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**Values and attributes of volleyball by the fans in the FIVB Men's  
World Championships 2014**

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ABSTRACT

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As the world of sport is encountering challenges, such as intensified competition, fragmented markets and loss of commitment, there is a need to discover new insights of the global sport consumers to gain more understanding of their behavior. Volleyball world is not an exception as regards the challenges. Despite its popularity, however, volleyball has not been researched as widely as for example football.

The purpose of this master's thesis was to investigate the image of volleyball through the perceived attributes the spectating fans link to this discipline in the context of an international tournament. Namely fans are the consumers in sport world and work as co-creators of sport events. The attributes of volleyball were linked with certain values which made it possible to explore the values and attributes of volleyball. Additionally, the fans' personal value patterns were investigated. The theories utilized in the research were human value theory by Schwartz (2012), consumer behavior theory by Kotler (2009) and brand image theory by Keller (1993).

The study was conducted as a quantitative research during the FIVB Men's Volleyball Championships 2014 in Poland and 276 questionnaires were collected. The results indicate that volleyball is perceived as international, fun, exciting, ambitious, and pleasant sport by the fans and the values of volleyball are universalism, stimulation, and achievement. Fans expect therefore i.e. escape from daily life, excitement, enjoyment, and togetherness when they attend a volleyball event. The most common personal values of the fans are benevolence, safety and hedonism.

As a conclusion, the findings indicate that there were no significant differences between nationalities or genders but the fans of volleyball are rather homogenous group of people. The discovered unique attributes and values can be used to develop the image of volleyball, to foster the growth of the sport and unity among volleyball fans. Moreover, the results provide valuable content for marketing, promotion and advertising.

**KEYWORDS:** volleyball, attributes, image, human values, consumer behavior, sport management

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays sports can be found everywhere. We can talk about sports, participate in sports, watch sports from TV, follow our favorite team, attend sport events, play video games or fantasy football online, work for sports in various ways, volunteer for sport organizations, coach sports teams and do many different matters related to sports all the time. Sport touches our daily living in numerous ways around the globe and can therefore be claimed to be a universal phenomenon.

The universality of sports has increased the competition; there are new teams, new sports, new technological advancements, which all require the attention of sport professionals in different fields. The intensified competition has led to the situation where sport seems to be more than mere sport nowadays and considerably big part of sport has transformed into valuable brands. It is not enough to provide just the sport itself but matches are entertaining events in order to satisfy fans and other stakeholders and their expectations.

Satisfying fans is therefore getting increasingly challenging. In addition, as sports is something people do on their spare time and time is nowadays considered to be a valuable investment, the expectations towards sports, sport events and sport organizations are growing and more demanding to fulfil (Robinson 2006). To have better chances to meet the growing expectations, this paper will investigate values and attributes of a sport perceived by the fans themselves, since it should turn out helpful and useful.

When knowing more about the personalities of global volleyball fans, for example market segmenting could be done according to their personal characteristics which further on will help to strengthen consistent image of volleyball. The purpose of segmentation in marketing is to serve individual customers who share similar behaviors and needs (Cleveland, Papadopoulos & Laroche 2011). The interactions between people and markets have intensified due to the globalization and marketers are advised to move from country-specific segmentation to global market segmentation. It means identifying similar groups that could be served with suitable marketing strategy irrespective to

country boundaries. (Merz et. al. 2008.) This way, one consistent image or identity could be created or strengthened.

Branding is important and one big key in succeeding as it has been a challenge for professional sports teams to attract and retain consumers due to the market competition and a cluttered marketplace. Therefore, it seems crucial to understand game consumption factors in order to have bigger chances to improve the quality of sports products and services. (Byon, Zhang and Baker 2013.) This view supports the importance of studies, such as this research, that try to add understanding about global fans and their values and opinions since they could have an impact on game consumption and motives to follow the sports.

Fans arrive from all over the world to follow sports, and the same applies to volleyball. Volleyball has an international fan base which should be taken into account in big sport events like FIVB Men's World Championships. Developing successful global marketing plans requires understanding global sport consumers better and namely fans are the consumers in the sport world. The aim of the research is to discover the value patterns of volleyball fans and what attributes they relate to volleyball. Those results will comprise the perceived image of volleyball in the form of brand associations.

There are most likely differences in what kind of associations one might relate to different sports, for example to golf and ice hockey. Knowing and understanding the perceived image of a specific sport or discipline is a useful asset in the intensified competition and it seems that it has not been thoroughly utilized in volleyball and especially in international volleyball events yet. In addition, the huge popularity of sports in general makes sports a very attractive platform for business purposes. The popularity of volleyball has that attractive factor as well since it has 800 million players worldwide. As spectating fans are another core of volleyball consumers, it is essential to understand them and how they perceive the sport. Loyal fans can enhance the image of a brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008) and can therefore have a crucial play in the process of succeeding in today's market.

By gaining more knowledge about the values, also underlying motives of the fans to follow the sport could be investigated because often values are linked with motives that eventually lead to behavior and actions (Gau & James 2013). The consumer behavior of the fans could then perhaps be a little more understandable. For these reasons, the

purpose of this research is to explore the perceived brand image of volleyball in the form of attributes and values. Hopefully, this kind of information helps practitioners around volleyball to succeed and foster the growth of volleyball.

Volleyball is one of the most played sports worldwide and the amount of participants has grown together with the number of world competitions. On estimation, there are 800 million players who play volleyball weekly. The success of world competitions and tournaments has raised the popularity of the sport. (Volleyball history 2011.) Nevertheless, this sport has not been researched nearly as extensively as for example football. As many other sports, volleyball has faced the challenges caused by modern consumers and their unexpected behavior, however, it also is able to utilize the possibilities of modern research and new customer insights from the spectating fans.

I see my own background in volleyball as a positive driver for the study. I have played the game at a professional level both in Finland and in Germany and in addition, I have also worked as an executive director for a men's volleyball club in Finland. These experiences have given me useful insights of the sport business and operations in practice. Now I would like to give my own contribution also this way to the sport of my life.

## **2 SPORTS - PRODUCING GOOD AND GOODS**

Despite of the fact that sport industry is rather new industry, it is a wide-reaching business that spans the field of play and has a few special characteristics. These characteristics of the sports field will now be introduced.

### **2.1 Sports - economic, social and political force**

Sport and people can be connected via different touch points; economically, socially, politically. Sport has an economic impact that has significantly grown and seems to grow more in the future. On estimation, the total revenue of the global sports market in 2014 was 146, 47 billion U.S. dollars (Total revenues of the global sports market 2015). Sports has also social significance since it works as a core in many welfare programs to boost mental, physical and social health. Sports is used in many social belongingness programs as well to strengthen people's sense of belonging through sports. Lastly, sport is another way to reduce crimes where sport is tried to work as an outlet for youth's energy for example. (Bill 2009, 6.)

Political significance of sport is debatable as some wishes politics and sport to work separately. Nation building has also been considered as one part of political significance of sports. (Bill 2009, 6-7.) It is therefore difficult to keep sports and politics separated as sports has been utilized as a political tool already in the ancient Greece. An example of political significance of sports to a nation: it is said that Finland ran itself into the world's map in the early times of its independence. More precisely, right after Finland's independence, Finnish athletes won many medals in international track and field competitions. This strengthened the pride and unity of the new nation and created the image of Finland as a sportive nation. (Kokkonen 2003.)

Sport often offers positive examples of behavior (team building, following rules etc.) that can further be utilized i.e. in work places (Bill 2009, 7). In some cultures sports is used to teach values such as discipline, hard work, respect etc. for youngsters in different phases of life i.e. in schools and work places (Eitzen 1989, 17). Thus, these aspects of sport are also good to understand when talking about sport industry. Sport

management should therefore be seen as serious global business as other business fields which require intelligent management.

## 2.2 Sports as a product

To be able to make money out of sports, sports has been materialized and divided by certain characteristics. Sport industry can be divided into different sectors and segmented by product and buyer type (Pitts, Fielding and Miller 1994). These distinct parts are called sports performance segment, sport production segment and sport promotion segment. The first segment (sports performance segment) can be seen as a product. This segment is provided to buyers as a product for participants and also as a product for spectators. (Pitts, Fielding & Miller 1994.) As the focus will be on a volleyball event, this segment will be more important for this research.

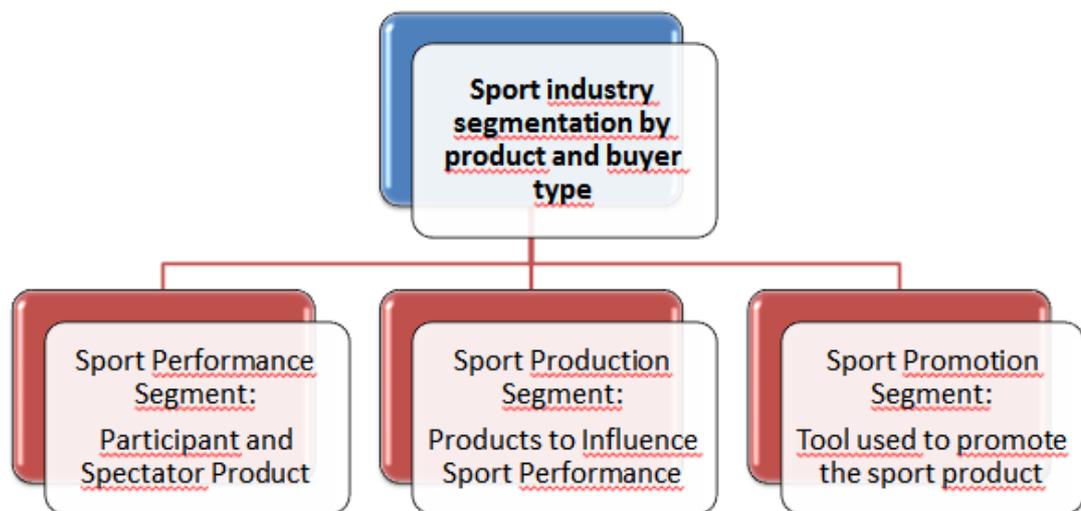


FIGURE 1. Sport industry segmentation. (Adapted from Pitts, Fielding & Miller, 1994)

Participation can happen in different ways as the sport product can be offered in multiple ways. For example, sport settings, performance levels, and market segments can vary. The participants are actually the producers of the sports and leisure activities. As a product for spectators, sport product is offered for spectators in the following ways: personal attendance, through television, video tape, via radio. (Lee 2000.) Internet

and live streams have also been added to the ways to spectate nowadays and it is more and more common.

