking, housework, family time, cinemas etc. Things moves faster than before; people has gotten less patient. ``

Many ``football experts`` and spectators have pointed out the importance of having local players in the team squad. The event manger pointed out that previously, there have been some problems in the Norwegian Eliteserien, maybe having too many foreign players and few locals in their squads.

`` A couple of years back, a lot of the players in the Norwegian top clubs' squad had become foreign players, and very few players with a local affiliation. It creates a whole order of affiliation when there are local players playing for the club. Our strategy is to make sure that one of three players in the squad, should be local players. Either local players or players that

have joined the club at a young age and been in the club for some years. I think this is gripes that could increase the interest for Norwegian football and AAFK as an individual club. ``

In the last part of the interview, we wanted to know if she as the event manager was thinking about things AAFK could and can do better in order to make it more attractive for the supporters to go to the stadium. Where the event manager was pretty clear that there absolutely things they could do better and that there were some aspects they had already started to work with.

``No doubt that there are things we could do better. In the period there where there was a lot of new people that started to work at AAFK, we got relegated as well. So, in some way we started with a clean slate. ``

``Have gotten a lot of feedback by supporters that have had a season ticket over a longer period, they don't feel that we have apricate them enough. We wish to focus on that the supporters that are supporting the team, is very important for us as a club. It is important for us that we are appreciating the loyal supporters. Audience survey shows that people feels a connection to the club and wish to feel important and get appreciated. ``

``We want to re-cultivate that matchday is our main product. We have used a lot of time on different types of activities, we wish to be smarter, build up to matchday, what happens on matchday and talk more about matchday. For example, we have tried something called fan zone, activities before the match. This is a measure to get more youngsters and families to the stadium on matchday. This project started in 2017, and we have seen that families with small kids are already in a time squeeze and have trouble to find time to attend the matches, therefore we have actually started to pay less attention to the (families with small kids) segment. We want to develop the strategy, getting grandparents to the match together with their grandkids. If the kids want to go to the match, then the adults most likely will follow together with them, this is something we are aware of``:

In 2018, another project called ``Jubel`` was invented to attract new people to the AAFK matches. The idea behind this concept is that the smaller local clubs around the district is assigned to a match, where the local club and their members goes to the match together to support AAFK and create a good atmosphere around and during the match. In the end of the season the local clubs that has been chosen to have done the best job during these events, gets a money reward by AAFK.

``Many of the supporters that have been with Jubel have not been to match before, comes to match when their local club has their Jubel. Going with friends and family, experience and gets a feeling of unity. Many of the people that has been to Jubel, comes back on a later notice, because of the good experience they had with Jubel. This is something that creates a better atmosphere at the stadium. This is something we are going develop further but has not been possible to work with yet because of the cornea situation.

``One of the hardest parts with working at AAFK, is that you have a lot of ideas, simultaneous with many other people at the club that also have a lot of good ideas. There is not enough time to implement all the good ideas. Changes are constantly done, for example we want to have more focus towards the supporters. Making sure of and facilitate that the singing supporters, that are an important part of the atmosphere in the stadium, is having a good time. This something that we have been working a lot with. We also wish to make use of the new technology available to come closer to the spectators. This is a collaboration at the national level, being able to get more direct feedback from the audience relative to trends and measures. ``

This insight from the event manager shows us that Aafk is, not surprisingly, already working hard to solve the problems they have with the decreasing numbers of spectators. They have already implemented several measures, and only the future will show how successful this measure will be.

The findings from this interview did not add any new factors to our model. Instead the quotes, from the event manager, supported the findings we found when we interviewed the spectators and gave validity to our previous findings.

5.5 Findings and Results from the analysis

5.5.1 Findings and results

The results from the different factors in the model shows that there is not one specific factor that stands out, when it comes to explain the outcome of the model. All the five different factors contribute to explain the consumption and consumer behaviour of purchasing tickets to the Aafk home matches.

From the data we have collected there is not one big reason that stands out to explain the purchasing behaviour of the different types of spectators. Even though there's no main reason there are different strengths related to each theme. This can again be related to each segment of supporters or types of fans.

We see that people that are members of a supporter union or have purchased a season ticket, will probably attend the match independent of other substitutes, external factors, market related and team related factors. For this segment are the barriers or the negative aspect related to each category low. Especially the category substitutes are defined as low to non-existent for the members of supporter unions. For the current season ticket holders' substitutes are still categorized as low, but they can still be a factor that contributes negatively to attend matches.

For the supporter unions member are attending Aafk home games obligatory and something that is natural for them. The spectators that already have purchased a season ticket has therefore most likely rated their options before they deciding to invest in a season ticket, and therefore in some way have already taken the decision to attend the matches for the season before they purchased the season ticket.

