



# Master's degree thesis

**IDR950 Sport Management**

**Title: Managers' Motivations Behind Sponsorship Engagements: A case study of Sandefjord Football**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this thesis is to uncover the main motivations, goals and objectives of Sandefjord Football's sponsors through the main research question formulated as '*what are the motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of organisations sponsoring Sandefjord Football?*'.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative case study approach was taken, and the findings are based on semi-structured interviews with four of the club's main sponsors and two club representatives. Data was analysed by using Mykletun's (2016) three-step model of analysing qualitative data.

**Findings:** Motivations behind the sponsorship engagements with Sandefjord Football varied, and goals and objectives usually relates to motivations. Reputation and community goodwill seemed to be the most important motivation for some sponsors, while business, B2B networking and new customers were a motivation for others. The work they put in and how they organise their sponsorship activities varies according to motivations, goals and objectives, as well as resources and own corporate policy. None of the sponsors have any formal education in terms of sponsorship, however sponsorship activity in all sponsoring organisations was based on significant experience. Time and resources was stated as a factor impacting the extent to which sponsorship activities are managed by the club and the sponsors.

**Conclusions:** Conclusions in this thesis suggests that the sponsors' motivations behind their sponsorship engagement varies significantly based on corporate goals, objectives and policy, as well as the nature of organisation, personal interest and organisational resources. The notion that 'together for Sandefjord' and supporting the local community is central in all sponsors support of the club is also emphasised. An assumption has been made that sponsorship initiatives are more aimed local community development than commercial benefits.

**Research limitations/originality:** The findings should not be generalised due to the small sample population. The thesis offer originality as no studies have previously addressed Sandefjord Football's sponsors, and few studies have investigated managers' motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of smaller, local organisations with limited resources and unstable sporting results. Addressing sponsorship from a local and/or regional theory perspective would increase the validity of my findings and make them more relevant.

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# 1.0 Introduction

Sponsorship is a growing marketing activity and a phenomenon that roots back to ancient Greece (Beech and Chadwick 2007). Today sponsorship is seen as a method organisations use for marketing communications, with clearly defined objectives, goals and strategies for the most effective sponsorship exploitation. Sports may be the field in which the most significant sponsorship agreements occurs. This is because sports tend to face substantial international and national media coverage, which gives organisations possibilities for broad brand exposure. Sports are also seen as more professionalised entities than for example culture and art (Thjømøe 2010). There is possibly no mega events, professional sport or sports team, or profiled individual athletes that are not sponsored by one or many high profile corporations. It is seen both at the big arenas such as mega events like the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup Finals, in sports leagues such as the English Premier League or the National Football League in the USA, as well as for individual athletes like Usain Bolt or Cristiano Ronaldo. However, sport sponsorship exists at any level including grassroots and amateur sports, and in less profiled and exposed sports such as dart and fencing. According to Sponsor Insight (2018) global sponsorship spending was estimated to \$62.7 billions in total in 2017, a 4.3% growth from 2016, which is expected to grow with another 4.9% in 2018. Sport sponsorship can be seen everywhere, and include different corporate or non-corporate goals and objectives pursued by the sponsors. Moreover, motivations behind engaging in sponsorship agreements varies from, for example, achieving corporate objectives to supporting the local community, or brand- and/or relationship building. However, the relationship perspective of sponsorship and how managers assess a sponsorship's ability to fulfil specific objectives, have received little research attention (Farrelly and Quester 2005; Henseler, Wilson and Westberg 2011). Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the motivations and objectives behind the sponsors of Sandefjord Football, how they structure and manage their sponsorship activities to achieve desired goals and objectives both internally and as part of the sponsorship relationship.

In the following I will present a brief overview of the history and development of sponsorship in general, and give a short overview of the international and Norwegian sponsorship market and its current trend. Note that sources such as Nielsen Sport and



Sponsor Insight are used to understand current trends, but that both these companies are for-profit and benefit financially from their surveys and reports. Further, I will explain why Sandefjord Football was chosen as the case study for this thesis and outline the case and research questions. At the end of the chapter the structure and disposition of the thesis will be presented.

## 1.1 Sponsorship History and Development

Sponsorship has been around for a very long time. Already in 1903 the French newspaper L'Auto created 'Le Tour de France', to gain competitive advantage over their rival sports newspaper in France (Le Vélo) after sales had stagnated and they were threatened to go out of business (Gaboriau 2003). Trading teams were competing in the race, which had their own sponsors covering costs and equipment such as accommodation and bicycles. In 1930, national teams competed in the Tour as opposed to trade teams. This resulted in the accommodation cost for riders needing to be covered by the organisers rather than the sponsors. To cover these costs, advertisers were allowed to precede the race. Consequently, what became known as the publicity caravan or advertising caravan was introduced, including colourfully decorated trucks and cars by companies following the Tour (Gaboriau 2003).

The roots of sponsorship are even older. The Roman games in the ancient Greece or Rome was used as commercial tools, despite the fact that most spectators could not write or read (Beech and Chadwick 2007). Caesar used gladiators' fights as advertising to earn votes 65 BC, and according to Beech and Chadwick (2007) he was fully aware that organising these kinds of events would have a positive impact on his voting campaign. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, commercial motivations for supporting an activity became a phenomenon with British catering company 'Spiers and Pond' sponsoring the British cricket team's first Australian tour and reaching a £11,000 return on investment in 1864 (Beech and Chadwick 2007). It is argued that sponsorship became part of corporate marketing strategies in the early 1980s (Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005), in which sport sponsorship was increasingly used for brand awareness, consumer goodwill, image transfer and fan involvement (Meenaghan 2001). Even though sponsorship has existed for a long a time, we know little about the mechanisms of how sponsorship actually works (Henseler et al. 2011). At that

note, the current trends in the international and Norwegian sponsorship market will be taken into account.

## 1.2 Current Sponsorship Trends

In line with the commercialisation of sport sponsorship, various analytical and consulting companies are attempting to keep track of current trends in the sponsorship market. Forbes reported from the 30<sup>th</sup> annual IEG Sponsorship Conferences in 2013 that consumer brands eventually had realised that a substantial return on investment from sponsorships requires more than paying for logo appearances next to the logo of a professional sports teams, purchasing television advertising or stadium advertising during games (Belzer 2013). Rather, developing dynamic partnerships allow organisations to engage with consumers continuously and develop engaging and dynamic campaigns that make the brand become an authentic part of the sponsored property (Belzer 2013). Nielsen Sport (2017) analysed commercial trends in sport for 2017 and found that the emphasis on breaking the code for sponsorship return on investment gains even more focus. They have also noticed that rights holders (sponsored properties) predict the return on investment expected for a brand before the sales process. Moreover, Nielsen Sport works toward linking sponsorship exposure and retail sales in order to provide continuing tracking of how a sponsorship partnership is performing (Nielsen Sport 2017). Evidently, a large focus is currently given to the measurement and evaluation of sport sponsorship and increasingly sophisticated models are being developed, which highlight the intense competition in the global sponsorship market. While these are some of the trends in the international sponsorship market, this thesis focuses on a sport property and its sponsors with a national, or even local, reach. Therefore, an overview of trends in the Norwegian sponsorship market will be presented.

While the international sponsorship market is important to understand when investigating how sponsorship works, it is more important to look at trends in the market which is being investigated, namely the Norwegian sponsorship market. Yet, this market has faced little attention from researchers and in the literature, which is true for most small national and/or local sponsorship markets. Sponsor Insight (2018), a Norwegian analytical company, charted the turnover in the Norwegian sponsorship market for 2017. They indicated that the market faced an increase of four percent, to reach a total of 4,8 billion NOK. CEO of Sponsor

Insight, Vegard Arntsen, argued that sponsorships continue its stable growth, despite the challenges the Norwegian market has faced. He suggested that this includes sponsored properties reporting strong competition for sponsorship money and the media channels experiencing a decline (NTB 2018). Further, he argues that this growth indicates that sponsorship is less dependent on business cycles than other channels, and that Norwegian companies view sponsorships as an important marketing communication tool. Sponsorship as a media channel has faced continuous growth in Norway with an increase of 46 percent during 2009-2017, in which further growth is estimated in 2018 (NTB 2018). This growth can be explained by increased knowledge about sponsorship and more clearly defined goals and strategies of how to achieve return on investment besides tickets and logo exposure (Sponsor Insight 2018). It is argued that more knowledge of exploitation possibilities has been developed including image enhancement, new product launch, employee engagement and how to reach new segments of the market (Sponsor Insight 2018).

While the Norwegian sponsorship market in general has faced an increase – with the Norwegian Ski Federation at the front – sponsorship of football has decreased the past years. Sponsor Insight (2018) reported that football sponsorship faced a total income in 2017 of 1,6 billion NOK and a 33% share of the total sponsorship market. Despite its decline, there are 12 football clubs among the top 20 sponsored properties in Norway, and 24 football clubs have reached the top 40 (Sponsor Insight 2018), indicating the significant role football plays in the Norwegian sponsorship market.

### 1.3 The Case

Sandefjord Football is a football club from the city of Sandefjord, which currently plays their second consecutive season in the Norwegian Premier League (Eliteserien). The club has a relatively short history after being founded in 1998 with a goal of reaching and establishing at the top level of Norwegian football, being a professional club and a rallying point for the region of Vestfold. In the past years, the club has balanced between the top division and the second highest division. Their main goal is to establish the team among the top ten teams in Norwegian football. To reach this goals resources are crucial. Beside sporting success, sponsorship income is the most stable and significant source of revenue for any club (Beach and Chadwick 2007). With between 110 and 120 sponsors, one general

and six main partners (Sandefjord Fotball 2018), Sandefjord Football is ranked number 23 among Norway's biggest sponsored sport properties (Sponsor Insight 2018). While many of the club's sponsors can be seen as small- to medium-sized local enterprises, some of the main partners have a national and even a global reach, with international painting company Jotun at the forefront (Sandefjord Fotball 2018). According to the tier-structure of the club's sponsors, the general and main partners provide the club with most resources (Sandefjord Fotball 2018). Therefore, semi-structured interviews with four of these have been conducted based on the assumption that the sponsors spending most on their sponsorship initiative are those that have most well thought out structures and strategies related to the sponsorship agreement.

#### 1.4 Aim and Justification of the Case, and Research Questions

The reason for the chosen topic and case is first and foremost that I have been and still are employed at Sandefjord Football. Being involved in the club have made me aware of the club's low budget and the challenges they have faced in securing sufficient funding, their dependence on sponsorship income and the work put in by the club to increase sponsorship revenues. It made me curious about the level of engagement, the motivations and strategic work behind their sponsorships. Thus, are the sponsors' engagement a result of managers' interest in football, a community responsibility, or being part of a network? And are clear structures and strategies developed to pursue the sponsorship for commercial gains?

The club's limited human resources might inhibit the process of managing all sponsors equally due to a lack of time. Therefore, how satisfied the sponsors are with the sponsorship relationship, as well as how the club manage and work with their sponsors was considered an interesting point to investigate. Although a wide range of literature has investigated sponsorship and its many different aspects and perspectives, limited research has been undertaken with regards to leagues without global reach and huge commercial sponsorship agreements, the managers' motivations and the relationship perspective of sponsorship. Therefore, I wish to uncover some of the existing literature on sport sponsorship and sponsorship in general, while at the same time provide new understanding of how sponsorship works in a minor club at the highest level of Norwegian football. As a result,

one main research question has been formulated in addition to three sub-questions that are developed to elucidate the main research question. The main research question is as follows:

*What are the motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of organisations sponsoring Sandefjord Football?*

The aim with this research question is not to generalise sponsorship as a subject. Rather an exploratory approach is taken to get an understanding of what constitute sponsorship, organisations motivations and objectives behind sponsorship agreements, as well as what the sponsors regard as important for a successful sponsorship relationship. This thesis will attempt to contribute to a new understanding of sponsors' motivations to engage in a sponsorship initiative, what they expect from the club with regards to a sponsorship relationship and how they structure their sponsorship activities. This thesis will then be a valuable contribution for sponsors, researchers, and clubs, as it fills a gap in the existing literature on the field. The three sub-questions are developed to emphasise the different aspects of sponsorship in relation to the main research question. The sub-questions will be used as part of the discussion and conclusion in chapter five and six. They are as follows:

- 1. What values are important to achieve by the sponsors in terms of return on investment, community goodwill, reputation, customer engagement, employee motivation and networking?*
- 2. Why do they sponsor a club which could not be perceived as a winning team?*
- 3. How does the sponsorship work? Do they have strategic goals and objectives? Do they evaluate and measure the effectiveness of their sponsorship?*

## 1.5 Structure and Disposition

The following chapters of this thesis will present an overview of the existing literature on sponsorship, including a discussion of different definitions on sponsorship. It will also look at the development and evolving views, sponsorship relationships, and the importance of trust and commitment in sponsorship relationships. Further, it will look at what the literature regards as the main motivations, objectives and goals behind sponsorship initiatives, and the evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness. Moreover, leveraging of sponsorship activities, and

the importance of image-transfer and congruence in sponsorship agreements will be taken into account. Chapter three will look at qualitative research interviews and case study research as the approach used in undertaking this research. Further, chapter four will look at the process of analysis and present the findings conducted from the semi-structured qualitative research interviews. In chapter five a discussion of the research findings will be undertaken based on the research questions mentioned above, and compared to previous research findings that are presented in chapter two. Finally, conclusions in relation to the main research question will be presented, as well as limitations to the thesis and recommendations for further research. The following part, chapter two, will give an overview of the literature on sponsorship.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Sponsorship is a marketing communication tool used by organisations instead of, or in addition to, traditional advertising and marketing techniques. Within contemporary sport, sponsorship may be the most financially lucrative way for a contemporary sport organisation to make their presence felt and is critical in achieving sporting success (Beech and Chadwick 2007). Lagae (2005, in Beech and Chadwick 2007, 231) described sponsorship as “a business agreement between two parties, based on reciprocity”, while Gordon and Cheah (2017, 3) argued that “sports sponsorship is essentially about a relationship.” Thus, the exchange should benefit both parties involved. However, Farrelly and Quester (2005) noticed that the relationship perspective of sponsorship has received little research attention despite evidence of sponsors and sport properties engaging in mutually beneficial, long-term relationships where commitment and trust plays an essential role. The competition among sport properties trying to attract scarce sponsorship resources is high, as demand for sponsorship resources exceed the supply of interested sponsors (Madill and O’Reilly 2010).

Usually the sponsor provides funds, resources or equipment to the sponsored property in return for association or user rights, which the sponsor can use for own commercial advantage (e.g. Beech and Chadwick 2007; Meenaghan 2001). Through sponsorship a link might be created between the sponsored property and the sponsor in the mind of the consumer, which is what differentiates sponsorship from advertising (Madill and O’Reilly

2010). This link may result in image transfer where an association between sponsored property and sponsor is created and where both parties benefit from that association (e.g. Madill and O'Reilly 2010; Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005). In general, the association with sport is argued to provide organisations with a possibility of reaching out to potential audiences, markets and customers which may be challenging to reach through other techniques of marketing communication (Meenaghan 2001; Beech and Chadwick 2007; Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013).

How sponsorship works in the mind of the consumer through image transfer, congruence and leveraging have received a lot of attention in the literature (Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005; Thjømmøe 2010; Meenaghan 2001; Chien, Cornwell and Stokes 2005; Nickell, Cornwell and Johnston 2011; Pappu and Cornwell 2014; Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012). On the other hand, managers' perception of sponsorship effects, evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness, and managers' motivations behind sponsorship initiatives are less researched, and the understanding of how sponsorship works from a manager and club perspective is limited. It is evident that the literature on sponsorship is complex, and involves many different views and aspects of sponsorship. As a result, I will present an overview of the literature in terms of evolving and developing views on sponsorship from philanthropy to a relationship and network perspective. Various elements of sponsorship will be discussed in this chapter including the sponsorship relationship, objectives and motivations in sponsorship engagements, as well as the role of trust and commitment and evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness. Image transfer, congruence and sponsorship leveraging will also be taken into account as they are central parts of the sponsorship literature. First, a brief discussion on the various definitions of sponsorship will be undertaken in order to understand the different views and perspectives that the literature emphasises.

## 2.1 Definitions of Sponsorship

Many different definitions of sponsorship exist including different views on what constitute sponsorship. Mullins, Hardy and Sutton (2000, in Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou 2004, 254) stated that sponsorship is "the acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product or event for the purpose of deriving benefits related to that affiliation of association." This definition suggests that sponsorship agreements includes two elements.

One including the sponsor's investment in order to obtain the right to associate with the event, activity and/or sport, while the other part includes the received benefit for the sponsor in return for their investment (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou 2004). However, corporate and/or marketing objectives are not mentioned in this definition.

Meenaghan (1983, 9) defined sponsorship as "the provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organisation for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives." Although this definition has been commonly accepted (Cobbs 2011), it indicates that sponsorship is purely commercial. Gordon and Cheah (2017) emphasised Gardner and Shuman's (1987, 3) definition of sponsorship to be relevant for their research: "sponsorship may be defined as investments in causes or events to support corporate objectives (for example, by enhancing corporate image) or marketing objectives (such as brand awareness)." This definition emphasises sponsorship as an investment to support and help achieve corporate and/or marketing objectives for the sponsoring organisation.

As none of these definitions mention sponsorship as a partnership or relationship, Howard and Crompton's (1995, in Beech and Chadwick 2007, 269-270) definition should be brought forward: sponsorship is... "a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and a sports event or organisation which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage." Although sponsorship is here seen as a business relationship, commercial advantage as opposed to corporate objectives is emphasised, indicating that sponsorship is purely commercial.

