



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

**Motivations and expectations of partnership formation
in sports - the case of the Austrian Sports Funding
Organization Österreichische Sporthilfe**

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Preface

The intention of this master thesis is to provide the Austrian Sports Funding Organization Österreichische Sporthilfe with valuable knowledge about why companies cooperate with it. By asking current partners, the organization gets ideas about their motivations and expectations, and in what way they benefit from this partnership. These findings can prospectively be used to acquire future partners more effectively.

First and foremost, my thanks go to the Austrian Sports Funding Organization, especially to Johann Leitner and Daniel Gmeiner, who offered me the opportunity to write this thesis, and subsequently provided me with the necessary information and contacts for the interviews. A special thank naturally goes to the executives who agreed to answer my interview questions and enabled me to generate the data necessary for this study; without them, this thesis would not have been realized.

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Finally, I am very grateful for my family who provided me with all resources needed during the period of composing the thesis, and not at least for my colleagues and friends at Magic Snow Academy who catered for the necessary balance of actively practicing sports and sitting in front of my notebook writing the thesis – you guys substantially account for keeping up my motivation for finishing this thesis.

Raphaela Ossberger

Molde, 2018

Abstract

Purpose – The objective of the thesis is to find answers to the questions about what motivates companies to form partnerships with sports organizations like the Austrian Sports Funding Organization Österreichische Sporthilfe – in the following denoted with the abbreviation ‘ÖSH’ –, and what they expect from such collaborations. This also included finding out about any tangible benefits gained specifically from the partnership, and what it needs, respectively what it would need to extend the partnership contract beyond the current contract.

The purpose of dealing with these topics was to enhance the knowledge about what the partners of ÖSH think about the partnership respectively what works as the main attraction for them; the findings are to be used to approach prospective partners more specifically.

Method – The qualitative data was gathered through interviews with semi-structured elements with present and former partners. A contentual and semantic examination of the statements was used.

Findings – The analysis showed that the companies have integrative approaches to the partnership, and do not only support the organization for philanthropic reasons, i.e. they expect something in return, for instance getting access to the field of sports and athletes, and to new target markets. What was frequently highlighted throughout the interviews were the networking effects the companies benefit from by being part of this partner pool of ÖSH. Generally, there were positive experiences from the partnership.

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this master thesis is to explore motives and motivations, expectations and objectives of private-sector corporations for forming partnerships with sports organizations. The rationale underpinning this study is to provide a deeper understanding about motives for forming partnerships with nonprofit organizations in sports and in what way partners benefit from their commitment.

The research question for this thesis is as follows:

What is the motivation for companies to form a partnership with the Austrian Sports Funding Organization, what do they expect from it and what are the benefits?

The Austrian Sports Funding Organization Österreichische Sporthilfe – hereinafter denoted as ‘ÖSH’ respectively as ‘the organization’ – hereby serves as example since it, indeed, is a nonprofit organization whose aim and raison d’être it is to support professional as well as up-and-coming athletes in Austria with different kinds of services. Consequently, this thesis primarily focuses on professional sports, but aspects from amateur sports will also be included.

ÖSH is per definition a nonprofit organization, i.e. an organization that uses its revenues and incomes for the achievement of its objective (Clements 2014; Heyman 2011). These and further characteristics of such organizations will be applied to the example of ÖSH.

The support of sports, athletes, and teams requires – what else? – financial resources. One of the most commonly used approaches to raise those resources is the method of fundraising. Heyman (2011), Kartakoullis et al. (2013), Sargeant and Shang (2010), and Stier and Schneider (1999) view fundraising as the actual act of generating financial resources from sources external to the organization that has been undergoing a continuous professionalization over the last decades. One pillar for effective and successful fundraising is the maintenance of relationships with partners (Burnett 1992; Burnett 1993; MacPherson 2005). Partnerships have been of increasing importance for sports organizations (Babiak 2007; Doherty and Murray 2007) like ÖSH is one. The crucial factor is to make these partnerships as sustainable and enduring as possible in order to secure a stable financing. This is a current issue for many sports organizations and is therefore an important subject in the sport management studies; Stier and Schneider

emphasize this by stating that “the sport manager who is able to secure adequate funding, especially outside of the normal budgetary process (i.e., via fundraising), will be highly prized and much sought after” (1999: 94). Therefore, it is necessary to know about the motives for and expectations of partnering with it, what attracted them to the partnership, so that the hereby gained knowledge can be used prospectively when acquiring new partners (Doherty and Murray 2007; MacPherson 2005; Pope et al. 2009) – just as Kelly stated, “with research, you can predict which prospects have the highest possibility of giving before you solicit them” (1991: 55).

At the time of the research, ÖSH contracted with 39 companies of various industries. ÖSH offers its partners several different levels and forms of partnerships, which differ in the amount of money the respective company is willing to give to ÖSH. What makes ÖSH as organization so special and worth to be studied is that it is not only a nonprofit organization, but also a non-governmental organization that does not receive any governmental funds or grants from the Austrian state. Additionally, donations to ÖSH are not tax-deductible what makes it even more difficult to raise money from the public. This connotes that the organization is fully reliable on partners and sponsors which provide financial and in-kind support. Another ‘obstacle’, if one wants to call it like that, is that partners of ÖSH do not become visible as partner of the organization’s athletes, although the partners actually are a sponsor of those athletes. In public, athletes who receive money from ÖSH display the logo of ÖSH with the term ‘Sporthilfe’ as sticker or badge on their clothing, but not the logo of the Austrian lotteries or any other partner corporation which actually acts as the investor. This circumstance serves as unique context that has not been studied yet; therefore it will add to the picture of partnership studies in the context of sports and is an excellent opportunity to expand the comprehension about partnership formation between organizations, especially those from the sports branch, and corporations.

Compared to the importance and frequency of partnerships in sports (Mackintosh 2011; Babiak 2003; Babiak 2007), there is only little academic attention given to the study of partnerships. First of all, it is therefore to bring into question if there is a certain connection between the corporation and the sports branch, respectively if sports serve as extraordinary valuable for the corporation and its business objectives (Bason and Anagnostopoulos 2015; Dowling et al. 2013; Hallmann et al. 2012; Levermore 2013; Stier and Schneider 1999). This implements to challenge whether the sporting success of the

athletes supported by ÖSH and/or the reputation of the Austrian sports system play a significant role in the decision to form respectively to continue a partnership with ÖSH. Stier and Schneider (1999) look at that aspect from the perspective of the organization that receives the money and claim that its reputation, indeed, has an influence on how much money is raised from external investors; and it seems only logical when they claim that a good image and recent successes contribute positively to the attraction of partners (Stier and Schneider 1999).

The literature suggests a variety of motives, ranging from personal interests and emotional motivation (Austin 2009; Tsiotsou 1998), philanthropy (Austin 2009; Clementsen 2014; Irwin et al. 2010; Sheth and Babiak 2010), through to influencing the corporate image (Roy and Graeff 2003), or getting involved in a certain scene (Tsiotsou 1998). Additionally, Ko et al. (2014) defined eight dimensions of donor motivation that explain why people give money to athletic departments.

Regarding the expectations of forming collaborations, possible countable benefits resulting from these partnerships are one of the main reasons for corporations to contract with an organization (Austin 2009). As it is to expect in a partnership, in the end all parties involved should benefit; to what extent and in what kind may differ from party to party (Babiak 2007). Here, it is also to mention that organizations do not only have certain expectations, but they also have, or at least should have, a clear objective which is aimed to be achieved through the partnership (Babiak 2007).

Since all of the interviewees currently contract or recently contracted with ÖSH, the paper will also discuss course and progression of the partnership as well as its outcomes. In the course of a partnership, communication and interaction between the partners play an important role and contribute to the vitality of the collaboration (Austin 2009; Mohr and Spekman 1994); thus, this aspect will be examined in the present paper by questioning the extent and frequency of communication and interaction between ÖSH and its respective partners. This vitality of the partnership is usually an essential determinant for whether the partnership continues, meaning whether the contract will be renewed. The findings of Austin (2009), Jamali and Keshishian (2009), and Mohr and Spekman (1994) will be used to question what factors are important to the partners in order to extend the contract with ÖSH. In the case of the already terminated partnership, the reasons for this termination and, if applicable, recommendations for improvements will be discovered.

Austin (2009), Clementsen (2014), and Mohr and Spekman (1994) also examined the timely duration of partnerships and found that short-term partnerships can be at risk to appear as commercial, whereas a long-term partnership is usually a sign for a strong commitment by the corporation to the organization what appears as more authentic and deliberate.

To explain the partnership phenomenon from a more holistic perspective, the Collaboration Continuum by James Austin (2009), and the partnership matrix by Darian Rodriguez Heyman will be applied.

1.1 Research outline

To begin with, the case of ÖSH and organizational and operational structures will be explained in more detail in chapter two. Chapter three will consist of a solid literature review on several topics that touch that issue of partnership formation. As ÖSH is a nonprofit organization, this kind of organization as well as the phenomenon of fundraising will be explained. The major part of the theory section will take the explication of partnerships, focusing on motivations, expectations and outcomes. Throughout the literature review, links to practices of ÖSH will be established in order to make those theoretical explanations more concrete. The fourth chapter will explain how the research was conducted. Finally, results from the research will be presented and explained, and ultimately discussed, and conclusions for the industry as well as for the research will be drawn.

In the following, the companies that partner with ÖSH will be addressed by using the term ‘company’ or ‘corporation’.

2.0 ÖSH and its funding

This chapter includes an introduction about the history of the organization as well as its contemporary operations and organizational structures and an overview about the complex funding system. Additionally, there will be a special emphasis on current partnerships, offerings from the organization to its partners, and actual activities and incentives for fundraising. The finance model of ÖSH will add to the holistic picture of the whole entity.

2.1 Background information about ÖSH

ÖSH was founded on October 29th 1971 by Dr. Fred Sinowatz, Minister for Sports in the National Assembly of Austria at that time and later Federal Chancellor of Austria, and Ing. Rudolf Sallinger, then president of The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber WKÖ, and was then registered as nonprofit organization (Sportreport 2011). At the time of the present study ÖSH is located in Austria's capital city of Vienna and is run by 13 professional employees (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018a).

Now as well as at the time of its founding, the mission and vision of ÖSH is to “accompany Austrian professional and up-and-coming athletes who predominantly compete in Olympic disciplines on their way to success and support them by creating and maintaining an ideal setting” (Sportreport 2011). Harald Bauer, who has been employed as CEO of the organization since July 1st 2016 (Sporthilfe 2016) views ÖSH as “organization that contributes to protect athletes socially so that they do not need to have a side job, but can concentrate on their sport” (Maryodnig 2017). The funds received by the athletes therefore count as “representation allowance for the occupation of society as well as increased expenses which arise due to the practice of high-performance sport” (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). In this regard, the organization emphasizes that its entire funding system gets along without any federal money and grants from the Austrian government (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018), what subsequently means that it is a completely self-financed organization (Maryodnig 2017).

With regard to sports, ÖSH – and consequently this thesis – deals with professional sports, in contrast to grassroots sports and amateur sports, what Clementsen defines as “sports where the athletes receive payment for their performance” (2014: 28), also including that those professional athletes earn their livings through doing their respective sports (Clementsen 2014). Since 2011, ÖSH has also been supporting athletes from parasports and disabled sports (Bundesministerium für Öffentlichen Dienst und Sport 2011).

As compared with international standards, there are similar organizations with the same purpose; for instance the German Sports Funding Organization ‘Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe’, the Swiss Sports Funding Organization ‘Stiftung Schweizer Sporthilfe’ and the Sports Funding Organization of South Tyrol ‘Südtiroler Sporthilfe Alto Adige’. What they have in common with ÖSH is that all four of them highly build on partnerships as financial

resources. In addition they try to raise money through events, which tend to be similar in nature as it can be seen by the example of the sports galas – ‘Galanacht des Sports’ in Austria, ‘Ball des Sports’ and ‘Goldene Sportpyramide’ in Germany, ‘Nachwuchspreis’ and ‘Soirée Romande in Switzerland and ‘Ball des Sports’ in South Tyrol – where the best athletes are awarded, and what is an excellent opportunity for the respective sports funding organization to gain media attention and publicity (Österreichischer Polizeisportverband 2016; Heyman 2011).

Noticeable is the relation of the financial volume and the number of athletes funded: The German Sports Funding organization supports 3800 athletes (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2018) and has a financial funding volume of around 10 Million Euro per year (Ritzinger 2015); the Swiss Sports Funding supports around 885 athletes and spends around 4.2 Million Euro per year (Stiftung Schweizer Sporthilfe 2016). As it will be explained in more detail in the following, ÖSH annually supports its athletes with the amount of around 3 Million Euro (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017a).

2.2 The funding system

Between 1971 and 2011, in total around 2,300 Austrian athletes received money from ÖSH (Sportreport 2011). Currently, ÖSH supports around 300 Austrian athletes from various kinds of sports; in May 2017, exactly 278 athletes were adjudged as ‘worthy for receiving funding’ in the form of individual funding (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017a). ‘Worthy for receiving funding’ from ÖSH basically are athletes with Austrian nationality (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f) who have limited financial resources for their sporting career (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation 2018). Other fundamental prerequisites are (without any ranking order):

- a) Timely online submission of the application form;
- b) Membership in a sports association that is registered with the Austrian Federal Sports Association Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO;
- c) Fulfillment of the performance requirements, and granting of the funding by the evaluation commission; the performance requirements need to be proofed by the respective sports association;
- d) Recognition of the implementation rules by the athlete (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f; Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018).

The funding only applies to individual persons, however, athletes do not have a legal claim for this funding (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018). Athletes who apply for funding promise to act and behave respectfully and loyally towards ÖSH. This means that the athlete but also the organization have to preserve the positive reputation and image of the respective counterpart. Furthermore, the athlete must not take actions that possibly lead to a punishment due to any “frauds or criminal acts against the competition, granting of or accepting advantage, corruption, bribery, or any comparable torts” (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f: 2). As expectable in professional sports, the applying athlete also has to commit himself to the Anti-Doping rules, but also any other valid laws and regulations that concern ÖSH. In case of a violation of any kind whatsoever the funding is terminated without notice (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). Similarly, an attested doping offense is also an excursion criterion from the entire funding system of ÖSH; this means that after having been tested positively on any doping agents, the athlete does not have the chance to apply for any funding from the organization anymore. Money that was received after the first positive doping test has to be refunded to the organization. During the time an athlete is accused to a doping offense, any funding will be frozen until the process is finished (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f).