The market related category is low for the season ticket holders and the supporter unions, but it will not affect them negatively to attend the match because of the reasons mentioned above. This have a greater effect on the more casual segment of supporters. The market related factors can contribute negatively for the willingness to attend the match. We have especially seen that the fans from the outskirts of Aalesund has lost their interest in recent years and this factor plays an important role according to our data.

For spectators that are only attending the Aafk home matches occasionally, or just attending a couple of matches during the season, the decision making seems to be a lot more complex and influenced by all the five factors in the model.

The two main factors that is the most important for these types of fans are group affiliation and substitutes in combination with the other categories or factors. Most of the participants that was going to a few matches stated that the substitution factors where high. They were more likely to participate in other activities or watch the game at home instead of watching the game live. The factor group affiliation where also significant lower with these types of fans. Some stated that they had no group affiliation influence with Aafk and had lost their interest.

To increase the tickets sales, it seems that the aspect of the total packaged offered to the customer is very important. In the interviews it was mentioned by different participants. The term “total package” can mean something different for each type of fan. For the members of supporter unions can it be important to create a better atmosphere and have the right facilities for different types of supporter effects such as flares, tifo etc. Aafk as an organization can facilitate these tools to a certain consent, but this is mainly up to each union themselves. For the more casual viewer will the atmosphere play one part, but the total package can be in form of better service at the kiosk or the measures done by Aafk such as Fan zone and Jubelfeltet.

5.5.2 Sport consumption model for Aafk

From our results and findings, have we created our own model, that tries to explain how the different factors contributes to the willingness to attend an Aafk home game for the consumers. This is an adaptation from previous research on sport fan motivation and the general model mentioned in the last paragraph. Our data indicates five main categories and this illustrated framework shows the connection between them. Willingness to attend Aafk home games is the equivalent to the intention in the general model. At the end of the model are the result of all factors combined that will lead to sport consumption, which will then again lead to higher attendance at Aafk home games.

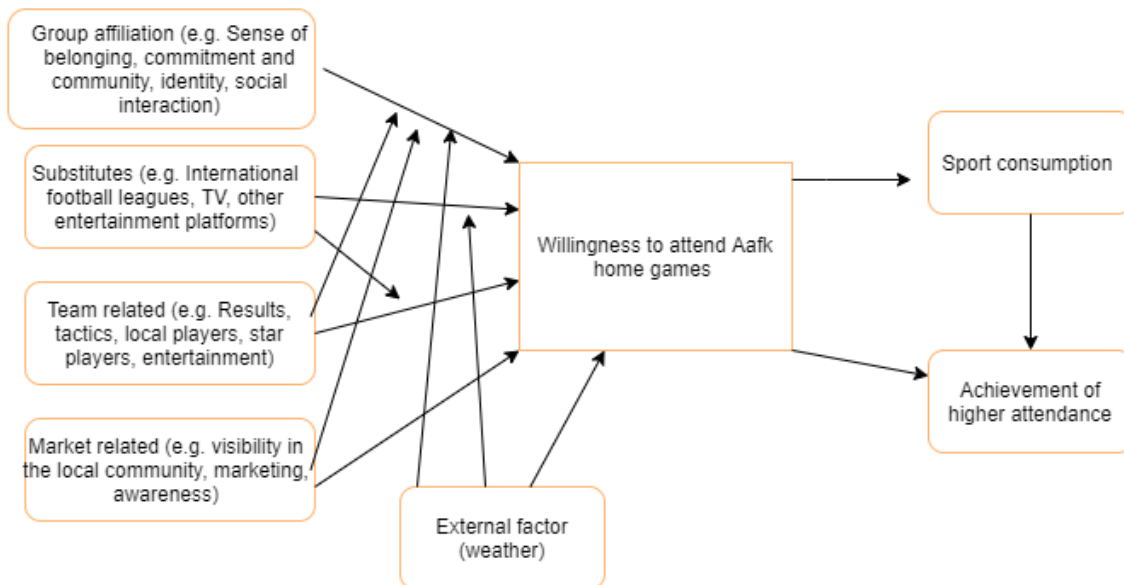


Figure 5.2: Aafk teamsport consumption model (Researchers' own drawing)

As mentioned earlier are the combination of factors essential to understand or evaluate the willingness to attend Aafk home games. The main categories and sub factors are in interaction with each other and are illustrated by the arrows in the model. The analysis of our data indicates that group affiliation is linked with the following factors: market related, weather and team related. These factors influence the group affiliation. For example, if the team has a good local player then the group affiliation will be stronger. The next category substitutes are linked with the weather and the factor team related. Our data indicates that if the weather is good the barrier to take use of substitutes was lowered. The opposite effect occurs if the weather was bad. As mentioned, are substitutes also linked with the team related category. Especially when it comes to their performance and local players. The group affiliation will strengthen if the team perform well and their motivation for attending the match will be higher. Vice versa if the team performs poorly. The third category team related are contingent with the substitutes. The fourth factor is contingent with group affiliation. The fifth and final category are contingent with the substitutes.