Even though these definitions are different and emphasises different aspects of sponsorship, they are similar and, in broad terms, includes the same notion. Namely that sponsorship can give the sponsoring organisation a commercial advantage in terms of association rights as they invest in or provide the sponsored property with funds, resources or services which benefits the sponsored property. These findings are similar to Madill and O'Reilly's (2010, 134) who argued that sponsorship definitions usually contain two constant elements, namely "the mutually beneficial exchange of sponsor resources [...] in return for promotional value" and "the sponsor's association with the sponsee" (sponsored property). Among the definitions mentioned, Howards and Crompton's (1995, in Beech and Chadwick 2007) definition is the only one emphasising sponsorship as a business relationship. It is true that sponsorship can be used solely for commercial gains and seen as a market transaction



between buyer and seller (Gordon and Cheah 2017). However, sponsorship as a mutual interaction between multiple groups have become source of recent discussions (Gordon and Cheah 2017). Therefore, it is important to take into account sponsorship as a two-way relationship.

Sponsor Insight (2018) argued that different designations of sponsorship exist, as well as, in part, very different content of sponsorship within the different categories. Therefore, they provided their survey population with a general definition to ensure accuracy in their research. Sponsor Insight's definition is similar to that of Howard and Crompton's, with a few exceptions. Originally, Sponsor Insight's definition was in Norwegian, but an attempt to translate it as accurate as possible is made. Sponsorship is ...

*“a business agreement (economic or service related) between two parties (an organisation/sponsored property and a company/sponsor) based on reciprocity (logo exposure, access to relationship building, access to events, communication, deliveries/supplies, products etc.)”* (Sponsor Insight 2018, 5).

This definition is the basis for the thesis as it includes the partnership aspect, reciprocity, and what the sponsorship exchange may include. Further, it includes both pure monetary income as well as barter agreements (deliveries/services instead of cash as payment for the sponsorship), which is a common element in sponsorship contracts (Sponsor Insight 2018).

Furthermore, Gordon and Cheah (2017) argued that how you define sponsorship depends on the type of sponsorship which is up for discussion. They presented Abratt, Clayton and Pitt's (1987, in Gordon and Cheah 2017) five methods for sport sponsorship including: sponsorship of sport in general; sponsorship of specific sport; sponsorship of a competition within a sport; sponsorship of a team within a competition; and sponsorship of an individual. This thesis will largely focus on the sponsorship of a team within a competition as Sandefjord Football is a football team within competitions of Norwegian football. With this in mind, McCarville and Copeland (1994, in Copeland et al. 1996, 32) suggested that sport sponsorship “represent exchange relationship between sport organisers, corporations, and other intermediaries”, in which the basis for these relationships are “principles of maximising rewards and minimising risks for all parties involved”. Accordingly, I argue that Sponsor Insight's definition is appropriate and general enough to lay the basis for this thesis.

## 2.2 Development and Evolving Views on Sponsorship

When it comes to the development of sport sponsorship, the literature suggests that the real growth occurred during the 1980s (e.g. Beech and Chadwick 2007; Ryan and Fahy 2012). As pointed out earlier sponsorship has been around much longer than that. According to Beech and Chadwick (2007), sport sponsorship was seen by many companies as a new opportunity during the 1960s as it could provide significant positive media exposure with limited expenditure. Meenaghan (2001, 95) suggested that a more collective commercial version of sponsorship has developed in the last three decades, in which it is “increasingly pragmatic in business terms, greater in scale, and globally practiced.” Ryan and Fahy (2012) investigated the changing views on commercial sponsorship from the 1970s until 2010. They argued that the period before the 1980s could be described as a philanthropic approach, while the period beyond this fall into a more market or commercial oriented approach to sponsorship (Ryan and Fahy 2012). However, it is possible to argue that several of the approaches exists still and co-exist in present sponsorship theory and practice (Ryan and Fahy 2012). The evolving views of sponsorship give an overview of how the market have changed and developed. Approaches may overlap and different sponsorship philosophies might co-exist within different approaches (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Figure 1 is adopted from Ryan and Fahy (2012, 1139), and represent “the evolution of sponsorship thinking and changing priorities over time.”

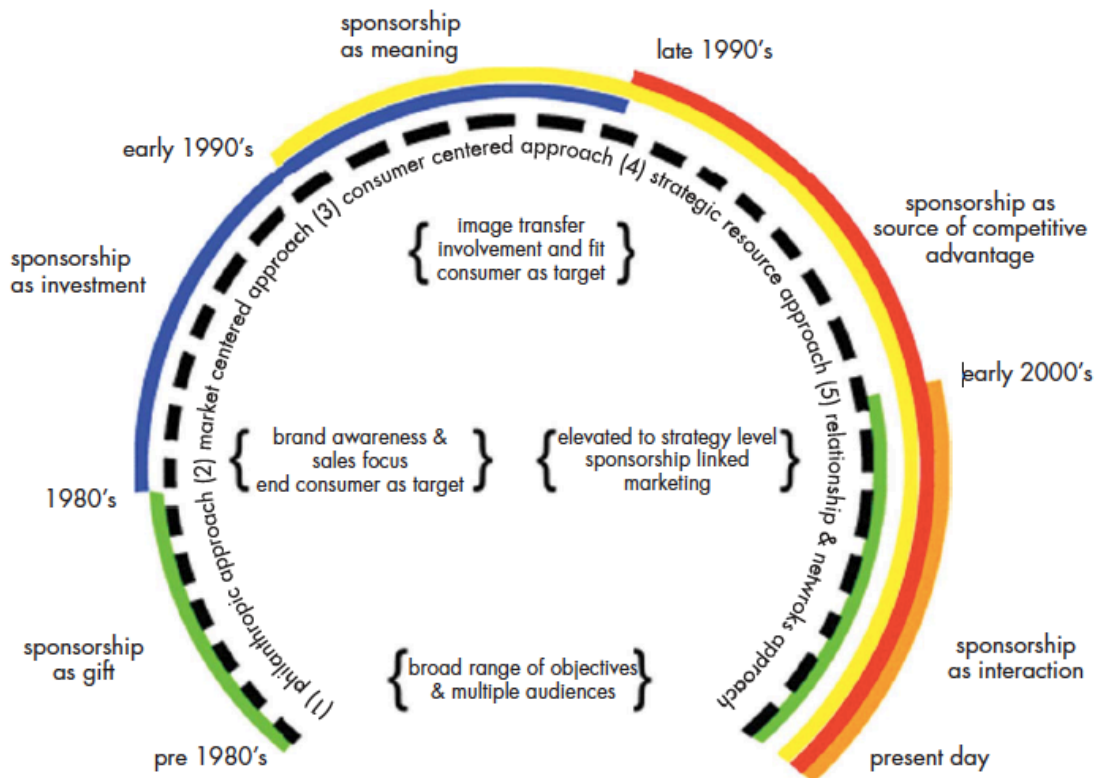


Figure 1: Graphical representation of the evolution of sponsorship thinking and changing priorities over time (adopted from Ryan and Fahy 2012, 1139).

### 2.2.1 The philanthropic approach

The philanthropic approach is argued to be the basis of the emerged understanding of commercial sponsorship as we know it today (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Philanthropy views sponsorship as a gift, and in its early forms were seen to “facilitate the achievement of broad corporate objectives” (1138) including corporate image enhancement and goodwill generation among several stakeholders (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Beech and Chadwick 2007). Copeland et al. (1996) argued that sponsorship management in this approach lacked clear corporate sponsorship policy development and sponsorship effectiveness evaluation. The practice of ‘director’s choice’ was also common, in which sponsorship properties were chosen based on the CEOs personal preferences and for personal reasons (Ryan and Fahy 2012).

### **2.2.2 The market-centred approach**

Ryan and Fahy (2012) argues that commercial sponsorship research moved away from the philanthropic approach towards the emergence of the market-centred approach during the 1980s and 1990s. The new era viewed sponsorship as an investment. Characteristics of this period includes a focus on brand and image awareness and return on investment of sponsorship. As sponsorship became increasingly marketing-related, it became increasingly professionalised and quantitative performance assessment criteria was developed in order for sponsors to evaluate and measure sponsorship success (Ryan and Fahy 2012). According to Ryan and Fahy (2012) external environment factors as well as limitation to more traditional promotional forms was the driving force behind the development towards more marketing-related objectives. For example, the change in government policy on tobacco advertising forced such companies to look other ways for communication (Meenaghan 2001). Sponsorship-linked marketing and forms of leveraging became central to the argument (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Cornwell et al. 2005).

### **2.2.3 The consumer-centred approach**

The market-centred approach received criticisms in the late 1990s as it lacked an understanding of consumer behaviour and their attitudes towards sponsorship in relation to image transfer (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Cornwell and Maignan (1998) emphasised the importance of understanding how sponsorship works in the mind of the consumer and how it may affect consumers' perceptions of a company or brand. The role of congruence or fit between sponsor and sponsored property became an important theme in the consumer-centred approach (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Cornwell et al. 2005). The importance of image transfer also emerged during this time as research looked at how brand values could be transferred (Donlan 2014).

### **2.2.4 The strategic-resource approach**

Ryan and Fahy (2012) argues that, in the late 1990s, commercial sponsorship became a source of competitive advantage. A shift of the sponsorship context was seen with higher

level of competition, threat of ambush marketing, and shifting power relation where in some cases, power was transferred from sponsor to sponsored property (Ryan and Fahy 2012). The strategic-resource approach also saw a shift from the view of sponsorship as 'just' a communication tool, towards a strategic way to potentially enhance corporate branding and marketing strategies (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Beech and Chadwick 2007). As a result, additional investments in internal capabilities was required to operationalise sponsorship objectives, and the sponsorship value generation was developed at the inter-organisational and organisational levels (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Relationship oriented sponsorship developed with the strategic-resource approach as mutual sharing of experience and resources became the norm and was seen necessary in gaining competitive advantage (Ryan and Fahy 2012).

### **2.2.5 The relationships and networks approach**

Finally, Ryan and Fahy (2012) presented the relationships and networks approach, and argued that it emerged in the early 2000nds as a natural development of the strategic-resource approach. In this orientation sponsorship is viewed as interaction in which sponsor and sponsored property are mutually dependent on the actions of the other. The business thinking shift towards more open relationships within the networks, where relationship-based activities become more common, and sponsorship objectives are developed jointly to achieve more successful sponsorships.

These views represent how sponsorship has evolved over time and indicate the focus of sponsorship literature from the 1980 (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Although, Ryan and Fahy (2012) argue that the relationship and networks approach is the main view practiced today, elements from all approaches can be seen in today's sponsorship theory and practice. It might be that these trends represent the increasing need for managers and practitioners to justify and legitimate sponsorship activities in terms of stakeholders and corporate policies. Moreover, as sponsorship effects can be difficult to measure, the development of trends can be a form of rationalising the decision to continue sponsorship activities. Rationalisation of sponsorship can relate to researchers, commercial companies as well as organisations that wish to legitimate their activities. Thus, their sponsorship activities might be rationalised as a method of keeping track with the market or as a source of modernisation. Consequently,

are the reasons for sponsorship activities a reflection of organisational expectations more than a real motivation? As a natural transition from the relationship and networks approach argued as the main sponsorship approach today (Ryan and Fahy 2012), the sponsorship relationship will be taken further into account.

### 2.3 The Sponsorship Relationship

An understanding of the sponsorship relationship is important as any sponsorship contract is based on the agreement between two parties – the sponsor and the sponsored property. As pointed out by Gordon and Cheah (2017, 3), “sport sponsorship is essentially about a relationship.” The sponsor gives something to the sport, sport team, activity, event or otherwise and asks for something in return. In general, sponsorship is very dynamic (Gordon and Cheah 2017). A basic part of any sponsorship is mutual obligations that are explicitly contracted, and success usually requires reliance on ongoing institutional and personal relationship that are both informal and implicit (Gordon and Cheah 2017). Both Farrelly and Quester (2005) and Gordon and Cheah (2017) pointed out the lack of research concerning the relationship perspective of sponsorship. This is despite evidence of long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between sponsors and sport properties occurs (Farrelly and Quester 2005). Relational objectives have constantly appeared in research findings as important objectives (Cobbs 2011), however, image and/or awareness outcomes measured through consumer perceptions continues to be the focus in most research on sponsorship evaluation (Madill and O’Reilly 2010; Cornwell et al. 2005).

Ryan and Fahy (2012) argued that a variety of sponsorship-specific capabilities involving high degrees of joint working became central as part of the relationships and networks approach that evolved in the early 2000nds. Accordingly, these capabilities are relationship specific capabilities and important for successful sponsorship management arrangements including reciprocal commitment, sponsorship-led brand building- and collaborative capabilities (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Reciprocal commitment concerns the perception of an equal level of investment from both parties in the sponsorship relationship. Therefore, a core competence in such relationships include both parties’ ability to commit to the relationship (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Sponsorship-led brand building capabilities concerns both parties’ commitment towards the sponsor’s brand as essential (Ryan and Fahy 2012). The last

relationship specific capability includes collaborative capabilities which concerns both parties' ability to engage in the relationship. More specifically, this includes both parties' ability to develop a structure in the relationship which can facilitate exchange of knowledge and how to meet sponsorship objectives (Ryan and Fahy 2012).

Jensen and Cornwell (2017) investigated reasons behind dissolution of sponsorship relationships and found that congruence and brand equity could reduce 'the hazard of dissolution' from the sponsors perspective. Further, they argue that the duration of a partnership can influence the success of the sponsorship. This is because a longer partnership provides the possibility for both parties to better understand each other's capabilities, which can lead to both parties learning ways that can enhance the relationship (Jensen and Cornwell 2017). Duration can also be an important factor from the consumers' perspective as it shows perceived commitment from the sponsor to the sponsored property and provide a stronger association between the brand and sponsored property in the mind of the consumers (Cornwell et al. 2005). Therefore, a longer duration of a partnership can facilitate the sponsor in moving beyond brand awareness towards improved brand image (Jensen and Cornwell 2017).

Cobbs (2011) pointed out the need to evaluate sports sponsorship from a broader perspective. This was argued as a result of evidence of the diverse targets and objectives to sponsorship, which includes relational aspects and interpersonal communications of sponsorship arrangements (Cobbs 2011; Farrelly and Quester 2003). While sponsorship is argued to deserve attention as a mass communication device, with image and awareness effects at the core, reaching a consumer audience is not the focus of all sponsoring organisations (Cobbs 2011). This leads us to the next part of the thesis emphasising sponsorship objectives and motivations.

## 2.4 Sponsorship Objectives and Motivations

Sponsorship objectives and motivations can vary depending on different factors including the type of sponsorship (e.g. art, culture, sport, event), the sponsoring organisation (e.g. size, corporate objectives, values), and the scope and scale of both the sponsoring organisation and the sponsored property (Gordon and Cheah 2017). Understanding motivations that

influence an organisation's decision to become involved in sponsorship agreements can be valuable in the process of soliciting and maintain corporate support (Copeland et al. 1996). Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) also argued that the objectives corporations seek are valuable to understand as it allows the sponsored property to actively work towards meeting the sponsors' expectations. Abratt, Clayton and Pitt (1987, in Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013, 102) described sport sponsorship objectives as "corporate marketing, communications, public relations, and/or promotional objectives deemed to be attainable through sport sponsorship." According to Kuzma et al. (1993, in Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013), exhibiting a close match between event/activity/sport characteristics and corporate objectives should be the primary principle when selling sponsorship. Beech and Chadwick (2007) noted the importance of identifying and specifying sponsorship goals and objectives before signing the contract. They suggested that many organisations are disappointed when evaluating their sport sponsorship performance as they experience weak results. An intuitive feeling held by many managers is that sponsorship is vital in order to increase brand awareness. It is argued that specifying goals and objectives are important in reaching preferred performance of the sponsorship (e.g. Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013; Beech and Chadwick 2007).

The literature has largely focused on sponsorship objectives, rather than managers' motivations of entering into a sponsorship agreement. Cobbs (2011) reviewed the literature and found several survey-generated corporate motivations for sport sponsorship participation (e.g. Copeland et al. 1996). Five general categories of objectives appeared as a result of his research, including image/awareness enhancement, sales, relationship building, community relations and support, and personal interest (Cobbs 2011). Personal interest might include the practice of 'director's choice' (Ryan and Fahy 2012) as previously discussed. It might also include pure patriotism, which offers a perspective beyond corporate goals and objectives. Pure patriotism as a motivation for sponsorship engagement will be investigated more closely as part of the qualitative research for this thesis.

The extent of the identified motivations and objectives was argued to portray "sponsorship as a versatile medium with the capability of reaching a wide range of publics while potentially achieving multiple objectives" (Cobbs 2011, 591). Madill and O'Reilly (2010) found over 50 distinct sponsorship objectives in their review of the sponsorship literature.



These varied from access to an event and achieving media exposure to brand building in specific target markets or achieving return on investment (Madill and O'Reilly 2010).

Many industrial firms consider brand image building and competence establishment in business-to-business (B2B) markets as vital sponsorship objectives (Blombäck and Axelsson 2007, in Cobbs 2011). Moreover, Crowley (1991, in Cobbs 2011) suggested that among all corporation using sponsorship as a marketing tool, more than a quarter have the business community as their primary target, while Caemmer and Descotes (2011) investigated relational objectives in sponsorship engagements. Wagner, Persson and Overbye (2017) studied one Danish Premier League football club and one lower level league Danish handball club. They found that for the sponsors of these clubs, networking opportunities and business logics were among the most important reasons for being involved in sport sponsorship. This can be explained by the uncertainty of being part of an open league structure, where a possibility of relegation is always present. Therefore, securing some financial income and stability is paramount when sporting results are poor (Wagner et al. 2017).

At the other end of the scale, Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) examined the motivations and objectives of Grand National sponsors of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. They found that the motivations for sponsoring the Athens Olympics went beyond the typical business objectives. Rather, “the desire to support the national effort and a sense of obligation led most companies to enter into a sponsorship agreement” (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou 2004, 180). When it comes to the sponsors' objectives, increasing sales or market share, enhancing corporate image, and increasing brand awareness were among the most valued objectives by the national Olympic sponsors (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou 2004). These objectives fall under some of the same categories identified by Cobbs (2011), which supports objectives identified by other researchers (e.g. Lough and Irwin 2001; Stotlar 2004; Vance et al. 2016; Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013; Wagner et al. 2017; Meenaghan 2001; Copeland et al. 1996).