The second segment is sport production segment that includes the necessary products in order to participate in sports or to influence the level of sport. This leads to another division inside the segment where outfitting products (equipment, apparel) and performance production products (trainers, instructors) can be distinguished. (Pitts, Fielding & Miller 1994.) Sport production segment can vary significantly as products can be high tech skis for elite performance or a soft beach volley ball for children's backyard games.

The third segment type categorized by product and buyer type is sport promotion segment. This segment consists of those products used in the promotion of sport industry products. Promotion is an important segment that aids the two other segments to turn into money. Since the sport industry is rather broad industry, also the means of promotion must be as broad. Some known ways of promotion are: promotional merchandise products (to promote a sport product or event, i.e. t-shirts), promotional events (i.e. use a sports star to draw people to an event), media (the use of media as a promotion channel and also the use of sports by media), sponsorship (e.g. sponsor an event to get a place for advertisement in the event), endorsement (so called exchange relationship; e.g. a product, such as Nike helmet, is used by a sports celebrity to get mutual benefits). (Pitts, Fielding & Miller 1994.)

In volleyball, the same segments can be distinguished. There is the sports performance segment where volleyball is played and watched. This research uses this sector by contacting the active spectators of volleyball during the event (FIVB Men's World Championships 2014). Sport production segment produces equipment for volleyball (i.e. kneepads, nets, jerseys) but this thesis focuses the least on this segment. Lastly, the results of this research could be utilized further on in the promotion segment in order to help volleyball to gain new customers both as players and as spectators.

One common way to divide the sport sector is also by how sports is supplied: through private, public or voluntary sector. Private sector is also called as commercial sector. It includes a massive part of the industry whose main goal is to make profits such as TV channels, some sports clubs, fitness clubs, stadium operators etc. Public sector means

the part of the sport that is involved with government. Common ways of government involvement are for example through regulations, facilitation (e.g. finance sport projects) and direct provider (local governments offering leisure facilities and opportunities). The third sector is voluntary sector that is the backbone of the sport industry. It can mean small sport events organized by volunteers of a club but also large organizations like International Olympic Committee that do not focus on making profits but reaching i.e. social objectives. (Bill 2009, 8-9.)

Volleyball can be linked to all of the three sectors depending on the situation. This particular event (the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014) aims at making profits and therefore has features from the private sector. However, this kind of tournament would have not been possible to set up and run without the help of volunteers. Additionally, governments are often cooperating with big international events as they hope to get positive visibility and include the city/country within the event.

The FIVB Men's World Championships tournament therefore intertwines all the sectors which indicate the significance of knowing the different sectors in sport. Moreover, the blurred boundaries of the sectors have raised new challenges and/or opportunities. The sectors are increasingly operating in similar ways, have more common partnerships between the sectors, and have new notions of viability. (Bill 2009, 10.)

### **2.3 Management in sports – more than the play**

The term sport management is rather complex to define simply. The approach here is therefore to distinguish the term “management” first. Bill (2009, 16) utilizes Fayol's classification of principles of management and lists the functions of management in the following way: planning (i.e. operational action plans), organizing (work elaborated into its key components, making schedules, and dividing responsibilities), coordinating (coordination of actions and resources), staffing (designing staff recruitment and jobs), leading/motivating your employees, controlling (checking how the plans are going, identifying relevant indicators of performance and act accordingly).

The concept of management is broad and difficult to define unanimously but this listing helps to understand the functions that managers often have to control. Sport management is then controlling similar managerial tasks but mainly related to the sports sector that has been elaborated in the chapters above. While making purchase decisions,

consumers rely on their awareness, perception and attachment to a brand which highlights the importance of management of a sport brand (Kaynak, Salman & Tatoglu 2008).

## **2.4 Sports fandom**

One sub-part of sport management includes managing fan relations and fan culture. Sports fandom is one form of popular culture fandom and fandom overall has been said to be the result or response to the star system. Without stars and worshipping, there would not be fans either. (Lewis 2002, 10.) Stardom as a phenomenon is enabled by media which provides the platforms (print, internet, television, radio, etc.) that can make i.e. a local athlete internationally recognizable star (Wann et al 2001, 13).

Wenner (2013) defines fan as an enthusiastic devotee of some particular consumptive object who has some level of attachment with an object. The definition of sport fans is by Wann et al (2001, 2) “individuals who are interested in and follow sport, team and/or athlete”. Further, a fan is an enthusiastic consumer who is motivated to engage in behavior related to sports. Fanship identities in sport can be complex and vary from cultural dope to empowerment. Fans have been classified as obsessive and hysterical on one hand and then on the other hand, seen as positively engaged, creative and strong group of people. Thus, fandom is also varying, it might be very passionate or casual and features disparate sporting knowledge. (Wenner 2013.)

People also become fans from different reasons, such as through passion or enthusiasm for sports, interpersonal relationships, experiences along life etc. Information gained from the experiences is considered as expectations, beliefs, and perceptions associated with the schema and at the end, an individual has processed available information and makes judgements. The schema is often consisted of related hierarchical levels which works as the sports consumptive object and may represent the sport itself or the league for example. (Bashaw, Bristol & Hunt 1999.)

In addition, fans / consumers are always the co-producers of events and experiences (Vargo & Lush 2004), and the sports world is no exception. Sport fans have been researched to have their own subculture and community where they co-create social experiences and therefore, are also co-producers and active participants of sports events

and experiences (Grant et al 2011). Thus, as spectating fans, people are establishing, construing and reflecting meanings through the sport consumption activity which in this case is a volleyball event. Meanings can mean all the experiences, reflections, and significant happenings that sport fans attach to the event. (Xing 2008.)

Woratschek et al (2014) have researched the value framework in sports and now claim that the sport event participants have a significant role to the actual experience and co-create the value to an event. For example, the atmosphere depends largely on the fans and their participatory behavior or the lack of it, after the event fans might celebrate the win jointly in communities and continue the value-creation together. Thus, fans and fan culture is another part of creating value for the event and can have significant role in it. (Woratschek et al 2014.)

To understand fans and their culture in contemporary society better, both micro and macro level features of the phenomenon should be considered. Sport psychological viewpoint presents the micro level framework as it contains individual behaviors, traits and characteristics of fans which are expressed in team identification, attendance decisions etc. This paper seeks the insights of individual fans and has characteristics of understanding the fan phenomenon from micro level aspect therefore. Macro level framework concerns sociological viewpoint that focuses on the larger implications and understanding the phenomenon in matters such as collective behavior and structural context of sport. (Wann et al 2001, 17-18.)

Wann et al (2001, 24) state sports fandom to derive from the socialization process. Socialization refers to the process of learning to behave and understand the culture or subculture by internalizing its values, norms, beliefs and attitudes. Most likely sport fandom culture is learned from the family, peers, school and community of an individual that can be called as socialization agents. The impact of socialization agents is quite powerful according to research but it can differ from one sport to another and among diverse ethnic groups. For instance, the subculture of football hooligans and the values, norms, beliefs within the group are most likely different from Wimbledon fans. Sport settings can also vary from each other and for example, queue norms in a skiing event in Finland and in a cricket match in India might not be similar. Therefore, these kinds of settings might represent the society norms and values in a miniature or a sport

fan setting might have formulated its own miniature culture, e.g. tailgating in the United States. (Wann et al 2001, 25.)

From societal perspective, sports fandom has been interpreted from functionalism's viewpoint. These potential functional imperatives of sport fandom are, according to Wann et al (2001, 181), to allow for emotional expression, provide quality entertainment, enhance communication, facilitate national identity, produce social capital, contribute to the socialization process, enhance integration at all levels, assist in social control, and serve as a form of religion. In addition, Holt (1995) and Madrigal (2006) state that sport fans make sense of their consumption objects through accounting, evaluating, and appreciating the games.

Sport fan culture is therefore societally remarkable phenomenon that mirrors the people of the time and serves a platform for people to express themselves in various ways, i.e. consume sports together. Sport fandom has also its challenges and problems such as riots, match fixing and spectator violence but the positive sides of sport fandom have been more prevalent at least so far. (Wann et al 2001, 207.)

### **3 THE MYSTERY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

To survive in sport management, it is important to know how to effectively manage challenges such as increasing costs, a highly competitive market place, increasing fan discontent and disconnection, and explosive growth of new technology (Gladden & Sutton 2009; Howard & Crompton 2005). These can all be claimed to be linked with the postmodern phenomena. After defining postmodernism, theoretical information of consumer behavior will be introduced as consuming a sport event requires various elements of consumption behavior before the actual consumption for the event happens.

Postmodern phenomena create challenges, opportunities and changes in the world of sport (i.e. Gómez, Kase & Urrutia 2010, 2-3). Postmodern times refer here culturally diverse, fragmented, increasingly market-mediated and performative ways to consume (Kotler et al 2009, 27). Postmodernism offers explanations for the complexity of today's markets.

Hyper-reality (virtual worlds are blurred with reality) and reversals of production and consumption (consumers are active in the production of meaning, of marketing, of consumption) are some signs of it. Other conditions of postmodern time are fragmentation where life is like a collection of short-term moments and seen as fast, furious, hectic, fleeting and hyperactive. In addition, centeredness refers to time where individuals are classified according to social class, demographics etc. but postmodernism suggests that the more marketers endeavor to categorize consumers, the less successfully it will be. (Kotler et al 2009.) Help for the managers have been derived from the field of values lately since values are more permanent matters in people's lives than for example opinions.

#### **3.1 The shift in the marketplace**

Interest in consumer choices grew up among marketers who aimed to formulate a more general marketing theory. Through times, consumers' preferences and opinions mattered more and more so that the other parts of the business knew what to produce,

what kinds of features the product should have, how much consumers were ready to pay for it and where they prefer to buy the product and how. Consumer research started to develop as well and the earliest research was about consumer personalities. (Hansen & Christensen 2007.) According to Hansen and Christensen (2007, 19), consumer research started to develop as a discipline significantly after the Second World War (after 1946).

Brands emerged at the same time as some manufacturers tried to keep the product similar and standardized for the customer who was happy with the earlier product so that he/she would buy the same product again from the same manufacturer. These kinds of brand manufacturers were interested in consumer's opinions, what they liked about the product and what could be changed so that they would be more attached with it. (Hansen & Christensen 2007.) In addition, family-life cycles offered important explanations in the early days of consumer research. Nowadays these theories have been made questionable by the raising amount of divorces, single mothers, second marriages etc. (Hansen & Christensen 2007, 20.)