This model is developed from our interviews and illustrates the most important factors for Aafk's customers. It has not taken into the account of different segments of fans but illustrates the interactions and combination of factors that are vital for Aafk customers to attend match.

This gives a broader illustration of the whole customer base to Aafk. Each category will have a different importance depending on what type of supporter that are attending.

The motivation for a supporter union member is much higher than a casual fan or a bandwagon, but the factors for attend the match are same for all types of fans. The difference is as mentioned the strength or importance of each category depending on what type of fan they are.

From our data have we found out that to get the willingness to attend match to increase among the customers of Aafk it has to be a positive combination of most of the factors in the model. If this is achieved will Aafks attendance increase. Aafk can directly influence two factors that are Market related and Team related factors. If these two factors improve it will likely affect the other factors in the model such as group affiliation and substitutes.

Under we have summed up the factors, in table 5.6, that have high influence on the different kind of supporters, when it comes to the willingness to attend the Aafk home matches.

In table 5.7 we have gathered the barriers for attending Aafk matches where we have come up with some possible measures that can be done by Aafk.

Last, in table 5.8, we have done the same as in 5.7, but are using motivator instead of barriers, to look at the possible measurers that can be done regarding the motivational aspects for the spectators attending the match.

Table 5.6: Factors that has high influence on different types of spectators

Type of spectator	Factors with influence
Supporter union	Seems to be few factors that influences their decision making to go to the match. Wants to support the team anyway. But is conscious of the group affiliation aspect and the job being done at the club, in our model included in the market related and team related factors.
Season ticket holders	Team performance and socialization
General spectators (participating in a match now and then)	Weather, awareness, socialization, other activates...

Table 5.7: Barriers for attending Aafk matches

Barriers	Possible measures to be done by Aafk
Weather conditions	Not much to do, obviously... can be linked to the time squeeze solution, using less time outside the stadium when traveling to and from the match
See the match at home on tv	Create a frame and atmosphere before and around when the match is played. Bring out awareness to the potential spectators of the experience when attending the match live compared to when they are watching it on tv
Other entertainment platforms	Difficult to handle, must make the product they offer (Aafk home matches) competitive in order to attract the consumers
Time squeeze	Make it easier to travel to and from the game; increase in availability of public transport offering, parking zones etc.

Table 5.8: Motivators for attending Aafk matches

Motivators	Possible measures to be done by Aafk
Team performance	Focusing on developing the sporting operations
Star players / Local players	Scout and look for players who can offer the little extra, to the team, both on and off the pitch. Focus on growing own local players that can take the step up to the first team.
Socialization	Facilitate
Awareness about the club	Be visible in the local community. Focusing on building up the awareness and atmosphere, the days before matchday.

5.5.3 Summary of factors

From the factors we have created from the data we have gotten five main factors, along with sub factors which belongs and goes under the five main factors. In this table we are summing up the findings from the model and the quotes that were presented in chapter four under each main factor. In this table each sub factor is linked up with a quote to show how the factors and subfactors are supported by the findings from our data.

There were some different opinions among the interview objects on many of the factors found in the model. For example, looking at the team related factor, for some spectators local players was very important, for others the most important part was that there were good players that could be entertaining to watch and had a positive impact on the team, and if the player was local and foreign was not the important part.

Some of our interview objects also stated that AAFK was doing a good job when it comes to be visible in the local community, while others meant that AAFK is very bad when it comes to been visible and contribute to the young local teams around the district. So, there was no clear indication about the local's viewpoint on the marketing job Aafk is doing, it depended on the people you asked and talked to, there were different opinions on the subject on each side of the scale.

This is something that also can be seen of the other factors, for members of supporter unions and season tickets holders, there seems to be few substitutes that are preferred instead of attending the match on matchday. For the more general spectator however, it seems that Aafk are facing several substitutes that are competing with the attention of the consumers when it comes to choose of activity, and therefore also the consumers' willingness to buy tickets to the Aafk game. This shows that substitutes as a factor has a different influence and importance for the individual consumers, but that there is no doubt that this is a factor which affects the consumer behaviour.

If we look at the team related factor there seems to be different beliefs of how important the tactics and playing style of the team is, for some this means absolutely nothing while others have some preferences when it comes to what tactics the team are playing. Most of the participants also seems to appreciate to have local players on the team, but having attractive and good (star) player(s), that is not necessary a local player(s), seems to actually be even more important for our sample of the audience. When it comes to the last sub-factor from the team related factor, results, there is a great agreement that this is something that are important for the enthusiasm around the club.

The combined effect, from all the five different factors we have identified from our data, results in the consumers' willingness to attend the Aafk home matches. If the factors are affected positively, the willingness to attend Aafk matches will increase. When the willingness to attend Aafk matches is increasing, this will again result (in higher) consumption of Aafk tickets by the consumers. When the consumption of tickets increases this will, of course, result in a higher attendance at the stadium as well.