Beech and Chadwick (2007) argued that most sponsorship objectives ‘fall into’ four main groups: awareness, image, sales and internal communication. Awareness includes making a brand name or company known for a specific target market, thus, bringing attention to the brand of potential consumers (Henseler et al. 2011). However, if a brand or company is

already well known, such as Coca-Cola or Adidas, the focus would potentially lie on other objectives. This can for example be image enhancement, where positive values associated with the athlete, sport, team or event can be transferred to the company's image (e.g. Chien et al. 2005).

Sales is another objective, which in many cases can be a goal more than an objective and vary depending on the company's corporate objectives. Nevertheless, the objective of increasing sales can include increasing sales of products, consumer stimulation to try out a new product, or motivate the sponsor's commercial team work (Beech and Chadwick 2007). Sponsorship creates, in these objectives, a more 'convivial dimension to communication'. Therefore, a friendlier link to a target market occurs (Beech and Chadwick 2007).

B2B relationship can also be part of the objective of increasing sales (Beech and Chadwick 2007) and the sponsor's business network. This can be an important objective for some sponsors in order to increase their business and develop relations among their community (Wagner et al. 2017). When it comes to sponsorship as a more general tool, Beech and Chadwick (2007) argues that public communities increasingly use sport sponsorship. Here, sales cannot be considered as the objective, nor does it mean they have a philanthropic approach to their support. These communities rather pursue television exposure, awareness, image and internal motivation (Beech and Chadwick 2007), which is similar to private companies (except the sales objective), in order for their sponsorship actions to achieve an economic impact in their local community (Madill and O'Reilly 2010).

Internal communication is the forth 'objective group' proposed by Beech and Chadwick (2007), which includes the potential internal effects sponsorship can have. Essentially, it is about employee motivation and the feeling employees can get of the company's sponsorship activities, which can help create a team spirit and develop the company culture. Beech and Chadwick (2007) suggest that this depends on the sport that is sponsored as well as corporate policy orientation. One example of this includes yachting sponsorship, which are usually chosen based on their values that can be closely related to the values of the business world. An important point to make is that all the four main groups of sponsorship objectives can be pursued by a sponsor at the same time. Usually one main goal is identified, however, several objectives should also be identified in order for the sponsorship to create the desired value for the sponsors.

Vance et al. (2016) investigated corporate culture, belief and motivations behind the selection of sport sponsorships in Australia. Although, there has been limited research in regards to the sponsorship selection process, and the motivations for involvement in sport sponsorship, they found that corporate culture, the sponsorship manager's beliefs about sponsorship types and their motivations have a great influence on the sponsorship selection process (Vance et al. 2016). They also highlighted the importance of knowing and understanding underlying objectives for a sponsor, as it can help develop relevant performance indicators based on shared goals. As a result, the sponsored property can respond according to these objectives and in turn be more likely to experience lasting sponsorship partnerships (Farrelly and Quester 2005). This is in line with Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) findings that understanding sponsors' motivations and objectives can contribute to successful partnerships for both sponsors and sponsored property. The selection of a sponsorship can also be based on the intuition and interests of the manager making the decision, as discussed earlier as a practice called 'director's choice' (Ryan and Fahy 2012).

While an understanding of common motivations and objectives are important when investigating Sandefjord Football's sponsors' motivations and objectives, little research is done towards local sponsors with patriotism as the main motivation. Therefore, the findings from this research will be interesting in the sense to which it relates to the existing literature. In addition, whether the sponsorship objectives are as comprehensive for them as for the corporations covered by the literature will be interesting to investigate together with structures and strategies developed to reach these objectives. As the literature suggest that sponsorships are in fact relationships, the role of trust and commitment in sponsorship relationship need to be taken into account.

## 2.5 Trust and Commitment in Sponsorship Relationships

Trust and commitment is an important topic to cover when investigating sponsorship relationships and other B2B relationships and is likely to be crucial in long-term, mutually beneficial relationships (Farrelly and Quester 2005). In the literature, commitment and trust has been given quite a lot of focus (e.g. Morgan and Hunt 1994; Farrelly, Quester and

Mavondo 2003; Farrelly and Quester 2003 and 2005; Moorman, Deshpande and Zaltman 1993). However, Farrelly et al. (2003) noticed that when it comes to examining how the relationships between sponsors and sponsored properties are maintained and developed, as well as how it can impact sponsorship effectiveness, little research has been done. Farrelly et al. (2003) investigated sponsorship relationships according to market orientation and relationship marketing. They argued that the sponsors market orientation can affect and drive collaborative communication, trust and commitment, as important factors in successful sponsorship relationships. Morgan and Hunt (1994) introduced the commitment-trust theory in relationship marketing, and argued that commitment and trust, rather than power and the ability to 'condition others', can lead to cooperative behaviours that are conducive to successful relationship marketing. They further state that the presence of commitment and trust in such relationships create outcomes in which efficiency, productivity and effectiveness are promoted (Morgan and Hunt 1994).

Communication between sponsor and sponsored property is important and necessary in order to translate information from market-oriented activities into profitable strategies (Farrelly et al. 2003). Communication among key personnel across the sponsorship partnership can lead to shared interpretation of goals, as well as the development of agreed norms and roles (Farrelly et al. 2003). In fact, as pointed out by Andreasen (1996, in Farrelly et al. 2003, 131), the ability of the relationship partners to engage "in an explicit dialogue about market opportunities, goals and expectations", determine the success or failure of the alliance, together with the parties "willingness to nurture a productive working relationship."

Commitment can be linked to sponsorship effectiveness (Farrelly et al. 2003) and is recognised as a key factor in long-term relationships (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Morgan and Hunt (1994, 23) defined relationship commitment as "an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it; that is, the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely." However, a simpler definition was presented by Farrelly and Quester (2005, 212): commitment is "a willingness of the parties in the sponsorship relationship to make short-term investments in an effort to realise long-term benefits from the relationship." Commitment is widely discussed in the social exchange literature and organisational behaviour theory (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Accordingly, commitment can be discussed and is important whenever a relationship is present. Barry and Parasuraman (1991,

in Morgan and Hunt 1994, 23) pointed out that in services relationship marketing, “relationships are built on the foundation of mutual commitment.” This is also true in sponsorship relationships as it directly relates to the willingness of a sponsor to invest into leveraging the sponsorship association (Farrelly et al. 2003; Farrelly and Quester 2005). Leveraging is an activity that has become accepted as central to sponsorship success (Cornwell et al. 2005), and will be discussed more closely later. Moreover, the level of commitment affect how prepared the parties are to cooperate to achieve resource synergies and maximum effect. It also gives an indication of the sponsors and the sponsored property’s strategic intent, which includes whether a long- or short-term focus exists (Farrelly et al. 2003). Morgan and Hunt (1994) theorised commitment to be a central factor to all relational exchanges between an organisation and its partners.

Finally, trust is another important factor in sponsorship relationships. Morgan and Hunt (1994) suggest that trust exist when one party is confident about an exchange partner’s integrity and reliability. They present the classic view involving the expectation of one individual that the word of another “can be relied on” (Morgan and Hunt 1994, 23). Further, they argue that the literature suggest that trust indicates reliability and high integrity, which can be associated with different qualities, such as being “consistent, competent, honest, fair, responsible, helpful and, benevolent.” Moorman et al. (1993, 82) include ‘willingness to rely’ in their definition of trust, in which they argue that trust is limited “if one believes that a partner is trustworthy without being willing to rely on that partner.” However, Morgan and Hunt (1994, 23-24) argue that ‘willingness’ is unnecessary in the definition as “willingness to act is implicit in the conceptualisation of trust, and therefore, one could not label a trading partner as ‘trustworthy’ if one were not willing to take actions that otherwise would entail risk.” In other words, if one party has genuine confidence to rely on another this implies a behavioural intention to rely. Moreover, Moorman et al. (1993) argue that trust involves vulnerability and uncertainty. Vulnerability because without it, the outcomes will be inconsequential for the other part. And uncertainty because without it, “the trustor can control an exchange partner’s actions or has complete knowledge about those actions” (Moorman et al. 1993, 82). Further, they argue that for trust to exist, components of both belief and behavioural intention must be present. Finally, a strong level of trust can be important in a sponsorship exchange as it can be essential in the exchange of sensitive information which is crucial for the preparation of sponsorship objectives (Farrelly and Quester 2005; Farrelly et al. 2003).

## 2.6 Evaluation of Sponsorship Effectiveness

In order to develop and maintain a successful sponsorship relationship and achieve sponsorship objectives, evaluation of the effectiveness of the sponsorship is important. However, Copeland et al. (1996) pointed out the lack of knowledge about how organisations evaluate “the success of their sponsorship involvements” and how the decisions of future involvement are affected based on such assessments. Moreover, Gordon and Cheah (2017) argued that measuring the effectiveness of sponsorship might be the most challenging aspect of any sponsorship. This might be the reason for Stotlar (2014) to argue that many organisations fail to adequately assess sponsorship’s effectiveness in terms of corporate objectives. On the other hand, as mentioned, various analytical companies are developing methods for effective sponsorship evaluation (e.g. Nielsen Sport 2017; Sponsor Insight 2018). According to Gordon and Cheah (2017), measuring the quantity of exposure for a sponsor’s brand achieved through media coverage is the most common evaluation method of sponsorship effectiveness. In doing this, time and space of the appearance of the sponsor’s logo, mention of the sponsor’s name etc. is assessed and converted into monetary value, and to achieve equivalent exposure advertising cost is calculated (Gordon and Cheah 2017). However, this type of evaluation does not give any insight to how the sponsorship impact on consumers, attitude and/or behavioural change (Olson 2010; Walraven et al. 2016). According to Stotlar (2004), those properties who supply data to their sponsors about sponsorship effectiveness often provide figures of attendance and media impressions, thus fail to provide measures of the sponsor’s objectives, which arguably are more interesting for the sponsors.

Accordingly, he developed a conceptual model based on the assumption that the most appropriate way to measure sponsorship effectiveness is whether sponsors’ specific marketing objectives are met, rather than what the sponsorship generated (Stotlar 2004). His sponsorship evaluation model consists of five elements: input, filter, activated components, evaluation protocol, and feedback loop.

‘Input’ involves the property’s packaging and selling of sponsorship with a focus based on sponsor objectives, as well as the sponsors being aware of their own objectives and what they wish to achieve from the sponsorship. Therefore, properties should have a marked

oriented focus where they ‘make what will sell’, and offer prospective sponsors a unique set of exploitable sponsorship components that meets the sponsors objectives (Stotlar 2004). The ‘filter’ element of the model involves the inventory a property can offer in terms of exploitable commercial potential in order to meet and realise sponsors objectives. ‘Activated components’ involves “the flow of objectives through the filter” (Stotlar 2004, 62). These are determined by corporate inputs as well as the property’s feasible inventory. The property should construct customised proposals as well as tailored sponsor benefits to the sponsors due to their unique nature. The ‘evaluation protocol’ of the model involves the ability to select appropriate sponsorships, and the need to assess whether the benefits of the sponsorship supports corporate expenditures. This includes establishing key performance indicators and developing an evaluation protocol for each performance indicator related to the sponsor objectives tied to each activated component. Finally, the ‘feedback loop’ of the model involves reassessment of corporate objectives, thus whether the sponsorship achieved the objectives (Stotlar 2004).

While Stotlar (2004) developed a sponsorship evaluation model, Walraven et al. (2016) proposed using data envelopment analysis (DEA) to benchmark sponsorship efficiency in response to concerns of a lack of accountability in sports sponsorship investments. They argue that sponsorship clutter, sponsorship duration, and sports popularity are drivers of sponsorship efficiency (Walraven et al. 2016). Sponsorship clutter is defined as “a high level of competing communications” (Donlan 2014, 8) and involves the number of sponsors a property have (Walraven et al. 2016). It might seem attractive to have as many sponsors as possible for a property, however, Walraven et al. (2016) found that it has a negative effect on sponsorship efficiency. The reason for this might be because consumers are exposed to too many sponsor messages at once, resulting in the majority of them being noise (Donlan 2014). On the other, the networking aspect of sponsorship clutter have not been discussed, and it might be that this aspect is more important for some sponsors than the actual signage and marketing messages (Cobbs 2011). Sports popularity was found to have a negative effect on sponsorship efficiency because it might require larger investments (Walraven et al. 2016). Sponsoring popular sports can offer potential benefits in terms of media exposure and target group involvement, however, since such sponsorships might be more expensive it can potentially be less efficient (Walraven et al. 2016). Finally, sponsorship duration was found to have a positive effect on sponsorship efficiency (Walraven et al. 2016). The cognitive processing of a sponsorship is enhanced by repeated exposure, which strengthens

consumers' association between sponsored property and sponsor (Walraven et al. 2016). A long-term sponsorship agreement also indicates a sponsor's commitment to the property, which is important when building brand equity (Donlan 2014; Walraven et al. 2016). This leads us to the next part including image transfer and congruence in sponsorship.

## 2.7 Image Transfer and Congruence in Sponsorship

Considering image transfer as part of sponsorship can both be useful and important for sponsors and sponsored properties. The sponsorship effects on consumers in terms of image transfer has received attention in literature by many (e.g. Madill and O'Reilly 2010; Meenaghan 2001; Cornwell et al. 2005). Ries and Trout (1986, in Beech and Chadwick 2007, 273) defined a company's image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions held by consumers about the company and its products." Although, an organisation's image cannot completely be changed through a sponsorship engagement, positive values of an athlete, sport, team or event, can be transferred into the mind of the consumer if a relevant association exist (Beech and Chadwick 2007). The sharing of brand values between sponsor and sponsored property as one of the main components of image-related sponsorship objectives can help establish 'an effective link with consumers' that can exceed 'the message of traditional advertising' (Madill and O'Reilly 2010; Beech and Chadwick 2007). Organisations in industries containing traditionally negative image, such as the tobacco and oil industry, have often used image enhancement as a main goal in their sponsorships (Beech and Chadwick 2007; Meenaghan 2001). Cornwell et al. (2005) considered meaning transfer in an attempt to explain image transfer effects, implying that meaning transfer from an event to the sponsor's product when paired during an event, and further to the consumers attending the event. Meenaghan (2001) suggested that different image values are transferred to the sponsor depending on the sponsorship category. In other words, sponsorship of arts activities such as ballet or classical music, transfer very different image values than sponsorship of a football team. A good example of potential image transfer effects includes the sponsors of the X Games (Cornwell et al. 2005). The X Games target a youth market with various actions sports in which the sponsors want to be associated with. They therefore seek image transfer opportunities where meaning moves from the X Games event to the sponsors' product to the consumers.



Image transfer in sponsorship has also been discussed in relation to fit or congruence between sponsored property and sponsoring brand (Kelly et al. 2016; Pappu and Cornwell 2014; Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012; Meenaghan 2001; Chien et al. 2005; Cornwell et al. 2005). Congruence is about the consumers' perception of similarity and fit between sponsor and the sponsored property. The consumer perception of the brand is determined by the fit, thus the greater the fit, the greater the chance for the sponsorship to 'enhance consumer perception of the brand' (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Congruence theory suggest that relatedness or similarity influences storage in memory and retrieval of information, for example, remembering that a running shoe brand sponsors a running event is easy and seems appropriate (Cornwell et al. 2005). Woisetschläger and Michaelis (2012) found that existing literature conceptualised congruence between sponsor and sponsored property as match in terms of perceived similarity, consistency and sense making between sponsor and sponsored property. Moreover, Pappu and Cornwell (2014) distinguished between sponsorship relationship fit and similarity. They argued that sponsorship relationship fit can be caused by image congruence and functional congruence and "refers to the degree to which the sponsor's brand-specific associations are applicable or beneficial to the sponsee's product category" (Spiggle et al. 2012, in Pappu and Cornwell 2014, 491). Similarity is about the similarity between objects of comparison which originate from commonality, and includes shared characteristics and features, and aligned differences (Pappu and Cornwell 2014). Examples of the commonality of aligned differences includes tobacco companies sponsoring sports, as well as McDonald's sponsorship of the Olympic Games (Pappu and Cornwell 2014).

Congruence between sponsor and sponsored property has been argued to be essential in developing effective image transfer (Cornwell et al. 2005; Woisetschläger and Michaelis 2012). However, Thjømmøe (2010) argued that image transfer varies significantly in terms of the kind of events and products that are taken into account. He also argued that fit and image should be separated as two different terms, in which fit should not be considered in relation to other terms. Thjømmøe (2010) also argued that fit is the most important component affecting sponsorship effects. Kelly et al. (2016) argued that congruence of sponsor and property, the power of image transfer and the use of signals is important when developing an association between the sponsor's brand and the property's brand. This is in order to facilitate brand awareness, brand image, sales and brand attitude and goodwill. Finally, Olson and Thjømmøe (2011, in Jensen and Cornwell 2017) suggested that perceived match or

fit between sponsor and sponsored property can be enhanced by announcing that an existing sponsor is continuing its support as opposed to announcing a new sponsor. Thus, indicating that a longer duration of a sponsorship partnership can benefit both a sponsor's brand as well as the perceived commitment by consumers of the sponsor (Jensen and Cornwell 2017). In addition, Thjømmøe (2010) argued that sponsorship leveraging is one way to enhance sponsorship congruence, which leads us to the last point of this chapter.

## 2.8 Sponsorship-linked Marketing and Leveraging

While sponsorship has been defined as a business agreement between two parties based on reciprocity (Sponsor Insight 2018), sponsorship-linked marketing has been defined as “the orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association to a sponsorship” (Cornwell 1995, in Cornwell et al. 2005, 21). From this the differences between sponsorship and advertising can be seen. On the one hand, we have sponsorship, which involves a fee paid to the sponsored property in return for commercial rights. On the other hand, we have advertising, which “offers a more knowable and more controlled communication” (Cornwell et al. 2005, 21). According to Meenaghan (2001), advertisement is seen by buyers as cynical, while sponsorship is more altruistic.