Thus, the situation in the marketplace has changed from mass production to more individualized direction. In addition to consumers' opinions, technological advancements along globalization started to arise. The integration of world economy, innovations and advancements in technology, communication and transportation, decreased protectionism and also the possibility to coordinate global cooperation are the factors that lead to the globalization (Terpstra 1987). As a result, the consumers and the markets changed drastically. For example, companies are facing more intense competition from domestic and foreign markets which has made marketing expenses to rise and marginal profits to shrink (Kotler et al 2009, 20). Some brands extending their product category are examples of the change, i.e. luxury clothing brand Armani entering into the chocolate markets.

Kotler et al (2009, 23) describe today's consumers as marketing-savvy and sophisticated. The great variety of products and services, amount of information about almost anything and the easiness in interacting and placing and receiving orders (i.e. online stores, tracking packages) are some of the reasons behind it. This generation has been called "Internet generation" or "generation Now" to illustrate the pace of living nowadays.

Internet has offered many platforms for people to express their opinions, communicate and interact. One of the consequences is that self-expression is characteristic for today's consumer. Consumers are ruling the markets; they are often heard, offerings are customized and co-created with companies. Additionally, self-service technology is utilized increasingly to reduce the costs and serve the consumer better in the way they want; wherever and whenever. (Kotler et al 2009, 23-24.)

Globalization offers explanations for sports and sport consumers becoming universal since globalization entered into sports and in the business world especially after mid-1990s. The freer flow of goods, services, money, people and ideas across the borders were possible via advancements in i.e. transportation and telecommunication infrastructure (Wild, Wild & Han 2009). Boudreaux (2008, 1) defines globalization simply as "the advance of human cooperation across national boundaries". This can for example be illustrated by the success story of English club, Manchester United that has been able to expand its fan base from English to global and the statistics are respectful. In 2012, Manchester United had 659 million followers worldwide from which 71 million in America, 90 million in Europe, 173 million in Africa and Middle-East, and 325 million in Asia (Kantar 2012).

This all has affected sports world as well, an example of globalization in sports production sector could be hockey gear. It can be financed by Canada, designed in Sweden, manufactured in Denmark, Japan and the US, and distributed across North America and Northern Europe (Donnelly 1996, 240). Finally, it is bought online by hockey players around the world. In addition, the gear bought and used is often commented and evaluated in media by consumers. Thus, the definition of globalization by Boudreaux (2008) is on point by saying that globalization is about human cooperation across boundaries.

According to Miller et al (2001), sport is still increasingly "shaped by the media, spectacularized by commerce, employed to deliver audiences to sponsors, and intimately linked to the technological opportunities afforded by various media delivery forms" (i.e. satellite, cable). However, the nations and cultures still exist and they bring their own meanings to the process. Even though the borders have blurred, cultural tendencies have not disappeared (Miller 2001). Since the drivers of consumer behavior in global sport world are diverse within, across and between cultures and contexts

(Cleveland, Papadopoulos & Laroche 2011), the needs and wants of these customers are challenging to discover. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate global sport consumers since it may offer insights in today's complex consumer behavior.

### **3.2 Consumers in sports**

Consumers can differ from each other significantly. Basically everyone can be perceived as a consumer who has some potential needs or wants to be fulfilled (Kotler et al 2009). On the supposition is that fans are the consumers in the sports world. Consumer in the sport world can also be categorized into sport fanatics or club/team loyalists (Kearney 2003). Sport fan means a person who is an enthusiastic devotee of sports according to Wenner (2015). Other popular way to define fans is the level of enthusiasm. Fan and spectator can be differing from each other by the degree of engrossment and passion. Fans are more passionate about the sport and games while spectators are less enthusiastic. (Wann et al 2001.) In this study, the word "fan" is used more than "spectator" to describe the respondents. The assumption is that buying a ticket to watch the matches makes them fans of volleyball at least in some level.

Behavior is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary (6.1.2015) as "the manner of conducting oneself" and "the response of an individual, group or species to its environment". Behavior is strongly influenced by the individual characteristics that guide motivation and lead motivation to actions (Kotler et al 2009, 230).

Hoyer and Macinnis (2009, 3) define consumer behavior as "the totality of consumer's decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people and ideas by (human) decision-making units (over time)". This definition demonstrates the vastness of consumer behavior term. Thus, the act of purchasing is a process and comprises the purchase itself but also the activities prior and posterior to this. According to Hansen & Christensen (2007, 30-31), consumer behavior includes all activities related to purchasing, consuming, and exchanging information about brands, products, and services. These activities are present majority of the time (Hansen & Christensen 2007, 30-31). The goal of consumer behavioral analysis is to have more positive outcomes in terms of exchange where two organizations or persons will eventually give and receive something of value (Askegaard, Bamossy & Solomon 2006, 6).

Kotler et al (2009, 224) state that consumer behavior is the study of “how individuals or groups buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants”. Cultures, situations and individual characteristics are then affecting the needs and wants of consumers. According to Funk (2008, 6), sport and event consumer behavior defined is “the process of involved when individuals select, purchase, use and dispose of sport and sport event related products and services to satisfy needs and receive benefits”. Thus, the particular volleyball event and its’ fans fit well for the purpose for gaining more insights of the sport consumers.

In addition, Kotler et al (2009, 224) distinguish three different categories of consumer behavior that are 1) the study of culture, 2) the study of social groups, and 3) the study of the individual. The importance of knowing your individual consumers and their values as a starting point for consumer behavior understanding was highlighted since values are affecting consumer decisions as they underlie attitudes and behavior (Kotler et al 2009, 236). Because this research is about the values of individual consumers (and attributes of the sport), this study belongs to the latter group (number three). The idea is to a) gain more understanding about modern sport consumers’ values, and b) study the product/service (volleyball) and how consumers think about it. Focusing on individuals is chosen because the fragmented market is hard to generalize. Therefore, the goal is to learn through individuals’ opinions and utilize these insights for the sport.

### **3.3 Consumer behavior perspectives**

Understanding the consumer is usually divided into areas that marketers try to find insights into: psychological, economic, social and cultural drivers behind the action. Consumer research is most often used in order to find insights into aforementioned areas. (Hoyer & Macinnis 2008, 16.) Here the aim is to gain more understanding of the psychological and social drivers.

Consumer behavior theories are often derived from consumer research and from human behavior theories. Consumer research is, according to Kumra (2007, 17), an extension of marketing research. Marketing research aims at helping the decision making process in managerial level and consumer research does the same by finding out consumer insights (Kumra 2007, 17). Consumer behavior theories aim at explaining of how the

process of consumption might go in consumers' minds. In other words, what kind of psychological process it is. In addition to purchase process, consumer behavior theories often describe also the use and disposal of products. Thus, the questions to solve are what, when, where, how, from whom and how often products are being purchased when investigating consumer behavior. (Kumra 2007.)

There are different perspectives in consumer behavior and four of them will be introduced below as they touch upon this paper's research topic. The information processing perspective in consumer behavior takes into consideration the mental process of consumers in the decision making. The idea is that consumers' decisions are reasoned decisions based on the information they processed by forming beliefs and attitudes towards the marketing offer. According to this perspective, consumers go through five decision-making activities: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice, and post-purchase evaluation. (Kotler et al 2009, 244.) Information perspective is a popular one and many sport consumer behavior theories use the idea of the mentioned five stage decision-making (i.e. Funk 2008). For example, (sport) marketing often bases on the process introduced in the theory and aims to affect one or two of the mentioned stages.

The emotional perspective suggests that consumer affections, such as emotions, explain consumer behavior. The main idea is to fulfil a desire and obtain pleasure in life rather than only evaluate the relations between attitude, beliefs and the environment. Consumption is seen as a way to seek more experiences. (Kotler et al 2009, 244.) Emotion aspect is one of importance for sports since sports often aim at offering experiences and appeals to the desire to obtain pleasure by watching sports (Funk 2008). Thus, it is important to know the benefits to be able to create content for marketing in order to bring the experiences and benefits for the spectators.

In the cultural perspective, marketing is seen as a channel that transfers cultural meanings attached to products. Marketing could therefore shape culture and also be shaped by it. Here products and services should be regarded as symbols that represent different beliefs, norms and values. Products are not bought only because of their functional features but also due to their appearance, name and color because they represent something appealing for consumers. (Kotler et al 2009, 245.) Thus, the cultural approach suggests that products or services should be understood as symbols.

This viewpoint can be linked with sport events since events are intangible and play with attributes and symbols.

Hedonic motives represent the intangible benefits of the experience and involve emotional responses (Robinson & Trail 2005). After discovering the values of the fans, these attributes and symbols could then represent the most common values of them when marketing would indeed be shaped by cultures.

Multi-perspective approach takes into consideration the limited resources that consumers have for processing information about products and offerings. This approach suggests therefore that sometimes consumers go for simple associations between product and expected benefit because they have limited space of mental resources for every purchase. Moreover, then their established preferences or preferred conclusions are reinforced. (Kotler et al 2009, 246.) Multi-perspective approach touches sport environment as well as sport consumers might have limited resources to process information. Therefore, knowing these values and the attributes of the sport could help to create associations that are simple and attractive for consumers to choose volleyball.

Thus, consumer behavior is a process and common for the different perspectives listed above is that first consumers are trying to satisfy a need. After acknowledging the need to be fulfilled, they look for possible benefits of the product. Often consumers see a bunch of attributes with different capabilities that satisfy the desired benefits in addition to fulfil the original need. (Kotler et al 2009, 249.) These attributes are aimed to be discovered by this research so there would be more information what kind of needs volleyball is fulfilling and therefore, it relates closely to consumer behavior.

### **3.3.1 Determinants of consumer behavior**

Consumer behavior is affected by cultural, social and personal factors. Culture is a fundamental determinant of consumers' behavior. Culture can be defined as the meanings that are commonly shared majority of the people in the same social group. Cultural values and norms are developed further on into guidelines of human behavior. Subcultures are smaller groups that have their own, more specific identification and blueprint of behavior. (Kotler et al 2009, 224.) Sport environment offers a good

platform for people to form subcultures. Additionally, De Mooji (2004) states that since socioeconomic variables are converging, cultural variables assume greater importance in accounting for cross-country behavioral variation.

In addition to culture, also other people and social settings can influence individuals' attitude and behavior. Sport event is a social setting in itself so the influence of other people is likely. These groups of people Kotler et al, (2009, 227) call reference groups. Reference groups are one form of social groups. There are different kinds of reference groups depending on the seriousness of the influence of the group to an individual and his/her behavior. Groups that have direct influence are called membership groups, for instance family and friends that usually have the most impact on individual. In sport context, the influence of family and friends is significant (Funk 2008).

It is important to notice also that consumer is not always the user of the product/service and vice versa. Sometimes the buyer of the product or service is for example a parent or a friend. (Kumra 2007, 17.) Thus, discovering the values of some members of the group, there should be a possibility to draw the attention of the significant others as well. For example, if sport marketers succeed to get a new spectator, he/she is likely to bring a friend or a family member with him/her as sports events are often socially consumed (Funk 2008).