Higher consumption of match tickets (and therefore also higher attendance at the stadium) will then have a positive effect on the performance outcome for Aafk as a club in general. When looking at the operational side, it will result in higher sales revenues, probability, good balance sheet etc. Also, it is worth mention, when looking at the positive effect, when it comes to the performance of the team, having a higher attendance at the stadium will increase the supporting of the team, which can lead to better performances and results on the pitch also.

From our analysis have we found differences in the willingness to attend match are related to type of segments. This is also the case for the sports consumption behaviours related to research question number two. The members of Stormen and Aalesund support are highly

involved in the club and the most loyal segment. These are all season ticketholders and will renew their season ticket at the beginning of the season. They are also the most likely segment to buy supporter effects such as replica shirts and other products. It is important that Aafk target this segment through reinforced marketing strategies such as keeping a close dialog and show that they care about them. This will strengthen the market related factor. If this is not a priority, they may lose interest in the team.

The regular fans consist of both season ticketholders and ordinary ticket purchases. They have a high commitment but are not attending as many games as the supporter union members. In the PCM model have they developed awareness, attraction, and attachment, but not the final stage, allegiance. Even though they attend several games they are not committed towards the team. The reasons for buying tickets for this segment is many, but the factor group affiliation and the sub factor social interaction are important. In one interview stated one participant that he bought a season ticket because his friends did. This segment is not as loyal and can lose interest in the team quickly. It is important that Aafk target this segment with promotional strategies. The casual fans are the segment that are least loyal and have a low commitment. Their attendance frequency is low and go to a few games a season. The barriers for attending games are high and they prioritise other substitutes instead of buying tickets. They can for instance watch most of the games on TV instead of watching it live.

In addition to the barriers and the team related factor, can also group affiliation be essential for this segment. One participant used his dad as an example to why he did not attend Aafk live matches. His dad watched all the matches on TV because his son had moved to another city, and therefore had no one to attend the match with. Here can the sports marketers at Aafk focus on the social benefits of attending games. This will decrease the barriers for attending games for casual fans and increase the group affiliation.

One thing that seems clear and common for all the factors; the main factors and their sub factors all seems to have an important impact on the outcome on the consumers' willingness to attend the Aafk matches. Especially when looking at the combination of the different factors, it seems that they explain a great deal of the willingness to attend the Aafk matches, which again contributes to explain the sport consumption that leads to the achievement of higher attendance.

Table 5.9: Summary of findings from factors

Factor	Sub factors	Quotations related to factors
Group affiliation	<i>Sense of belonging</i>	<i>“ (The social aspect) is very important. To be on the station together with friends, having common interests and watch the team we are supporting together, is an important part of the whole package. ”</i>
	<i>Identity</i>	<i>“The first meeting with the home stadium and the club together with your family can create affiliation and unity. ”.</i>
	<i>Social interaction</i>	<i>“The social interactions are important, and I think everyone is dependent on someone to attend the match with”.</i>
	<i>Commitment and community</i>	<i>“For me the social aspect to attend a match, is very important. If I go to an AAFK home match it is often just as much about being social and do something fun. Then you would like to be there with people you like and are having fun together with”.</i>
Substitutes	<i>TV</i>	<i>“If there is no special reason to go to an AAFK match, I would rather watch Premier League football on tv”.</i>
	<i>International football leagues</i>	<p><i>“AAFK is always priority, even if there should be bigger matches being played at the same time in foreign leagues. ”</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>“It depends on which matches are played at international level and who AAFK are going to play against. As a Liverpool supporter, I</i></p>

		<i>choose Liverpool matches over AAFK matches. ``</i>
	Other entertainment platforms	<i>``(Other alternative activities could be) watching other football matches, compulsory football trainings, parties, short trips. Can also be to just hang out with friends or chill at home.``</i>
Team related	Results	<i>``When they relegated (down to the OBOS League), it was not as attractive to go to the matches, so then I have seen more matches from home on the tv. ``</i> ----- <i>``The results are important.``</i>
	Tactics	<i>``AAFks playing style is not important, you meet up at match regardless of the tactics the team plays.``</i> ----- <i>``The style of playing football is important. If they lose and lose in addition to play bad football, then people will stop going to the matches. You go to the matches to be entertained...``</i>
	Local players	<i>``It is very important with local players. The more the merrier. It is very fun to watch young local players. But there needs to be a balance. If the player is from Nigeria or Oslo it's not important if he scores goals. It is very important that the player cares for the club.``</i> -----