As discussed previously, image- and value transfer is a key factor and effect of sponsorship. However, in order for potential consumers to realise the link between sponsor and sponsored property, and for the sponsor to best exploit the sponsorship communication potential, sponsorship leveraging has been argued to be necessary (e.g. Cornwell et al. 2005; Nickell et al. 2011; Walraven et al. 2016; Farrelly and Quester 2003). Thjømmøe (2010) on the other hand, argued that this assertion lacks evidence. He further suggested that sponsorship works alone, and if leveraged, no synergy is achieved. However, leveraging may increase fit, which further increases the importance of leveraging sponsorships (Thjømmøe 2010).

Sponsorship-linked marketing and leveraging involve additional effort and investment, beyond the sponsorship contract, to build awareness of the link between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored property through advertising and promotion (e.g. Cornwell, in Söderman and Dolles 2013; Farrelly and Quester 2003). As argued by Nickell et al. (2011), sponsors investing in leveraging activities expect to see higher levels of awareness, and is

crucial in order to realise marketing objectives (Fahy, Farrelly and Quester 2004). Moreover, Walraven et al. (2016) noted that proper leveraging investment by a sponsor can provide more favourable consumer processing, while Farrelly and Quester (2003) argued it is necessary ‘to achieve any real degree of success’. They also argued that the sponsored property benefits equally (or even more) of a sponsor leveraging its sponsorship as their brand is promoted through an additional platform. Leveraging a sponsorship indicates commitment by the sponsor, and can be especially beneficial in a long-term partnership as it strengthens the link or association between sponsoring brand and property (Farrelly and Quester 2003). Finally, Crimmins and Horn (1996, in Nickell et al. 2011, 580) stated the importance of leveraging a sponsorship: “if the brand cannot afford to spend to communicate its sponsorship, then the brand cannot afford sponsorship at all”. Evidently, communicating a sponsorship seem necessary if enhanced awareness objectives are to be achieved.

## 2.9 Summary

Evidently, the literature covers a wide range of different perspective and views on sponsorship. While many have focused on how sponsorship works in the mind of the consumer through sponsorship-linked marketing, leveraging, image transfer and congruence. Others emphasises sponsorship from a relationship perspective, and include trust and commitment to the discussion. Clearly, motivations and objectives sponsors seek through sponsorship activities varies significantly as well. Many have focused on identifying objectives and motivations in commercialised sponsorships. These sponsorships often involve high corporations and prominent sport properties where structures and strategies are likely to be developed in order to reach corporate objectives. Fewer have investigated managers’ motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of smaller, local organisations with less resources and unstable sporting results. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to uncover the main motivations, goals and objectives of Sandefjord Football’s sponsors through qualitative semi-structured interviews with four of the club’s main sponsors. As a result, how objectives are reached, how the sponsorships are evaluated, and what the managers perceive as the most important factors of success in a sponsorship relationship will be investigated. First, an overview of the methodology used in conducting this research will be presented in chapter three.

## 3.0 Methodology

In this chapter I present the methodology used when conducting research and an explanation for how the research was conducted and analysed. The research question has been broken down into different sub-questions to cover several aspects of the main research question. A qualitative case study approach was taken and interviews were conducted based on a semi-structured interview guide aimed at studying the different aspects of the research issue at hand. The analysis process will be described in accordance with Mykletun's (2016) three-step model of analysing qualitative data, and results of the analysis will be presented in chapter four. I will also address the degree of validity, reliability and transferability, as well as a consideration of ethical issues.

### 3.1 Research Design – Qualitative Case Study Research

According to Veal and Darcy (2014, 42), empirical research involves “the collection and/or analysis of data, which may be quantitative or qualitative, primary or secondary.” Information in empirical research is gathered by ‘real world’ observations or information, and is rarely exclusively empirical because data must be interpreted. Accordingly, Veal and Darcy (2014) argue that empirical research is usually based on some theory or conceptual framework, and that research projects usually include both theoretical and empirical components which are complementary and enhance each other.

First and foremost a research topic needs to be chosen before starting a research project. Further it is necessary to specify a research question in which to base the literature review and further research on (Veal and Darcy 2014). A review of the literature is necessary before specifying the final research question, to identify a topic that has not yet been researched or for some reason has received little attention by other researchers (Veal and Darcy 2014). When developing a research question for this thesis, I first looked at topics related to sponsorship that could be beneficial for Sandefjord Football, and thereafter searched the literature in order to find out what has already been discussed. From the literature, it was clear that most research on sponsorship involves high corporations and prominent sport properties where structure and strategies are likely to be developed in order to reach

corporate objectives. Further, more social or ‘charitable’ sponsorship has also received some attention. Less research has been done towards managers’ motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of smaller, local organisations with less resources and unstable sporting results. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to uncover the main motivations, goals and objectives of Sandefjord Football’s sponsors through qualitative semi-structured interviews with four of the club’s main sponsors. As a result, my research question is as follows:

*What are the motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of organisations sponsoring Sandefjord Football?*

Tanggard and Brinkmann (2012) argued that the research question determines what kind of research method and approach that should be used. The aim with this research question is not to generalise sponsorship as a subject. Rather an exploratory approach is taken to get an understanding of what constitute sponsorship, organisations motivations and objectives behind sponsorship agreements, as well as what the sponsors regard as important for a successful sponsorship relationship. Selnes (1999) suggested that exploratory research might provide insight into evolving trends, and details and anecdotes can appear and provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon in which insight is desired. This thesis will attempt to contribute to a new understanding of sponsors’ motivations to engage in a sponsorship initiative, what they expect from the club with regards to a sponsorship relationship and how they structure their sponsorship activities. The thesis will then be a valuable contribution for sponsors, researchers, and clubs, as it fills a gap in the existing research on the field.

In order to address the sponsors’ motivations in terms of their sponsorship engagement, a qualitative approach to research was taken. The term qualitative indicates that the research is interested in addressing how something is done, said, experienced, emerged and developed (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2012). Because qualitative research is based on peoples’ own perspectives and account from the real world, it strives to understand individuals from within their lives and as in this case at their local practices (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2012). The reasons for choosing a qualitative approach to this research was the belief that personally involved individuals are best suited to explain and describe, in their own words, motivations, experiences and world-view in a particular situation, which is also

the general foundation of qualitative research (Veal and Darcy 2012). A deductive approach is taken as data is collected on the basis of existing literature (Veal and Darcy 2012). Nevertheless, Veal and Darcy (2012) argued that most research is both inductive and deductive.

### **3.1.1 Case study research**

The research conducted for this thesis is based on case study research, as Gummesson (2007, 87) defined as “...means that one or several cases from real life are used as empirical data for research, especially when knowledge of an area is sparse or missing, and when complex phenomena are studied.” Consequently, my thesis focuses on “the ability to get a rich understanding of the context of the research” (Söderman and Dolles 2013, 116).

According to Veal and Darcy (2014) case study research offers flexibility in data collection, however, the initial preparatory steps of research should still be undertaken. This includes “specifying research questions, reviewing the literature, establishing a theoretical/conceptual framework and determining data needs and sources” (Veal and Darcy 2014, 374). Three additional issues should be included when conducting case study research: defining the unit of analysis, selection of cases and data gathering (Veal and Darcy 2014).

#### **3.1.1.1 Defining unit of analysis**

When defining the unit of analysis, it is important to be clear about the single case. For example, this thesis includes two different units – Sandefjord Football as a single sport facility and their sponsor network. Sandefjord Football is owned by Sandefjord Football AS and it is therefore important to keep the analysis at the level of the club and not their owner Sandefjord Football AS (Veal and Darcy 2014). This also holds for their sponsor network. Many of the sponsoring organisations have owners, sibling organisations, are part of larger alliances, and so on. As a result, it is important to point out that the unit of analyses have been the actual organisations that have their brand name in the club’s sponsorship structure and Sandefjord Football as a single sport facility.

### **3.1.1.2 Selection of cases**

The selection of case(s) is of key importance in case study research, and Veal and Darcy (2014) identify four types of case selection that may be considered: purposive, illustrative, typical/atypical, and pragmatic/opportunistic. In this research, it is possible to say that two types of case selection have been considered. First, pragmatic/opportunistic selection is the most apparent reason for the club chosen, as I already had access to Sandefjord Football as a former intern. On the other hand, the sponsor cases were chosen based on their perceived influence and importance at the club, and because all are part of what is called the 'main sponsors'. Therefore, the sponsor case selection may be considered as more purposive selection as multiple cases were selected based on their influence and status as sponsors.

### **3.1.1.3 Data gathering**

The last additional issue identified by Veal and Darcy (2014) is data gathering, and the fact that case study research generally includes more than one data source and data-gathering technique. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with main sponsors and the club in order to get both parties' perspective, in which interview guides were developed based on existing literature. Due to my employment at the club, some observations were made, however not formally and structurally conducted.

The fact that I was employed at the club while writing the master thesis using the club as a case, was both challenging and advantageous. To an extent, and in different situations, it was challenging to view information from an objective viewpoint. The correcting element as part of working towards a supervisor and academic norms helped me with this in situation where I was too close to the data and the interview subject. Moreover, the short time I have been at the club made it possible to distance myself and further look at the information objectively. I was very clear to my colleagues that findings from interviews and the thesis would not be discussed until it was published. This was respected, which made it less challenging and easier to separate work from studies. Eventually it gave me an advantage as it offers more rigour and depth to the statements and information gathered in the interviews.

### 3.2 Research Method – Semi-structured Qualitative Interviews

Semi-structure interviews were conducted with all, but one, interview subjects. The purpose of interview research includes getting as close to the interview subject's experiences as possible, and ultimately formulate a coherent and theoretically well-informed third-person perspective on the experience (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). Tanggaard and Brinkmann (2012) argue that a student projects typically include 3-5 informants. Accordingly, I chose to interview four individuals as part of the sponsor perspective, and two individuals in order to get the club's perspective on sponsorship agreements and relationships. According to Tanggaard and Brinkmann (2012), it is better to conduct few interviews and analyse these thoroughly than many interviews superficially.

The club provided me with contact information of all seven main sponsors of the club. The CEOs or event/sponsorship managers in the sponsoring organisations were approached via e-mail. First I presented myself – who I am and what I do – then I presented the basic and main purposes of the thesis, before kindly asking for their help. I received six positive replies, however, eventually, meetings with four sponsors was scheduled. Out of the last three, one was positive, but had a full schedule and therefore was unable to 'help out' during that time. Another, provided me with contact information to another person within the organisation, yet no reply was received from the second potential interview subject. The last one never responded to the original e-mail. No attempt was made to follow-up these three, as four interview subjects was considered sufficient for this research (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). Two potential and relevant individuals at the club were approached via e-mail, in which both were positive. One was scheduled right away and the other required a significant amount of follow-up conversations in order to carry out the interview at all. This was due to a very busy schedule. Eventually, answers were collected via email, and follow up questions and conversations occurred continuously.

All sponsor interviews were conducted face-to-face and at the interview subjects' respective offices as people tend to be more authentic, relaxed and open in a familiar environment (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). Face to face interviews without a strict structure can facilitate more open answers, and the research subject are more likely to tell its own story and react to the interviewer's questions and interpretations (Tanggaard and Brinkmann



2012). Therefore, semi-structured open-ended interviews were carried out. Moreover, a dictaphone was used to record the interviews as this made it easier for me to pay attention and provide follow-up questions during the sessions, although such procedures might, in some cases, inhibit respondents (Veal and Darcy 2014). However, recording the interviews are of advantage as it make it possible to produce complete verbatim transcripts of the interviews, which gives the opportunity to analyse the results in a way that is more methodical and complete than with notes (Veal and Darcy 2014). Normally, semi-structured interviews should be conducted on the basis of an interview guide (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). An overview of how this was done follows.

The interview guides developed for this research include both themes and specific questions (see appendix 1 and 2), and is a more thematic dimension to an interview guide than a dynamic dimension (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). The literature review was used to develop relevant interview questions for the interview guide (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012; Veal and Darcy 2014). I used the interview guide as a frame in the interviews and even though not every question was asked, I made sure that the most relevant questions and themes were addressed. Moreover, some questions were asked in one interview and not another to address different aspects of the research topic and as a result of the different nature of the research organisations (Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). Before starting the actual interview session, I informed and explained briefly about the aim and purposes of the thesis, offered and ensured complete anonymity, and the use of the dictaphone. I also asked whether they had any questions for me. The dictaphone was placed at the table between the interview subject and me in all interviews. In order to get as detailed information as possible about the interview subjects and their sponsorship practices, I pretended not to know anything about their organisations or their roles. This was also done to get the interview subjects to explain everything they deemed important.

First some general questions about the interview subject and its position in terms of the club and the sponsorship agreement was asked before various themes was addressed. As some questions was answered in other questions, I jumped back and forth in the interview guide to address issues as they came along by the interview subject. Some themes and questions that might have been answered was covered more than once in order to make sure that I covered all relevant themes. Although, silence can be awkward and uncomfortable and/or intimidating, I attempted to wait with follow-up questions or new questions for about three

seconds (Veal and Darcy 2014). As a result, the interview subjects tended to continue speaking or add more information, which in many cases were relevant for the research. All interviews lasted between 20 and 35 minutes, and ended when I was satisfied with the information gained. After the dictaphone was shut off, I experienced that all were interested in talking more, not necessarily about the subject, but about the club, and they seemed more relaxed and comfortable to speak freely. However, I will not consider the dictaphone to inhibit the respondents, but it may have made them more concerned and focused on their answers. Nevertheless, all seemed to forget about it during the first two questions. No follow-up interviews were conducted after the original interviews, other than with one club representative. This club representative was interviewed via email, in which informal conversations at work helped enlighten any questions I may have had. Due to the different nature of the interviews with club representatives, the data attained from one was much more comprehensive than from the other. Nevertheless, the most important points were addressed. Going forward I will explain how the interviews were analysed in accordance with Mykltun's (2016) three-step model of qualitative research analysis.

### 3.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

As mentioned, complete verbatim transcripts of the interviews were produced within a day after the original interview took place. By having complete transcripts of the interviews, analysis of the results could be done in a methodical and complete way (Veal and Darcy 2014). As pointed out by Veal and Darcy (2014, 430) "the information gathered should be sorted through and evaluated in relation to the concepts identified in the conceptual framework, the research questions posed or the hypothesis put forward." Transcribing the material was beneficial as ideas for the analysis and important material occurred while listening and typing up the interviews. When analysing the material, I used a three-step model of analysis adopted by Mykletun (2016), which is a manual method of analysing qualitative data (figure 2). Although the first step in this model involves identifying emergent themes, it is necessary to highlight that emergent themes were identified after the material was coded. After the process of coding, I looked for and identified emergent themes, which is the first step of the three-step model (see figure 2 below). Further, relationship, similarities, and differences between these themes were identified and described. They were grouped in relation to meaningful descriptions, processes, concepts, and structures (Mykltun

2016). In this step theories and previous research might be consulted in order to find concepts and understand the processes that can support the data collected and increase the value of the research. However, although consultation with previous research is done, this will not be presented until chapter five. The final step of the analysing process involves summarising and formulate conclusions that can be drawn. The results of this analysis will be presented in chapter four.

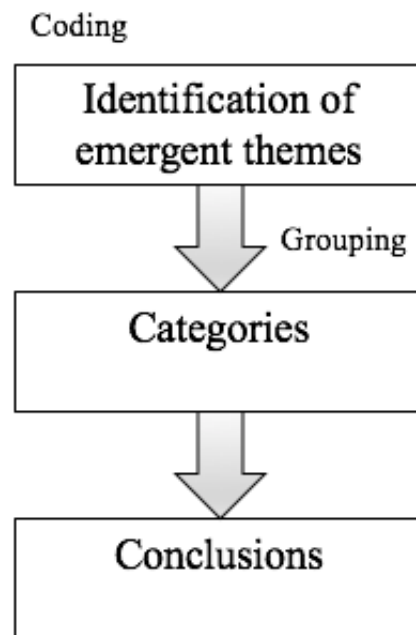


Figure 2: Three-step manual model of analysing qualitative data (adopted from Mykletun (2016)).

### 3.3.1 Step one: coding and emergent themes

The first step of the analysis includes coding and the identification of emergent themes. Emergent themes are the equivalent of variables in quantitative research and can be identified both by using a deductive and an inductive approach (Veal and Darcy 2014). Accordingly, both approaches were used when analysing the data. Thus, themes that arose from the literature review and research questions was used and searched for in a deductive way, while at the same time some themes emerged unprompted indicating an inductive approach (Veal and Darcy 2014). As both an inductive and deductive approach was taken, I used open coding, which is the process of taking notes and making heading in the text while

reading it (Elo and Kyngäs 2007). The main research question involves the sponsors motivations behind the sponsorship, which was kept in mind and considered during the analysis, as well as the sub-questions presented in chapter one. By grouping codes and considering the conceptual framework and research questions, emergent themes were identified. This included, among a few others, philanthropy and community responsibility, business, networks and relations, customers and sales, reputation and brand building, evaluation of return on investment, relationship and goals, trust, cooperation and communication, capacity and resources, potential, internal values and exploitation of sponsorship agreement. This leads us to the second step of the analysis which considers the process of grouping these emergent themes into categories.

### **3.3.2 Step two: grouping and categories**

The second step of the analysis includes identifying and describing relationships, differences, and similarities between themes. All themes that were salient throughout were put together into a developed framework below (see figure 3), which represent work in progress, thus should not be confused with fully developed and finished work (Veal and Darcy 2014). Level one include ‘motivations’ and ‘sponsorship work’, which are drawn from the research questions and the analysis. Level two includes the categories, which are grouped from the emergent themes in level three. These emergent themes appear as a result of the open coding process. A discussion of each category follows in chapter four.