Crawford (2004, 3-4) states that consuming considers also the social side in addition to the material culture. As an example he mentions how consumption of a sport event involves person-person relationships where the event actions are observed and consumed together. Another viewpoint is to understand that sometimes fan activity does not involve act of consumption since feelings, memories and thoughts are reflecting what being a fan is, not the material consumption (Cohen 1985).

Personal factors include age, stage in life cycle, occupation, economic environment, lifestyle, personality and self-concept. Age and stage in the life cycle are important factors as people consume differently in different phases in their lives, also depending on the number of people in their households. Western families are fragmented, the traditional image of family of husband, wife and two or three kids cannot be generalized. Moreover, also the psychological sides of people influence their attitudes and behavior. (Kotler et al 2009, 230.)

In addition, responses to marketing messages differ by genders. Women valued connections and relationships with family and friends more whereas men related more to competition and action (Kotler et. al. 2009, 229). These kinds of insights should also be considered of importance in sports business when creating events and tailoring marketing messages.

Researchers (i.e. Kotler 2009, Cleveland, Papadopoulos & Laroche 2011) have concluded that basic socioeconomic characters seem not to be enough anymore to explain buying behaviors of customers of this era. The key psychological processes in consumer behavior comprise of motivation, perception, learning and memory. Psychographic information seems to provide more explanations and therefore, also more valid segmentation criteria. (Kotler et al 2009.)

The careful evaluation of psychological criteria of the key target market might aid sport marketers in discovering and identifying new potential segments to develop marketing approaches (Funk 2008). Psychographics utilizes information on consumer activities, opinion, interests, and demographics to profit possible behaviors and therefore, is valuable for marketing (Lee 2000). As the aim is to investigate the brand attributes that consumers attach to volleyball, the motivation aspect of the psychological process of consumer behavior is in the focus. In addition, motivational factors might also help explaining fans' perceptions.

Motivation is explained in the context of values under the headline of "From values to needs and motivations". Consumers' motivation can have direction which determines which goals one is going after. Motivation can also be situational or enduring. Freud's theory suggests that people's behavior is mainly unconscious. Thus, people are evaluating unconsciously other things about a brand (such as shape and size) in addition to the stated capabilities. (Kotler et al 2009, 238.) For marketing, this means that different motives in a product can satisfy people's needs, i.e. Gatorade meets the needs for recovery, status of an athlete and thirst.

As a summary, below is a process demonstrating the whole consumer behavior process explained in the chapters above suggested by Kotler et al (2009, 238). Buying decision process and purchase decision parts have not been explained in detail because they are not relevant for the purposes of this research

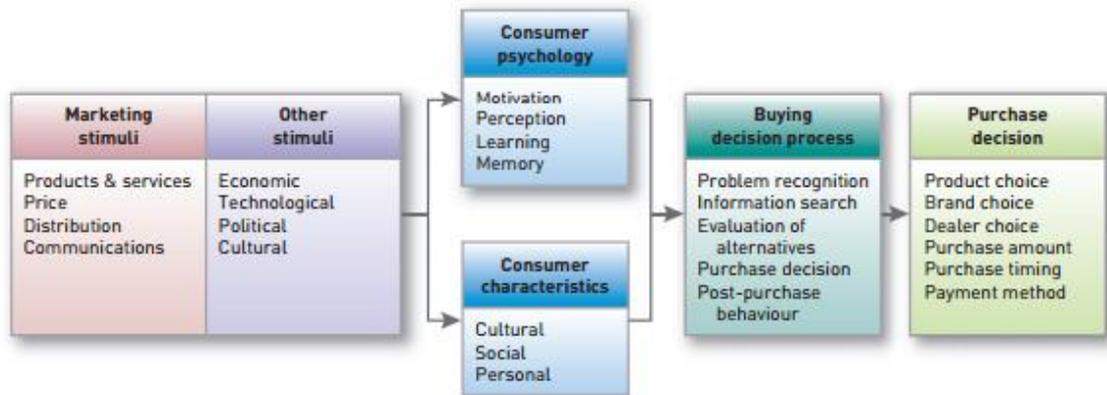


FIGURE 2. Model of Consumer Behavior by Kotler et al (2009, 238).

### 3.3.2 New waves in consumer behavior

Changes such as growing business, empty promises, the amount of selection etc., have finally lead to loss of commitment. Consumers are not likely to be very loyal anymore like they used to be and they may have many contradictory consuming patterns going on simultaneously. New insights for the unpredictable consumer behavior are searched from the field of personality and self-concept. (Kotler et al 2009.) This paper explores the personal values of the fans that supposedly affect the personality and self-concept of a consumer.

Personality has been defined as “a set of distinguishing human psychological traits that lead to relatively consistent and enduring responses to environmental stimuli” that also includes buying behavior. The main idea behind it is that consumers are more likely to choose brands which personalities will match with their own. (Kotler et al 2009, 231). As an example, some people prefer to buy BMW because the brand of BMW comes across strong, powerful, and self-confident so they feel connected with the brand and consider BMW to fit their personality.

Since consumers often choose brands that have aligned personality traits with their own actual self-concept (how they view themselves) or even the ideal self-concept (how they would like to view themselves) or others’ self-concept (how they think others see them), it offers a fruitful situation to discover the self-concepts of their customers. It should be taken into consideration that different situations or different kinds of people might

evoke different kinds of self-concepts such as being a serious golfer or loving mum or enthusiastic volleyball fan. Moreover, personalities are more likely to be pronounced more often in publicly consumed products than privately consumed. (Kotler et. al. 2009, 231). This supports the findings of this research as it is publicly consumed product: a sport event with spectators.

A brand image, which equals with the image the target market has, is an optimal situation since image's foundation lies then in the consumer's self-concept of their actual self-image. Brand image that is congruent with the self-concept of a consumer, will also enhance brand loyalty. (Graeff 1996.) If the associations consumers attach to certain sport could be discovered, i.e. marketing strategies could then reinforce the existing positive brand associations (Gladden & Funk 2001).

## **4 LINKING HUMAN VALUES AND SPORTS**

Human value theory is the basis of the research. The theory explains the basic values of human beings by their motivational goals. It therefore provides the ground for the aims of this research as the perceived image of volleyball is compiled by defining the values explained by the theory. The human value theory will be introduced next and then linked with motivations and finally discussed within the sport context.

### **4.1 The core of the human value theory**

To justify why human values are worth of discovering and chosen to work as a foundation for this research, a sentence from Lee and Trail's (2011) article is attached here: "values have been influential factors for attitudes (Hansen 2008; Homer & Kahle 1998 etc.), personal involvement (Celsi & Olson 1988; Zaichowsky 1985, 1994), brand choice (Quester, Beverland and Farrelly 2006), goals (Nelson 2004) and behaviors (e.g. Braithwaite and Law 1985; Krystallis, Vassallo, Chrysohoidis & Perrea 2008)".

This sentence illustrates the meaning that values can have on consumer behavior. This research aims to discover the brand image through the attributes of the sport and personal values of the fans. The results of this research could ideally then reveal influential factors for personal involvement, brand choice and behavior.

The definition of a value is important here because the concept of value has different definitions. According to Schwartz (2006), values can be considered as guiding principles a person holds for daily life. Additionally, values can be attached to an object when values have experiences between the object and the person (i.e. sport event) (Holbrook 2006). These two definitions are the ones that matter the most for this research as the focus is on the human values of volleyball fans and values that fans attach to the sport itself. Sometimes values are used to mean the monetary value of something (i.e. Brewer et. al. 2011) but here the values of human beings are the subject instead.

The human value theory introduced by Schwartz (2006) will be used as a base theory for this research. Schwartz' value theory (2006) has been used the second most often

after the List of Values (the LOV) theory introduced by Kahle & Kennedy (1989) (Lee & Trail 2011, 3) thus it should be of good quality and credible. The LOV contains nine values so it is a little narrower scale than Schwartz' value theory (2006) with 19 values. The theory by Schwartz (2006) is based on the fact that there are universal values that can be recognized in all societies. Therefore, the human value theory is suitable for research in international settings.

Schwartz' human value theory (2006) includes also values that are related to collective interests such as benevolence and universalism. These kinds of collective values are of importance when examining a collective matter such as spectator sport/volleyball. In addition, the goal is to provide more comprehensive information to which values are most often related to volleyball and what kind of values fans have. Therefore, using the human value theory by Schwartz (2006) will offer more suitable values for this research.

The three universal requirements of human existence are the needs of individuals as biological organs, necessities of coordinated social interaction and survival and welfare needs of groups. The values in the theory are all grounded in one or more of these categories. Thus, these basic values are then defined as trans-situational goals which will vary in importance. Schwartz (2006) states that the basic values of a human being are organized in a coherent system which can provide more understanding and explanations for the decision making, attitudes and behavior of one. (Schwartz 2006.) Thus, values are motivationally distinct. This provides opportunities to further analyze, predict and explain consumers' behavior and therefore, is used to investigate the associations that volleyball fans attach to volleyball.

The refined value theory by Schwartz (2012) emerged from the need to have more narrowly defined values in addition to the basic values. As a result, 19 values were defined. The added 9 values still fit in the motivational continuum as introduced in 2006. The benefit of having 19 values is the ability to have each value more narrowly defined and reduce cross-loadings and multicollinearity. 19 distinct values will bring more precise information about the values for the research. The researcher can also choose if the aim is to find out more about only one part of the value circle for example. (Schwartz et al 2012, 665.) A vaster arrange of values is more appropriate than detailed information about one part of the value circle for this research.

The refined value theory by Schwartz (2012) fulfilled the purposes of this research and our research included 13 main values listed below. More narrow subcategories of these main values were excluded as for this purpose, it was not necessary to discover the subtle differences of the main values. The main values used in the research are listed below with their motivational goals defined for each value.

TABLE 1. The main human values used in this research with their motivational goals. (Schwartz et al 2012.)

<b>1. Self-Direction</b>	Independent thought and action; choosing, creating, exploring.
<b>2. Stimulation</b>	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.
<b>3. Hedonism</b>	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
<b>4. Achievement</b>	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
<b>5. Power</b>	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
<b>6. Security</b>	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.
<b>7. Conformity</b>	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
<b>8. Tradition</b>	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
<b>9. Benevolence</b>	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the „in-group“).
<b>10. Universalism</b>	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.
<b>11. Face</b>	Security and power through maintaining one’s public image and avoiding humiliation
<b>12. Humility</b>	Recognizing one’s insignificance in the larger scheme of things.
<b>13. Universalism-nature</b>	Preservation of the natural environment.