		<i>“Important to have local players that attracts supporters from their local circuit...”</i>
	Star players	<p><i>“It is a very important factor to have local players in the team, in addition it is a big plus to have a profile on the team, the popstar, he can gladly come from outside (the club).”</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>I “I think it is more important that there are good players playing (then being a local player), even if they are coming from outside the country. It is AAFK as a team that I support.”</i></p>
	Entertainment	<i>“You go to the matches to be entertained...”</i>
Market related	Visibility in the local community	<p><i>“.. Would like to see that the club was more visible, especially the players.”</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>“Has become worse to market themselves on smaller local football clubs than they were before. Is mainly just focusing on themselves, and do not manage to see themselves from the outside of the club. Half of the spectators they have lost is from the district. Important to reach out, to line up with football schools to get new supporters. ”</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>“ They also participate in different kind of activities like different sports events. Have experienced that AAFK players did meet up</i></p>

		<i>at my own local club, and that there have been AAFK players at football schools that is arranged by the club. ``</i>
	Marketing	<p><i>``I think they are good with social media, where they share player profiler, trainings, matches etc.``</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>``They are doing a good job with their homepage but that is (maybe) not something people use on a regular basis.``</i></p>
	Awareness	<i>``When it comes to create attention around upcoming home matches it is a bit weak. They are more dependent on their local newspaper are doing the job, instead of themselves.``</i>
External	Weather	<i>``The weather can play an important role for many when it comes to attending live matches. ``</i>

6.0 Discussion, implications and limitations

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will start with presenting the summary of our findings in this paper based on our analysis of our data. Then we will talk about how our findings in this study is contributing to the theory of this field. Next, we investigate the managerial implications, which we try to look at which measures can be done by Aafk to improve the current situation. Further, we are also discussing the limitations of this paper. In the end we are discussing how our findings can contribute to further research in this field of study.

6.2 Summary of findings

From the conceptual model on Aafk sport consumption have we seen the connection between different motivational factors and barriers. As mentioned earlier are there not one main category that determines the willingness to attend Aafk home games, but a combination of all the five categories. This paper showcases the main categories that are important in relation to Aafk customers. From our findings and the data collected from semi structured interviews have we scoped out five fitting categories that are divided into sub factors.

When it comes to the first research question, what are the motivations and barriers for attending home games of the Aafk? We have from our data have found interesting findings depending on type of fan segments. The findings from our analysis indicated that fans from the supporter unions valued the main categories differently than other segments such as casual sport fans. The motivation of supporter unions members to attend Aafk home games where high, and they stated they would go to Aafk home games regardless of the strength of each category. They had a low attraction to substitutes and had no barriers to not attend Aafk home games. This can be set into context of the different stages that are needed to create sport involvement. Our findings from segment of sport union members indicate that they are involved in all four stages of the PCM model (Beaton et al., 2011).

The external factor weather played no part in the decision to attend games for the supporter union members. This is a deviation with the marketing research done by Norsk toppfotball. Their findings highlighted weather as one of the main reasons to why the fans chose to not attend the match.

Another factor that had a low impact on the decision where the game related category. The player squad disposition of local players where seen as a bonus and the same could be said about the result and competitiveness of the team. This segment had high loyalty to Aafk and they would go to the games regardless of these factors mentioned above.

The fourth factor group affiliation where seen as the category that where most important for the supporter unions. They valued their unity and emphasized the importance of a good atmosphere in the stadium.

The final factor market related has a moderate importance for the supporter union members. They stated that they should be more visible in the community, but where not vital for their decision on attending matches. Their passion and love for Aafk made the negative effects of the categories to be very low or non-existing for this segment. They put Aafk above everything, both on a personal and external level. The reasoning for the low negative impact these categories has on union members can again be seen considering the PCM model. They have a great Allegiance and have become integrated into the self-schema of the individual. They are so involved and committed that match attendance is a part of their own core-values and believes (Beaton et al., 2011).

For the other types of fans such as season ticketholders and casual fans the categories play a more important role for match motivation. Factor one group affiliation is important for this segment. Especially the social aspect.

The interview objects stated that it was important to have someone to attend match with and said that they would not go to the match alone. The subfactor sense of belonging had varying importance to the different types of supporters. Both the current and previously ticketholders said that they felt a sense of belonging to Aafk. They were proud of Aafk and where not shy to brag or talk positive about them to others.

The casual fans or the ones that went to two or three matches during a season said that they felt no connection to Aafk and stated that they went to a match just because it's the best rated team in the immediate area. According to Wann (Wann, 1995) this segment is a typical

example of strong connection to the motive group affiliation. They want to strengthen and maintaining social links through sharing an experience by attending an Aafk home game. They also feel obliged to attend matches because they have a local connection with the team.

Factor two substitutes had a strong negative impact on this segment. The competition from bigger leagues such as Premier League and La Liga where the biggest football substitute. Some stated that they would prioritise a match where their favourite foreign team played instead of Aafk. This type of consumption sport is not unique for Norwegian fans, but a global trend which will only become stronger over time. Fans are taking the content on the go (Clinton, August 28, 2018). Other common substitutes were other entertainment services and social activities with friends and family.