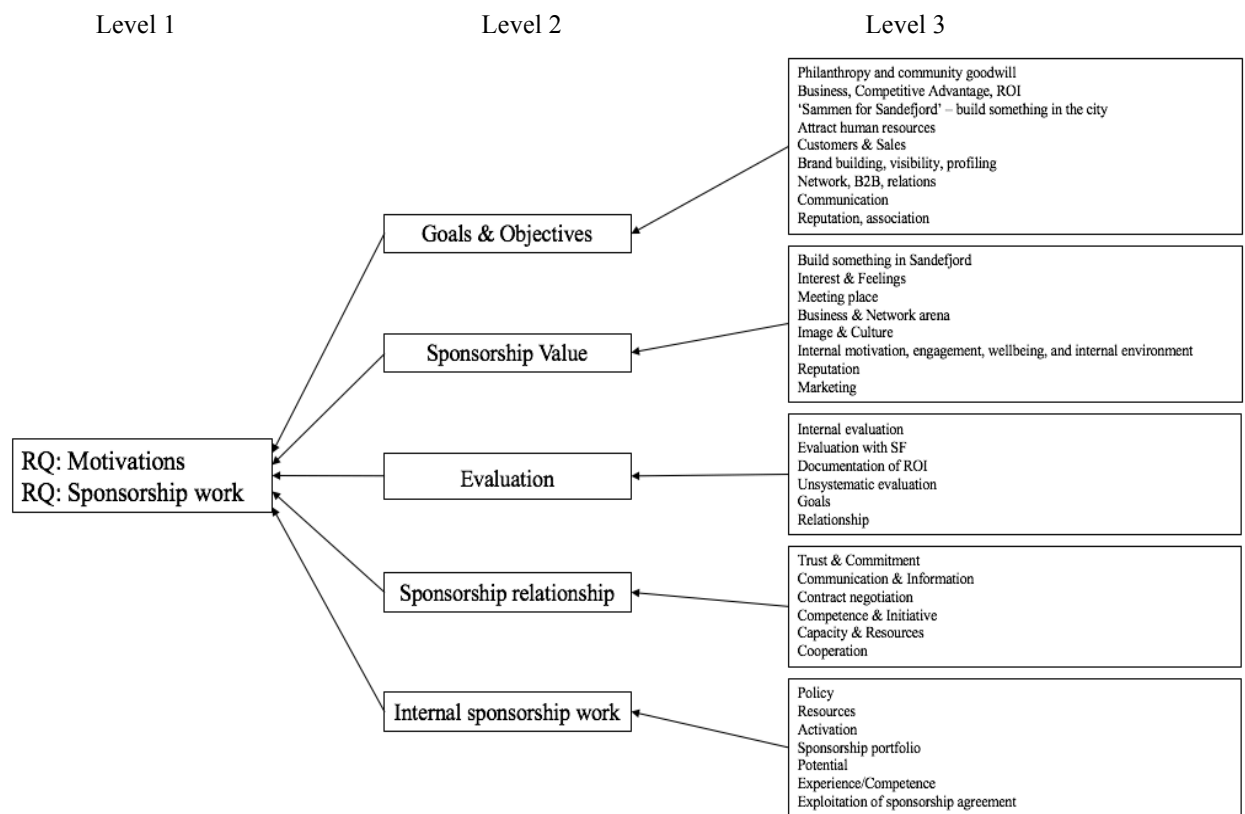


Figure 3: Developed conceptual framework (adapted from Veal and Darcy 2014, 431).

The aim of the second step is to get larger meaningful units of the analysis. Themes were grouped relative to meaningful descriptions, processes, concepts, and structures. Here previous research and theories may be applied and consulted in order to find concepts and understand the processes that can clarify the data and increase the value of the research by framing it in existing theories. Chapter four will look closer at the categories that have been grouped as a result of the identification of emergent themes, as part of step three.

### 3.4 Anonymity, Confidentiality and Biases

Research involving interviews with real-life individuals and organisations should provide the option of being anonymous (Veal and Darcy 2014). This is not only because sensitive information can be provided in such interviews, but also in order for the research subject to talk more freely and not having to worry about sensitive information being leaked (Veal and Darcy 2014). Not all interview subjects considered anonymity to be important, however, everyone was provided with it and made sure that everything said during the interview

session was handled with absolute confidentiality. Further, as a dictaphone was used to record the interviews, they were ensured that this would be deleted when the research project was submitted (Veal and Darcy 2014; Tanggaard and Brinkmann 2012). Anonymity and confidentiality was of particular importance in this project due to my employment in the club. Therefore, no interviews were discussed with any employee, member or stakeholder of the club, and both interview subjects and individuals aware of the project within the club was informed that this would not, under any circumstances be discussed before the thesis is submitted. Further, names of organisations and interview subjects was kept separate to the original interview transcripts in which codes was used to ensure the subjects anonymity. Moreover, some interview subjects have activities directly related to the leadership and management of the club. This might result in biased or unclear answers as the subjects 'sit at both sides of the table' and information received by the club might be information most sponsors does not or are not supposed to receive. Therefore, the roles might overlap, which was apparent in the analysis of the interviews.

### 3.5 Validity, Reliability and Transferability

Söderman and Dolles (2013) identified different weaknesses in case study research. Due to the fact that findings usually involve personal impressions and biases, there might be a lack of validity and reliability in such research. On the other hand, personal impressions and biases might be important for the research, and even motivate action. Therefore it can be argued that this is too easily rejected as a weakness as it may uncover specific details enhancing the research and encouraging further research on the subject. Trustworthiness might be another limitation to case study research, however, the trustworthiness may increase with the range of previous research and theories that can be applied to the study (Graneheim and Lundman 2004). Moreover, as with all self-reported and observed data, how honest and accurate the research subjects are in their response to questions is hard to know for the researcher (Veal and Darcy 2014). The problem of recall might also be an issue, where the research subject struggle to remember details which could have been useful for the researcher (Veal and Darcy 2014). The ability to transfer the findings to other settings or groups may increase the trustworthiness of the research as it may allow the reader to look for alternative interpretations (Graneheim and Lundman 2004).

At this point, no previous research has been applied to the findings, therefore the level of trustworthiness will be discussed at a later point. Including quotations from the research with examples from the transcribed interviews is identified as a strength. On the other hand, as only four out of over a hundred sponsors were interviewed, conclusions cannot be generalised to the wider population (Evers and Wu 2006). Consequently, although the sponsors interviewed had different purposes and motivations to engage in sponsorships, as well as different opinions on how to organise sponsorship activities, the different aspects and perspectives identified by the four sponsors provide a picture encompassing the various nature of the sponsoring organisations. Moreover, it gives a clear indication of how Sandefjord Football's sponsor network involve a range of different motivations, as well as organisations with varying degree of resources, experience and competence on sponsorship.

### 3.6 Ethical Issues

In terms of the nature of ethical issues, this research is conducted based on general principles. As a result, it should be beneficial to society including Sandefjord Football, and the sponsorship environment related to the club, and be supervised by a qualified researcher that was provided by HiMolde. Further, all interview subjects took part freely and on the basis of informed consent, no harm was made to the subjects, and data was "honestly and rigorously analysed, interpreted and reported" (Veal and Darcy 2014, 108). Moreover, information about the purpose of the thesis was provided before conducting any interviews. When it comes to data storage and confidentiality, no interview transcripts or data files were labelled with real names of the organisation or people interviewed. Code names, such as red, blue and white, was used instead, and original names was kept in a separate place. Names mentioned by the respondents are difficult to disguise, however, a judgement was made to disguise them in any quotations provided in the report (Veal and Darcy 2014). No recorded files were uploaded to a computer, but kept on the original dictaphone used, and are to be deleted upon submission of the thesis. Finally, all those involved in the project, thus my supervisor, the club and their sponsors, have received appropriate acknowledgements.

Chapter four will present the findings and analyses of the interviews conducted, both with the sponsors and the club. This will be done in relation to the three-step model of analysing

qualitative data (Mykltun 2016) presented in chapter 3.3, and is structured based on the categories in the developed framework in figure 3.

## 4.0 Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter will present the findings from the interviews conducted in relation to the three-step model of analysing qualitative data (Mykltun 2016) that was presented in the previous chapter. First, findings from the interviews with the club's sponsors will be presented in accordance with the categories in level two of the conceptual framework in figure 3. Further, the findings from the interviews with representatives from the club will be presented. Mykletun's (2016) model was used in the analyses, however no conceptual framework was developed in terms of the club's perspective.

### 4.1 The Sponsors' Perspective

#### 4.1.1 Goals and objectives

Goals and objectives includes various motivations of why the sponsors have decided to sponsor Sandefjord Football. It can be why they entered into a sponsorship agreement, what they wish to achieve, and how they view their sponsorship engagement with the club. Sponsorship as philanthropy or community responsibility and/or engagement was one overall objective many sponsors believed to be important. One sponsor stated:

“...in terms of sponsorship and philanthropy then almost everything that what we do leans towards philanthropy, in that we do not think we will get a whole lot back in terms of additional sales [from sponsorships], however, we think that we can get a whole lot back in terms of reputation and how the surroundings perceive [the sponsor] as a local business.”

All sponsors, except one stated that they wish to receive something in return or achieve something from the sponsorship association and relationship in addition to viewing it as a community responsibility or engagement. This could be customers, business relations and the possibility for B2B events, projects, or sales. For some it might seem that it started as a



pure community engagement, however, development in the market or own organisation, for example, have made them aware of potential benefits beyond community goodwill and reputation. One example of this is as follows.

“...we have supported heavily from day one, and at the time we started it was also because we were interested in having a top team in Sandefjord and contributed with that. We have also had.. and that was probably so much a kind of wish to have the top team and feel ‘together for Sandefjord’ and had the heart more with us than our heads. But gradually we have focused more on the fact that it should be a business model where we contribute but we want something in return. Bottom line, what we want, we want more customers, that’s our main purpose, but then it’s a matter of creating the brand of course, which is a part of it and we do that through, for example, our cooperation with Sandefjord Football.”

On the other hand, a pure business minded sponsor stated this:

“Those assessments we do in our management team on what our sponsorship portfolio is, is closely related to getting business out of it [...]. The fact that it is an arena where we also meet other decision makers in Sandefjord that are [related to their business]... so that is our main motivation around SF.”

‘Together for Sandefjord’ is Sandefjord Football’s old vision, and was changed to ‘magical moments’ some years ago. However, evidently, this vision is still something the sponsors are concerned with and it remains as an important motivation and purpose for their continuous support. All, but one, stated that their support has a lot to do with the wish to create and build something, make something happen, or support one of the good things in Sandefjord. One sponsor stated for example this:

“The most important thing for us is that we create a good environment here, create a good club, which creates some pride that give people some joy in this city. The fjord is important, the nature is important, SF is important, grassroots sports is important, culture is important, this is what will create Sandefjord.”

#### 4.1.2 Sponsorship value

When it comes to sponsorship value, this includes what kinds of values Sandefjord Football give the sponsors from the sponsors perspective. This varied in terms of their goals and objectives, however, reputation and brand visibility was an important factor for all sponsors. Nevertheless, reputation was not necessarily directly linked to the club but towards the fact that they are sponsoring something in the community. Furthermore, the fact that Sandefjord Football facilitate a meeting place, not solely to build relations, but also as a network arena where business can be done was valued by most of the sponsors. One sponsored described this in a good way:

“It is the number one team in the city and they have good values, the people are good and clever, they create engagement, even though Sandefjord basically is a city without the biggest engagement. It’s not like Bergen where they are madcap. But it provides visibility and at the same time it creates an arena when.. before every home match then 2-300 people can network, which is also important for us. But visibility is important.”

Another sponsor recognised that the club offers a platform in which B2B and networking occurs between organisations within the sponsor network. However, they found this opportunity to be rather meaningless for them due to their prominent position among the sponsors. This sponsor stated:

“SF creates an arena for cooperation between sponsors, discussions with other sponsors, etc. But there as well, in the setting of Sandefjord then [we] are also special. We are really large in comparison to all the others. That they can sit down around a table, the other sponsors, and find out ‘yes, here we have something in common and maybe there is something we can do together’ and so on, I think that occurs. But for [us] that are so much larger than the other and that have a completely different international footprint, then there is pretty meaningless, so we don’t use a lot of resources to achieve this.”

It was clear, especially by one, that there is potential within the club to grow towards a bigger goal and thus become a bigger and more important arena for sponsors and other organisations to meet and do business. This sponsor stated:

“...therefore it is limited what we think is the potential in SF as it stands now. If SF managed to get in a position where they are Vestfold’s club, managed to create a business arena that was important for all of Vestfold, then there is like the strategic dimension become significantly bigger than what they are now.”

Interest and feelings might just be reasons to be a sponsor, however, it is considered here as a value as part of the sponsors’ motivations. This is because the club awakens feelings when they play matches and the sponsors are interested in the performance of the club, and values the emotions and engagement a football club can give, as well as the interest in supporting people that are trying to create something. This is evident from this statement:

“...but we mean that Sandefjord Football is one of the better areas to show some responsibility. It is a bit in our interests, we think it is fun and then people that are interested in other things, those who does not want to sponsor football, but they wish to sponsor scouts or what.. that is fine, it is, people must choose. And they must... but they can’t decide not to sponsor and support people that are trying to create something. Because it is not that easy to create something so those who have the possibility and the resources must step up.”

Further, the sponsorship might or might not affect the internal motivation, engagement and wellbeing among the employees in the sponsoring organisation. All sponsors stated that for some employees the sponsorship gives a direct value through going to matches or pride to be part of the club, while others were not concerned with football. Therefore, the sponsorship might give some value to employees of the sponsoring organisation, while at the same time be totally uninteresting for others. One sponsor pointed out that the internal value it creates should not be overestimated. The sponsor stated:

“Internal engagement is decent, like we get x amount of tickets and they disappear every time. And the value and pride often comes in relation to the results, and Sandefjord Football is not a club where.. it’s not Rosenborg, so to say. However, at

least we feel that, to a certain extent is a value to be part of it internally as well, but I will not overestimate that value. I don't think people here had lost any motivation in their work if we had ended our sponsorship with Sandefjord Football, I don't think that. But I think they feel.. it is many, at least those who are interested in football and sports that thinks it is a bit cool that we are part of it.”

Finally, the marketing value of the sponsorship varied among all sponsors. Some stated that the club brand has shown little value or effect on their own brand which is apparent from this statement:

“And when like such fundamental parts of what we do has not given any reverberation then we have not believed that a more of a community engagement, that is sponsorship, that it will give any reverberation, and therefore no effort has been made to lift it up really, we haven't even thought about it.”

On the other hand, one sponsor stated that the club has great value in their own marketing and promotion, and they use it continuously. Another has realised the need to activate the sponsorship and invest additional resources into leveraging the sponsorship indicating that the club's brand has some kind of commercial value for them. However, no indication was given that evaluations are made in terms of the effects of using the club's brand in own marketing efforts, which leads us to the next category.

#### **4.1.3 Evaluation**

Evaluation is a category brought forward from the literature and includes evaluation protocols and the process related to the evaluation of sponsorship agreement, relationship, effectiveness and performance. Emergent themes identified from the analysis of the interviews included internal evaluation, evaluation in cooperation with the club, documentation of return on investment, unsystematic evaluation, goals and relationships. None of the sponsors stated that they have any strategic or structured evaluation processes, and usually, evaluation is based on assumptions. However, some evaluation of the sponsorship relation is done with regards to contract negotiations, both internally and with the club, and often involve whether the involvement is to be continued. Most stated that they

find it challenging and/or pointless to measure return on investment in terms of exposure, reputation, and sales or customers. Moreover, sponsors that are engaged with the club for philanthropic reasons stated that, as the objective and goal with their sponsorship engagement involves a community responsibility, evaluation of the sponsorship effect on consumers are unnecessary. One example includes this statement:

“... but it is also important to say that as we use so much resources on it.. and I think it is difficult to measure in terms of value in the sense that.. do we sell more [products], does it enhance our reputation etc. that’s almost impossible to measure. So, this is not mathematics for us, it is a bit like flippantly, but it is almost more those feelings around it and the belief we have around creating a good local community.”

Another sponsor stated:

“We don’t have any specific goals. We haven’t said that; through this system we shall have 10 or 100 new customers during the season because it is so difficult to measure where it comes from. So, the goals, which is also difficult to measure, for example you can measure relations, how many at [Komplett Arena] knows that we are one of the main sponsors, who does people think of when one think of sponsors, [the sponsor’s industry] and sponsors of Sandefjord Football. Such things can be measured, and I am unsure whether such measures have been done and we haven’t been very concerned with that either, but there’s few specific goals.”

#### **4.1.4 Sponsorship relationship**

The sponsorship relationship is an important part of any sponsorship agreement. It was both identified from the literature as well as from the analyses of the interviews. All sponsors stated that trust plays a significant role in the sponsorship relationship with Sandefjord Football. One stated:

“If there is no trust, we would not engage. Thus, I am saying we are a [sponsor’s industry] and we have to identify with the club we engage in, thus what it has of ethics and moral, and we are dependent on the fact that the club is proper with proper

people, if not we would end the agreement. To say it like this; we have enough of other offers knocking on our door which would like to have.. with lots of clever, good people, who would like our money. So, trust is alpha-omega.”

Communication and information flow is another important element in the sponsorship relationship. Although, all sponsors seemed relatively satisfied with the sponsorship relationship and frequency of communication, all stated there is room for improvement. Most implied that there is a lack of initiative from the club, and room for improvement in terms of identifying commercial possibilities as part of the sponsorship agreement beyond stadium signage. Moreover, all sponsors stated that they must take some responsibility for the exploitation of the agreement and the development of commercial ideas. One sponsor stated:

“I think we cooperate. Whether they are totally aware of our wishes, I am not sure, because we are probably not very clear on that. I don’t think we have given clear indications or so in terms of that, from us either, thus on that point it is more on us than the football.”

It is evident from the analysis that capacity, resources and competence is stretched in most of the sponsoring organisations, which also has noticed the lack of resources and capacity at the club. Consequently, the lack of initiative and development of sponsorship agreements from the club was justified and defended with the lack of time and resources. In terms of the exploitation potential one sponsor stated this:

“... but I am not sure just how, and it’s a matter of resources. How much are we willing to put in, how much more are we willing.. not money, but maybe time and such. And we also know that there are limited resources up at Sandefjord Football. We cannot expect to get any more then. Then we would have to, in a way, do something smart together, and put in more time and such.”