The timely online submission mentioned under a) means that the application form needs to be submitted electronically; the deadline for submission is different for athletes from summer sports who need to submit not later than October 30th, and winter sports athletes, whose deadline is April 30th. The funding period lasts for exactly one year, starting on January 1st for summer sports athletes and July 1st for athletes from winter sports. After each one-year period, the athlete has to apply anew (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). This differentiation between summer and winter sports stretches through the entire funding system; for the classification ÖSH distinguishes also between Olympic and non-Olympic sports and parasports (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). In general, those athletes who finally receive money are classified into the three levels, Gold, Silver and Bronze. Elite athletes are categorized either in Gold or Silver, up-and-coming athletes in Bronze (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). The actual amount to be paid out finally also depends on whether the respective athlete receives support from another sports funding organization, for example by being employed with the Sports department at the Austrian Armed forces ‘Heeressportzentrum’, with the Interior Ministry or the Ministry of Finance or the like (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f).

| OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC SPORTS | | | |
|---|-------|--|-------|
| Without any other sports funding organization | | In case of funding through another sports funding organization | |
| Gold | 800 € | Gold | 600 € |
| Silver | 400 € | Silver | 250 € |
| Bronze | 200 € | Bronze | 100 € |

Figure 1: Basic categorization of funding for Olympic and Paralympic sports

(Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f: 2)

| NON-OLYMPIC AND NON-PARALYMPIC SPORTS | |
|---|-------|
| In case of funding through another sports funding organization, 'Silver' is to be applied | |
| Gold | 250 € |
| Silver | 100 € |
| Bronze | 100 € |

Figure 2: Basic categorization of funding for Non-Olympic and Non-Paralympic sports

(Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f: 2)

The performance requirements mentioned in c) are the determining factors for the categorization explained previously. Performances that are taken into consideration are as follows:

- Official competitions that are approved by an international sports association;
- Performances that were achieved in the previous season in the general class or junior class;
- Applications until the age of 45 effective on the day of the deadline for the application; this does not apply to athletes from parasports (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f).

It needs to be added that the athlete's performance of the entire season is used to evaluate if five or more competitions on Top Level, i.e. the highest frequently organized competition series such as World Cup, Bundesliga or similar, were executed, if the athlete took part in 75% of the competitions or more, and if the following criteria are fulfilled: Regarding the results stated in the performance requirements, the athlete always has to be ranked within the first quarter of the respective competition according to the total number of participants. In the case of non-Olympic sports, a minimum number of nations need to participate in order for the competition to be counted (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f).

ÖSH divides the sports into three different groups what is then used to distribute the funding accordingly (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). A detailed table about the guidelines for classification of athletes of ÖSH can be found in the appendix of this thesis. For ‘compensation’ reasons, the supported athletes commit themselves to participate in public relations and marketing activities for the purpose of ÖSH at least five times per year; additionally, each athlete is obliged to display the logo of ÖSH in the form of badges and stickers at competitions and other public appearances (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). In the case of an injury or sickness that entails a long-term outage the concerned athlete has the right to receive the entire funding if he submits a medical certificate (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). In the case that the athlete decides to end his career, he is obliged to immediately inform ÖSH about this decision. The funding is then terminated immediately (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f). What is different for ÖSH compared to the German Sports Funding Organization is that Austrian athletes do not have to pay dues to the organization as compensation; athletes supported by the German organization who have an individual marketing are obliged to pay five percent of their advertising revenues to the organization (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2018).

2.3 Current partnerships of ÖSH

Over the years, ÖSH has been establishing a network of relationships that enable and assure its existence and operational ability. Within the Austrian sports system, ÖSH plays an essential role as link between sports and business by giving corporations the opportunity to use the positive image of the Austrian sport and its athletes for their own purpose (Sportreport 2011). The Austrian athletes hereby play an important role as international ambassadors that first and foremost represent the country and their sports, but ideally also the supporting companies as CEO Harald Bauer explains (Österreichischer Polzeisportverband 2016). In an official press release on the occasion of its 40-year-anniversary in 2011, ÖSH stated that “many companies use the positive image transfer through supporting the Austrian Sports Funding organization” (Sportreport 2011). Furthermore, it pointed out the importance of those companies and their dedication since these partnerships “work as the basis for the athlete funding” (Sportreport 2011). Broadening and extending this basis is the objective of the organization, and the results from this present study are supposed to contribute to this objective.

The partnerships of ÖSH have partly been existing over a long time, such as the one with the Austrian Lotteries which have been supporting the organization since 1986 and have been investing more than 30 million Euro into the funding of Sporthilfe athletes since then (Bundesministerium für Öffentlichen Dienst und Sport 2010). The Austrian Lotteries is the so called 'Premium Partner' of ÖSH. The Premium Partner level is the highest level in the partnership system of the organization and implies a high degree of engagement. The engagement gradually decreases with the lower levels.

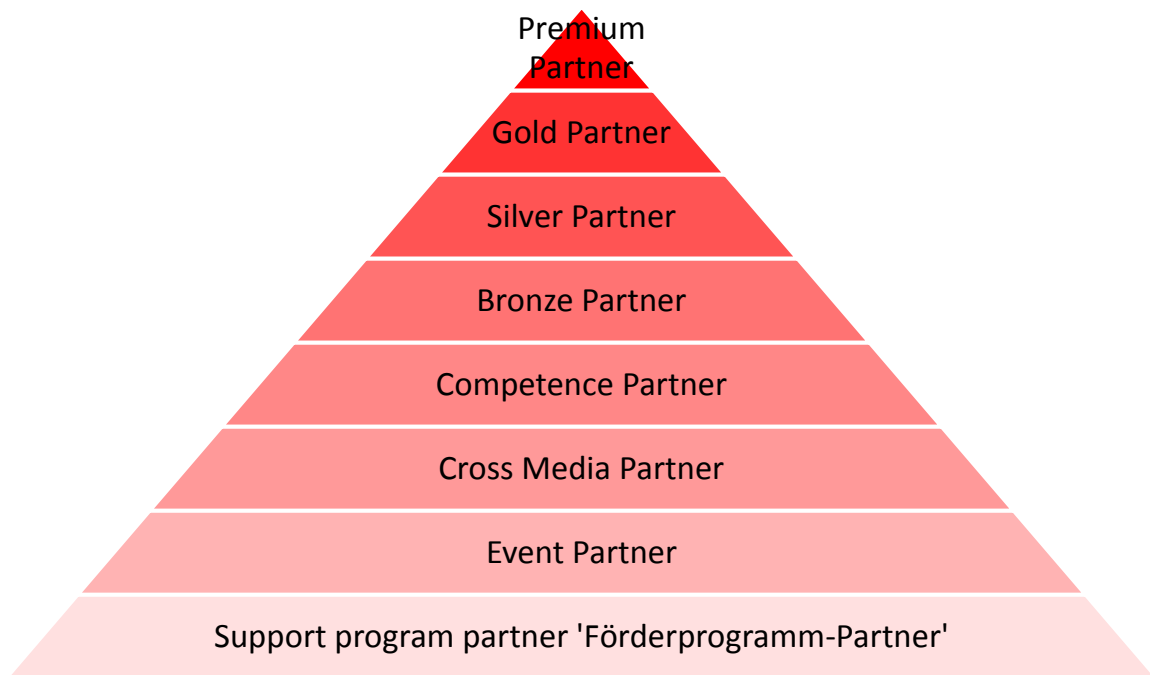


Figure 3: Partnership levels of ÖSH
(Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018b)

The Austrian Lotteries have a special position as the only Premium Partner as their involvement is not comparable to any other partnering companies regarding their investment and engagement (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018). Gold Partners annually give an agreed amount of money and additionally support certain projects financially and with knowledge or other in-kind resources (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018). Also as Silver or Bronze Partner a company provides both financial and in-kind investment, whereas the companies engaging in the support program fund specific projects, selected athletes and objectives with their contributions (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018).

In addition to those seven levels, ÖSH also offers a package that is called ‘Sporthilfe Supporter’. Together with the partnership levels displayed in Figure 3, it compiles the partnership program of ÖSH. Companies engaging either as Gold, Silver or Bronze Partner become member of the ‘Sporthilfe Business Community’ (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017g). The following figure gives an overview about what partners had to invest and what they got offered for their engagement in 2017 (Figure 3).

| | Sporthilfe Business Community | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | <i>Sporthilfe Supporter</i> | <i>Bronze partner</i> | <i>Silver Partner</i> | <i>Gold Partner</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Go for gold’ News incl. annual subscription for ‘Color of Sports’* • Sporthilfe Charity calendar • Sporthilfe Cashback card | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporthilfe Business Community meets Special Olympics • Sporthilfe Charity Table Tennis Trophy • Sporthilfe Charity Xmas Bowling • Sporthilfe Business Community meets Ski & Snowboard Cross World Cup | | 1 event at choice | 2 events at choice | 3 events at choice |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporthilfe Charity Beachvolleyball Trophy • Sporthilfe Business Community meets ‘Kärnten läuft’ running event • Sporthilfe Business Community meets Business run Ischgl • Sporthilfe Charity Golf Trophy at GC Ansfelden • Sporthilfe Charity Golf Trophy at GC Götzendorf | | | 1 event at choice | 2 events at choice |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ski for Gold Charity Race Schladming • Styrian Sporthilfe Gala • LOTTERIEN Sporthilfe Gala | | | -10% | -20% |
| Price per year (plus 20% VAT) | 75 € | 175€ | 350€ | 700€ |
| <p>* ‘Go for Gold’ News is the corporate publishing magazine of ÖSH and contains information about recent and coming events, recent developments and other necessary things to know. The ‘Go for Gold’ News are published six times a year as part of the Austrian sport business newspaper ‘Color of Sports’ (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018c).</p> | | | | |

Figure 4: Overview about the offerings and prices of the Sporthilfe Business Community
(Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017h)

As shown in Figure 4, it does not need high financial expenses for entering a partnership with ÖSH. Besides the offerings mentioned therein, ÖSH, in turn, provides a variety of rights and opportunities for companies, depending on the individual package desired by the company:

- Right to call itself ‘Official partner of the Austrian Sports Funding Organization Österreichische Sporthilfe’;

- Right of use for the logo of ÖSH;
- Public presentation of the partnership;
- Presentation of the company online (homepage ‘sporthilfe.at’, social media, newsletter) and print (‘Go for Gold’ News, other print publications);
- Depiction of the company’s logo at events organized by ÖSH;
- Sales presentation of the company’s products at certain events organized by ÖSH;
- Attendance or autographing session of an athlete from ÖSH (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017h: 2).

2.4 Finance model of ÖSH

Currently, ÖSH has a financial volume of about 3 million Euro per year (Maryodnig 2017). For comparison, in its first year, the organization spent around 18.000 Euro – respectively 250,000 Schilling, what was the currency in Austria at that time –, and in 2011 it were 2.1 Million Euro that were used for the funding of athletes (Sportreport 2011). Within the first 40 years since its founding, ÖSH released about 40 million Euro for the funding of sports (Sportreport 2011; Bundesministerium für Öffentlichen Dienst und Sport 2011).

The partnerships with several companies build the foundation for the existence of ÖSH and subsequently for the funding of the athletes (Sportreport 2011). The second source for money, although less yielding, is events that on the one hand serve as presentation platform for the partners of ÖSH, and on the other hand serve as opportunity to raise funds. The biggest and most prestigious event is the annual sports gala ‘Lotterien-Gala Nacht des Sports’ where the best Austrian athletes – no matter if funded by ÖSH or not – are awarded (Österreichische Bundes-Sport Organisation BSO 2018). Besides this, the organization arranges a number of other events throughout the year as it can be seen in Figure 4. The third pillar for mobilizing money is fundraising through purposeful campaigns. Currently, the main project is the so called ‘Held aus Österreich’ [translated ‘Hero from Austria’] campaign which comprises the sale of t-shirts with this slogan as overprint under the motto “the stuff that tomorrow’s sports legends are made of” (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018d). ÖSH receives the net income of this sale. The idea behind this project is that each supporter, i.e. each buyer of a t-shirt, can well-visible display his engagement, what “makes him a true hero from Austria” (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018d). Usually, such campaigns change every year; but this ‘Held aus

Österreich' campaign was such a big success in 2017 that the organization decided to continue it in 2018. Another successful and regularly performed project is organized in cooperation with the Austrian public broadcaster ORF: The latter dedicates a special episode of the quiz show 'Millionenshow' to the organization, what means that athletes participate in the quiz and the money they win is donated to ÖSH (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018e). A charity action in the form of an auction is annually organized in cooperation with the Austrian newspaper 'Kronen Zeitung'. There, extraordinary exhibits such as VIP and behind-the-scene tickets for sports events are sold in support of ÖSH (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018f). Another project that integrates the partnering companies is the annual wall calendar that displays a selection of Austrian athletes performing their respective sports. A company interested in supporting ÖSH through this initiative can 'buy' one calendar sheet and get its logo printed on the sheet and is present on various media products such as newsletters, the website of ÖSH and at the sports gala mentioned previously (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018g). A slightly different project is conducted with the organization's partner Cashback World, a shopping community. By paying with a special 'Sporthilfe Cashback card', the consumer collects Cashback points; the company automatically donates up to 1% of the congregated sum to ÖSH (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018h).

To conclude, the finance model of ÖSH is broadly positioned, i.e. it is spread over several projects and the funding does not rely on one single project or initiative only. Still, each of them requires the support of partners, what once again proves that the cultivation of partnerships and the emerging network and the constant expansion of it are crucial for the maintenance of the funding system. A wide knowledge about the partnering companies and their motives and expectations is therefore indispensable.

3.0 Literature review

Chapter three will consist of a solid literature review on several topics that refer to partnerships. As ÖSH is a nonprofit organization, this kind of organization will be explained from a general perspective but of course the emphasis will be on nonprofit organizations in sports. The second aspect to be mentioned will be the phenomenon of fundraising, also its various forms and approaches. The major part of this section will be about the explication of partnerships. Focusing on the research question, the need for partnerships will be exposed and motives and motivations from organizations and

companies will be questioned. Expectations from a partnership and any outcomes of it, i.e. if there are any benefits for the collaborating parties will be addressed. Links to practices of ÖSH will be established in order to make the theory more concrete.