The third category game related had a moderate important for this segment. The subcategory of tactics were the least important subfactor. The casual fans had no strong opinions on the tactics side but results and local players played a big part. They stated that they lost interest in recent years especially after the relegation. This indicates that this segment is result oriented. The player squad were also important for this segment. The state of local players from their area was important to attract more players from outside the city centre. They saw the local players as a bonus, but it should be balanced, and the most important part was result and that the team was competitive. Previous research states that the competitiveness of the team is crucial for attracting more attendance (M. K. a. H. A. Solberg, 2012).

The fourth factor market related had some varying answers. On the positive side stated most of the objects that Aafk were solid on social media and their channels were always up to date. They especially liked the involvement of the current players on the web side and Instagram. On the other side said some of the participants that Aafk had some challenges when it comes to creating awareness on the upcoming matches outside of their channels.

Physical presence in the community were something that were mentioned a lot. This could be in form of physical presence in the youth leagues outside of Aafk or different arrangements that helped spreading awareness. They also stated that they felt the local media were not on Aafk side when it comes to spreading positivity about Aafk and always were searching for a negative angle. As mentioned in chapter two and Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) is create the first stage, awareness (Beaton et al., 2011).

The fifth and final factor weather had both a positive and negative impact on the motivation of attending Aafk home games. Bad weather played a negative part especially when it was late in the season. When it came to the buyer decision would this have a negative impact on the motivation and the substitutes become stronger. When the weather was nice it had the opposite effect. Then the barriers of watching the game at home would become weaker. Especially when the customer was close to buying a ticket the weather condition played a part. If the weather was good the chances were that the customer would buy a ticket if the other categories were on point. Especially group affiliation and weather played a part when the customer was close to buying a ticket.

In context of research question two, which is in what ways can the behaviour of the football fans and supporters be influenced to increase consumption of Aafk sporting activities. Here can Aafk as an organisation make an impact in two of the categories which is team related and market related. By making a positive shift on these two categories will influence the other categories in the model with exception of the weather. The sport operations will be down to the head coach, the squad and his staff to make the results go in a positive direction. This will directly impact the team related category. The next category where Aafk can directly influence their customers are the market related category. By changing or improving the current marketing activities will Aafk experience an increase in spectators according to our sport consumption model of Aafk. Research question number three will be discussed in detail under international implications.

6.3 Theory contribution

In this paper, our contribution to the theory consumption sports and sports behaviour has resulted in a model. The model is fixed towards the consuming of tickets, to Aafks home matches. The model tries to explain the factors that lies behind the customer's choice and willingness to purchase tickets to Aafks home matches, which in turn results in a higher attendance at the Color line stadium. It is an adaptation of the Sports Fan Motivation scale by Wann (Wann, 1995) where we added the barriers substitutes and weather. These categories and subcategories are based on our data from our qualitative analysis. The inclusion of the barrier substitutes is based on the current consumption sport trends. In the last two decades the availability of entertainment and sport has changed our consumption pattern. For this reason, is it natural to add this to the model. The inclusion of weather was also natural

because of Norway harsh environment and that previous market research indicated that this was one of the main reasons for Norwegian fans to not attend live matches in Eliteserien.

Even though the model is directed specifically against Aafk and their spectators, we think our model can be also be useful in future studies of other Norwegian clubs, playing in Eliteserien or OBOS league primarily. The model can also be relevant for the top divisions in other countries, with similar facilities and base, as the Norwegian top divisions.

For example, the two other Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark, where the top football can be compared to the Norwegian the model in this paper could be useful as a starting point or as a small contribution to other studies.

This means that the model in addition to be useful for other Norwegian top clubs, can also be used when studying the spectator situation in other countries which are comparable to the Norwegian Eliteserien.

6.4 Managerial implications

6.4.1 Local managerial implications

In our model we found that several factors lie behind the consumer motivation for attending the home games. For the management in Aafk the Team related and Market related factors will be the easiest factors to affect, but as mentioned above these factors linked together with substitutes and group affiliation, and therefore may be indirectly affected by changes that has positive outcomes when it comes to the market and team related factors.

From our analysis that is based on the data we have collected, doing a qualitative research by interviewing a small sample from the spectators, we have found some opinions that seems to be common for most of the interview objects.

It seems clear that the many of the supporter union members and people that have already purchased season ticket, mostly choose to attend the Aafk home matches unaffected by other substitutes or factors. The key will therefore most likely be to try attracting the consumers

which are attending a match now and then, to purchase tickets more regular or even go over to purchasing a season ticket in the slightly longer term.