In terms of contact and meetings, all stated that this occurred continuously, however, usually only when necessary. Therefore, most meetings seemed to be related to contract negotiation and renewal. Some stated that they do not wish to be involved in the daily operations of the club and only provide input if asked or when they believe it is necessary to contribute with

their competence. Moreover, the same sponsor feel that the club knows why they are in it, however they don't always like it and pitch ideas and possibilities which are not in the interest of the sponsor. This sponsor stated:

“...we don't meddle in terms of what they do and so on, however, discussions on what they should engage in and what they shouldn't do occur sometimes, as well as what is important for us and so on, but, I think that it is just.. the most important thing is that they understand, that SF understands that we are not there to sell [more products], we are in this collaboration to build a good city. So yes, and they understand that, even though they don't always like it.”

Another sponsor indicated that whether the club understand their motivations and goals is dependent on who you speak to at the club. The sponsor suggested that it might have something to do with how active they are in the relationship as well, but at the moment there is low activity and initiative both from the sponsor and the club. Additionally, the sponsor was clear in saying that more activity and initiative from the club would not hurt. This sponsor stated:

“I think it depends on who you talk to at SF. If we talk with, so to say board members or investors then I think they understand this very well. I might think that the CEO have a good understanding of this as well, but I am not sure.. so to say, the marketing people has had a varying degree of understanding. We had a period a few years ago where I felt that there was more activity from the marketing side in terms of understanding what we are concerned with and connect us with relevant people in our industry, which are not those investors that are on the board, but other investors. [...]. It is not something critical, but it hadn't hurt if [the club] was more active [in identifying potential business partners].”

On the other hand, other sponsors are more involved in the daily operations and suggests that more effort is made to attempt to help when problems occur and does more to be involved with the club in terms of daily operations, however, they only meddle when perceived as necessary.

Some of the sponsors have supported the club ever since it was founded and was part of the process around starting the club. They stated that their support has never changed regardless of which division the club has played. A sense of loyalty and commitment is evident here, and one sponsor stated this:

“... we feel it is important, i.e. we see it as a community responsibility too, but it is business related.. and it has turned more and more towards a business-related mindset, but there is something left behind, that we should be proud of this city and one of the things we are proud of is Sandefjord Football, and we have been, we have supported them both up and down. [...] and never changed our contract, neither when they have been relegated nor when they have been promoted, we have thus been loyal in that sense. Regardless of whether they have played in the highest or second highest division.”

#### **4.1.5 Internal sponsorship work**

Internal sponsorship work involves how the club organise their sponsorship activities. The emergent themes drawn from the analysis includes policy, resources, activation (leverage), sponsorship portfolio, potential, experience and competence, exploitation of sponsorship agreement and internal values. It was evident that all sponsors work differently towards sponsorships. The level of professionalization and degree of sponsorship guidelines varied among all sponsors where some had clear guidelines and policies, while others worked more on assumptions without formal policies and guidelines. Only one sponsor has realised the potential and necessity of leveraging the sponsorship relationship, however, limited time and resources was suggested to prevent the exploitation of the full potential of such activities. When it comes to sponsorship portfolios, all sponsors support other activities besides Sandefjord Football. The strategic work behind sponsorship portfolios varied among the sponsors, and only one had a clear strategy behind the activities they are supporting. This sponsor support two football clubs located in their business area. Sandefjord Football was suggested not to reach the same potential as the other club in relation to their business objective. This sponsor stated:



“I would say it is strategic [the portfolio] in relation to.. as I previously mentioned, the arena both clubs offer. [Sponsored property] is especially a business arena in [its respective county]. SF has not managed to establish the same position in Vestfold as [sponsored property] has in [its respective county], however it is an important part of the environment in Sandefjord. While.. nevertheless, it is the only place we sponsor in Vestfold in lack of the existence of another club or another arena that covers the business environment in Vestfold. But, SF offers an entrance to the environment in Sandefjord and not least a close relation to the investors behind SF...”

An attempt to think strategically when choosing sponsorship activities was made by another sponsor, however, it seemed that the only criterion involved good, clever and proper people and activities. A lack of time and resources was stated to limit the process of developing proper strategic guidelines for their sponsorship portfolio. Another had a clear policy of what they support, however, all sponsorship work was said to relate to reputation and supporting the important and good things in the city, thus indicating a philanthropic sponsorship policy. The last sponsor based their sponsorship portfolio specifically on own interests, and clearly support activities in which they have a personal interest. This sponsor was clear about the fact that people with resources and wealth should not restrain from supporting something, no matter what their interests might be. Finally, in all organisations knowledge and competence about sponsorship were based on experience.

## 4.2 The Club's Perspective

Two individuals directly involved in sponsorship activities, agreements and relationships at Sandefjord Football (SF) was interviewed. This was done in order to get an understanding of how the club structure their sponsorship activities, create relations with their sponsors and how the club understands what is important for the sponsors. Similarly to the interview guide developed for the sponsors, literature and previous research findings was used to develop an interview guide for the club (see appendix 2). The data collected from the sponsors were also briefly used to create relevant questions.

### **4.2.1 Challenges**

The most apparent finding involves the lack of time to organise the sponsorship work in a structured way. One stated that the most challenging factor is “to have enough time to follow through content in contracts and to be more present for them [the sponsors].” On the other hand, the other stated that the challenge with time and structure had improved since last year due to additional investments into human resources in the administration. This SF representative stated that the biggest challenge for the club at this point involves making the right priorities, and securing the place at the highest level of Norwegian football. The representative stated:

“As long as the club operates at this level and has a healthy economy and does not go too much in minus, then I think, in many ways, that many [sponsors] are satisfied. But you can again talk about time, over how long time – we are in a critical phase with the second season in Eliteserien – if we are relegated now, based on bad decisions or because of bad decisions and bad priorities and wrong priorities – then we will experience that the sponsors might fall of, that’s fast, and its quick.”

Further, the importance of working towards the club’s values (glow, precision and unity) was stressed as many of the sponsors was suggested to support the club because of these values. This was also related to the internal work at the club, and the importance that everyone work towards the same goals and in terms of the same values in order to deliver those values and services the club says it will deliver on. This is evident in this statement:

“It is important to create an environment where the sponsors feel that they want to join, SF must show interest and desire to facilitate sponsors. The sponsors must experience that they get in return what they expect to get in return.”

### **4.2.2 Sponsorship relationship**

By interviewing representatives from the club, it was apparent that the sponsorship relationship and building relation to the sponsors are important. Moreover, contributing to an environment where sponsors can meet and network seemed to be another important

element of the sponsorship work. However, when asked how the club learns to know the sponsors, one stated:

“Use of homepages or otherwise attainable information about the organisation. Presentation from the organisation in the first meeting. Talk with contacts at meeting places.”

Obviously, this is part of the process of getting to know potential new sponsors. The other representative emphasised experience, sales, ‘chemistry’ and asking questions as important elements of getting to know a sponsor. This person stated:

“It has a lot to do with questions, and then those meetings are important, follow-up meetings throughout the year, ask... what’s up, what’s new, what do you wish to get known for, so to get hold of those things.”

When asked how important it is to build a good relation to the sponsors, and what they do to build this relation both were clear on the importance of having a good relationship to the sponsors. Both emphasised the importance of creating meeting places both socially and business related, and deliver on those points the sponsors deem important. Moreover, one stated that in order for development, some fights need to be taken, also with the sponsors. This related mostly to the ability to push them away to get time to think and get away from all the good advice that inhibit and delay the actual work that needs to be done. The sponsorship council, which is a council made up by some sponsors, was organised to make sure that the sponsors’ opinions are taken care of. This was emphasised as the sponsors, through this council, can give good advice in a structured and constructive way, which was stated to be easier to relate to. Moreover, a good relationship was stated to be based on trust, transparency and honesty.

Meetings, besides contract meetings, between club and sponsor were suggested to be held occasionally, if needed. As one stated: “we map or asses the need for meetings and contact. Someone needs to be followed up more than others.” The sponsors’ wishes, goals and needs with the sponsorship agreement was suggested to be discussed and assessed in meetings. All sponsors have tailor made sponsorship agreements based on their wishes. However, when asked whether the sponsors know what is important for the club, one stated this:

“I feel that the sponsors know – but it might be that not all know all areas, that they think that we only have a first team for example. So, when they discover that we work with community or other areas then they get more hooks to place their sponsorship.”

Further, four points were made with regards to how the club create value for the sponsors, in which all are dependent on knowing the sponsors wishes with the sponsorship relationship. This representative stated:

“By following up the content which is agreed in the best way possible. Talk good about the sponsor to other sponsors. Facilitate good meeting places both social and business related. Help them communicate their message well, where they wish to bring it forward.”

#### **4.2.3 The club’s sponsorship activity**

When it comes to the organising of Sandefjord Football’s sponsorship activities, the lack of time was evident. The club has between 110 and 120 sponsors, and in reality, only two people are working with and managing all these sponsors. An additional investment has been made to structure the sponsorship agreements in the administration. One of the representatives stated that before additional investment was made, work towards sponsors was chaotic and lacked structure in order to manage all the sponsorship activities. Then, all agreements were made continuous, which mean they are automatically renewed if not ended before a specific date. This statement describes how this released time as well as how the sponsorship work was divided:

“It is essentially me that does agreements with the sponsors. So, you can say that it might be 80/20 then, so [the other employee] does 20% and then I do maybe 80 – I think, about that... and we have made the agreements continuous, such as not everything has to be done in the middle of the period, but we increase with the consumer price index. So, this means that we have got a little more time to also organise ourselves so that we can get new ones.”

It is evident that the club are trying to improve by being more efficient in the sponsorship work, and they are concerned with securing and delivering quality to the sponsors. Bringing structure into the work is seen as an important factor with regards to this.

When asked what they look for in a potential sponsor, both emphasised values, that the potential sponsors match the club in terms of identity and are good collaborators/partners. One stated that potential new sponsors should be able to deliver services that the club need, in which the club enjoy the service at a reduced cost. The other emphasised the sponsors' interest as important. This involved being passionate about the club, be fond of football and sports and community engagement, find it important to have a 'flagship' in the city, concerned with city identity, attract attention to the club and the city, attract more organisations and people to the city, and further stated:

“To be part of building a club, to be part of building that joint 'flagship' for the whole of Sandefjord, which put Sandefjord on the map most times during the year, that's what we... and then there is a whole lot included in this, but that... see the value of what we work on, which is sort of the effect of football.”

Further, one stated that value creation in such relationships occur when “both parties finds the benefits of the cooperation, either directly business related or emotionally”. Both emphasised the need to deliver in terms of the sponsors' expectations as well as facilitating an arena where the sponsors can meet, either to do business or socially. One stated that if the business and network dimension is the most important for a sponsor, then it is necessary for this sponsor to continuously attend various networking events organised by the club in order to build relations and do business with other sponsors. Moreover, if selling or buying is important for the sponsors, sending the right person at such events was said to be essential. Nevertheless, creating an environment for the sponsors through the original vision of 'together for Sandefjord', deliver quality and having a good reputation seemed important for the club. One sponsor stated that the club has a long way to go in order to become Vestfold's club. As a result, one of the club representatives was asked whether they feel this is something they have achieved. Evidently, it is something the club are working towards, however, have not been able to achieve just yet. One justification was that Vestfold is in a way a special county, where it can be difficult to get through to organisations located in

cities outside Sandefjord. In terms of how sponsors can help with this issues, one club representative stated:

“We need to have such ambitious goals that when we work with networks and with those sponsors we have, who only want what’s best for the club, that they also can work towards, the same for us or together with us, that they also lead firms from Vestfold in. Also, we must trick them in. But Sandefjord Football is called Sandefjord Football, and that is good in a way, and in another way, it puts some obstacles in the way – it creates some speed bumps at least. So, if we were called [name] football then it would have been much easier for people to join.”

#### **4.2.4 Value creation**

When it comes to value creation, this involves how the sponsors help create value for the club, as well as how the club help create value for the sponsors. Value might be economic factors, relational factors, reputation, etc. I did not specify what I meant with value to the interview subjects in order to get an understanding of what they make of value. When asked which role the sponsors play in terms of value creation in SF and what they contribute with to enhance the value creation in the club, one club representative stated:

“The sponsors are crucial directly through the financial contribution at the revenue side. It is important for the reputation that the sponsors like SF and are able to highlight/talk good about the importance of being a sponsor. The sponsorship council are also a body that contributes in processes and actions that build value.”

The other club representative also emphasised the importance of both the sponsors in general and the sponsorship council:

“They are ambassadors. They are incredibly loyal. They are not afraid to speak up. They have a sponsorship council, which takes care of us which is extremely important – it is clear that we have a board and a club board and such too, but the sponsors accounts for almost half of the turnover of the club, so that we have established that sponsorship council in the way that we have done now, I think that

can... that gives value to the club – both in that we must improve ourselves, which makes us better, and that they must be allowed to mean something.”

Evidently, the sponsorship council is an important element of creating value to the club. Further, goodwill, reputation and leads to potential new sponsors was highlighted as important values brought in by sponsors. One club representative emphasised how great their sponsors are, both in organisational terms as well as in terms of the people working at the sponsoring organisations: “we just have to let us inspire and they give us more value, and we hope that we can give more value to them as well.” On the other hand, it is possible to assume that this representative believe that the club give even more value to the sponsoring organisations as the club put Sandefjord on the map, and the internal motivation the sponsorship gives employees. This was stated:

“It is also cool for the employees, they get proud so it is probably so much an internal... so they build in a way their own pride among the employees, in almost like one of those employee programs. [...]. People get upset if they quit in an organisation and no longer is a sponsor so it’s like, if they have played a central part and worked towards the football club, then I think sometimes that the saddest part when quitting a job is that they are no longer part of the family here.”

When the club representatives were asked whether they think the sponsors have good enough knowledge about what is important to achieve success in a sponsorship relationship, the answers clearly stated both yes and no. It was evident that work has been put in to increase the sponsors’ knowledge of how they can improve and develop, and to increase their understanding of what it means to run a football club. As a result, transparency, being open about challenges and creating collaboration with the sponsors was stated to be important in order to achieve success in the sponsorship relationships.

#### **4.2.5 Evaluation**

When it comes to evaluation, it can be argued that it is just as important for the club as for the sponsors. Evaluation is related to the sponsorship relationship, as well as evaluations specifically related to what the club achieves through sponsorship agreements. One stated

that an attempt was made to measure profiling values for the sponsors, however, this was realised to be too challenging for the sponsors. Nevertheless, the club representative stated that some sponsors were curious in the beginning, so in the first week a turnover between the sponsors of 2 million NOK was registered, which gave an indication of a turnover of 100 million NOK between all sponsors of the club, that week. The other club representative stated that evaluations are made in follow-up meetings:

“This is done in follow-up meetings where we ask the sponsors for feedback on what is working, possibly what is not working. This is the basis for new agreements.”

The other representative stated that in addition to meetings, surveys are done during the same period each year, including the same questions to get an indication on whether the club has improved. Moreover, the survey provides the club the opportunity to understand what areas they are doing well, as well as in what areas there are room for improvement. The club also develop their own goals in terms of sponsorship revenue. These goals are set by the board and carried out by sales manager, CEO (and marketing coordinator). One representative stated:

“The goal this year – I am not sure what the output sum is – but we were to increase with 10% - and I think we have managed that already. [...]. It is in the strategy, so I work in line with the strategy and then the goal that the board decided last year was to increase the sponsorship agreement with 10%. I think that is low because I think that 10% at 17 million or what we had last year – it is 2 million that haven't come in yet and now I am on 16, so then we have 18 in sponsorship funds so far, and then I have done the preparatory work with all the new ones – that we should manage 1-2 million more by working smart and I believe in that.”

Evidently, evaluation processes are developed by the club, and a willingness to improve and listen to their sponsors seem present.



### 4.3 Summary

Evidence from the analysis of the sponsor interviews suggests that motivations behind the sponsors of Sandefjord Football varies, and goals and objectives usually relate to the motivations. Reputation and community goodwill seemed to be the most important motivation for the sponsors. Business, B2B networking and new customers came as a secondary motivation and a natural exploitation opportunity as part of being a sponsor. The work they put in and how they organise their sponsorship activities varies according to motivations, goals and objectives, as well as resources and own corporate policy. None of the sponsors have any formal education in terms of sponsorship, however sponsorship activity in all sponsoring organisations was based on significant experience. Based on the interviews, an assumption can be made that there is potential to enhance the sponsorship relationship from all parties involved, and more initiative from the club are desired by most sponsors. Moreover, there are contradicting views on the perceived value of Sandefjord Football as a marketing platform.

From the club's perspective it seems that the club work towards meeting and identifying sponsors' goals and objectives, and are broadly speaking aware of the most common sponsorship motivations. However, a lack of time and resources prevents them from managing all sponsors as well as they wish. Moreover, the sponsorship relationship was suggested to be important, and a sponsorship council had been created in order to get feedback and input in a structured way. When it comes to meeting the sponsorship objective of B2B networking, and developing business relations, the club stated that it facilitates arenas and events directly related to business and/or social interaction. Evaluation of sponsorship relationships was suggested to formally occur once a year, and more specifically in terms of contract or renewal meetings. Finally, the marketing, exposure and internal value the club can have on their sponsors was suggested to be significant. This is in contrast to some of the sponsors' belief that the sponsorship has limited marketing and internal values on their organisation.

## 5.0 Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings presented in chapter four in relation to previous literature from the perspective of the club and the sponsors. I will discuss the findings in general, both from the sponsors' perspective and from the club, as well as consult with previous literature to find similarities, differences and perspectives on sponsorship. The literature is also consulted to get an overview and understanding of the main research question. The sub-questions presented in chapter 1.4 will be used to address all aspects of the research issue at hand.

### 5.1 What Values are Important to Achieve by the Sponsors?

The findings suggest that all sponsors seek different values in accordance with their sponsorship engagement, but there are many similarities as well. It might be that if other employees in the sponsoring organisations were asked about which values they deem important as part of the sponsorship initiative, different values would be identified and perceived central to the agreement. The interview subjects' answers can also reflect expectations which they are more or less aware of. When they have to defend their investments to people that may be critical, they might argue thereafter and variation in expressions can reflect this. Nevertheless, eventually it seems that most sponsors support a project, which they mean is important for the city's attractiveness, visibility and exposure. The purpose was to find out what kind of values the sponsors believe they can achieve through their sponsorship engagement with Sandefjord Football.