The order of the values in the circle matters (see figure 3). The values next to each other are compatible whereas the value on the opposite side of the circle is a conflicting value. The values are also placed by the focus on personal values versus social outcomes. In addition, one of the contrasting factors is self-protection and avoiding anxiety versus the values that express anxiety-free growth. The values have also been divided into four sets of values that differ from each other: values that express self-transcendence versus self-enhancement and values that express openness to change versus conservation.

(Schwartz et al 2012.) Hence, as the circular structure explains the value relations, it is possible to draw parallels between values and attributes.



FIGURE 3. Proposed circular motivational continuum of 19 values with sources that underlie their order. (Schwartz et al 2012, 669).

Moreover, the attributes used in the research questionnaire are extracted from the values and follow the rules of the theory. The connection between image profile attributes and values derives from Schwartz' (2012) theory, where the sets of values are described as adjectives. These adjectives are placed in a questionnaire so that the adjectives are linked with a set of value. For example, attributes "emphatic, honest and loyal" will describe the value of benevolence. Benevolence belongs to the category of self-transcendence and it has a social focus more than a personal focus. Thus, if majority of the respondents will perceive volleyball to be i.e. honest and loyal sport, volleyball can be linked with the value of benevolence.

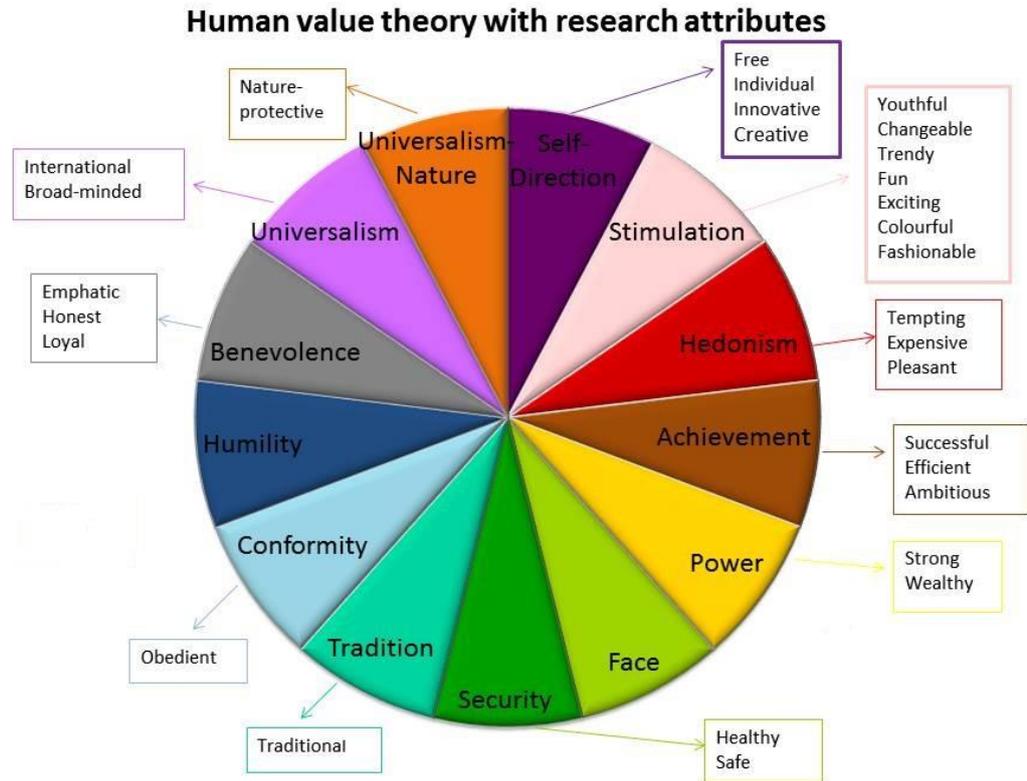


FIGURE 4. Human value theory added with research attributes (original figure from Schwartz 2012).

Values have been treated in the literature of management in three different ways according to Urde (2003): 1) values that are related to the organization 2) values that summarize the brand 3) values as they are experienced by customers. This thesis focuses more on the third way of looking at values. On the other hand, the values customers relate to the sport brand, could also summarize the brand of volleyball. Moreover, these values could be used as guiding values for the sport organizations among volleyball because organizations are the ones who make connections with customers. So by engaging and representing values of both for both, the organization and customers in target groups, have been stated to be required in order to develop a brand into a strategic resource (Urde 1999). This means that the brand would add value for the organization, work as a sustainable competitive advantage and as a differentiating factor (Urde 1999).

## 4.2 From values to needs and motivations

Values are stemming from needs so the link between needs, values and motivations needs to be elaborated. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1970), starting from the basic needs that include physiological needs (food, water etc.) and safety needs (security and safety). Next levels of needs are psychological needs (in the rising order) of belongingness and love needs (relationships) and esteem needs (prestige and feeling accomplishment). Lastly, on the top of the hierarchy lies self-fulfillment needs that are self-actualization needs such as achieving one's full potential and creative activities. (Maslow 1970).

These are the needs required for basic human life that serve as sources of values and motivations (Kotler 2003). It is stated that once the basic needs are fulfilled, then the needs of the upper levels can exist. This is used for example in business, if customers' economic situation is poor, they will put their money into the basic needs at level one such as food, not for example for things that can boost their self-esteem because the need for food is more urgent. Therefore, it may be smarter to focus to market self-esteem products and services for wealthier people.

Rokeach (1973) has stated that values serve attributions attached to individual needs. Moreover, the societal and institutional demands are transformed into values as they are cognitive representations of an individual (Rokeach 1973). Then motivations and values stem from needs and according to Kotler and Keller (2009); when need is aroused enough to force people to act, it becomes a motive. Motivations are more situational than needs or values (Rokeach 1973). Robbins and Judge (2014) also state that values are the foundation which attitudes, motivation and perceptions are further on build from or influenced.

Like mentioned, values can guide people to act or behave in a certain way as they are more central part of human beings (Schwartz 2004). The figure 4 demonstrates the relationship of needs, values and motivation, and the construction of behavior response that might as well be sport consumption. Thus, behavior response is an outcome of the process that happens behind the curtains.

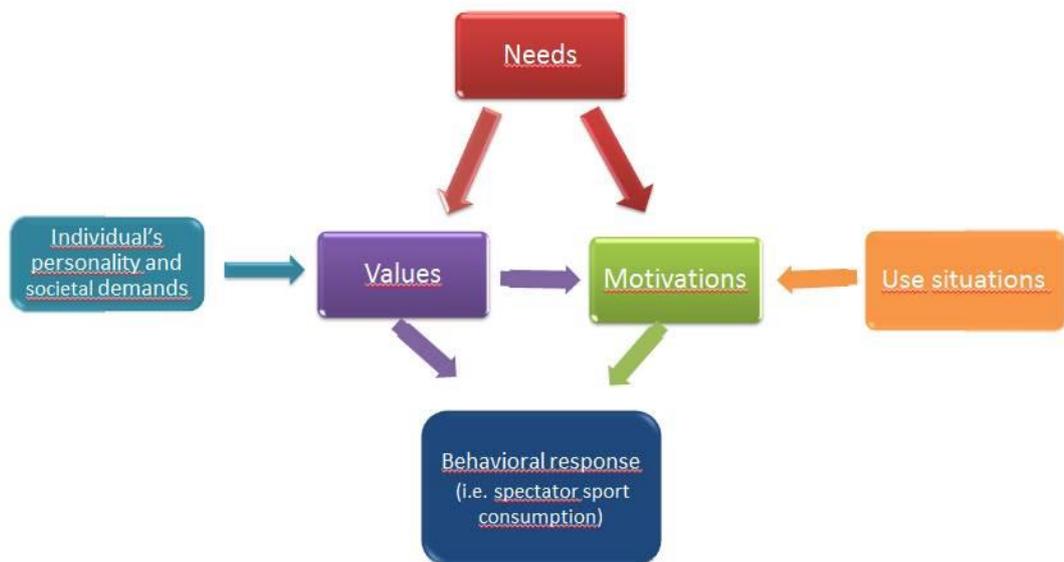


FIGURE 5. Relationships among needs, values and motivations. (See original figure Gau & James 2013.)

According to Kotler et al (2009, 164), there are core values that are passed from generation to another and reinforced by institutions such as schools and government. In addition, there are secondary beliefs or values that are more open to change. Marketers try to affect those beliefs. For example, believing in marriage as an institution is a core value and believing that girls should be married before turning 25, is a secondary belief. (Kotler et al 2009, 164.)

Thus, the capacity of values to influence the assessment and choices is suggesting that there is a relationship between values, attitude and behavior (Añaña & Nique 2007). For marketers for example, this relationship is intriguing since the aim is to influence human behavior/decision making. Hence, the values of spectators are expected to examine this relationship to better understand the motives for consuming sporting events and in this case, a volleyball event.

Rokeach (1973) believes that behavior is an integrative cognitive system which consists of beliefs, attitudes and values. So if there is a change in one part of the system, it also provokes other parts to change or at least affect by it. For example, marketers are often basing their actions on it since they aim to affect consumers' beliefs of certain product

or service. Añaña and Nique (2007) discovered that personal values have role in consumer perceptions which is an important note for this research as it aims to reveal the personal values of fans. In addition, Detert, Schroeder and Mauriel (2000) argue that there are gaps between espoused (written statements) organizational values and the values perceived by the stakeholders. Mentioned gaps could perhaps be filled more likely if the values of stakeholders would be known and reflected then in espoused organizational values.

McShane and Steen (2009) (in MacIntosh & Spence 2012) stated that for organization leaders, knowing the values which guide the members of her/his organization is providing valid information about the desirable or even expected way of doing things. It is useful to know individual's values in an intercultural setting because values might work as a unifying or conflictive factor (MacIntosh & Spence 2012). International volleyball event is indeed a cross-cultural setting. Considering volleyball environment to be like any other working environment, values are important keys to understand and facilitate human conduct (Dolan & Garcia 2002).

In addition, leadership is stated to be a dialogue about values at its most fundamental which calls for the knowledge about values (Dolan & Garcia 2002). According to MacIntosh & Spence (2012), knowledge about values can help leaders to understand the members' preferred way of behavior. Furthermore, as this paper attempts to discover the values of fans and also values attached to the sport by fans, it can have similar implications. Although personal values will not be able to explain every consumer behavior action, they do have proven to be salient influence on consumption behavior (Shao 2002).