The market related and team related factors are those two factors, as mentioned above, that will be the easiest for the club to affect and do something with. Creating awareness about the match can make it easier for a group of friends planning to go to the match together, this will increase the satisfaction on the group affiliation factor. Good results do often attract more spectators, so once again this would also probably affect the group affiliation factor in a positive direction.

Awareness about the match and satisfying results, would also probably increase the probability that the consumers are attending the match instead of doing some other activities on matchday, meaning that the Aafk match would strengthen its chances relative to other substitutes available for the consumers.

When looking at the market related factor, the results from our data shows that some spectators think that Aafk are not doing a good enough job to market and create the most out of the product they offer on matchday. Some stated that Aafk need to start earlier to build up the awareness and atmosphere around the matchday. This is something that is related to the market related factor, and more specifically, the sub-factor, awareness. It was also found in the analysis, from the market related factor, that the consumers felt that the club, both players and staff, were not visible and contributing enough around the local district. Aafk could work on campaigns focusing on the matchday, to create awareness and enthusiasm among the spectators. We are not implying that they are not, already, marketing and focusing on their matchday product. But maybe it would be possible to look at the possibility to combine promotion of matchday together with activities where players and staff are contributing in different activities, around the local district. With the focus on promote an upcoming home match which are being played a few days later.

But it is also quite important to mention that a few of interview objects, stated that they were quite satisfied with the job Aafk was doing related to this factor. So, the feedback was negative and clear that the job Aafk was doing here was too bad. Regardless, it may be

beneficial for the management to look closer into what they can do to increase the satisfaction of their customers, when it comes to the market related factors.

Team related factor is the other factor that Aafk have the impact to improve, but of course it is not an easy factor to change for the positive. If it was easy deliver good results on the pitch and maybe at the same time play the most entertaining football that is possible, every football club would have done just that. But the team related factor is not about results and tactics, it is also about having local players in the squad, along with good attractive players. This is also something that is no which is easy to get. But focusing on local player development, will increase the chances to get closer to that goal.

Among the participants in this paper it was also often mentioned in fact, surprisingly often the importance of having a player that stood out on the pitch. A player that are standing out positively from the rest of the squad and brings with it that little extra in form of entertainment and contribution to the team. Many of the participants pointed out that they gladly would like to see that many local players in the team, but what matters the most was that there was one or more player that stood out, what we usually refer to as a star player.

Having popular players can also create advantages in terms of marketing strategies for the team. Star player, can be used in commercials in the local press, billboards, social media shops etc. Star player can also participate in local activities to create engagement and attention towards the club and their matchday product. In football clubs, in general, having a star player can increase the sales of football shirts and the general interest around the club...

But, yet again, it is not an easy job to go out to the player market and just pick up a star player, anyway this shows the importance of bringing in players to the squad that can contribute with something extra for both the team and the spectators.

So, the managerial implications can that Aafk can work with is mainly related to the team and market related factors. It doesn't seem like there exist one magical solution to the increase the spectator numbers, instead there are seems to be many small things related to the team and marketing objectivise, when combined, can give rise and result in increasing attendance at Colorline stadium.

6.4.2. International managerial implications

When it comes to the implications of the findings for international business can this paper be useful for other smaller football leagues across the globe. The trend of declining attendance for the football leagues is not limited to the Norwegian Eliteserien and happens for several minor football leagues. The top 5 leagues have taken over the market shares and in return the people has lost its interest in the national league.

International clubs have asked themselves the same question as to the motivations behind attending the match. Especially for the northern leagues. This includes Denmark, Sweden and Finland. These leagues have the most similarities with the Norwegian league. This includes attendance, income, culture, and the quality of the league.

This study can be transferred over to a club from the leagues mentioned above. By using the general theoretical framework can a more specific model can be constructed for each club. The findings and result are uncertain, and some changes will occur from league to league and from club to club but most of the main categories will stay.

The strength of each category will vary, and some categories can be added and some excluded. This depends on the data of each club. Our research is not the absolute but gives valuable information on sports consumption and motivations in a national context that international clubs can draw similarities with. The research needs some adaption to each league and club but gives a foundation for doing similar research.

For Aafk as an organisation will this not be useful in an international business context. Aafk`s international business consists of incoming players and player scouting. They have many international players in their squad, but they are not actively looking to expand their customer base internationally.

Looking at the current situation, it would also seem unrealistic to expand their customer base internationally, as the competition aboard is very high and they would have had to compete with international clubs that is on a higher level both when it comes to performances on the pitch, access to capital, player profiles etc. When it comes to potential customers from other parts of the country, that is not easily accessible either, as the other big cities in Norway the local spectators follow their own local team. So, it seems like a good idea to focus mainly on the potential customer base that are available in the city and the local district.

6.5 Limitations

When we had just started working on this paper, the world suddenly faced an unexpected situation, the corona virus changed the situation in the society all over the world. In Norway, where our study was undertaken when the whole country got locked down by the government. This was very inconvenient for our study which should be about what lay behind the motivation of people going to the match and socializing.