An interesting finding included the contradicting perceptions of what values the club think they offer and what values they are actually offering, and the extent to which these values were important to the sponsors. The club emphasised that values related to internal motivation, building relations and exposure possibilities were important for the sponsors. However, not all sponsors are convinced about these assertions.

In terms of internal values, the club representatives stated that engaging in sponsorships has an internal effect on the employees in the sponsoring organisation. It was assumed by the

club that sponsoring Sandefjord Football gave internal values in terms of motivation, engagement, wellbeing, and created a sort of environment for the employees in the sponsoring organisations. While the literature supports this argument (e.g. Beech and Chadwick 2007; Hickman, Lawrence and Ward 2005), one sponsor clearly stated that this internal value should not be overestimated. All sponsors stated that it has some kind of internal value, however, they also argued that they – the sponsors – could be better at exploiting the opportunities in terms of using the sponsorship for internal purposes. They recognised that the sponsorship facilitates in creating an environment between employees that are interested in football, but no effort seems to be made to promote it internally. As a result, no real internal effect on motivation, identification and engagement is achieved (Beech and Chadwick 2007). The reason for this may be that creating internal value through sponsorships is not recognised as a direct benefit by the sponsors, and while some of their employees are interested in football, the majority is not. Therefore, no effort is made to use the sponsorship in order to increase collective internal motivation, engagement or wellbeing in the sponsoring organisations. On the other hand, both the sponsors and the club emphasised that building relations through the sponsor network was an important part of the sponsorship agreement. Arguably, building relations through the sponsor network may create internal value for the employees directly involved in sponsorship activities, which is also recognised by the sponsors but not actively ‘promoted’.

From the findings it is evident that creating social and business relations are an important part of the sponsorship agreement, which is also emphasised by the club as an element of creating value for the sponsors. While one sponsor found the business aspect of networking with other sponsors to be meaningless for them, all others found significant value in the business platform facilitated by the club. Wagner et al. (2017) pointed out that such B2B networks can prove financially beneficial for the club even when sporting results are poor, and can enhance the club’s attractiveness for sponsors. Facilitating a good platform for the sponsor network to develop business relations seem significantly important for Sandefjord Football, as sporting results varies tremendously. The club is by many called a ‘lift-team’ because they are relegated and promoted every other year. Accordingly, Cobbs (2011, 591) argued that the club as the sponsored property has a portfolio including corporate partners, in which the club holds a “network position that enables it to act as a broker between any two or more of its partners.” In relation to this, the club faces a potential. One sponsor argued

that when it comes to connecting them to relevant decision makers in their industry through the sponsor network, more initiative from the club would not hurt.

The club can over time extend its value proposition beyond awareness and image dimensions of sponsorship through the delivery of a B2B service where they facilitate opportunistic relationships between sponsoring firms (Cobbs 2011). While it is evident that the club facilitates a B2B arena, the question is how well it knows its sponsors in order to facilitate opportunistic relationships between sponsoring firms that originally are not in it for business purposes, and thus extending their value proposition? To what extent does the club facilitate opportunistic relationships between sponsoring firms that are in it for business purposes? The lack of time might justify the limited effort made by the club to facilitate such relationships, which is also recognised by all sponsors. However, one club representative clearly stated that if the sponsors are to make business from the events organised by the club, then they also need to show commitment and attend more than one or two events. This representative also argued that business is about relations and if you wish to achieve business through the sponsor network, then you should show up to such events with the right people and interact with other relevant sponsors. While it seems pointless to send a person who are not 'qualified' to sell or purchase or otherwise do business with other organisations, this might reflect the quality of these B2B events. It might be that the sponsors have not realised the opportunities within the events. But it is also possible that the club lack a clear understanding of what the sponsors wish to achieve through the business network beyond social relations and how they are to facilitate B2B relations in practice. It may not be enough solely to organise such events. Ryan and Fahy (2012) recognised that sponsorship relationships needs to be investigated from a network perspective. They pointed out the fact that a sponsored property is managing a complex portfolio of sponsors pursuing different goals and objectives and at the same time receives pressure from other stakeholders. As a result, the reason for sponsored properties to fall short of expectations was justified.

The sponsorship council was emphasised by the club as a body aimed at creating value both for the club and the sponsors. While the literature has identified that relationship and network management and marketing deserve more attention in the sponsorship literature, no mention was found for the need of a council representing the sponsors' opinions. The original purpose of creating a sponsorship council seemed to be the club's need to gather all the sponsors' opinions and advice into one body. This was in order for the sponsors to give feedback

through the council in a constructive and structured way so daily work at the club could be done without constant interruptions. By creating a sponsorship council, the club sends a message to the sponsors indicating that they are a central part of the club, and their opinions and feedback are important. The sponsors' also sends a message to the club that they wish to be involved and contribute to further develop the club. Moreover, it suggests that the club's relationship to their sponsors is not solely based on one-to-one interaction, but a network of relations. An assumption can be made that the club has realised Ryan and Fahy's (2012) suggestion that a sponsorship portfolio includes relations that are highly interrelated and affected by a range of direct and indirect relationship. As a result, closer investigation of the conflicts that may arise in such complex sponsorship network markets could contribute to a better understanding of managerial actions in sponsorship relationships (Ryan and Fahy 2012). Further research can address the various relations in such networks, the power relation between the sponsors, and whether conflict arise and how conflicts are managed. It can also address the club's or sponsored property's position in managing their sponsorship portfolio, how much power the club have and to what extent sponsors and properties are using their power.

Another aspect that can be brought into the discussion of values include leveraging sponsorship activities which is part of the commercial perspective of sponsorship. The literature presents some contradicting arguments about the real effects of leveraging. However, a consensus is that leveraging is beneficial in terms of communicating sponsorship activities towards consumers and enhancing the perceived congruence between sponsor and sponsored property (e.g. Thjømmøe 2010; Cornwell et al. 2005). Only one sponsor has realised the commercial potential of additional investment into leveraging sponsorship activities. This sponsor has incorporated it as a separate point in their sponsorship guidelines stating that "the effectiveness of sponsorship must be considered in line with other market channels. Exposure (for example logo on shirt or sign in hall) will have limited value. It is therefore important to leverage every sponsorship for optimal return." While it seems that the club has attempted to increase the sponsors' knowledge around the potential additional benefits through leveraging activities, one sponsor was convinced that such commercial effort would not benefit them. This sponsor suggested that additional investment into communicating the sponsorship was pointless and beyond their original objectives and own corporate policy. It was evident from the findings that the sponsors have contradicting views on the potential effects of leveraging. However, all sponsors had logo exposure and visibility

as one important element to increase the awareness level of their presence at the club. Cornwell argued that a brand name or logo briefly displayed will have limited effect on consumers as it includes “a title sponsor mentioned by an announcer, but not a complete message” (Cornwell, in Söderman and Dolles 2013, 464). Therefore, she argued that in order to gain increased awareness other elements beyond arena signage or logo exposure needs to be brought in. This can further be emphasised by the number of brands exposed at the stadium at the same time. In a highly competitive market place, where numerous brands are presented to consumers at once, there is a high level of competing communications, and thus the majority becomes noise and will have limited effect on consumers (Donlan 2014).

The literature emphasises image-related values as a main part of organisations’ decision to engage in sponsorship activities (e.g. Madill and O’Reilly 2010). My findings, on the other hand, indicate that image-related values, such as brand building and visibility, may be seen as a secondary benefit of sponsorship, rather than a motivation or objective. Although important, these values seem to be aimed at building a city – through ‘together for Sandefjord’ – more than their own brand. This leads us to the second research question, why do they sponsor a club which is not perceived as a winning team?

## 5.2 Why do They Sponsor a Club Which Could not be Perceived as a Winning Team?

This question can, to a certain extent, be ambiguous as Sandefjord Football when playing at the second highest level was seen as a winning team. After being relegated in 2015, the club was promoted to Eliteserien in 2016. Moreover, when playing at the second highest level in 2014, the club only lost one match, and was superior for promotion. Therefore, this question relates to their overall performance at the highest level. All sponsors indicated that the club lack both engagement and performance in comparison to other teams in the league, thus is not perceived as a winning team.

As mentioned, brand building and visibility were stated by the sponsors as an important part of their sponsorship engagement. However, a more prominent reason includes the vision of ‘together for Sandefjord’ and building a city that is attractive, good and diverse. All sponsors indicated that their sponsorship initiative is part of a community responsibility or

engagement. Sandefjord Football was suggested to be one of many elements that are important in order to achieve this. That their sponsorship efforts included Sandefjord Football was not important, but the club was suggested to be one of the better places to show support. This was reasoned by the fact that there are limited opportunities to sponsor other professional sports in the city and county. Thus, Sandefjord Football was argued to offer more exposure, engagement and business opportunities than other potential sport properties in and around the city.

Even though most sponsors stated various business objectives, building a city and a good and attractive local community seemed to be central and part of the notion of ‘together for Sandefjord’. As a result, local businesses have teamed up to make this happen with Sandefjord Football as a main component in an effort to communicate this message. Accordingly, an assumption can be made that the image-related objectives mentioned above is an attempt for brand building and visibility of the city. It seems that the sponsors take for granted that visibility and exposure of the city is beneficial for their own organisation or the city’s business environment. This seems to be experienced as a rational strategy by many of the sponsors even though it does not hold as justification of their sponsorship internally. However, based on the assumption that ‘everyone else’ is doing it, the strategy can easily be perceived as legitimate.

Return on investment through customers, sales and consumer stimulation was stated as an objective by many, and one had a clear business-related purpose. However, a potential was identified concerning the club’s position to become Vestfold’s club. If they were to achieve this, one sponsor stated that a more strategic dimension would be relevant in terms of using the sponsor network for business purposes.

All but one sponsor indicated that the original notion of ‘together for Sandefjord’ is still central to their support, which was also recognised by the club as something they strive for. One suggested that a return on investment is not expected from the sponsorship, but at the same time they want to attract customers and build network. It seems that this sponsor has contradicting views and might wish that their sponsorship efforts are perceived as a pure community engagement, while in fact, some return on investment is desired.

On the other hand, another sponsor stated that sponsorship as a community engagement does not hold as a reason or justification for their substantial funding relating to sponsorship activities. As a result, they have divided their support into commercial sponsorships and donations. Smaller scale sponsorships in their portfolio relate to a philanthropic approach where their support is seen as a gift. Their sponsorship towards Sandefjord Football has been commercialised and is used more and more for business purposes and to get return on investment. This is an example of where a philanthropic approach to sponsorship has been replaced with a commercialised business activity (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Cornwell et al. 2005). However, my findings indicate that philanthropy in sponsorship clearly still exists.

Another sponsor specifically stated that their sponsorship efforts relate to a philanthropic approach as they believe that return on investment includes enhanced reputation and community goodwill rather than additional sales. Clearly, broad corporate objectives are pursued by this sponsor, which Ryan and Fahy (2012) argued to relate to a philanthropic approach. However, building a good and attractive local community and city through supporting all levels of sports and culture was arguably their main motivation. This sponsor was convinced that the sponsorship does not facilitate more sales, and therefore adding more funds into comprehensive communication strategies was argued to be pointless. Therefore, their brand building strategy is solely based on profiling and communicating that they are present at sporting arenas in Sandefjord. While this was suggested to be part of gaining community goodwill and show support to the local community, it might as well be aimed at recruiting employees and not purely relate to a philanthropic approach.

Finally, the last reason to engage in a sponsorship agreement with Sandefjord Football concerns pure and genuine interest and love for the club and football in general. Especially one interview subject specified that the main reason for sponsoring Sandefjord Football is genuine interest and love for the club. As the interview subject is the CEO and owner of its respective company, and played a major role in the decision to sponsor the club, this can relate to the practice of 'director's choice'. Ryan and Fahy (2012, 1140) argues that the practice of 'director's choice' is essentially related to a philanthropic approach to sponsorship where CEOs tend to "choose sponsorship properties for personal reasons." While genuine interest may be an advantage in a sponsorship relationship as it provides commitment and trust to the relationship, it may lack commercial rigour (Ryan and Fahy 2012). As this sponsor also stated that it wants something in return, managing the



sponsorship in terms of interest and heart might inhibit the development of clear corporate strategies and policies in terms of sponsorship management. Ryan and Fahy (2012, 1139-1140) quoted Javalgi et al. (1994) with regards to sponsorship decisions being made based on personal interest and involvement:

“Because of their positions, they wield enough influence within their firms to ensure sponsorship expenditures in the tens of thousands ... although such sponsorships may be couched in vague references to community service and support for the arts [other community-related activities could perhaps be included here] they are essentially made without regard to any direct, measurable benefit to the sponsoring company.”

Evaluating the effectiveness of the sponsorship may be seen as less important, as the main aim is to support the club (Ryan and Fahy 2012). The potential to achieve higher levels of business related objectives might be disregarded, and the expectations of return on investment disappointing. On the other hand, the pride in supporting the club, having their logo exposed in relation to the club, and being associated with the club might be enough. After all, this sponsor seemed more concerned with supporting something, regardless of what it may be. A clear message was sent saying that people with resources should not restrain from supporting something they believe in and help others that are trying to make something happen. Furthermore, one club representative specifically stated that a genuine interest for football, the club, community responsibility and city identity was important elements in seeking new sponsors. Although, these elements are important in terms of engagement from sponsors, it might restrict the club from seeking sponsors that have the potential to be more heavily involved. It might also lack justification in an industry that have become highly commercialised and require more professionalised and sophisticated business relationships.

Following the discussion around building a city and a local community through the sponsorship initiative, it is possible to argue that the club and their sponsors are part of a bigger development project for the city. While the sponsors support the project Sandefjord Football, it can also be perceived as a sponsorship of their own projects in an effort to develop the city. Many of the sponsors stated that they have never changed their support of the club, regardless of which division they have played. They argued that this show a sense

of loyalty and commitment. While this seems valid, and stable support may be crucial for the club, no pressure is put on the club to perform at the higher level. This might confirm the assumption that the sponsors support their own project of developing the city more than a football club striving for sporting success. As a result, the commercial dimension emphasised by the literature diminishes even though the sponsors may believe that what is good for the city is also good for business. In the case of Sandefjord Football and their sponsors, it is apparent that a local business environment have gone together to build something they believe will enhance awareness, attractiveness and exposure of the city, and in turn create some kind of value for them. This phenomenon has not been addressed by the literature. Consequently, theory on local and/or regional development could have been used in addressing this dimension of sponsorship.

### 5.3 How Does the Sponsorship Work?

While the previous part has mainly focused on motivations, values and reasons for engaging in a sponsorship agreement with Sandefjord Football, the following part will focus more specifically on the mechanisms in terms of how the sponsorship work. I will discuss whether the sponsors and the club develop structures and strategies to reach sponsorship objectives, and how these are evaluated. Do they have strategic goals and objectives? Do they evaluate and measure the effectiveness of their sponsorships, and which role does the club play in the evaluation process?

From the findings, it was evident that the sponsors lack clear structures and strategies in managing their sponsorship activities. Several of them stated that their sponsorship activities are mainly based on assumptions, and goals and objectives are identified, but not specified, or at least not strategically approached. Moreover, one suggested that the management of sponsorship activities are not as structured as they would like it to be although objectives and strategies are incorporated in their sponsorship guidelines. Even though they justified this with a lack of time and resources, both Greenhalgh and Greenwell (2013) and Beech and Chadwick (2007) argued that specifying goals and objectives are important in reaching preferred performance of the sponsorship engagement. The findings indicate that no formal sponsorship departments are present in any of the sponsoring organisations, in which a team is composed when decision and evaluations are necessary. Basically, it seems that they have

goals and objectives they wish to achieve; however, it is possible to assume that the process of reaching these goals and objectives lack developed structures, strategies and evaluations. Thus, when decisions have to be made there are no clear process of reaching a decision. This is in line with Ryan and Fahy's (2012) discussion on the philanthropic approach to sponsorship, where objectives of sponsorship were seen in broad terms, lack formal policies for selection of properties as well as sponsorship effectiveness evaluation.

All sponsors stated that they have objectives they wish to achieve through the sponsorship, and none stated that there is a difference in what they wish to achieve and what they actually achieve. This might be a result of the prominent original objective concerning building a city and community goodwill. The effectiveness of sponsorship in terms of such objectives might be difficult to measure (Gordon and Cheah 2017). However, in terms of image-related and business-related objectives, it seemed that the sponsors more or less blame themselves for not reaching the potential return on objectives through the sponsorship engagement, but are relatively satisfied with what they achieve. This might reflect the limited potential many sponsors believe is present at the club. Moreover, it was suggested that the club could be more proactive in understanding what is actually important for their sponsors, as suggested by all sponsors. Although both club representatives suggested that they identify sponsors' objectives in contract negotiation meetings, all sponsors indicated that more effort and initiative could be made by the club to meet these objectives. The sponsors indicated that they are aware of the lack of time and resources at the club, which the club also suggested limited the process of identifying and meeting all sponsors' expectations. Nonetheless, Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) argued that it is beneficial for a sponsored property to understand the values corporations seek as it allows them to actively work towards meeting the sponsors' expectations. However, even though beneficial for the sponsors, meeting all sponsors' expectations in a complex sponsorship portfolio, as previously discussed, seem even more challenging when time and resources are limited at the club.