### **4.3 Values and motivation in sports**

There is some existing literature about values and sports but research about human values and volleyball or about the image profile of volleyball were not found. Values and sports are often mentioned together discovering different motivational factors for fans to attend the events (i.e. Trail & James 2001). Sometimes in terms of the outcomes of doing sport is seen, for example "social values of sport participation" (Rajmund, Dorota & Waldyslaw 2012). Sport and values are often also seen together in terms of ethics; there values are often expressed through sport which touches many ethical

issues, such as equality (genders, nationalities, races etc.) (Davis 2001). In addition, a few studies about personal values' impact on sport participation and spectatorship can be found (Lee & Trail 2013).

Kahle et. al. (2001) discovered that values between genders differed significantly among sport fans. The research was done by assessing the social values of women's and men's basketball fans and it resulted in variations in fan motivations (Kahle et. al. 2001). Bilyeu and Wann (2002) discovered gender differences in sport fan motivations as well. They suggest males having higher economic motivation and females higher family motivations (Bilyeu & Wann 2002).

Funk (2008) suggested a model for sport and event consumer motivation process. Funk (2008) states that people participate or watch sport event because the act of doing so has certain outcomes that are attractive to the person. In other words, through acquisition it is possible to receive the desired benefit or an internal need. The stages are need, tension, drive, want, and goal (see the figure 5). Need recognition state includes recognizing the need. Tension reduction refers to the unpleasant feeling that one wishes to reduce. It will drive the person then to act in order to reduce or remove the tension to restore balance which is the drive state. Want pathway illustrates the choice the person makes to reduce the tension. For example experiences, socio-cultural upbringing, values, personality etc. affect the choice making. Goal behavior is the last stage where the chosen consumption activity should fulfil the need and reduce tension.

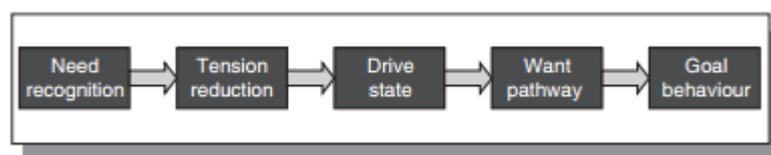


FIGURE 6. Sport and event consumer motivation process (Funk 2008).

Trail and James (2001) introduced a motivation scale for sport consumption in the perspective of psychometric properties. Different motivations of fans of different sports were also investigated by Wann, Grieve, Zapalac and Pease (2008). They discovered that there were many significant motivational differences among the sports and that the consumption of different sport types was characterized by different motivational

patterns. Based on earlier research on fan motives (e.g. Wann, Melnick, Russell & Pease 2001), Wann et. al. (2008) discovered eight motives that are most often mentioned among fans: escape, economic, eustress, self-esteem, group affiliation, entertainment, family, and aesthetics.

Humans are social beings and sport fandom can aid to fulfil the human need for social interaction by providing a sense of belongingness. The family motive is similar to the group affiliation motive and it involves a wish to spend time with the family members in a sport setting. Aesthetic motives involve a desire to be a fan of certain sport due to its artistic beauty or grace of sport movements. Self-esteem motive is a common motive and it concerns the people's desire to participate in a sport as a fan since it makes them feel better about themselves. Economic motivation refers to for example gambling where an individual can gain monetary advantage of being a fan and trying to predict the results.

The eustress motive is the consequence of the lack of stimulation in people's lives and they gain more excitement through sport fandom. Eustress means a positive form of arousal and stimulation. The escape motive is another popular one that allows individuals to forget their daily troubles and routines and participate in sport events. It might be due to the overstimulative (to relieve the stress) or understimulative (to relieve boredom) situations of their lives that makes them wish to escape from their daily life for a moment. Sport spectating can also be one form of entertainment so the motive to be a fan often is to experience entertainment through fandom. (Wann et al 2001, 31-41.)

Fans' motivations to consume sports differ also depending on the features of sport (Wann, Schrader & Wilson 1999) and the sport (McDonald, Milne & Hong 2002). Wann, Schrader and Wilson (1999) discovered that there were different motivation factors for consumers to choose either aggressive or non-aggressive sport, or individual or team sport. McDonald, Milne and Hong (2002) discovered that there are motivational differences across sports. Their research focused on nine different sports and for example, fans of golf had high levels of aesthetic motivations. Findings indicate that the motivational patterns to follow team sports are eustress, self-esteem, group affiliation, entertainment and family.

These kinds of insights matter because if consumers want to consume sport because of certain motivation, i.e. to spend time with family and friends, they are more likely to

choose sport that offers such interactions as a norm. (McDonald, Milne & Hong 2002.) Additionally, Gladden and Funk (2002) talk about utilitarian and hedonic motives in sport context. Utilitarian motives refer to the objective for tangible benefits of a product/service (i.e. stadium, purchase cost) and hedonic are then the intangible benefits (i.e. social belongingness, excitement). Thus, these unique aspects of sport context should be understood by marketers and integrating them into strategies so that these benefits could be realized through sport consumption.

Racial differences among sport fan motivations were investigated by Bilyeu and Wann (2002) and they concluded that African Americans have higher overall sport fan motivation than European Americans. African Americans were noticed to have also higher self-esteem motivation and family motivation than European Americans.

Kim, James and Kim (2013) suggested a model for relationships between sport consumer motives, spectator commitment and behavioral intentions. According to the model, sport consumer motives can be segmented into three categories. First one is hedonic motives that include aesthetics, drama, escape, physical attraction, physical skill, family, and social interaction. Second segment is psychological connection motives which comprises of achievement, team effort, and team affiliation. Social influence motives are the third segment that means the social pressure from family and peers. These segments explain the type of commitment that sport consumers have. For example, the reason to support a local team may relate to satisfying the psychological need of achievement. (Kim, James & Kim 2013.)

Kim, James and Kim (2013) also suggest that hedonic motives relate strongly to affective commitment, which reflects a positive emotional attachment to a sport or team. Therefore, investigating fan values might reveal some hedonic motives among volleyball fans which then can reflect the emotional attachment to volleyball. Moreover, after knowing the motives of volleyball fans, this model could be utilized if wanted to investigate the different drivers of commitment by placing the discovered motives into this model.

Neale and Funk (2006) discovered that team interest, vicarious achievement, excitement and player interest predicted the levels of loyalty of spectators attending an Australian Football League game. In addition, vicarious achievement, player interest, entertainment value, drama and socialization were factors that predicted game-day

attendance (Neale & Funk 2006). This research aims at discovering motivational factors related to volleyball since they have not been researched before.

Research about sport fans has also been linked with sport consumption. Gau's (2007) research revealed that sport spectators are likely to experience something relevant to some values through sport consumption but it did not mean constant associating with the value of spectator sports. Shao (2002) discovered that the List of Values partially predicted spectator sport consumption. Sport fan behavior study by Park, Mahony and Kim (2011) aimed at investigating factors that influence individuals to consume sport. Their results suggest that curiosity can be considered to be a major motivator of human exploratory behavior. Moreover, since sport situations elicit more curiosity by nature, curiosity may be helpful in understanding sport fans. (Park, Mahony & Kim 2011.) According to Shao's (2002), there were differences in values between American and Taiwanese nationalities which further on had remarkable effect on sport consumption patterns.

These findings demonstrate the importance of understanding possible cultural differences and values in the global world of sports. The mentioned studies are interesting for this research since they illustrate that knowing the values of your consumers has many implications. Thus, research discovering the general values of a certain sport perceived by fans were not found, nor research about volleyball fans' values, needs, consumption or motivations.

## **5 BRAND IMAGE – ONE KEY TO SUCCESS IN SPORTS**

Next chapter defines a brand and explains the brand image theory by Keller because it is one of the fundamental theories of this research. Later on, the brands in sports are introduced.

### **5.1 What is a brand?**

Brand is “a name, symbol, logo, design or image, or any combination of these, which is designed to identify the product or service” (Kotler et. al. 2009, 425). Keller (1993) calls these brand components as “brand identities” and their unity as “the brand”. When buyer or user considers a brand to have unique, sustained added value in addition to the need, brand is identifiable and therefore, also successful. Thus, brand’s function is to distinguish a particular product or service from its competitors. Branding, therefore, is the work done for a product or service to become a brand or strengthen the brand (Kotler et. al. 2009, 245.) One very well-known example of successful brands is Nike. People recognize Nike’s clothes and apparel already when they see the “Swoosh” that is the well-known logo of Nike and often choose Nike over other labels.

Definition of a sport brand is similar to a brand. Sport brand is according to Shank (1999, 239) “a name, design, symbol, or any combination that a sports organization uses to help differentiate its product from the competition”.

Aaker (2002) states branding to be development, building, management, and measurement of brand equity. Moreover, brand equity is then the added value attached to the brand’s name etc. (Aaker 2002). Brand equity is a set of assets that provide more value to the consumers’ of the brand. The major assets are brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations. (Aaker 2002.)

Keller (1993) introduced the conceptualization of brand knowledge where customer based brand equity is defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand”. Keller’s theory (1993) bases on Aaker’s (1991) conceptual framework of brand equity which measures brand equity as advantages and disadvantages that customer relates to a brand. The value of a product or

service can either be created or weakened depending on the advantages or disadvantages. Thus, customer-based brand equity exists when consumer is aware of the brand and has some favorable, strong and unique brand associations in memory. (Keller 1993.) Keller (1993) justifies this theory by stating that brand strategies should be shaped by the content and structure of memory for the brand that consumers have. It will also strongly affect the effectiveness of the marketing strategies.

Keller's (1993) theory of customer-based brand equity fits with this research because it is more detailed than other brand equity models and offers more insights about consumers' knowledge structures that form a basis for brand equity (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008). In addition, Keller's (1993) key ideas have been used also before in team-sport research (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008.) Since this research is a team-sport setting as well and aims to discover insights of consumers and brand image, Keller's (1993) concept was selected.

## **5.2 Building the brand image**

By constructing a strong brand image, i.e. sport marketers can enhance sport consumers' preference and loyalty which means strong, positive and unique beliefs about the brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler 2008). The brand knowledge theory by Keller (1993) is one popular theory that explains the ways to build a strong brand image.

Brand knowledge is defined by two components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness means the recalls and recognitions of the brand by consumers. Brand image is the associations related to the brand that consumers have in their memory. Brand nodes in memory link to variety of associations and these associations form the brand knowledge. (Keller 1993.) For example, if considering volleyball equipment, a consumer might think of Mizuno immediately because Mizuno's strong association to the product category. Moreover, next consumer's knowledge about Mizuno comes to mind, where i.e. logo, colorful shoes, good quality kneepads or even some images from past experiences and advertisements are thought and evaluated.