3.1 Nonprofit organizations in sports

As mentioned in the previous chapter, ÖSH is a nonprofit organization (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018a). Nonprofit organizations – in the following denoted as ‘NPOs’ – can be differentiated from for-profit organizations by the fact that the latter pocket their revenues for themselves, whereas the former use the profit in order to achieve their respective objectives (Clements 2014; Heyman 2011). Still, the term ‘nonprofit’ is somewhat misleading as those organizations, indeed, are allowed to earn profit, but as explained, it is the utilization and disposition that matters in this respect (Heyman 2011; Sargeant and Shang 2010).

Sargeant and Shang (2010) identified five pillars that characterize a NPO. According to this, a NPO is ...

- ... organized, i.e. there are operational structures followed when executing its tasks;
- ... private, what implicates that the organization operates independently from a government or a state; however, it is to mention that this point is not related to whether the organization receives grants or any other support from a public entity;
- ... not profit-distributing, what is the same as what was mentioned previously, namely that profits are not distributed to any managers but instead are used to achieve the NPO’s objectives;
- ... self-governing, i.e. the organization is run entirely independent, and decisions and other operational activities are made by the organization itself;
- ... voluntary, what means that there are no legally compulsory memberships or the like; any participation rests on pure voluntariness (Sargeant and Shang 2010).

Every NPO is supposed to have a mission and a strategy to achieve this mission. The former describes the fundamental purpose and objectives, i.e. the reason to be of an organization; the latter describes how this mission is to be accomplished. While a mission rarely changes, after all it is the basic principle of the NPO, the corresponding strategy can change respectively needs to be adapted in order to ensure the achievement of the mission

(Heyman 2011). Pope et al. (2009) stress the importance of NPOs for the economy as NPOs provide goods and services to the community that otherwise the state or any other government would need to supply – or as Heyman expresses, “nonprofits exist for a reason. They enter the market when the for-profit and governmental sectors can’t, won’t, or shouldn’t, generally due to a gap or failure in the market economy” (2011: 213). The latter is particularly applicable for ÖSH. The Austrian government cannot or is not willing to support Austrian athletes with an unlimited amount of money so that they would have sufficient resources to finance their sporting career. The companies of the for-profit sector can voluntarily decide whether they want to sponsor athletes or sports organizations; consequently, some, mostly the less popular athletes and sports, do not receive sufficient or do not receive any monies at all from sponsorships or commercial contracts. Here, ÖSH steps in and fills this gap mentioned by Heyman (2011) in order to enable those athletes practicing their sports.

3.2 Fundraising

Most NPOs use fundraising as their primary source for securing their finances. This way of ‘raising funds’ has been becoming increasingly more professional over the last decades (Heyman 2011). To say it with the simple words of Sargeant and Shang, who refer to Bruce Hopkins (2000), fundraising is “the generation of revenue for charitable purposes” (2010: 34). Resources raised through fundraising do not necessarily have to be financial in nature; it can also be in-kind resources such as certain goods and services or anything else that is valuable for the organization and meets its needs (Stier and Schneider 1999).

Fundraising entails hard work and tenacity, but it also effectively consumes money; thus, collecting money means spending money at the same time, for instance in the form of working time, telephone costs for calling potential partners or the like. This leads to the conclusion that in order to complete a fundraising project successfully, the actual revenues have to exceed the costs of fundraising (Kartakoullis et al. 2013). Although there are certain tactics and principles that can be used more or less universally when executing fundraising projects, it still needs some degree of creativity and resourcefulness that adapts to the given situation and project, and makes it as unique and distinct as possible. Consequently, a combination of the basic principles and creative ideas can be a promising foundation for a successful fundraising project (Stier and Schneider 1999).

Stier and Schneider (1999) differentiate between four categories of fundraising, namely 1) individual solicitations, 2) corporate partnerships or sponsorships, 3) profit centers, and 4) special events:

- 1) Individual solicitation is nothing more than when someone asks someone else for a donation, in whatever kind; an example of ÖSH is the online donation tool on its website where the organization asks anyone to give money, both private persons and companies (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018i);
- 2) Corporate partnerships or sponsorships rest on a mutual beneficial collaboration with joint promotion, PR and publicity activities where both the sponsoring corporation and the sports organization benefit. The sponsoring corporation engages with the sports organization with the expectation of receiving a certain linkage or service in return for its commitment; the partnerships of ÖSH are a typical example for this type of fundraising;
- 3) A profit center is a single commercial activity with the objective to make money; for instance the annual auction or the initiative 'Hero from Austria' are a profit center of ÖSH;
- 4) Special events, as the denotation already says, are single or a series of projects that are related to a certain event, including a valuable promotion for the sports organization; the annual sports gala of ÖSH where the best Austrian athletes are honored is a special event that contributes to the raising of funds (Stier and Schneider 1999).

Other elements that are connected to fundraising are advertising, promoting, public relations, and piggybacking. The former is assumed to not need a detailed explanation; advertising is simply direct and targeted communication through mass media that reaches a more or less considerable amount of people and that aims for influencing their behavior, what in the case of fundraising means to motivate them to donate. 'Promoting' means the marketing of products and services; just as advertising, promoting wants to make people act in a certain way, i.e. which benefits the promoting organization. Those activities are usually consciously planned; in contrast, 'public relations' deal with anything around the organization. The objective of public relations is to maintain a desired impression of the organization. The last element, 'piggybacking', involves joint activities between the organization and another organization or corporation where both parties finally benefit from (Stier and Schneider 1999).

What ÖSH is used to most is receiving annual funds; this means, a company annually donates an agreed amount of money to the organization that is used for financing certain programs and the daily operations; Sargeant and Shang (2010) add that this annual fund can be changed to a monthly fund, or the annual giving can be complemented by monthly giving. Companies, in turn, are used to do so by the means of cash donations, or in the form of gifts of products and services, i.e. in-kind contributions (Sargeant and Shang 2010). This appears to be natural since companies exist to produce and offer certain products and/or services. If the organization is in need for exactly those goods, in-kind donations of this kind can be as valuable to it as a cash donation. ÖSH hereby has among others an agreement with an insurance company that offers insurance benefits to the athletes as part of the “Athletes Care Program” and with a printing company that cares for any print products of the organization (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017h).

Joe Waters (2013) composed an overview about 40 different fundraising strategies for NPOs. As it would go beyond the scope of this thesis to go through all of them, only a number of selected strategies that are applicable in the present case will be mentioned in the following:

- **Percentage-of-Sales fundraising**

In percentage-of-sales initiatives, partnering companies donate a certain amount of money to the organization when a certain product is bought (Waters 2013). ÖSH’s fundraising project with Cashback World where up 1% of the expenses of the shopping community is donated to the organization (Österreichische Sporthilfe 2018h) can be categorized as percentage-of-sales program.

- **Cash donation**

Cash donations are the most common, but of course also one of the least creative ways of fundraising – but it yields what every organization aims for: “cold, hard cash”, as Waters (2013: 53) expresses it. It involves nothing more than contacting potential partner companies and ask them for giving money or any other valuable contribution, similar to what Stier and Schneider (1999) denote as ‘individual solicitation’ and what was explained previously but on a B2B basis. When making cash donations, some companies do so by signing multiple-year contracts with the organization upfront (Waters 2013). According to Waters (2013), this is the ideal case for both parties as it gives a substantial degree of planning security; the organization is able to plan its budget and the spreading of the money, and also the company can align its budget and resources on a longer run. This fundraising

strategy is one of the pillars of ÖSH as it is frequently working on acquiring new partners that give cash money to the organization because that is what it needs most for funding the athletes.

- **Special Occasion fundraising**

Waters (2013) refers to a study that approved that noticeable events such as the Olympics or other important competitions work as incentive for companies to engage with sports organizations. However, antagonizing to a common belief, there is no need for a direct connection between the organization and the special occasion. Waters (2013) further mentions that those special occasions are a valuable opportunity to observe which companies engage with this occasion and which could consequently be lured by the organization for its own purposes; Waters refers to this with the saying that “the best place to find your next corporate partner is in the arms of another” (2013: 240). Such special occasions for the case of ÖSH are for instance international sports events where athletes who are funded by the organization participate, just as the Olympics or World Championships, or events organized in Austria. It is, indeed, conceivable that a company decides to enter a partnership with ÖSH at a time where such events take place and thereof expect a certain benefit such as visibility, i.e. it wants to downright ‘exploit’ this occasion where it is likely to benefit more than in an ordinary time period.

- **Sports Team fundraising**

Sports Team fundraising has to be viewed from the other side of the partnership, namely from the perspective of a company. It means that a company ‘uses’ a sports team or individual athletes for its purposes, i.e. for instance marketing and promotion activities, and in return provides them with support either in the form of financial or in-kind resources (Waters 2013). Waters (2013) recommends to closely look at which team or which athlete is in need for support, but also to examine which sports or which athlete fits to the company. The method of Sports Team fundraising is currently and frequently used by the partnering companies of ÖSH, and not the organization itself, quite the reverse, it is the one that is used. The organization offers hospitality services and activities with athletes to the company which in turn donates to the organization for using these services. What is different to the approach by Waters (2013), who sees the company in the move for initiating and maintaining the fundraising partnership, is that in the case of ÖSH it is the organization who approaches the companies and

who after successfully signing a partnership contract organizes those events and incentives respectively offers it to the company, and not the other way round.

One strategy that is not mentioned by Waters is relationship fundraising. MacPherson (2005) refers to Burnett (1992) who first mentioned the term 'relationship fundraising' already in 1992 when explaining that this fundraising method is about fostering relationships as individually as possible, i.e. exactly the opposite of mass mailings and other rather impersonal communication. This involves also approaching each partner in such a way that it fits to his culture and motivation for giving. Burnett (1993) admits that this approach that has its roots in the United States has been practiced by many fundraisers by consciously taking care of their partners but without denoting or defining it as 'relationship fundraising'. The rise of relationship fundraising can be attributed to the increasingly selective behavior of companies when deciding which organization to donate to. There, it is only logic that they choose that one organization they have a good relationship with (Burnett 1993). A good relationship additionally can be an important factor when it comes to renewing a contract: the better and closer the interorganizational relationship, the less likely it will be terminated, even if the relationship is not economically valuable for the company anymore (Burnett 1993).

Especially in this context, it is necessary to find out who respectively which markets are likely to be willing most to give money to the organization (Pope et al. 2009). Furthermore, these authors stress the importance for NPOs to have a strategy that clearly appeals to those potential funders by directly addressing their needs and expectations (Pope et al. 2009). Still, when fostering relationships, certain standards are expected and should therefore be complied with and the relationship should be seen holistically (MacPherson 2005). According to Burnett (1993) the success of fundraising highly depends on the relationship built for this purpose, which should be "real" (Burnett 1993: 44) and with the ultimate objective of "encouraging them to give more and to give for longer" (Burnett 1993: 44). Burnett talks in this context about "existing friends and donors" (1993: 44) which the organization has to better utilize since it is more difficult and demands more effort to acquire new partners than fostering the existing ones (Burnett 1993).

Just as anywhere else, the image of the sports organization, team or athlete is an essential factor for the success of a fundraising project. As Stier and Schneider stress, "it is always

easier to generate outside resources when the image, the reputation and recent achievements of the sport organization are very positive than when there are problems associated with the organization” (1999: 100). Image hereby does not only imply the ‘classic’ meaning of reputation but also recent sporting success in competitions and tournaments. Identifying donors that share the same philosophy as the sport organization is the first step in any sports fundraising project. These consequently form a population pool the fundraising organization can draw on when seeking for money or other kind of contribution (Stier and Schneider 1999). For the case of ÖSH, the image of it definitely has an influence on whether companies are motivated to enter a partnership or not. Turning this theory the other way round and assuming that the Austrian sport had a negative image, companies would be very unlikely to collaborate with a sports organization because they do not want to be associated with something negative.

3.3 Partnerships

“A partnership is a sort of collaboration to pursue common goals, while leveraging resources and capitalizing on the respective competences and strengths of both partners” (Jamali and Keshishian 2009: 279), i.e. partnerships are mutual beneficial relationship where one party exploits the skills, capabilities and qualities of the respective other(s), and vice versa (Jamali and Keshishian 2009). This is a good summary of that sheer endless number of definitions of partnerships. The inflationary use of the term ‘partnership’ even prompted Mackintosh (2011) to claim that it consequently lost its real meaning. Still, attributes that are repetitive in the literature about partnerships are voluntariness, long run, closeness, and planned strategy that encompasses two or more partner with the mutual goal of increasing any benefits (Babiak 2003; Dowling et al. 2013; Jamali and Keshishian 2009; Mackintosh 2011). The crucial factor for and during partnerships are people; it needs people to establish and maintain partnerships (Austin 2009). Another term that is used in the context of partnerships is ‘interorganizational relationships’. As the name already says, it involves two or several organizations and/or corporations that form a relationship for collaboration with “relatively enduring transactions, flows, and linkages” (Oliver: 1990: 241). Thus, interorganizational relationships and partnerships are rather similar in nature and the term ‘partnership’ is consequently used as general term for all these kinds of relationships and collaborations, also because ÖSH itself uses this denotation.

The literature refers to several types of partnerships. The one that is most applicable for the case of ÖSH respectively for most sports organizations is the one between NPOs, i.e. the sports organization, and one or several businesses. Business-NPO partnerships are part of what Googins and Rochlin (2000), and Waddock (1988) denote as ‘social partnerships’. This per definition is a partnership where one or several corporations commit themselves to collaborate with an organization from a different economic sector. The objective of this commitment is to actively work on solving a certain problem or issue in such a way that all parties involved, i.e. both the business side and the organization, benefit from it (Seitanidi and Crane 2009; Waddock 1988).