According to the findings it seems that the club is aware of the sponsors' objectives and meet them as part of the sponsorship contract where packages are tailor-made in terms of the sponsors' wishes. However, clear structures and strategies are not developed either as a result of lack of time and resources, or due to priorities. On the other hand, all sponsors suggested that they can do more in exploiting the sponsorship potential. Vance et al. (2016)

highlighted the importance of knowing and understanding underlying objectives for a sponsor, as it can help develop relevant performance indicators based on shared goals. Consequently, the club can respond according to sponsors' objectives and in turn be more likely to experience lasting sponsorship partnerships (Farrelly and Quester 2005). The question is then; how much more can the sponsors expect from the club when they are not willing to put more effort in on their own and are aware of the club's limited resources in managing almost 120 sponsors? It might be that the club have to make the first step in order for the sponsors to realise the benefits for both parties in more developed structures and strategies. Therefore, by proposing a jointly developed guideline emphasising how to meet both the club's and the sponsors' goals and objectives, the club could facilitate joint working and ensure that both club and sponsors work towards the same goals (Ryan and Fahy 2012; Vance et al. 2016; Farrelly and Quester 2005).

Many managers have an intuitive feeling that sponsorship is vital in order to increase brand awareness, however, many are disappointed when evaluating their sport sponsorship performance as weak results are experienced (Beech and Chadwick 2007). The findings indicate that when the sponsors evaluate their sponsorships, it is often in relation to renewal of the sponsorship agreement. In many of the cases this was done both internally in the sponsoring organisation and with the club to evaluate if any changes to the contract were necessary. Most sponsors stated that they find it challenging and/or pointless to measure return on investment in terms of exposure, reputation, and sales or customers and therefore such evaluations are not carried out. Stotlar (2004) claimed that sponsored properties usually provide data in terms of how much the sponsorship generated, but that this is not interesting facts for the sponsors. This argument seems to get support from some of the sponsors. Arguably, the sponsors are more concerned with evaluation measures targeting their own objectives, in which Stotlar (2004) indicated that many organisation fail to adequately assess a sponsorship's effectiveness in terms of corporate objectives. However, if such evaluation measures are to be developed or executed by the club it requires the sponsors to develop and identify specific goals and objectives.

Furthermore, a sponsor with reputation as one of its main objectives, stated that nationwide evaluations of their reputation has been executed, however, how their sponsorship affect the local community have not been assessed. Moreover, this sponsor did not seem too concerned with their reputation, and suggested that being a sponsor of Sandefjord Football had little

impact on their overall reputation. Rather, their reputation was indicated to be much greater than that of the club independently of their sponsorship engagements. While this might be true, there is no evidence of this statement. However, it reflects the previous argument that they are more or less supporting their own project as the club is seen to have limited impact and advantages to their own brand.

Exposure and visibility was argued previously to be an additional benefit to sponsorship activities rather than an objective or motivation for the club's sponsors. However, all sponsors stated both exposure and visibility to be important elements of their sponsorship efforts. Gammelsæter (2017) found that a city receives additional media coverage by hosting a top football club. Moreover, analytical firms have increasingly focused on developing sophisticated methods for evaluating the value of logo exposure into monetary terms (Nielsen Sport 2017; Sponsor Insight 2018). One sponsor had no belief in such evaluation methods and seemed reluctant to see any possible benefits in such measures. Olson (2010) and Walraven et al. (2016) supports this argument in the way that such evaluation measures does not give any insight to how the sponsorship impact on consumers, attitude and/or behavioural change. This sponsor argued that the sports world had become self-centred as it believes that every time someone see something on television it triggers the purchase intention of the viewer, which the sponsor shrugged off as plain nonsense. For that organisation, supporting local sport, both top and grassroots, as well as culture, was the main purpose, and argued that exposure value is not possible to measure 'mathematically'. This sponsor also argued that, while brand building is a major part of their marketing strategy and policy, logo exposure in the media does not have any psychological effect on consumers buying intentions. This is opposed findings in the literature, which argue the cognitive processing of a sponsorship is enhanced by repeated exposure in the mind of the consumer (Walraven et al. 2016). Consequently, the consumer is more likely to purchase a product from that brand than from any other competing brand. However, to what extent brand exposure affect consumers of Sandefjord Football and their sponsors would need further investigation.

On a final note, it is evident that the literature does not cover many of the phenomena identified in my research. This includes especially the identified motivation of building a city through sponsorship initiatives. It might not be pure philanthropy, but a local community going together to create a local environment that is attractive, good and diverse,

and at the same time pursuing brand building and visibility of the city through their sponsorship.

## 5.4 Summary

The values sponsors deem important to achieve through their sponsorship with Sandefjord Football varies from sponsor to sponsor and in terms of goals and objectives. However, underlying corporate values can be seen as the basis for their sponsorship engagement, and central for the club when looking for new sponsors. This can relate both to the sponsors corporate values and the club's values of 'glow, precision and unity'. Otherwise, image-related values through visibility and exposure, as well as reputation was central values stated by all sponsors. Seeing how these issues has received a lot of attention in the literature (Cornwell et al. 2005; Madill and O'Reilly 2010; Meenaghan 2001), the club recognises that these are important, and attempt to facilitate to the best of their ability to meet image-related objectives. On the other hand, contradictory to the literature findings, leveraging sponsorship activities was only emphasised by one sponsor as important to achieve brand- or sales related objectives. Relational values created through social or business related networking were valued by all sponsors to a varying degree. Internal values were suggested to have some effect, yet the potential to use the sponsorship as a means for internal motivation and engagement was proposed by the sponsors not to be fully exploited and should not be overestimated. This was in contrast to the club's perception that sponsorship engagement creates significant internal values for the employees in the sponsoring organisation.

The values discussed in chapter 5.1 are part of the sponsors' decision for their sponsorship initiative, this chapter attempted to discover why they have chosen to support Sandefjord Football in order to reach these values. It is evident that reasons for their sponsorship engagement with the club depends on the nature of the organisation, their position in the local and/or national market, resources and overall corporate objectives. Philanthropic, business and pure patriotism can all be identified as underlying reasons, with brand awareness and visibility as a common denominator. These findings correlate with Beech and Chadwick's (2007) argument that sponsorship objectives often fall into one of the four categories of awareness, image, sales and internal communication, although internal communication were not perceived as too important by the sponsors. Moreover, the six

potential objectives proposed by Meenaghan (1983) can also relate to the sponsors of Sandefjord Football, including broad corporate objectives, product-related objectives, sales, media coverage, guest hospitality, and personal objectives. Here, guest hospitality was stated by only one sponsor to be valuable in the past, but in recent years the interest to bring client and customers to matches was experience to decline. Therefore, reasons for sponsoring Sandefjord Football varies and include business and relationship building, community responsibility and engagement, brand building, awareness and image, and pure patriotism, interest and love for the club.

While sponsors have identified goals and objectives, specific structures and strategies does not seem to be developed in order to reach these. It was evident that the sponsors seek more initiative from the club in facilitating the achievement of their objectives and in identifying commercial possibilities within the sponsorship agreement. On the other hand, the lack of time and resources was suggested as a justification both by the club and the sponsors for not reaching the potential and meeting this request. Furthermore, it is assumed that evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness lack clear processes and is often done based on assumptions, and is usually only carried out in relation to contract renewal or renegotiation meetings.

The final chapter will present the conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion and answer the research questions. In order to grasp all aspects of the main research question, the conclusion will attempt to answer the sub-questions upon which the discussion has been structured.

## 6.0 Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

Sport sponsorship has become a commercial platform for organisations to reach corporate or non-corporate objectives through association with sports, arts, culture and other activities. Sponsorship objectives was found to vary significantly according to motivations, corporate policy, personal interests, nature of the sponsoring organisations, and organisational resources. These findings are supported in the literature (e.g. Gordon and Cheah 2017), and although many have identified different sponsorship objectives (e.g. Cobbs 2011;

Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013; Beech and Chadwick 2007; Madill and O'Reilly 2010), these usually relate to highly commercialised sponsorship organisations. Moreover, while many have focused on how sponsorship works in the mind of the consumer through sponsorship-linked marketing, leveraging, image transfer and congruence (e.g. Cornwell et al. 2005). Others emphasise sponsorship from a relationship perspective, and include trust and commitment to the discussion (e.g. Farrelly and Quester 2005).

Fewer have investigated managers' motivations behind the sponsorship engagement of smaller, local organisations with less resources and unstable sporting results. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to uncover the main motivations, goals and objectives of Sandefjord Football's sponsors through qualitative semi-structured interviews with four of the club's main sponsors. As a result, how objectives are reached, how the sponsorships are evaluated, and what the managers perceive as the most important factors of success in a sponsorship relationship was investigated.

Beech and Chadwick (2007) categorised sponsorship objectives into four main groups including awareness, image, sales and internal communication. The findings of this research indicate that all sponsors are concerned with brand awareness, thus using their sponsorship as a platform for brand exposure and visibility, and bringing attention to the brand of potential consumers (Henseler et al. 2011). There were contradicting views on whether the sponsorship of Sandefjord Football could facilitate image enhancement, as some argued that their brand image holds a higher awareness and reputation level than the club. However, building reputation through the sponsorship as a community responsibility and engagement was valued by all as a positive effect of their sponsorship.

Increasing sales, consumer stimulation and developing B2B relationships was proposed as objectives in the sales category as presented by Beech and Chadwick (2007). For the club's sponsors, increasing sales can include customers, clients and product sales. From the findings, it was evident that most sponsors recognise increased sales and consumer stimulation as a main objective, however there was a lack of clearly developed strategies on how to achieve this. Only one sponsor stated that increasing sales was not an objective as they did not believe the sponsorship to have any effect on consumers buying intentions. Developing B2B relationships was also stated by most sponsors as an important objective. However, an assumption can be made that building B2B relations through the club's sponsor



network is more important for organisations with its main reach in Sandefjord. Thus, larger organisations pointed out the potential for the club to become a more significant business arena in Vestfold.

While, it is evident that business stands as a main motivation for many sponsors, a representative from the club suggested that purely engaging in the club for business purposes would result in disappointing results. This was justified by the need to show continuous commitment by attending B2B events organised by the club in order to develop relations that could further turn into business for the sponsor. Beech and Chadwick (2007) noted the importance of identifying and specifying sponsorship goals and objectives before signing the contract. They suggested that many organisations are disappointed when evaluating their sport sponsorship performance as they experience weak results.

Although, an intuitive feeling held by many managers is that sponsorship is vital in order to increase brand awareness, specifying goals and objectives was argued to be important in reaching preferred performance of the sponsorship (e.g. Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013; Copeland et al. 1996). Accordingly, Farrelly and Quester (2005) argued that the club's knowledge and understanding of sponsors' underlying objectives is important as relevant performance indicators can be developed based on shared goals. Consequently, the sponsored property can respond according to these objectives and in turn be more likely to experience lasting sponsorship partnerships (Farrelly and Quester 2005). This is in line with Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) findings that understanding sponsors' motivations and objectives can contribute to successful partnerships for both sponsors and sponsored property. Thus, both the club and its sponsors face a potential in developing shared goals and objectives in order for the club to be able to work towards meeting the sponsors' expectations. This can in turn enhance the sponsorship relationship and contribute to results that satisfy both the club and its sponsors in the long run.

In conclusion, the sponsors' motivations behind their sponsorship engagement in Sandefjord Football varies significantly based on corporate goals, objectives and policy, as well as nature of organisations, personal interest and organisational resources. However, the everlasting notion of 'together for Sandefjord' and supporting the local community is central in their support. This can be seen as the original motivation for many of the club's sponsors, and an overall objective for their sponsorship. Many have argued that philanthropy in

sponsorship no longer exists and that sponsorship has increasingly become a resource oriented or marketing oriented approach where both parties involved expect something in return (e.g. Ryan and Fahy 2012; Farrelly and Quester 2005 Greenhalgh and Greenwell 2013; Madill and O'Reilly 2010). The findings in this thesis suggests that both might be true. While, some sponsors clearly are taking a philanthropic approach, others have moved away from this view and realised the potential for return on investment. It can also be argued that it is not about pure philanthropy. Jakobsen, Gammelsæter and Fløysand (2009) illustrated how Sogndal Football have been a driver for local development in their region. Sandefjord Football and their sponsors motivation of 'together for Sandefjord' and developing the city relates to a local community going together in much the same way that Sogndal did many years ago. The sponsorship literature does not address this phenomenon, which suggests that further sponsorship research should consider theory on regional and/or local development to further investigate this issue.

The aim with this research was not generalise the findings to the wider sponsorship population. Therefore, cautions should be taken if relating the findings to a wider population or other organisations. Providing quantitative research to this study could be helpful in order to relate causalities to the wider sponsorship population. As the findings of this research include personal impressions and biases there is a possibility for a lack of validity and reliability in some statements. However, for this research personal impressions and biases was important as it allowed to uncover specific details which may motivate action and encourage further research. As with all self-reported and observed data, how honest and accurate the research subjects are in their response to questions is hard to know for the researcher (Veal and Darcy 2014). Basing the thesis on one main theory such as relational theory or motivational theory could also be beneficial as it would give a more specific approach to the research issue as well as further closing the research gap identified in the literature. Recommendations for further research includes investigating what effect the sponsorship have on consumer behaviour in terms of the population and supporters of Sandefjord Football. This could contribute to a better understanding of how the club's and their sponsors' actions impact on consumers, which can be used as a tool to develop specific structures and strategies to reach specific goals and objectives. Further research could also consider the sponsorship relationships from a network perspective and thus address the various relations in sponsorship networks and how conflict can arise and managed. Finally, the sponsorship literature should consider regional and/or local development theory as this

research clearly indicate that the main motivation of Sandefjord Football and its sponsors include development of the local community.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Standard Interview Guide for Sponsors

### General information:

1. Briefly about the interview subject (role, department, years of experience with SF<sup>i</sup>).
2. How are your sponsorship activities structured internally?
3. What kind of competence do you have regarding sponsorship?
4. What is your role in relation to SF (responsibility, contact, meetings, etc.)?
5. What do you do to create a good relation with SF?
6. Please, explain briefly your sponsorship portfolio? Is it strategic or random?

### Goals and strategy:

7. When you first started to sponsor SF, what was the purpose and motivation?
  - a. What has changed since you first started to sponsor SF?
8. Do you have any strategy or motive for their sponsorship of SF and to achieve your goals?
9. Which specific goals do you have for your sponsor relation with SF? When in the relationship were these decided?
10. How did you decide these goals?
11. Is SF aware of your goals with the sponsorship and do they collaborate with you to achieve the goals? Opposite? Is it discussed between the parties?
12. How do you feel the cooperation with SF helps you get the most out of your goals and objectives with the sponsorship?

### Goals and potential:

13. What do you wish to achieve by sponsoring SF? Has this always been the case?
14. What does SF have that makes them an attractive sponsorship object for your organisation? Why?
15. Could you achieve the same by going in another direction than sponsoring SF? Possibly what? Are you looking at alternatives?
16. Do you see the potential to take greater advantage of the sponsorship relationship with SF than what you get today?

17. Is there a big difference in what you wish to achieve through the sponsorship and what you actually achieve?

Value creation:

18. In what way is the sponsorship relationship between you and SF important for value creation in your organisation?
19. How well does SF understand what is valuable to you?
  - a. In what way does SF contribute actively to help you?
20. How much time/resources are invested in the relationship beyond the sponsorship contract, to exploit the value creation potential? (from both parties).

Evaluation:

21. What evaluations are done regarding sponsorship and value creation?
  - a. How systematic are these evaluations?
22. How do you evaluate what you achieve through the sponsorship in relation to your goals?
  - a. Internally or in cooperation with SF?
23. Do you achieve these goals? If not, do you take actions to reach them?

The relationship:

24. How will you characterise the relationship between you and SF?
25. Can you elaborate on how the relationship works in practice? (frequency of meetings, content, participants, etc.).
26. Do you do anything to learn what SF want/needs to achieve?
27. Is a good relationship between the sponsor and SF important to achieve success? In what way?
28. What role does trust have in the relationship with SF?
  - a. What thoughts do you have regarding creating trust and commitment in the relationship with SF?

Other:

29. How important is it for you and your organisation to sponsor SF?
30. In what way do you believe that the sponsorship of SF affect your organisation? Internally, locally, among customer?

31. Do you use SF in your own marketing efforts? How? Possibly why not?
32. What are the biggest challenges to achieve the same or higher results of the sponsorship of SF in the future?

## Appendix 2: Standard Interview Guide for the Club

### General information:

1. Information about the interview subject.
2. Generally about SFs sponsorship activities – roles, responsibilities, number of sponsors.

### SFs sponsorship activities:

3. What do you look for in potential new sponsors – other than money?
4. What criteria do you set for who you choose as sponsors or for the organisations you regard as potential sponsors?
5. How do you achieve the most value creation in terms of relationship and cooperation, economic and similar – long-term/short-term sponsorship agreements?

### Value creation and competence:

6. What roles does the sponsors play in terms of value creation for SF? What does the sponsor contribute with to increase the value creation for the club?
7. Do you receive anything back from the sponsors other than money? Can you benefit from the association with a specific sponsor?
8. Do the sponsors do anything actively to help you achieve your goals beyond what is stated in the contract?
9. How do you develop knowledge and competence about sponsorship and the products which are offered in the sponsorship packages?
10. Do you feel that the sponsors have enough knowledge about what is important to achieve success in a sponsorship relationship?

### Relational values:

11. How important is it for you to build a good relationship with the sponsors? What do you do to build a good relationship?

12. How do you contribute to create value for your sponsors?
13. Is it important for you to highlight sponsor relations beyond what is stated in the contract? How do you work on the visibility of your sponsors and the benefits of being a sponsor?

The relationship:

14. How does the relationship work in practice – frequency of meetings, fixed or continuously?
15. How do you learn to know your sponsors?
16. Do you do anything to learn what needs, wants and goals your sponsors wish to achieve through the sponsorship, as well as their corporate objectives?
17. What is the biggest challenging regarding the work towards sponsors?

Evaluation:

18. How do you evaluate the relationship and the various relations with your sponsors? What you achieve, what they achieve, the way forward? Possibly, do you evaluate what the sponsors achieve through the sponsorship relationship before contract negotiations or renewal?
19. How do you evaluate your own work towards the sponsors? Financially, the relationship, etc.?

Other:

20. Do the sponsors have competence that you can benefit from, possibly also vice versa?
21. How and to what extent is this competence important? Does it have any impact on the relationship to the extent that it is taken into account?

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<sup>i</sup> Acronym: SF = Sandefjord Football.