Awareness of a brand (brand recall and recognition) and favorability, strength and uniqueness of the brand associations in consumer memory affect consumer responses and distinguish brand knowledge. Brand recognition is the ability to recognize the brand

when given some cues. Thus, the consumer has seen or heard about the brand before. Brand recall means a situation where consumer can retrieve a brand from the memory without cues to fulfill a need in a right product category. Other characteristics and relationships are then affecting these dimensions, i.e. the congruity of brand associations. (Keller 1993.)

Building brand image is practically impossible without brand awareness. The brand node should first be established in consumers' memory so that the brand could exist. Consumer decision making process is affected by brand awareness in three different ways. Firstly, it is important to have brand awareness in consumers' minds in the right product category. Then the brand is also considered as a possibility to fulfil the need of this category. Secondly, if the brand is familiar, some consumers are more likely to purchase products from familiar and well-known brands. In addition, when consumers' involvement is low, some consumers' find it easy to go with already known and safe brands. Thirdly, the formation and strength of brand association in the brand image can be influenced by brand awareness which then can influence consumer decision making. (Keller 1993.) For these reasons, discovering the perceived image of volleyball is interesting as it should reveal what kind of attributes consumers attach to volleyball and what they expect from volleyball.

Brand image relates to "the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumers' memory" (Keller 1993). In addition to brand nodes, brand associations are the other source of meaningful information about the brand in consumers' minds. There are different levels of brand associations and Keller (1993) uses the level of their abstraction to distinguish them. In other words, how much information is summarized or subsumed in the association. (Keller 1993.)

*The first category of brand associations includes attributes.* They relate to the thoughts of the product or service by the consumer – what one thinks the product is/has and what is involved when purchasing it. Attributes are then distinguished to non-product related attributes and product-related attributes. Product-related attributes contain the necessary ingredients of the product to be able to perform or serve the function, such as physical composition or requirements for service. Non-product related attributes refer to the external aspects of the product or service that still relate to the purchase or consumption of the product/service including price information, packaging or product appearance

information, user imagery (i.e. what kinds of persons use the product) and usage imagery (i.e. where and when the product/service is mostly used). (Keller 1993.) Thus, this research focuses on user imagery as the goal is to discover human values of the users.

*Benefits are the second category of brand associations.* Benefits are defined as personal values and meanings that consumers attach to a brand's attributes. These attributes satisfy the underlying needs and wants of the consumer. (Keller 1993.) Consequently, the research questionnaire investigates the attributes fans relate to volleyball individually.

Benefits can be divided into three subcategories based on the motivations related to them: functional, experiential and symbolic benefits. So again, the motivational aspect of this research is brought up as also benefits are linked to motivations in addition to values. Howard (1977) discovered already in the 1970s that terminal values are essential for product class decision and that instrumental values determine the brand choice. It is important from the brand's perspective to know what your consumers think about your brand in addition to what they like and do not like.

Functional benefits are the more essential and basic needs that are fulfilled by the product or service, for instance safety need in Maslow's (1970) theory. In sports, functional benefit could be for example following a sport team since it can be a temporary escape from daily stress for people (Gladden & Funk 2002).

Experiential benefits are often compared to product-related attributes since they illustrate what it feels like to use the product or service. Thus, they fulfil experiential needs such as sensory pleasure and variety. According to Kaynak, Salman and Tatoglu (2008), nostalgia is one example of experiential benefit in sports as sport team can provide a source for nostalgia.

Lastly, symbolic benefits satisfy more extrinsic needs that relate to underlying needs for social approval, personal expression or outer-directed self-esteem. Additionally, symbolic benefits are often corresponding to non-product related attributes. Consumers' self-concept plays an important role in symbolic benefits as some products or services are purchased or consumed because of their value of prestige for example. (Keller 1993.) In sport, a sport or team can offer a way to for example comply oneself with

something successful when fan identification can be a symbolic benefit (Kaynak, Salman & Tatoglu 2008).

Since this research aims to discover attributes attached to volleyball by its fans, it should also be possible to discover what kinds of motivations volleyball offers for them. Thus, it can also reveal some symbolic and experiential benefits as they satisfy higher level needs in Maslow's (1970) hierarchy than functional benefits can satisfy. Functional benefits are often solved by consumption but experiential benefits are obtained from products which further can offer sensory and emotional pleasure. Spectatorship is not solving consumption-related problems so for that reason, it is more corresponding with experiential and symbolic benefits than functional (Bauer et. al. 2008). The information about the benefits and their characteristics helps the marketing professionals to meet the desires of potential and existing customers. So forth, the understanding of the reasons for sport consumer behavior should impact on sport marketing actions as a result.

Bauer et al (2008) identify the following symbolic benefits in team-sport spectatorship: pride in place, fan identification, and peer-group acceptance. Experiential benefits identified were nostalgia, escape, socializing and companionship, emotions and entertainment. The list of motives found in viewing sports can be broad as Bauer's research is not the only research done about benefits of sport spectatorship. Research by Bauer et al (2008) was referred here because of its' focus on team-sport spectatorship which relates then more closely to volleyball than other researches.

*Third category of brand associations is brand attitudes.* Keller (1993) defines brand attitudes as the overall evaluation of the brand in consumers' minds. Brand attitudes often determine also behavior since the attitudes can work as deciding factors if i.e. a brand is even considered as a possibility in the product category for the consumer. Attitudes might also be related to beliefs. As an example, sometimes consumers' decisions are less thoughtful and they might use more signals or extrinsic cues at the moment of purchase when strong brands usually are in favor. (Keller 1993.)

In addition, the favorability, strength and uniqueness will also affect the associations of a brand. "Favorability" means that associations are different based on how favorably they are evaluated by the consumer. Thus, if the attribute is important for the consumer, it is more likely to be rated very good (or very bad). Unimportant attributes are difficult

to get linked with favorable associations. (Keller 1993.) Strength of associations relates to the amount of the information and the nature of it. So forth, the strength depends on how the information enters consumers' memory (encoding) and how the consumer maintains the memory (storage). (Keller 1993.)

The uniqueness of associations refers to a situation where the brand has a competitive advantage or other unique selling proposition that guides the consumer to choose the brand over others. The uniqueness of brand association might be crucial for the success of the brand since it implies the superiority over other brands. These associations can be shared with competitors or linked with the product category of the brand. They may also be highlighted indirectly without comparisons to competitors or communicated clearly by comparing brands in the same product category. Therefore, unique association can be product-related attributes, non-product-related attributes or benefits (functional, experiential or image). (Keller 1993.)

The favorability, strength and uniqueness of brand associations should be affected by their qualitative nature and the abstract level of the brand associations. As an instance, unique associations might be created by image related attributes like user insights. (Keller 1993.) Therefore, it is of importance to discover insights of the user and attributes since the fans of volleyball might relate something unique to volleyball which can be utilized further on.

The cohesiveness of brand image is affected by the congruence of brand associations. Other brand associations will likely affect each other in the memory of the consumer and create expectations. (Keller 1993.) Thus, there are expectations linked with the associations that might determine consumer satisfaction, i.e. if volleyball shoes are marketed to have "high shock absorber and support", it could also be marketed as "safe" shoe rather than "cool" since the expectations of safe relate to shock absorber and support more than the looks or coolness of the shoe. Different associations marketed should therefore stay aligned and create cohesive brand image to better meet the expectations of consumers created by the existing attributes of the brand (Keller 1993). Here, the point is to discover the brand image of volleyball and personal values of the fans so that cohesive brand image building could be possible.

Figure 7 demonstrates the concept of brand knowledge theory by Keller and summarizes the discussion above. The light blue boxes illustrate the path and focus of this research.

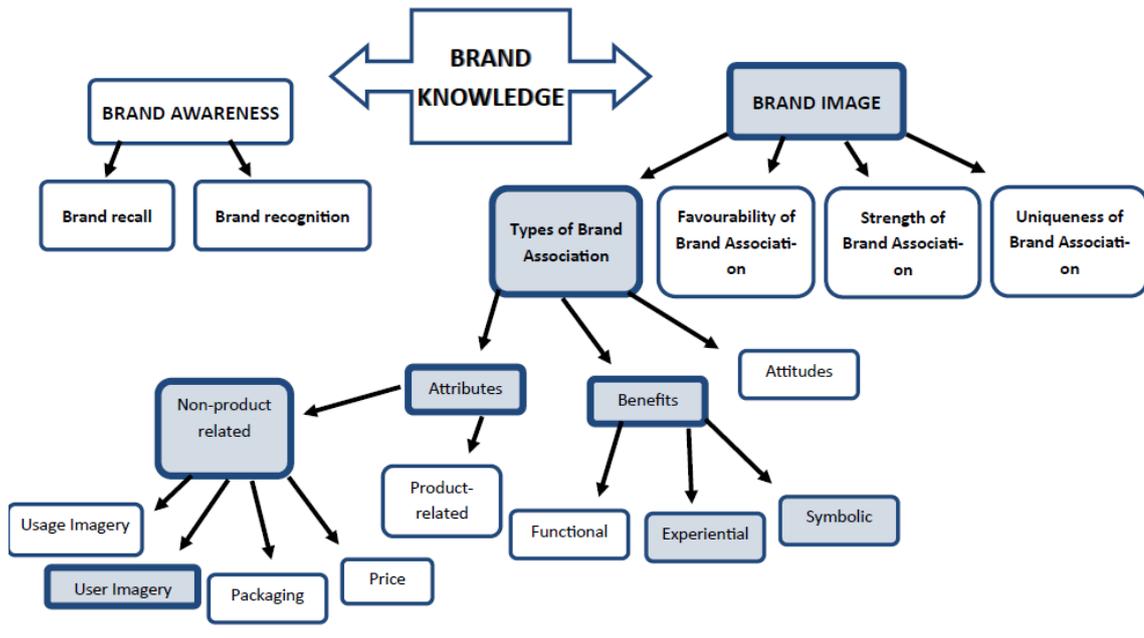


FIGURE 7. Brand Knowledge added with the path of this research marked in light blue. (See original figure Keller 1993).

It is proposed that after discovering the values of fans and the attributes of the sport, marketing communication messages, for example, could be better perceived by fans if values and advertising adjectives are aligned. Kahle et al (2001) also claim that further on, efforts to measure advertising or communication effectiveness would improve since it is possible to assess how successfully advertising ties their messages to the personal or group values of the target market. Opposite values might also draw the attention of consumers but it seems unlikely for consumers to choose a product that contradicts with their personal values at the end. (Kahle et al 2001.) For example, Clow et. al. (1997) discovered that image was one of the most important antecedents of customer expectation towards a sport organization. Therefore, as brand image is created in consumers' minds as attributes related to the brand/sport (Kotler et al 2009), knowing what motives consumers expect the sport to fulfil is important when wanted to meet with those expectations. That is why investigating the image attributes of the sport is of importance.