Jamali and Keshishian (2009) summarized the most essential factors for successful partnerships based on the findings of Samii et al. (2002) and Kanter (1994):

| Success factor | Description |
|---|--|
| Resource dependency | Recognition by the partners that what can be achieved together cannot be achieved alone. |
| Commitment symmetry | Equal commitment from partners confirmed through the allocation of time and resources. |
| Common goal symmetry | Individual goals as output or subset of the overall program objectives. |
| Intensive communication | Regular communication through different channels/means. |
| Alignment of cooperation working capability | The sharing of knowledge across organizational boundaries to alleviate problems of information asymmetry and ensure convergence in learning skills and speed. |
| Converging working cultures | The joint development of a set of working practices and procedures to level out differences in working style/culture. |
| Individual excellence | Both partners are strong and have something of value to contribute to the relationship. Their motives for entering into the relationship are positive (to pursue future opportunities), not negative (to mask weaknesses or escape a difficult situation). |
| Importance | The relationship fits major strategic objectives of partners so they want to make it work. Partners have long-term goals in which the relationship plays a key role. |
| Interdependence | The partners need each other. They have complementary assets and skills. Neither can accomplish alone what they both can together. |
| Investment | The partners invest in each other (e.g., equity swaps or mutual board service) to demonstrate their respective stakes in the relationship and each other. |
| Information | Communication is reasonably open. Partners share information required to make the relationship work, including their objectives/goals, technical data/knowledge of conflicts, |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| | trouble spots or changing situations. |
| Integration | The partners develop linkages and shared ways of operation so they can work together smoothly. |
| Institutionalization | The relationship is given a formal status, with clear responsibilities and decision-making processes. |
| Integrity | Partners behave toward each other in honorable ways that enhance mutual trust without abusing the information they gain, nor undermining each other. |

Figure 5: Factors for successful partnerships based on Samii et al. (2002) and Kanter (1994)

(Jamali and Keshishian 2009: 280)

Mohr and Spekman (1994) came up with similar results about what constitutes successful partnerships as mentioned in Figure 5. First, they view commitment as one of the most important factors; a high level of commitment can help to get over temporary problems between the partners, thus it is seen as success factor for long-term partnerships. Second, the coordination of the actions made to achieve the set objectives is also vital for getting the most out of a partnership (Mohr and Spekman 1994). This aspect can be found under ‘alignment of cooperation working capability’, ‘converging working cultures’, ‘integration’, and ‘integrity’ in Figure 5 as all of these points deal with the coordination of abilities and the direction of collaborating. Third, the importance of an effective communication, in qualitative and in quantitative terms, is also highlighted by both Jamali and Keshishian (2009) as well as by Mohr and Spekman (1994); this also applies to the factor of interdependence, i.e. that one partner is dependent on another, and vice versa, and that the goal can only be achieved in its most ideal peculiarity when all partners work together wisely (Jamali and Keshishian 2009; Mohr and Spekman 1994).

3.3.1 Types of partnerships and interorganizational relationships

Austin (2009) noted in her study about strategic alliances between NPOs and businesses that such cross-sector partnerships are special in a way that the two sides involved tend to be quite different in their approaches, organizational cultures, competencies, structures and some other aspects – what is only logical since they come from different backgrounds. This is particularly applicable for the partnerships of ÖSH where the companies basically come from several industries other than sports, and are differently constituted in their organizational structure.

3.3.1.1 Collaboration Continuum by James Austin

By examining different approaches, Austin (2009) developed the concept called ‘Collaboration Continuum’ that classifies relationships between companies and NPOs, but it can also be applied to other forms of organizations (Clements 2014). The reason for calling this concept a ‘continuum’, i.e. in the meaning of a continuous process, is that he considers partnerships and other relationships to be developing over time (Austin 2000). The Collaboration Continuum involves three stages a relationship may go through, namely the philanthropic, the transactional, and the integrative stage. All these levels are mainly classified based on the interaction between the partners involved in the relationship (Austin 2009).

The philanthropic stage

This first stage of the Collaboration Continuum is characterized by a rather low level of engagement. In simplified terms, one partner donates respectively gives something to the partnering organization – and that is mainly it; apart from the obligatory acknowledgment by the receiver. This leads to an asymmetrical relationship with a one-sided flow of resources. Still, there are mutual benefits for both parties, namely a successful fundraising for the organization, and an enhanced reputation from being a partner of the organization for the donating company (Austin 2009; Clements 2014). Although this approach seems to be quite arbitrary and driven by good-will of a donor who believes in the respective project, there might still be some underlying strategy behind the donor’s engagement. If so, the philanthropy is referred to as ‘strategic philanthropy’ (Clements 2014). According to Lakin and Scheubel (2010), and Xueming (2005), strategic philanthropy is about orienting charitable donations to a cause that fits to the company and its mission; thereby, the responsible always keep in mind the reputation and additional value resulting from this engagement. Thus, strategic philanthropy targets more than just being benevolent (Clements 2014; Lakin and Scheubel 2010; Xueming 2005).

Transactional stage

Compared to the philanthropic level, the relationships at the transactional stage are more symmetrical and balanced; there, indeed, is an actual exchange between the partners, for instance of knowledge and expertise, and more activity is involved. This leads to a higher fit among the parties, and the relationship thereby becomes more complex (Austin 2009;

Clements 2014). Sponsorship and cause-related marketing are typical examples for relationships of transactional nature (Clements 2014). Especially the case of cause-related marketing really expects a reward for its investment, and consequently fundamentally differs from philanthropy (Irwin et al. 2010). Since these are extraordinary popular activities at the moment, the transactional approach represents the fastest growing type for now (Austin 2009).

Integrative stage

The integrative stage of a relationship is characterized by intensity and congruence; intensity in a sense that the interaction among the partners becomes more intensive and the activities more full-scale; congruence refers to the values, missions, and strategies of the parties involved in the relationship that become more aligned, or integrated to come back to the denotation of this stage (Austin 2009; Clements 2014). Another pillar of the integrative stage is collaboration. This leads back to the intensity, since the collaboration between the partners intensifies at this level, and to the congruence what is a prerequisite for any collaboration that the collaborators are congruent with each other’s decisions and actions. In a relationship at the integrative stage, partnering means addressing a certain issue in a highly collaborative way (Austin 2009; Clements 2014; Seitanidi and Ryan 2007). Through collaboration, organizations and companies are able to jointly create value that is useful to everyone and to achieve missions together (Austin and Seitanidi 2012; Clements 2014). Eventually, such a relationship resembles a joint venture organization respectively the relationship becomes institutionalized (Austin 2009).

Figure 6 illustrates this framework by Austin (2009):

| Relationship stage | Philanthropic | Transactional | Integrative |
|------------------------|--|---------------|-------------|
| Level of engagement | Low → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | High |
| Importance to mission | Peripheral → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Strategic |
| Magnitude of resources | Small → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Big |
| Scope of activities | Narrow → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Broad |
| Interaction level | Infrequent → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Intensive |
| Managerial complexity | Simple → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Complex |
| Strategic value | Modest → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → | | Major |

Figure 6: Stages of the Collaboration Continuum by Austin

(Austin 2009: 35)

The following table (Figure 7) gives an overview about partnership characteristics in the various stages of the Collaboration Continuum:

| | Philanthropic | Transactional | Integrative |
|--|---|---|---|
| Collaboration mindset (“ <i>Do the partners operate at arm’s length or arm in arm?</i> ”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratefulness and charity syndromes • Minimal collaboration in defining activities • Separateness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering mindset • Increased understanding and trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘We’ mentality in place of ‘us versus them’ |
| Strategic alignment (“ <i>How well does the collaboration fit the partners’ missions, strategies, and values?</i> ”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal fit required beyond a shared interest in a particular issue area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlap in mission and values • Shared visioning at top of organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad scope of activities of strategic significance • Relationship as strategic tool • High mission mesh • Shared values |
| Collaboration value (“ <i>Are the partners’ resources being mobilized so as to generate as much value as possible?</i> ”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic resource transfer • Unequal exchange of resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core competency exchange • More equal exchange of resources • Projects of limited scope and risk that demonstrate success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects identified and developed at all levels in the organization, with leadership support • Joint benefit creation • Need for value renewal • Shared-equity investments for mutual ‘return’ |
| Relationship management (“ <i>Is the partnership a minimally managed collaboration? Is responsibility for the relationship an assigned duty?</i> ”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate contact person usually in community affairs or foundation; nonprofit contact person usually in development • Corporate personnel have minimal personal connection to cause • Project progress typically communicated via written status • Minimal performance expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded personal relationships throughout the organizations • Strong personal connection at leadership level • Emerging infrastructure, including relationship managers and communication channels • Explicit performance expectations • Informal learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded opportunities for direct employee involvement in relationship • Deep personal relationships across organizations • Culture of each organization influenced by the other • Partner relationship managers • Organizational integration in execution, including shared resources • Incentive systems to encourage partnerships |

Figure 7: Partnership characteristics in the Collaboration Continuum

(Austin 2009: 36-38)

It is obvious from the explanation above, that “as the relationship moves from stage to stage, the level of engagement of the two partners moves from low to high” (Austin 2009: 34). Nevertheless, a progression does not always have to move higher; it can also take one step down to a lower stage, for whatever reason (Austin 2009). The case of ÖSH leaves to implement all three stages since they give the potential partners the opportunity to choose how engaged they want to be.

3.3.1.2 Partnership matrix

Apart from Austin’s Collaboration Continuum, Darian Rodriguez Heyman (2011) developed a matrix that displays different types of partnerships which NPOs can form. Based on the examination of commitment and permanence, it ranges from rather pure collaboration to strategic alliance through to corporate integration (Heyman 2011). Figure 8 illustrates this concept:

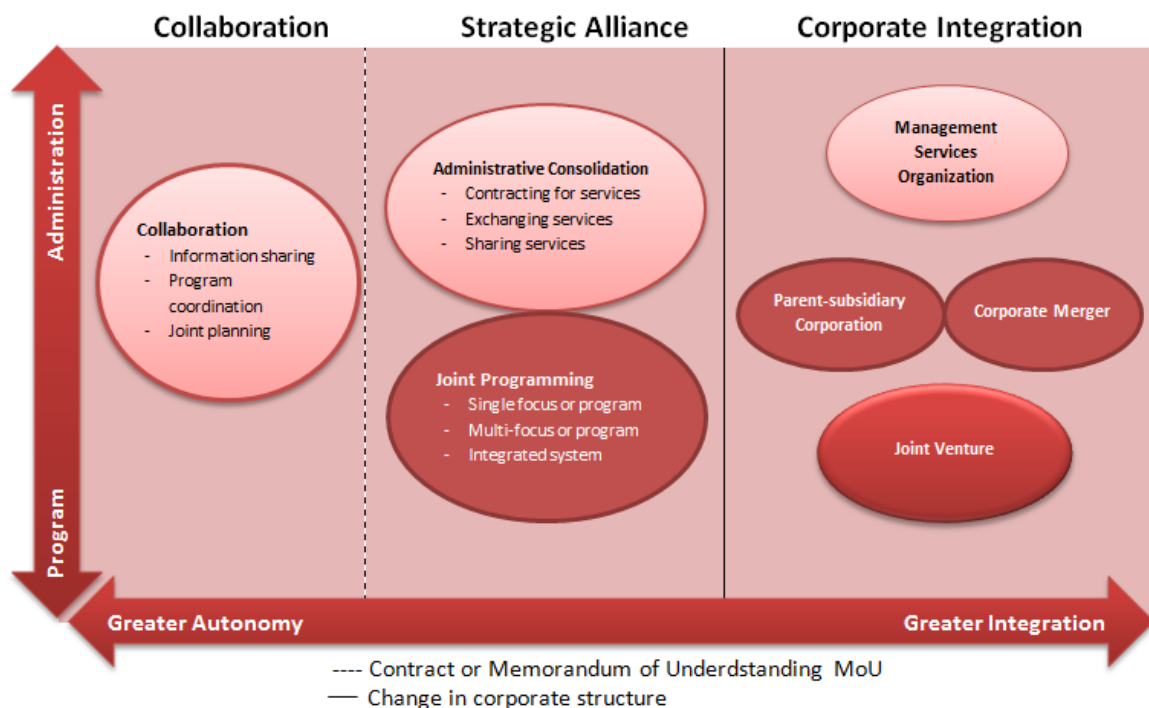


Figure 8: Partnership matrix by Darian Rodriguez Heyman

(Heyman 2011: 78)

To start on the left side, collaboration is characterized by a very low level of integration, but the collaborators enjoy a high degree of autonomy. This involves that collaborations are easy to form, but just as easy to terminate, and therefore do not need any formal agreement (Heyman 2011). When such collaboration develops towards more commitment, it turns into a ‘strategic alliance’ which is found in the middle of Heyman’s partnership matrix. A strategic alliance usually requires a Memorandum of Understanding or any other contract that seals the partnership. Administrative consolidation hereby means among others that one partner supports the other in certain services such as accounting or other administrative work. The second type here, joint programming, appears for instance “when one organization receives a foundation grant and then subcontracts pieces of the work to other organizations” (Heyman 2011: 79). The main characteristic of a strategic alliance is that the partners commit themselves to work together within certain scopes, but apart from that operate independently (Heyman 2011). At the very right side of the partnership matrix Heyman (2011) placed four types of corporate integration, namely management services organizations, parent-subsidiary corporations, corporate merger, and joint ventures. The former means that the administrative consolidation from the strategic alliance is moved to a separate entity, but still under the control of all partners involved. In parent-subsidiary corporations, one organization takes over the control over another but still enables it to remain a separate organization; in contrast to this, in a full merger the two or several organizations coalesce to one organization. All of those four forms have in common that they are very much integrated in nature, with management service organizations being the most administrative-shaped type, and the joint venture as partnership characterized by programming (Heyman 2011).

In the specific field of sport, partnerships can either be exclusive, semi-exclusive or non-exclusive:

- An exclusive partnership exists when a company is the one and only official partner of a certain organization or project;
- In a semi-exclusive partnership, a company is assured that no other company from the same branch is cooperating with the organization, i.e. the partner enjoys exclusiveness in its respective business area;
- An organization that engages non-exclusive partnerships is not limited to a certain quantity or quality of organizations it can partner with (Stier and Schneider 1999).