It was very strange to write about this topic, when the football season got delayed and everyone was encouraged by the government to stay home and isolated from people that were not a part of the family. To get the study done in this absurd situation, we interviewed most of our interview objects using digital platforms like Skype among others.

When talking to the people we interview we also made sure that we, mostly, based the assumptions on a normal situation and not the special situation we were in right now because of the corona virus. The reason we wanted to use the assumption of a normal situation was, of course, because we wanted our data and analysis to be able contributing to the original problem of decreasing spectators' numbers at Aafks home matches.

Another limitation is the small sample size from our data. We have interviewed just around ten persons in our paper. We wanted to get a in depth look into the spectator's opinions, and therefore we used a limited sample in order to make time to get this insight and deliver our thesis within the time limit. If we had used an even bigger sample, that would of course, made the data and analysis even stronger and more reliable. So, for further research about this topic, building on the theory and using a bigger sample, would be good for further research(es).

Our findings did not manage to point out one clear reason for what makes the consumers willing to purchase tickets to an Aafk game. From our analysis we concluded that there were several factors related that affected the willingness to attend the match. Further research, could go deeper into this factor, trying to understand how they are related and why it is complex to find one reason to explain the consumer behaviour of Aafk's consumers.

Even tough, we interviewed the event manager and had some contact with the CEO at Aafk, we as students at NTNU Aalesund has of course not the same insight as someone working on this issue daily inside the club. We are therefore humble about our findings, knowing that there will be some shortcomings with our findings.

We are forever grateful for the people that wanted to contribute to our paper, first and foremost by lining up for our interviews. But it is important to pin point, that our interview objects are common spectators to a greater and lesser extent, and that the findings in our data are based on their personal point of view, and that there will be oddities and different points of view on different themes and areas in relation to the problem(s) in this paper.

6.6 Future research

Since this research focuses on only one club in the Eliteserien it would be interesting to see future research where other Norwegian clubs were researched. Then we could see if there are any demographic differences of the research questions. This can be in terms of different motivational factors and barriers that influence willingness to attend match based on perception.

This can also be transferred into a more international context where the study focuses on similar leagues outside of Norway. This could for instance be into other Scandinavian countries or the eastern Europe. By looking at eastern Europe you can see if there are any changes in the social and cultural context and use Norway as a reference. Here can future research take use of our model and in detail analyze each category. By doing the actions mentioned above the research will give a clearer angle into the international business aspect of the research.

This future research can also use different methodology such as focus groups or mixed study where they add a quantitative study. By using a different method, the reasons may be clearer to measure the willingness to attend the match. This will give the researchers the tools to dig even deeper into the motivations of the supporters and football fans.

The trend of declining attendance and greater competition of the top five league and the availability of the streaming media makes this field of research in sports business essential in future research. In the upcoming years this problem can be even bigger and its vital to really understand the sports consumer behaviors. This research on football sports consumers can also be transferred into other sports that experience a negative trend in consummation of live sports.

6.7 Conclusion

This study gives an in-depth qualitative study of the motivation and barriers to attend Aafk home games. It has given management insight into sports consumption of different segments and their most important categories to focus on to attract more audience. The paper provides a new model based on our findings that are directly linked to sports consumption of Aafk home games. This model can be used in future research of both Norwegian and international clubs with similar statue.

Appendix

4.1 Interview guide; Aafk home match consumer behaviour

1. Identify the most important factors that attracts you to go to the AAFK home matches? Anything AAFK should could do or do better to attract supporters/people to their home matches?
2. Can you briefly outline your typical matchday, when AAFK is playing their home matches, what is your experience from attending previous matches?
3. Do you feel connected with AAFK or/and do you want to be identified with AAFK? Why do you want / Do not want to be identified with AAFK?
4. Do you identify yourself as a loyal AAFK supporter, what makes a supporter loyal?
5. Do you just spend time on AAFK matches when it is not competing with high quality international football on tv?
6. Why do you decide to attend the match instead of just staying at home and watch the match on tv?
7. Identify any other activities you would prefer on matchday, what other activities?
8. How important is it that there are local players from this region that plays for AAFK an important role for you?
9. How do you think the new schedule of matches, with the Corona situation in the mind, will affect your purchasing decision?
10. Do you think that the employees (players and staff) at AAFK is doing a good job when it comes to visibility and activities for the local community? For example: football schools, involvement in small local clubs?
11. How important factor is AAFKS playing style / tactics for you when you decide if you want to attend their home matches?
12. How do you experience AAFKs home matches as an activity for socialization? How important factor is the people/persons you are attending the match with, for you, when you decide whether to attend the match or not?
13. The problem of a decrease in audience is something that is common for almost all the teams in the Norwegian Eliteserien, tell us what you think could be the reason for this problem?

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