Semi-exclusive and non-exclusive partnership models enable an organization to contract with more than one company. In this case, Austin (2009) suggests viewing the partnership management as ‘collaboration portfolio’ in order to be able to manage them properly. This includes an initial analysis of the existing partnerships, for instance regarding their respective positions in the Collaboration Continuum, their importance for the organization, or their expectations from the partnership. Subsequently, this portfolio needs to be carefully and rationally managed in order to secure a vital mix of partnership forms that creates benefits for all parties involved (Austin 2009). Having multiple partnerships at once creates network what again can be advantageous for those included in it because such a network connects the various stakeholders and provides integral opportunities (Babiak 2007).

3.3.2 Need for partnerships

Some decades ago, the formation of partnerships was a pure voluntary strategy to gain a competitive advantage or to reach an objective more easily. This recently changed to partnerships being a “necessity for prosperity and survival” (Bolton et al. 2008: 101); this is what Bolton et al. (2008) denote as ‘partnership imperative’. There have been lots of studies about partnerships in Canadian sports, for example by Babiak (2003; 2007), MacPherson (2005), Mills (1998), the Sport Matters Group (2011), and Vail (1994). Katherine Babiak (2007) and Dennis Mills (1998) thereof see partnerships even as one of the main factors apart from leadership and accountability that will decide about the future of sports in Canada. This is caused by a number of factors that are quite different in nature. One is that the degree of government funding has been significantly reduced for sports organizations. This forced sports organizations and federations to look for new and alternative sources for revenue – and most of them made the find in building partnerships, especially with corporations from the private or the public sector (Babiak 2007; Doherty and Murray 2007). With this cut in governmental funding, sports organizations lost their stable position and consequently had to leave their comfort zones and become proactive (MacPherson 2005). However, Doherty and Murray (2007) see that at the same time the engagement of corporations regarding partnerships and sponsorships with sports entities has been increasing – and this might also be a reason for sports organizations to aim for partnerships since they sniffed this chance for additional money.

3.3.3 Motives and motivations for partnering

Even if they are not exposed to external factors that force them into partnerships, organizations increasingly proactively form partnerships on a voluntary basis because they see promising opportunities therein. These include, among others, “accessing or creating new markets; anticipating changes in social, political, and technological environments; sharing financial risk; or taking advantage of knowledge, skills, and expertise that are not available internally” (Babiak 2007: 338f.). Added to this, organizations prospectively see chances to reduce uncertainty when they work together with other organizations and companies (Babiak 2007; Child and Faulkner 1998; Kanter 1994; Van de Ven 1976).

Before even forming any partnership, the prospective partners need to think about one thing: Why do I want to partner? This means that one should be clear about one’s own motivation for partnering (Heyman 2011), and this applies to both the NPO and the giving company. This knowledge is not only essential for one’s own sake, but it is especially of importance for the organization that receives the donations respectively that seeks for partnerships due to financial reasons. This is because with this knowledge about the donor motivations, the organization can specifically address the needs and expectations and ideally make the partnership acquisition more successful (Ko et al. 2014; Pope et al. 2009). The Canadian ‘Sport Matters Group’, a task group that deals with the development and advancement of sport and other current issues in the sports system in Canada, pleads that “we need a better understanding of what businesses need and want from us if we’re going to ask them to do more, in the same way that we need to understand individual giving better” (Sports Matters Group 2011: 91).

NPOs’ motivation for entering partnerships mainly lies in the need for additional monies as explained in the previous section. On the company’s side, the motivation is triggered by the chance for a boost in the company’s reputation and legitimacy by supporting a social mission (Jamali and Keshishian 2009). Similar results were found by Katherine M. Babiak (2007) in her research about the partnerships of a Canadian Sports Center; she also mentions legitimacy and reciprocity were the main drivers for companies for forming partnerships with an NPO.

Ko et al. (2014) developed a ‘model of athletic donor motivation’ that particularly dealt with the question why people give to athletic programs. Based on an extensive literature review, they identified eight dimensions of donor motivation:

- 1) Philanthropy

- i.e. the donor does not directly benefit from the partnership, but the receiver does (Austin 2009); a donor with a philanthropic motivation does so for instance in order to feel good or to contribute to make a positive difference;
- 2) Vicarious achievement
 - i.e. the donor feels a sense of success when the organization has success, or as Ko et al. express it the donor enjoys “basking in reflected glory” (2014: 527);
- 3) Commitment
 - i.e. the donor gives to the organization because of personal feelings that connect him to the organization or to a specific program;
- 4) Affiliation
 - i.e. the donor aims for integration in a certain sphere or group by donating money;
- 5) Socialization
 - i.e. the donor seeks to associate, socialize and interact with other donors or stakeholders;
- 6) Public recognition
 - i.e. the donor expects public awareness and enhanced attention from partnering with the organization;
- 7) Tangible benefits
 - i.e. the donor expects some specific rewards from his commitment; Ko et al. (2014) hereby mention better seats at events or reserved parking lots as examples for those tangible benefits;
- 8) Power
 - i.e. the donor aims for influence on decisions about the organization’s performance and wants to get involved in programmatic decisions (Ko et al. 2014; Roberts and Weight 2013).

Apart from these motives and motivations, Tsotsou (1998) stresses the fact that those motivations can also stem from an organization’s respectively a donor’s values and therefore refers to Bakal who states that “our values, beliefs, interests, hopes, fears, and other feelings and habits not only motivate us to give but also determine to which causes we give” (1979: 43). Additionally, she mentions that companies might donate just for practical reasons such as tax benefits or special offers at sports events (Tsotsou 1998).

Questioning the motivations of the companies is of particular interest for the present case since the aim is to get an answer on the question why they actually decided to enter the partnership; thus, their motivations can prospectively be used to address potential partner

companies more effectively. The motivations mentioned herein are likely to give an indication for the actual motives of the partners of ÖSH respectively can be categorized in one of the dimensions explained.

3.3.4 Expectations and objectives of partnering

Generally, Jamali and Keshishian (2009) noted that there are rather low expectations from partnerships from the companies' side. Austin (2009) came to the same result in his study about strategic alliances between businesses and NPOs and therefore calls such relations "low-level engagements" (Austin 2009: 22), but stresses that they nevertheless can be of longevity and significance for both sides. Another general assumption based on the existing literature is that both organizations as well as companies enter partnerships with positive expectations. In this regard, Kanter proposed that "partnerships are initially romantic... their formation rests on hopes and dreams – what might be possible if certain opportunities are pursued" (1990: 99).

Katherine M. Babiak (2007) found that the most common objective of partnering is the establishment and maintenance of an organization's or a company's status and position within a network and its influence but also to gain or keep upright the access to required resources.

Knowing about what the partners expect from the partnership will be an asset for ÖSH in the future because on the one hand it can more effectively work on fulfilling those expectations and keep them in line as partner, and on the other hand it again enables it to effectively approach potential partners when you specifically address them with what they are likely to expect.

3.3.5 Benefits of partnering

Participants in the study of Babiak (2007) stated that it was important for them that the benefits were mutual, and that all parties involved usefully contribute to the partnership in order to establish synergies. Still, they stress that those contributions do not need to be of equal quantity or quality, but it needs to be beneficial (Babiak 2007).

For NPOs, these benefits include first and foremost the deployment of financial or in-kind resources, but also support with knowledge, technology, access to certain resources, improved reputation and awareness, and new opportunities. For its partners from the

company side, the benefits comprise an enhancement of the image of the company connected to increased customer loyalty, higher motivation of the employees, higher market share, development of skills and transfer knowledge as well as an establishment or strengthening of the company's values and culture (Austin 2009; Dowling et al. 2013). These more or less direct benefits can of course entail countless other positive effects (Clements 2014); just to exemplify this, an enhanced image of a company can lead to increased sales, more commissions etc.

As Austin highlights, the greatest benefits develop by 'joint value creation', what means that "the greatest value is generated when partners combine their capabilities synergistically, rather than simply transfer or exchange resources" (2009: 104).

What has not been mentioned yet here is the benefit of learning through the partnership, a benefit that can be observed during the evaluation phase of a partnership. Jamali and Keshishian (2009) hereby state that for instance one NPO benefitted in logistical terms from the partnership, whereas the companies' learning mainly focused on CSR-related fields such as about the importance of CSR for their success or about new ways of CSR.

Some of those benefits mentioned in the literature are likely to be found among the motives and motivations that made the partners entering the partnership. The theory by Austin (2009), Clements (2014), and Dowling et al. (2013) is very applicable to the present case of ÖSH, because knowing in what way the partnering companies benefit beyond the offerings provided in the partnership packages gives it the ability to effectively promote these benefits to the prospective partners.

3.3.6 Continuation of partnerships

Apart from institutionalizing a partnership, maintaining it in such a way that it becomes a sustainable one is one of the highly-ranked goals of partnership formation. This also applies to ÖSH which will use the findings of this present study exactly for this purpose. As mentioned earlier, it takes a lot more effort to establish new relationships than to maintain the existing ones. Thus, every organization should aim for sustainability regarding their partnerships (Heyman 2011). Still, institutionalization is a prerequisite for sustainability of partnerships (Austin 2009). The reason for referring to sustainability here is that a sustainable partnership is one that has been continuing over a longer period of time. Companies which decide to continue a partnership do so for certain reasons. According to Doherty and Murray (2007), one prerequisite for extending a partnership is

that the organization which receives the money or other support sticks to its promises that it gave to the company that gives. Jamali and Keshishian (2009) hereby add that partnerships of frequent continuation are characterized by efficiency and balanced outcomes and exchange. As it is only logical, the more successful a partnership is, the more probable it is to be continued in the future. Factors for successful partnerships are high commitment, trust, and interdependence as well as a functioning interaction process among the parties (Mohr and Spekman 1994). Consequently, these are all aspects that play a role when it comes to extending a partnership.

3.3.7 Communication and interaction in partnerships

As mentioned in the previous chapter, effective communication and interaction are essential for successful partnerships. Even more, without communication, the formation of any partnership is simply impossible; it needs effective communication among the partners as well as between an organization and its external stakeholders since there is an unconditional need for exchanging information (Austin 2009; Mohr and Spekman 1994). Effective communication does not only mean being available for your partners, it also requires an actual communication strategy that ensures meaningful, relevant, and timely interaction for both the internal and the external level (Austin 2009). The first formal communication apart from the initial and mostly informal contacting is the agreed contract or other agreement between the partners. This makes sure that the partners have the same knowledge and that there is clarity among them. In contrast, informal communication can be described as random interaction, for instance in the form of emails and phone calls. However, in the case of NPOs in sports, this informal communication exhibits to be more important than the formal one because such organizations are generally run on a more informal basis (Kikulis 2000; Mohr and Spekman 1994; Shaw and Allen 2006). Although it is advised to keep the communication on a frequent level, Jamali and Keshishian (2009) admit that their study revealed that this interaction is relatively infrequent but intense during the initiation phase and when it comes to specific projects such as events. It is to say that in general, the more effective the communication, the more vivid is the partnership. Furthermore, every relationship is built on trust – and trust in turn is established by communication and interaction (Austin 2009). The importance of communication is particularly noticeable when difficulties or interorganizational differences occur (Austin 2009). Poor communication is likely to lead to tensions among

the partners and then those difficulties are likely to cause a break-up of the cooperation (Morgan et al. 2014).

3.3.7.1 Personal relations in partnerships

“It’s not about the money – it’s about building the relationship” (Heyman 2011: 295). This statement by Darian Rodriguez Heyman stresses the importance of personal relations in partnership working. Just as mentioned under 3.3, people are the most vital contributor to the functioning of partnerships (Austin 2009) – and in partnerships, one should view one’s partners as friends (Heyman 2011). According to an estimation, it takes seven times more effort and money to acquire a new partner than to keep an existing one in line (Heyman 2011). Another principle that highlights the importance of personal relations in partnerships is that “people give to people” (Heyman 2011: 316); thus, officers who are responsible for managing partnerships in companies preferably have a ‘human’ counterpart in the organization they support. Austin even dares to say that “personal relationships are the glue that binds the organizations together” (2009: 55) and simultaneously sees it as foundation for strong alliances (Austin 2009). Referring back to chapter 3.3.6, and the explanation about duration and sustainability of partnerships, effective personal relations is one of the main foundations for sustainable partnerships as it creates good chemistry among the partners (Austin 2009). Certainly, personal relations, especially if they are overly close, involve some degree of danger. This might be particularly the case when there are differences of opinion or of any other kind that might influence the interpersonal level (Babiak 2007). Furthermore, one interviewee in the study about challenges in partnership working in sports by Mackintosh (2011) states that constant changes in the personnel responsible for managing the partnerships can snappily ruin what has been established regarding interpersonal and interorganizational relationship over years. What he wants to say is that if the partnership manager in one company or organization who has been the relied contact person for the partners for instance gets fired, a considerable amount of trust and knowledge might leave with him.

Making a short side leap to fundraising, also in this process personal relations play a crucial role because people need to get motivated to donate, thus it needs someone who acts as motivator for this purpose, and inspires and persuades people – and this is most successful when there is a trustworthy relationship between the fundraiser and the donor (Stier and Schneider 1999).

4.0 Method

The fourth chapter will explain how the research was done, i.e. the methodological choices will be explained and the process of data collection will be elaborated. The design of the interviews and how they were analyzed will be described.

4.1 Research design

Qualitative research methods were identified as the most useful technique to study opinions and attitudes as the words from the interviews serve as the ‘resource’ for the research. The data collection is characterized by a deductive approach, what means that the theory serves as foundation and creates expectations regarding what the empirical findings may look like; in other words, by using a deductive approach, the existing literature might give an indication regarding the interviewees’ answers and attitudes (Jacobsen 2013; Veal and Darcy 2014). Since only a fraction of the partner companies of ÖSH participated in the research, the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population. Nevertheless, they can give an indication regarding the motivations and expectations companies have when they decide to support a sports organization. The fact that only three companies are included in the sample again proves the decision to use a qualitative method as this approach is used in order to collect data exactly from a limited amount of samples, but instead explores them in more detail. Furthermore, the interviewees are able to provide inside information from their expert perspective and are therefore ideally suited for telling about their motivations and expectations as well as their experiences of collaborating with the organization (Veal and Darcy 2014).

4.2 Data collection

In order to give the study a more holistic appeal, the author together with ÖSH made the decision to also interview a former partner of the organization who recently quitted the partnership and use his perspective to enrich the study with this slightly different perspective, for instance in order to find out about any motivations and reasons for this termination of contract.

For collecting the data, interviews with partners of ÖSH were conducted. An actual selection of interviewees was not necessary because only a few companies were judged as approachable for the participation in the thesis project beforehand by the responsible

employees of ÖSH. The latter also did the initial contacting about the prospective inquiry by the author in order to firstly request their willingness to contribute to the research project. Contact details to the willing partners were then provided by the responsible employee from the organization. Those were subsequently contacted telephonically respectively via email providing them with the necessary information about the thesis project, and the intention of it, and dates for the execution of the interview were arranged. One of the potential interviewees had to reject the willingness to participate after having looked at the interview questions sent beforehand as they could not be answered in an appropriate way. Two companies requested did not reply to the inquiry in time. Since all of the participants asked for sending the set of questions beforehand, this request was followed, also for the reason that they can prepare for the interviews and give elaborated answers.

The order of interviews was chosen according to the availability of the interviewees; no other criteria were taken into consideration here.

Each interview was done via phone, what appeared to be the easiest and most effective way for both the author as well as the interviewees. The conversation was recorded with the recording function and a call record application installed on the interviewer's phone. All interviewees were initially asked to give consent for recording the conversation; all of them agreed with the recording. Furthermore, they got wised up about the fact that all the information given during the interview will be used only for the purpose of this present research. Furthermore, they were informed about that in case a particular answer will be highlighted and cited in the thesis, their respective names and companies will not be mentioned by name. However, it is still very likely that the examples mentioned by the interviewees can be decisively indicative of the respective company. Following the advice by Veal and Darcy (2014), and following the request of the interviewees, the statements of the latter are not labelled with their real names.

The duration of each interview was estimated with about 30 minutes; ultimately, the actual length of the interviews ranged from 12 minutes to 20 minutes.

4.2.1 Interview guideline and process

The interviews itself were set-up in a structured format with semi-structured elements, i.e. a set of questions was prepared beforehand, and supplementary questions were asked in case it needed a follow up on an answer. The prescribed set of questions consisted of 13

questions each for the prevailing partners, and 14 questions for the former partner who recently terminated the collaboration with ÖSH. The interview consisted entirely of open questions; therefore no tri-test was necessary.

Each interview started with introductory questions about the timely duration of the partnership between the respective company and ÖSH, if the respective company additionally partners with other sports organizations, teams, or athletes, and which department handles the administration of the partnership. This was done in order to give the interviewee the time to get used to the interview situation and composed in his conversational behavior.

The main questions were synthesized from the literature on motives and motivations for forming partnerships, especially Babiak (2007), Jamali and Keshishian (2009), Ko et al. (2014), and Tsotsou (1998); on expectations and objectives from partnerships, hereby especially from Austin (2009) and again Babiak (2007), whereby the latter also served as foundation for the questions regarding potential benefits of the partnership; furthermore the papers from Babiak and Wolfe (2009), Bason and Anagnostopoulos (2015), and Stier and Schneider (1999) did so for the questions regarding marketing; the questions dealing with communication and interaction among the partners and the factors leading to a continuation of the partnership are synthesized from the literature by Austin (2009), Doherty and Murray (2007), Heyman (2011), and Mohr and Spekman (1994); the question focusing on sports as tool for partnership working is primarily based on the papers by Smith and Westerbeek (2007), Stier and Schneider (1999), and Waters (2013).

After each the interview was conducted, the tape-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Since the language used in the interviews was German, the questions and answers were finally translated to English in order to provide substantial text for the then followed content analysis. The version used for the analysis was the English one due to compliance reasons.

4.2.2 Analysis of data

After gathering the data through interviews with the responsible person in the partnering company, the next step then was to analyze the interviews for emergent themes, i.e. topics that frequently arose throughout all interviews (Veal and Darcy 2014), but also for outstanding statements that have a high relevancy for the study.

In addition, the data gathered underwent a semantic analysis, i.e. the examination of a text regarding the occurrence of certain words and/or phrases in a specified text (Sweeney and Coughlan 2008), just like Bason and Anagnostopoulos (2015) did in their study on companies' CSR programs through sports. Each interview in its entirety was analyzed regarding the overall use of words, whether the interviewees talked positively or negatively about the partnership with ÖSH. A coding technique where emergent themes, keywords, and tags were highlighted was used; more precisely, the use of fluorescent markers of different colors helped to accentuate different aspects; for instance, green color was used to highlight positive aspects mentioned by the interviewee, whereas red was used for negative ones.

4.3 Limitations

Even though the present study delivers an important contribution to the understanding of motivations and expectations of partnership formation in sports, there are still some limitations that need to be considered. First and foremost, the results only display the opinions and attitudes of three companies, i.e. less than ten percent of the partners of ÖSH. This little sample size is the main limitation of this study what is mainly due to the time span of the thesis and some delays in the correspondences. For more significant and expressive results it requires more interviews with partnering companies. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in German since this served as the joint language for both the author and the interviewees. The limiting spot hereby is that although the questions and answers were consciously translated into English, this was only done by the author, and was not undertaken any further examination or data triangulation. Still, conducting the interviews in German and subsequently translating them was the better choice than conducting it in English since the interviewees now could speak in their mother tongue and clearly express their opinion without any language barriers.

5.0 Findings

In the following chapter, the findings based on the interviews conducted with the companies' executives will be displayed. The findings are divided into six parts, namely general attitudes towards the partnership, motivations, expectations, benefits, continuation of the partnership, and interaction and communication.

5.1 General attitudes towards the partnership

First and foremost, it is to state that all of the interviewees talked extremely positive about ÖSH as such; this even applied to the former partner who decided to end the collaboration by the end of last year. Aspects emphasized in this regard, especially in comparison to partnerships with sports teams, and individual athletes, were that

“(...) it is much easier from our perspective to cooperate with a sports organization because then you only appear when there is an actual success, when there is a success story to report on” (partner1).

The interviewees consistently mentioned the positive image and reputation of ÖSH. One interviewee stated that if he was asked to recommend entering a partnership with the organization, he would definitely do so. Also the partnership and collaborative operations were seen as very positive; partner2 mentioned the attractive offerings to the partners such as the yearly Sporthilfe calendar and the possibility to use the athletes supported by the organization for corporate activities. Another positive aspect stemming from partnering with ÖSH is that

“(...) the joint use of composite logos or visuals enables a joint execution and related presentation that leads to positively charged emotions by the observer” (partner1).

The only negative aspect mentioned was that there were some failures in the public representation what was not in accordance with the contractual agreements.

With regard to the marketing activities, all current partners interviewed for this present study, indeed, see the partnership as marketing instrument, but primarily to promote the partnership as such, or to push ÖSH in its operations; thus, it is more or less a B2B issue for the companies including separate marketing activities. For instance, one partner explained that they collaborated through social media and thereby mutually promoted each other's Facebook pages and homepages.

5.2 Motivations

The motivations by the partners were basically twofold: On the one hand, the companies viewed the partnership as ideal vehicle to get access to new markets, especially to increase their awareness on the Austrian market, and to develop further cooperations; and on the other hand, they simply viewed the partnership as something that fits to their corporate strategy and gives an additional asset to the company:

“(...) we did not want to be stuck with our new direction necessarily only in the motorsport drawer. That is why we decided to try to reach a broader audience, not only the one that is affine to motorsport” (partner2).

“This youth sports award somehow suited us, what is due to an attitude, due to the CSR topic which we have here at (name of company), namely that kids and youths have to grow up healthy” (former partner).

One partner additionally indicated to have altruistic, and in some way patriotic motives:

“(...) we hold the belief that with our partnership we can contribute to subsequent successes and to the realization of athletes' dreams” (partner1).

Furthermore, no partner has respectively had intentions for supporting ÖSH just because of the prospective of benefiting from a special event or success. For all of them, the staging of Olympic Games during their contract periods or any other outstanding events was not crucial for the decision to enter a partnership with ÖSH.

5.3 Expectations

There are basically two pillars mentioned by the partnering companies when asked about their initial expectations when they decided to enter a partnership with ÖSH: On the one hand, they expected to gain access to the sport, and especially to the athletes supported by the organization; and on the other hand, they expected a ‘push’ for their company, either by *“an actual transfer of awareness from a ‘foreign’ company or brand like (name of company) through to a local identity”* (partner1), or by becoming more attractive to customers and business partners what in turn again contributes to an increase in awareness, visibility, and popularity.

All the expectations the partners interviewed for this study had have been met so far. As already shortly introduced, only the former partner admitted that certain expectations *“regarding the public representation were not always completely met, that did not work the way we actually agreed on it contractually”* (former partner). At the same time, however, this interviewee also mentioned that the concerning company did not have specific expectations when they entered the partnership. This was due to the reason that the project was something completely new and they consequently had a rather explorative approach to it.

5.4 Benefits

The benefits gained from the partnership with ÖSH mainly revolve around networking effects the partners have merits from. This emerges in various forms; partner1, for instance, mentioned that the right to jointly use the composite logos and to represent itself together with ÖSH puts the company in a positive light. Another aspect in this regard is that the partners among themselves establish a network and B2B relations where they can benefit from each other. Partner2 hereby mentioned the annual Sporthilfe gala night as great incentive event for this networking, but especially highlights the introduction of special networking events such as dinners and hiking days where all CEOs of the presenting partners are invited.

One partner answered the question about any benefits arising from the partnership by telling a specific example which serves as best-case example for how companies can ideally benefit from it:

“I think it is two years ago when a certain (name of athlete) from alpine skiing, a young woman, was nominated for the youth sports award, and then really got awarded as prize winner, but was not there on site, but there was a video installation from her. On that evening (...) I intentionally took a seat at the table where her mum respectively her mum’s life partner sat, and talked to them – and if you take a close look now, then (name of athlete) presents (name of company) on her helmet. So much for networking effects in this regard; hereby we, indeed, made a considerable progress. We had been targeting this young lady for a long time before, and on site there we accomplished the first steps” (former partner).

Another aspect mentioned is brand identification and reputation transfer. Partner1 stated that the company wants to increase the Austrians' awareness of it and make them identifying with it. This goal was achieved through that partnership:

“(...) a partnership with such a typical red-white-red [Austrian National colors], an Austrian organization as the Austrian Sports Funding Organization is one suits perfectly here. (...) we provide an asset to the Austrian society for identifying with us because as Austrian one willingly identifies with Austrian successes in sports” (partner1).

5.5 Continuation of the partnership

Asked about what it takes to extend the contract beyond the current period, the interviewees stated that this is primarily dependent on monetary reasons:

“This is always a budget issue because these marketing budgets (...) always depend on the economic success where the marketing budget is distributed. When we are economically successful, then we have enough marketing budget on hand, that is unfortunately how it works, and then nothing blocks this, and there is no reason to terminate this partnership with the Austrian Sports Funding Organization” (partner2).

Subsequently, these budget reasons are also a determinant for any termination of the contract, as indicated by the former partner:

“(...) among others as it is a common occurrence one is constrained to certain economies. Then one takes a close look at it, and receives a ‘save money there and there’. Then you look at certain projects which you conduct, where you have running contracts, where you do not have running contracts anymore, what you would like to do, what you can relinquish, and so on. In fact, it was due to budget reasons that we decided not to do it anymore” (former partner).

Apart from that, one partner stated that his company decides from year to year whether the partnership will be continued or not. For it, this implements a thorough evaluation of recent activities and the development of the partnership. Though, all of the interviewees basically had a positive attitude towards any extension of a partnership with ÖSH. Even the one partner who recently decided to quit the partnership can imagine re-entering into the collaboration with the organization.

5.6 Interaction and communication

The current partners stated that they communicate on a very frequent basis with ÖSH. The responses by the interviewees in this context were mostly corresponding as they told to interact at least twice a month respectively at least every 14 days on average with the organization. Furthermore, they also gave similar answers regarding the reasons for these interactions:

“(...) when it comes to certain activities, may it be events or TV occurrences or anything else, we again fine-tune more precisely beforehand. This is regarding any new things coming up during a project caused by certain needs from the one or the other party” (partner1).

“It is mainly due to organizational reasons. (...) when it is about big activities, so that we decide about what we do at the next Sporthilfe gala night, when it is about big investments. Here, I do not simply send an email but we get together and talk about it” (partner2).

In these cases, the frequency of any interactions increases situationally with the organization or respectively participation in joint events.

6.0 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the interviews will be discussed and analyzed; thus, it will be revealed whether the partnerships of ÖSH go hand in hand with the existing literature, or if the companies concerned have different approaches and experiences. The discussion will follow the structure used for the findings and is thus split into six sub-chapters about general attitudes toward the partnership, motivations, expectations, benefits, continuation of the partnership, and interaction and communication.

6.1 General attitudes towards the partnership

Overall, the interviewees displayed a satisfied impression and a positive attitude towards ÖSH as organization and the partnership with it. However, these positive aspects nevertheless did not seem to be far-fetched or superficial although the partners did not go very much into why these aspects are that positive. Additionally, none of the interviewees talked about any disadvantages arisen from the partnership.

According to the analysis of the wording used in the interviews, the companies do not view their linkage as sponsorship or pure donation but truly as ‘partnership’ [Partnerschaft], ‘collaboration’ [Zusammenarbeit], and ‘cooperation’ [Kooperation]. All of those terms implement a certain degree of mutuality, and that the companies do not simply give but also want to receive something in return. This is in alignment with what Babiak (2007) found in her study on a Canadian sports organization, namely that the partners aim for a mutually beneficial collaboration, no matter if the contribution are finally balanced. The following quote by partner1 exemplifies this:

“(...) we hold the belief that with our partnership we can contribute to subsequent successes and to the realization of athletes’ dreams. In turn, we provide an asset to the Austrian society for identifying with us because as Austrian one willingly identifies with Austrian successes in sports” (partner1).

What is somewhat surprising is that none of the interviewees mentioned that they use the partnership to enhance and improve their image by shining in the positive light of the organization or its athletes. However, this might occur in the future, because the partners interviewed relatively recently entered the partnership and there they used the partnership to actually establish awareness on the Austrian market for their brand or products.

The partnerships of the Austrian Sports Organization ÖSH, at least those examined in more detail in the present thesis, can be categorized in the integrative stage of Austin’s Collaboration Continuum due to the considerable level of intensity and congruence, what is an indicator for true ‘collaborations’; and this is exactly the term the interviewees used among others when talking about their linkage with the Austrian Sports Organization ÖSH.

As Austin (2009), Clementsen (2014), and Seitanidi and Ryan (2007) identified, partnering at the integrative stage means that a certain issue is addressed jointly. This supports the conclusion that partners of ÖSH have an integrative approach to the partnership since the issue of financing, and actually enabling sports for the athletes is jointly approached through exactly this collaboration. Furthermore, the relationship is very close and deep, and the execution of projects is done integratively by sharing resources.

Reflecting the findings from the interviews, and the background knowledge about ÖSH and its operations and activities, also the parameters from Figure 6 are in compliance with it since the level of engagement and interaction is, at least at times of events, high, both

attribute a strategic approach to the mission of the partnership, allocate a considerable amount of resources to the partnership; the activities encompass a broad variety ranging from joint events, B2B activities, rights to exert the partnership for marketing activations etc.; it requires complex managerial decisions to be made and no precipitous acting at such a stage; and finally, they see a major strategic value in the partnership with ÖSH what can be observed by the previous parameters showing a high dedication to the partnership. This discussion has two consequences, namely on the one hand it supports the findings by Austin (2009), and on the other hand, it again supports the conclusion that the partnerships of ÖSH can be classified as integrative.

Additionally, as stated in Figure 7, integrative partnerships are characterized by an active learning process. This can also be applied to the partnerships examined for the present study since partner2 highlighted the fact that ÖSH is very open for feedback and ideas from the companies; thus, the organization is eager to learn from its partners. The aspect of shared values is mentioned by the former partner who stated that youth sports and a healthy lifestyle fit to their corporate attitudes and can be reinforced by this partnership as ÖSH stands for the same. The only item that is really missing in this context of integrative relationships is the existence of a separate relationship manager; two of the three interviewees quoted the marketing department to be responsible for the administration and maintenance of such partnerships, the third one referred to him as country manager in collaboration with the marketing department to be the one who takes care about it.

In contrast, applying the partnership matrix by Heyman (2011) to the case of ÖSH and its partnerships, the partnerships can be placed at the very left end of it, thus be classified as collaborations, and definitely not as integrative. Because what Heyman views as integrative is already too interwoven; the parties rather fuse to one, what is definitely not indicated in the present case. There is neither administrative consolidation nor joint programming, but pure collaboration for sharing information, planning and coordinating actions and events together with each partner remaining an autonomous organization. However, it is to say that those partnerships are, indeed, based on contracts that define the details of the collaboration.

Referring to the success factors for partnerships identified by Jamali and Keshishian (2009), the dimension of resource dependency is definitely addressed. All three partners interviewed indicated that what they aim for – for instance, access to new markets, networking, and awareness – can only be achieved with the partnership with ÖSH. Nevertheless, the goals of both sides of the partnership remain individual and are an output

of the partnership and the overall program objectives. This aspect refers to the dimension of common goal symmetry which is also identified for the present case. The intensive and frequent communication between ÖSH and its partners is definitely a success factor also in the present case what goes hand in hand with the theory by Jamali and Keshishian. This circumstance of frequent and useful exchange of information simultaneously fulfills the information dimension brought forward in this context. Furthermore, it was identified that the companies have a very positive attitude towards the partnership and ÖSH as organization, and they clearly see a value in the partnership. Jamali and Keshishian call this ‘individual excellence’ where the motives are positive and the contributions are valuable for the parties. Importance is another pillar brought up by Jamali and Keshishian, characterized by the attitude that the partnership is important for the companies in order to achieve corporate goals. This definitely applies to the present case since the interviewees across the board mentioned corporate objectives to be met with the help of the partnership; consequently, the partnership is judged as significant by the parties what is truly a success factor of it. In a way, both parties of the partnership invest in each other; the companies obviously by monetary means, and ÖSH by providing an adequate access to markets, setting up events, providing them a valuable platform etc. Thus, the dimension of investment is also found in the present case of ÖSH and supports the theory by Jamali and Keshishian. The remaining dimensions – commitment symmetry, converging working cultures, alignment of cooperation working capability, converging working cultures, interdependence, integration, institutionalization, and integrity – did not emerge from the present examination.

6.2 Motivations

All partners indicated to have had specific motivations that let them decide to enter a partnership with ÖSH; consequently, all – probably unknowingly – followed the advice by Heyman (2011) that one should be clear about one’s own intention. Babiak’s (2007) finding about a case study on a Canadian sport NPO saying that companies are particularly attracted by the prospect of gaining access to new markets can also be applied to the present case since this aspect was also mentioned as motivation for entering the partnership with ÖSH. Additionally, the partners here also aimed to gain access to the sports branch and not only to new markets as such.

The motive of philanthropy plays a very minor and subordinate role, as it was mentioned only once and only as one part of this partner's motives. Referring to the model of athletic donor motivation by Ko et al. (2014), five out of the eight dimensions could be identified for the partners interviewed:

- commitment – e.g. *“I have a personal friendship with the new CEO, with Harald Bauer, and that turned out to be very good (...) myself, I am also not a ‘greenhorn’ in the sports scene as you say; I studied sports sciences, it is somehow in my blood; thus, we had very good conversations from the beginning”* (partner2);
- affiliation – e.g. *“(...) we provide an asset to the Austrian society for identifying with us”* (partner1);
- socialization – e.g. *“An example of the Sporthilfe gala night is that the partners naturally meet there, get together quickly even if there is not much time but one gets to know each other, you see a face, exchange contact data, and can get in contact later on if one wants to”* (partner2);
- public recognition – e.g. *“The Austrian Sports Funding Organization offers opportunities to be present in the media, to make use of that platform in order to strengthen our brand awareness”* (partner2), and *“There is an actual transfer of awareness from a ‘foreign’ company or brand like (name of company) through to a local identity”* (partner1);
- tangible benefits – e.g. *“What is interesting are those gold and silver packages where you can invite customers for example to bowling or golf”* (partner2).

The former partner stated that the partnership was in perfect alignment with the company's values and strategy to support a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, one can say that his motivation to enter the partnership was driven by his values and interests; the same was observable for partner2 who mentioned a personal relation to sports due to his educational background. This goes in line with the findings by Tsotsou (1998) and Bakal (1979) who believed exactly this, namely that such feelings and affiliations determine who to support. What was no motivation at all for none of the interviewed partners is the motivation of benefitting from a special event or success. For the organization this means that the concept of ‘special occasion fundraising’ established by Waters (2013) is not applicable to its partners. This can be exemplified by the statement of partner1 saying that

“(...) we always wanted to support the Austrian Sports Funding Organization in general.(...) It is not decisive for our partnership with the Austrian Sports Funding

Organization whether there are Olympic Games staged in a contract year or not”
(partner1).

6.3 Expectations

What is noticeable is that all the aspects mentioned about the expectations are of positive nature, what is only logical – who would invest into something where one expects negative outcomes!? In the cases of the partnerships examined, these expectations initially are just hopes, just as Kanter (1990) used to say; however, so far, they were fulfilled except of one case where parts of those hopes did not become realized.

Entering a partnership with low or no expectations at all might have effects on how committed and engaged the partners interact and collaborate. However, this is not the case for the current partners of ÖSH because they are very engaged and active partners, and consequently also have high expectations. Referring to the observation by Jamali and Keshishian (2009) about ‘low-level commitments’ according to which companies tend to have rather low expectations, this theory therefore is not entirely supported by the present study. The former partner stated that he initially had no expectations since the company had a rather explorative approach to it; in the following he also said that the partnership was terminated mainly due to monetary reasons. Based on this literal statement and the literature, this one partnership can, indeed, be viewed at as low-level commitment since it broke-up due to this simple ‘we don’t have money’-reason.

The fact that the partnerships can be categorized as integrative, and since there are no real philanthropic motivations, it is only logical consistent and in line with the Collaboration Continuum by Austin (2009) which says the companies, indeed, have expectations from the partnership at that stage. Even more, the one partner who mentioned that his company did not have any expectations in the beginning is also the one who slightly indicated a philanthropic approach, at least in the initial phase of the partnership. This latter observation underpins the concept of the Collaboration Continuum also seen from this stage.

6.4 Benefits

The expected rewards mentioned in the interviews include affiliation and belonging to a certain sphere, access to networks, and markets, establishment of a linkage to the

positively-connoted field of sports, and new opportunities to engage with customers and business partners. This goes hand in hand with the findings by Babiak (2007) for the Canadian Sport Center which included the maintenance of a certain position in the sport sphere, expansion of power, enhancement of performance and reputation in order to reach new spheres, acquisition of sport partners, and the extension of revenue streams which allow further actions.

The benefit that was highlighted the most is the networking effects from this woven net of partners. Particularly partner2 delightedly stressed this aspect emerged through the partnership with ÖSH. This circumstance is clearly a win-win situation for all parties involved. The more partners ÖSH acquires, the more money it receives on the one hand, but also the network it can offer to potential and existing partners as such grows. The bigger this network, the more opportunities the companies have for new business deals and other cooperations. For the organization this means that it should force networking events and actively offer opportunities for the various executives to get in touch with each other. The potential lying in this aspect apparently was already identified by the organization as partner2 explained that there will be more networking events in the future.

Although networking was included in the literature by Babiak (2007), this aspect did not come off to be such a valuable benefit; in contrast, the interviewees in the present study literally signaled it. The latter might be a phenomenon of the contemporary business world. Since networking is closely connected to B2B relations which were also not explicitly stressed within the literature, there might be a general lack of research in this field what might in turn be retraceable to networking and B2B being a relatively recent phenomenon that still needs to be studied.

One interviewee also mentioned an increased attractiveness for customers, especially thanks to the annual Sporthilfe calendar. This benefit is also found in the findings by Austin 2009, and Dowling et al. 2013. Additionally, these authors also detected benefits regarding image improvement and a subsequent higher loyalty by the customers; also this is supported by the findings of the present study. Here, one partner stated that they more and more are perceived as Austrian company. Thus, the company effectively benefited from ÖSH having a positive image, and sport being a very emotional field what contributes to this image transfer and attainableness of customers.

Finally, these are clear benefits that can be of considerable value for ÖSH when approaching companies regarding a potential partnership in the future and when they

actively promote these aspects that are repeatedly, i.e. through the literature and the present study proved.

6.5 Continuation of the partnership

As already mentioned in the findings, the fulfillment of the hopes respectively the meeting of the expectations does not guarantee any extension of the partnership contract; this observation is based on the statement by the former partner who did not extend the contract even though the expectations were – at least partly – fulfilled. This contradicts the findings by Doherty and Murray (2007) which said that as long as the promises and expectations are fulfilled, the partners are very likely to extend the contract beyond the running contract period. Also the parameters identified by Mohr and Spekman (1994) which are supposed to play a role when it comes to extending a contract – namely high commitment, trust, interdependence, and interaction – were not mentioned by the interviewees to be decisive in the context of contract continuation. Rather they stated that it were pure economic aspects – i.e. money, to speak it out unvarnished – that decide whether to extend the partnership or not. This might especially be true because all of them are quite satisfied with the partnership overall, and the only issue that could deter them from continuing it would be that they could not afford it financially anymore. In case there hypothetically were interpersonal or interorganizational problems between the organization and one of the partners, then it would be very likely that these also played a role in the decision. Thus, in a further consequence, the factors identified by Jakki Mohr and Robert Spekman are still subordinately crucial in this context.

Money as decisive factor for contract continuation was not mentioned within the literature what is somewhat surprising and questionable since money is that one factor that has the final saying in every corporate decision. Seen from the perspective of the present study, economic aspects should not be missing in considerations about why companies do extend or do not extend a partnership or any other contract.

Considering the theory by Heyman (2011) that it takes a lot more effort and money to build up a new partnership – a theory that can definitely be applied also to the companies, and not only to the organizations –, companies should consciously think whether the termination of a contract really saves money in the long-run.

6.6 Interaction and communication

The reason for examining this aspect was because good personal relations are based on a well-functioning interaction between the parties; in turn close relations were found to be one of the pillars for the persistence of partnerships (Austin 2009; Heyman 2011). Asked about the frequency and intensity of the interaction between the executives at ÖSH and the respective company, the research yielded that there are close contacts but on an infrequent basis, whereby the frequency increases at special occasions such as joint events. This goes hand in hand with the findings by Jamali and Keshishian (2009) who state that interaction is particularly intense in such periods. Still, the collaboration is very close and any coordination is done jointly what refers to a well-functioning relation between the organization and its partners. Especially when partner2 gave an insight into the good personal relation with the CEO of ÖSH, this indicated that they interact very closely and committed to any joint missions. It also supports Heyman's (2011) 'people give to people' principle and the theory by Burnett (1993); this personal relation with the CEO of ÖSH as well as the good interaction with the organization and the employees working seemed to be crucial for the partnership. Such personal relations might be a crucial factor for any continuation of the partnership. When having close personal relations, it might be more difficult to end the contract because of interpersonal reasons; it is always difficult to cut a bond with someone who is close to you than with someone you have a distant relationship with – see the pronouncement by Darian Rodriguez Heyman claiming that "it's not about the money – it's about building the relationship" (2011: 295). Consequently, ÖSH is well-advised to work on close and personal relationships that ideally go beyond the organizational sphere as it is the case for partner2.

7.0 Conclusion and further research

The purpose of this qualitative study was to question and to examine the motivations and expectations of partners of ÖSH from contracting with such an organization, and in what way the companies benefit from being a partner of ÖSH. The most important findings from the analysis and discussion in order to answer the research question "*What is the motivation for companies to form a partnership with the Austrian Sports Funding Organization, what do they expect from it and what are the benefits?*" are as follows: First, this present study revealed two main motivations: On the one hand, they aim for getting

access to new markets and business networks, for instance because they want to increase their brand's awareness; and on the other hand, they enter the partnership because it goes hand in hand with their respective corporate strategy. The former aspect of getting access turned out to be not only a motivation but the partners actually expect that from the collaboration, even though in the sense of getting access to athletes and to the field of sports. Another expectation highlighted in the interviews was that the companies or their brands receive a boost, for example due to increased visibility and popularity. An essential learning connected to this is that the satisfaction of the respective expectations is not necessarily a condition for the continuation of the partnership; i.e. expectations which, indeed, have been met are not a free ride to a contract extension as it can be seen from the example of the former partner. He quit the partnership even though the expectations were mainly fulfilled. From this knowledge gained, it can be deduced that ÖSH needs to offer an additional and superior asset that puts itself in the 'pole position' when companies decide about who to support. The network effects respectively the access to the business network of ÖSH turned out to be that asset appreciated the most by the partners of the organization. Therefore, the organization is well-advised to expedite offerings in this area, and constantly and consciously work on the 'Business Community' as ÖSH calls its network of partners.

Although not explicitly highlighted in the interviews, the companies have been detecting the potential of these partnerships for their respective CSR objectives, and connect it to corporate attitudes, and public reputation. For ÖSH this means that it should look out for companies that share similar attitudes such as promotion of youth projects, active lifestyle, and sports affinity. As the interviews showed, companies with such corporate objectives are likely to see a good cause in supporting an organization like ÖSH, and consequently are likely to be persuaded to conclude a partnership contract for this purpose.

Asked about the benefits they have been enjoying from being a partner of ÖSH, the findings mainly revolved around the networking effects which contributed to extend the B2B relations within the partnering companies. This circle of businesses is obviously the big asset of ÖSH; subsequently, this area should be continued to work on because this aspect was strongly highlighted in the interviews. This is therefore one of the main conclusions that can be drawn from this study, namely that the organization should improve the quantity and quality of its network in order to provide its current but also its prospective partners with an attractive offer in this regard. As it was explicitly highlighted by the interviewees, this should be promoted accentingly when acquiring new partners in

the future by showing which profitable network of businesses they can enter when forming a partnership with ÖSH. This could give a crucial advantage to the companies when they get access to valuable business contacts, and convince them to enter a partnership with the organization just for this reason.

Apart from referring to the statements by the interviewees, the analysis of the wording used by them revealed that the partners almost entirely talk positive about the partnership with ÖSH, and also about the organization as such what includes that they, indeed, recommend entering a partnership with it if asked. The interviewees connect that primarily to the good reputation and positive image that ÖSH enjoys in the public. Maintaining this positive reputation should therefore not be underestimated by ÖSH, not only generally but especially with regard to the partnerships.

An interesting, and in this context surprising finding was that apparently none of the companies examined overwhelmingly exploits the right to position and promote itself as “official partner of the Austrian Sports Funding Organization”; rather, it appears to be a B2B issue for them than something that they aim to promote publicly. This leaves to conclude that ÖSH should emphasize this B2B aspect to a greater extent as it is of considerable value for the companies today. Again, focusing on the network and the business circle in order to provide the companies with sufficient and convincing possibilities for their B2B operations is a clear implication for the organization for successful partnership working. In research terms, this indicates that the field of B2B relations among partners of sports organization needs a closer examination since this present study revealed that this is more important to the companies at the moment than commercial and marketing activities.

As stated, these conclusions are drawn from only three interviews. Therefore, further research is required in order to complete this picture of what motivates companies to enter partnerships with sports organizations like ÖSH, and what they expect from such collaborations. In concrete terms, it is advisable to interview more, respectively interview ideally all partners of ÖSH so that the organization gets a thorough feedback from the companies. In addition, further research with a similar organization, for instance the German Sports Funding Organization, should be done for the purpose of comparability.

As mentioned in the thesis, there are still some white spots in the literature on partnerships in sports. This present study contributes to filling a fraction of this research gap as indication regarding the motivations and expectations companies have when they decide to

support a sports organization. At the same time it opens up new opportunities to study this field in more depth, with different organizations or in different countries.

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9.0 Appendix

The following appendix includes an overview about the guidelines ÖSH uses to apply for the classification of athletes, and the prescribed set of questions used for the interviews with the current partners and the former partner.

9.1 ÖSH's guidelines for the classification of athletes

| | GROUP 1 | GROUP 2 | GROUP 3 |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Olympic / Paralympic | Badminton Archery Boxing Judo Parallel Slalom, Parallel Giant Slalom (Snowboard) Wrestling Taekwondo Snowboard Cross Ski cross | Biathlon Cross country, Sprint, Road (Cycling) Speed Skating Pentathlon Cross country skiing Equestrian/Jumping | Aerials, Halfpipe, Moguls, Slopestyle (Freestyle) BMX, Individual Time Trial, Track (Cycling) Bobsleigh, Skeleton, Luge Figure Skating, Short Track Golf, Weightlifting, Equestrian sports Halfpipe, Snowboard Slopestyle (Snowboard) Nordic Combined, Ski Jumping Alpine Skiing Shooting Sprint (Cross country skiing) |
| Non-Olympic / Non-Paralympic | 4-Cross (Cycling) Minigolf Jiu-Jitsu Karate Kickboxing Squash | Cross country Marathon, Cyclo-Cross, Downhill (Cycling) Chess | Big Air (Snowboard) BMX Freestyle, Artistic cycling, Cycle ball DM (Freestyle) Aviation Competition dancing Grass skiing, Tobogganing, Ski bob Climbing Powerlifting Orienteering Roller sport, Ice Stock sports Water skiing |
| General class | Gold | Olympics – Top 4 / Semifinals WCH – Top 4 / Semifinals ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level | Olympics – Top 8 / Finals WCH – Top 8 / Finals ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level |
| | Silver | Olympics – Top 16 / Round of last 16 WCH – Top 16 / Round of last 16 ECH – Top 8 / Quarterfinals Season: > 50 % results in the Top 12 on Top Level | Olympics – Top 16 / Semifinals WCH – Top 16 / Semifinals ECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 12 on Top Level |
| Up-and-coming athletes | Bronze | High Level – Overall Top 3 | High Level – Overall Top 3 |
| | Bronze | YOG – Top 8 / Quarterfinals JWCH – Top 16 / Round of last 16 JECH – Top 8 / Quarterfinals Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level | YOG – Top 8 / Finals JWCH – Top 16 / Semifinals JECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level |

BEACHVOLLEYBALL

FENCING

JUDO

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--|---|---|
| General class | Gold | Olympics – Top 8 WCH – Top 8 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 30 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (at least four star) | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 3 Season: 3 results in the Top 16 on Top Level (at least World Cup) | Olympics – Top 8 WCH – Top 8 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (at least Grand Prix) |
| | Silver | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 Season: > 60 % results in the Top 16 on Top Level (at least four star) | Olympics – Top 32 WCH – Top 32 ECH – Top 8 Season: 5 results in the Top 32 on Top Level (at least World Cup) | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 16 on Top Level (at least Grand Prix) |
| | Bronze | Season: > 60 % results in the Top 16 on High Level (three star) | Season: 6 results in the Top 16 on High Level (at least Satellite) | Season: > 60 % results in the Top 16 on High Level (at least Open) |
| Up-and-coming athletes | Bronze | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 8 JECH – Top 8 | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 32 JECH – Top 16 Season: four results in the Top 16 on Top Level (Junior World Cup) | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 16 JECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (at least European Judo Cup) |

BILLARD

CANOE SLALOM

CANOE SPRINT

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--|--|--|
| General class | Gold | WCH – Top 4 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (Euro Tour) | Olympics – Top 6 WCH – Top 6 ECH – Top 3 Season: Overall World Cup Top 8 | Olympics – Top 6 WCH – Top 6 ECH – Top 3 Season: 2 results in the Top 6 on Top Level (World Cup) |
| | Silver | WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 12 on Top Level (Euro Tour) | Olympics – Top 12 WCH – Top 12 ECH – Top 6 Season: Overall World Cup Top 16 | Olympics – Top 12 WCH – Top 12 ECH – Top 6 Season: 3 results in the Top 12 on Top Level (World Cup) |
| | Up-and-coming athletes | Bronze | JWCH – Top 8 JECH – Top 3 | YOG – Top 6 JWCH – Top 12 JECH – Top 6 |

ROWING

SHOOTING

SAILING

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--|--|--|
| General class | Gold | Olympics – Top 6 WCH – Top 6 ECH – Top 3 Season: 2 results in the Top 6 on Top Level (World Cup) | Olympics – Finals WCH – Finals ECH – Top 3 Season: Qualification for the World Cup Finals | Olympics – Top 10 WCH – Top 10 ECH – Top 3 Season: Participation in the World Cup Finals |
| | Silver | Olympics – Top 12 WCH – Top 12 ECH – Top 6 Season: 3 results in the Top 12 on Top Level (World Cup) | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 Season: 3 results in the Top 16 on Top Level (World Cup) | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 10 ECH – Top 3 Season: 3 results in the Top 10 on Top Level (World Cup) |
| | Up-and-coming athletes | Bronze | YOG – Top 3 Under 23 WCH – Top 6 JECH – Top 3 | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 16 JECH – Top 8 |

SWIMMING

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING, DIVING

GYMNASTICS

| | | | | |
|---------------|------|---|--|---|
| General class | Gold | Olympics – Top 8 WCH – Top 8 ECH – Top 3 Season: FINA points upon consultation | Olympics – Top 6 WCH – Top 6 ECH – Top 3 | Olympics – Top 8 WCH – Top 8 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (World Cup, Challenge Cup) |
|---------------|------|---|--|---|

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--|---|--|
| Up-and-coming athletes | Silver | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 Season: FINA points upon consultation | Olympics – Top 12 WCH – Top 12 ECH – Top 6 | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 12 on Top Level (World Cup, Challenge Cup) |
| | Bronze | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 16 JECH – Top 8 Season: FINA points upon consultation | YOG – Top 6 JWCH (A) – Top 12 JECH (A) – Top 6 | YOG / EYOF / JECH - Top 8 |
| | | ATHLETICS | TABLE TENNIS | TRIATHLON |
| General class | Gold | Olympics – Top 8 WCH – Top 8 ECH – Top 3 | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 3 Season: 4 results in the Top 8 on Top Level (at least Major Series) | Olympics – Top 6 WCH – Top 6 ECH – Top 3 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 8 on Top Level (World Triathlon Series) |
| | Silver | Olympics – Top 16 WCH – Top 16 ECH – Top 8 | Olympics – Top 32 WCH – Top 32 ECH – Top 8 Europe Top 16 – Top 3 Season: 4 results in the Top 16 on Top Level (at least Major Series) | Olympics – Top 12 WCH – Top 12 ECH – Top 6 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 12 on Top Level (World Triathlon Series) |
| | Bronze | IAAF/EAA resp. ÖOC/ÖLV norm for OG / WCH / ECH: 200 € | Season: 6 results in the Top 16 on High Level (at least Challenge Series) | Season: > 60 % results in the Top 8 on High Level (European Cup, Standard) |
| Up-and-coming athletes | Bronze | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 8 JECH – Top 3 IAAF/EAA norm resp. quota place for YOG / WCH / ECH: 100 € | YOG – Top 8 JWCH – Top 16 JECH – Top 8 Season: > 50 % results in the Top 16 on Top Level (Junior Circuit) | YOG – Top 6 JWCH – Top 12 JECH – Top 6 Season: > 3 best results in the Top 8 on Top Level (Junior European Cup) |
| TENNIS | | | | |
| | Gold | 23 years / WTA: 150 / ATP: 200 22 years / WTA: 200 / ATP: 250 21 years / WTA: 250 / ATP: 300 | | |
| | Silver | 20 years / WTA: 300 / ATP: 400 19 years / WTA: 400 / ATP: 500 18 years / WTA: 500, ITF: 20 / ATP: 800, ITF: 30 | | |
| | Bronze | 17 years / WTA: 600, ITF: 50 / ATP: 1000, ITF: 75 16 years / WTA: 800, ITF: 100 / ITF: 300, TE16u: 10 | | |

WCH = World Championships
ECH= European Championships
YOG = Youth Olympic Games
JWCH = Junior World Championships
JECH = Junior European Championships
OG = Olympic Games

Top Level = highest frequently organized competition series
High Level = second - highest frequently organized competition series

Figure 9: Guidelines for the classification of athletes of ÖSH valid from January 2017

(Österreichische Sporthilfe 2017f: 4-6)

9.2 Set of questions for the interviews with current partners

First question: Do you agree to record this conversation with a mobile app? It is just for me so that I do not have to take notes about everything.

To start with, I have some initial background questions: How long have you been partnering with ÖSH? Since what year?

Do you partner with any other sports organizations, teams, or athletes?

Which department in your company deals with such partnerships as the one with ÖSH?

Then let's move on to the main questions that I already sent to you beforehand: Why did you decide to enter a partnership with ÖSH?

What were your initial expectations when you entered the partnership with ÖSH?

Have these expectations been met so far? Respectively partly met, or not met at all?

Which benefits emerged from this partnership with ÖSH for you respectively for your company?

Is the partnership (also) a marketing tool for you? Do you actively promote the partnership (“Official partner of the Austrian Sports Funding Organization” or the like)?

How often do you interact or communicate with ÖSH – on whatever ways?

What are the reasons for these interactions?

What role did the image of Austrian sports play in your decision? To what extent did it play a role that Olympic Games were staged in your contract period?

What is crucial for you in order to extend the current contract with ÖSH? What would you wish for the future from ÖSH?

9.3 Set of questions for the interview with the former partner

Before we start, I would like to ask you if it is ok to record this interview with a mobile app? This is just for my own purpose that I do not need to write down everything.

Thanks. Then I have some background questions for you: How long did the partnership with ÖSH last? Since what year?

And the partnership lasted until the end of 2017?

Did you partner with any other sports organizations, teams, or athletes at that period of time?

Which department in your company deals with such partnerships?

Then let's move on to the main questions that I already sent to you beforehand: Why did you decide to enter a partnership with ÖSH?

What were your initial expectations when you entered the partnership with ÖSH?

Were these expectations fulfilled / partly fulfilled / not fulfilled?

Which advantages and disadvantages arose for your company from the partnership with ÖSH?

Why did you terminate the partnership with ÖSH?

What would you have wished to extend the partnership?

Would you again enter into a partnership with ÖSH in the future? Would you recommend another company to partner with ÖSH?

So can you recommend a partnership with ÖSH when let's say one of your business partners asks you about your experiences with it?

Are there any differences between the partnership with ÖSH and other partnerships? If so, in what way?