### 5.3 Brands' role in the sports

Smart (2005), states that sport turning into business is not only about the business values intruding into the world of sport but also about sport events and participants becoming commodities. So forth, for example branding, that is originally known from the business world, entered the world of sports and there was no turning back. Sport events, sport clothing companies, athletes can for example be brands. Moreover, every sport is a brand and has image attributes (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999) and this research aims at discovering those image attributes of volleyball perceived by fans.

Consumption is nowadays one form of self-expression. Values inherent of sport strongly influence people and their behavior, also at family level and even at the generation level, touching the areas of social life (Gómez, Kase and Urrutia 2010, 16). There seems therefore be different meanings behind different consumptions and brands are often used as symbolic resources to construct and maintain identity. Strong brands have been identified to evoke feelings such as belonging, love and affection and associations of emotional responses to brands. (Kotler et al 2009.) Kwak, Kim, and Hirt (2011) discovered that emotions were a significant motivator of information processing and behavior among sport spectators. So it could be claimed that brands are a major part of modern people's lives since they are surrounded by strong brands.

Sport events as a consumption platform can work also as a form for self-expression. This is researched by Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) and according to them, brand attributes and personality can reinforce the self-concept of the consumer. It means that if brand could provide opportunities to reinforce the perceptions consumers have or desires to have of themselves, consumers can identify themselves better with a brand. Thus, if the characteristics of volleyball could be transferred to consumers, consumers would feel more positive about the brand.

Brand image can be of importance in sponsorships as the image of sport organizations can be leveraged to create value (Ferrand & Pages 1999). Also Madrigal (1999) claims that positive image of a sporting event would motivate consumers to purchase sponsors' goods and services. In addition, the linked sport brand image and sponsoring's brand image can affect each other according to Gwinner and Eaton (1999).

Loyalty and branding in sport has been researched earlier. For example, Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler (2008) examined the link between brand image and loyalty and concluded that brand image has a significant role in fostering loyal fan behavior. Moreover, they (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler 2008) discovered that brand-image model should incorporate causalities among brand attributes, benefits and attitudes which is an important note also for this research. Hedlund (2011) concludes that brand awareness and brand associations will lead to stronger feelings of loyalty and “eventually increased intentions to purchase sport brand/team merchandise”. Brand associations are predictive of brand loyalty in professional sports also according to Kaynak, Salman and Tanoglu (2008) who investigated a link between associations and loyalty.

Hedlund’s (2011) findings indicate that the more a consumer feels that the sport brand (i.e. a team) shares common attributes, such as benevolence, with oneself, the more loyal they are or become. It is based on the fact that the sport team or brand can then reflect the perceived self-identity of the consumer. Unique attributes and benefits are associated with sport team brands so they will be helpful for the creation of content for promotion and advertising (Gladden & Funk 2002). Additionally, one key predictor of sport consumption behavior was team identification (Kim & Trail 2010). These points highlight the importance of knowing consumers’ associations about the brand, because it is researched to have a strong influence of identification with the brand.

As consumers assign meaning to their sport experience, their image of the sport experience and any brand extensions (e.g. players, team, sport organization) of the sport experience are formed. Consumers gain knowledge and experience with an object, and then an image of the object is formed in the mind of consumers. When the image is better understood by marketers and other practitioners in the field, satisfying the consumers should be more likely. Hedlund (2011) argues that consumers, who are satisfied by the sporting event, would also intend to share positive word-of-mouth and plan to re-attend the event in the future. All in all, there is strong support that knowing the brand image is of importance also in the sport world. So the results of this research are meaningful and interesting for volleyball as they could be used for many purposes.

The figure 7 demonstrates the brand relations in this research and is based on the brand ideology of Aaker (2002). A major brand forms the expectations to the subbrands as the

attributes etc. are, first of all, related to the major brand (Aaker 2002). The subbrand includes the important factors of an event such as game attendance and merchandise consumption. Both attendance and purchase behaviors are important sources of revenue for sport organizations. The master brand, volleyball, is in the research focus as the idea is to find out the attributes of the brand. The image of sport experience and any brand extensions (i.e. sport organization) of the experience are formed when consumers are assigning meaning to the sport experience. So when consumers experience the object, subbrand, they also form an image of it which may affect the master brand as well.

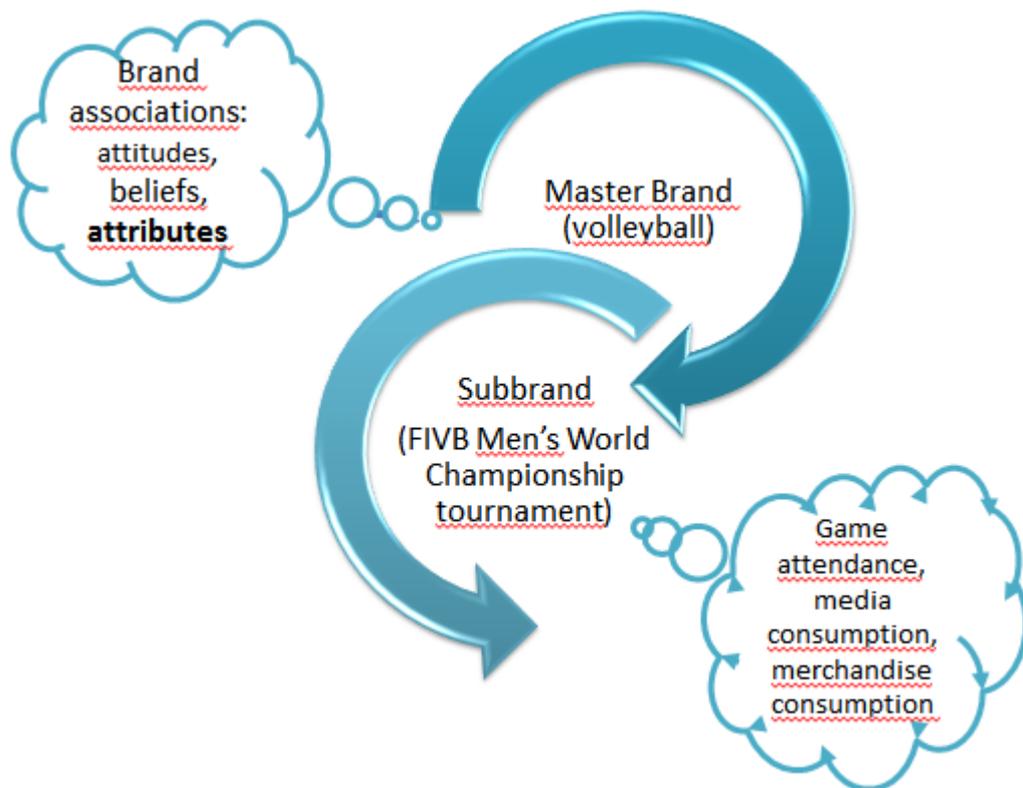


FIGURE 8. The relationship of master and subbrand added with the research topics. Based on Aaker (2002).

## **6 VOLLEYBALL – A POPULAR TEAM SPORT**

In this chapter, firstly, the origins of volleyball will be complied, and secondly, moving on the previous research findings and fan cultures in volleyball and the sport in Poland where the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014 was held.

### **6.1 Short history of volleyball**

Volleyball is the most played team sport in the world. There are 800 million players worldwide who play volleyball at least once a week. Its roots reach back to 1890s when it was invented by William G. Morgan in the USA. He used ideologies of tennis and handball as a basis for developing volleyball which was called as mintonette in the first place. Volleyball was supposed to be less physically demanding than basketball so it would pull more people into play. The name was changed from mintonette to volleyball in 1896 and the game started to spread quickly outside of the USA as well. First it spread to Cuba with military, then Japan, China and Philippines. During the first World War volleyball was played among American and British servicemen and it also spread into Europe and Africa. The first official international game was played in 1935 when the U.S.S.R and Afghanistan played against each other. (Saliba 2004, 9-11.)

In 1947 the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) was established which is the governing body of volleyball still. Then the rules were unified to match worldwide: court size 18\*9m, net height 2,43m for men and 2,24m for women. These rules still apply today. Now everything was set up for the official international games. The first European Championships were held in Rome in 1948 and first World Championships right at the following year in Prague. Women came right after men having their first World Championships in 1952 in Moscow, Soviet Union. It took a little longer to get to the Olympics which happened in 1964. The game was also developing quite much during those times and it started to attract more spectators. Volleyball became increasingly popular at professional level and in 1990, the first World League for men was formed. Women's equivalent league was formed in 1993, called The Grand Prix. (Saliba 2004, 12-13.)

In 1993 FIVB became the largest sports organization in the world with 210 affiliated member associations. Federations included are located the following way: 53 in Africa, 65 in Asia, 56 in Europe, 34 in NORCECA and 12 in South America. Today, FIVB has 220 affiliated federations and manages world class events such as the World Championships, Olympics, World League, Club World Championships and also similar events in beach volley. (FIVB History 2011). The core function of FIVB is to provide leadership to over 500 million players and 33 million licensed athletes (About FIVB 2014). Thus, volleyball is played in all continents and in several countries which makes it also internationally remarkable and popular sport.

The event, FIVB Men's World Championship, is the oldest and most important of all events arranged by the FIVB. Volleyball was accepted into Olympics in 1964 and the tournament was scheduled to alternate the Summer Olympics and to be held in every two years. In 1970 also Africa as a continent participated in the competition and so all the continents were involved. As a competition, it is the second most valued tournament after the Olympics which still beats World Championships by its prestige. The amount of teams allowed in the competition was set to 24 in 2002 from the 16 teams in 1990 due to the popularity of the sport. (FIVB History 2011; World Championships.)

The previous research on volleyball is concentrated on the physical side of the sport, only a few researches considered other matters such as sport management in volleyball and fan culture. Zetou etc. (2013) investigated the role of fan involvement with volleyball and their behavior in Greece. They discovered that loyalty was positively correlated with involvement. Another research was about intercollegiate women's volleyball spectators and it dealt with sociodemographics, market demand and consumption. The results were that market demand factors were positively predictive of the game consumption factors and that there is a need to emphasize these factors when marketing intercollegiate women's volleyball games. (Zapalac, Zhang & Pease 2010.) A couple of less scientific news and articles were found about the values and branding of FIVB but they do not fill the criteria of trusted scientific research so that they could be included as sources in master's thesis.

## 6.2 Volleyball's role in Poland and in Finland

The FIVB Men's World Championships 2014 was held in Poland and it was a right choice to let the Polish to host the tournament. Poland has been successful in volleyball history, both in men and women. In fact, Poland is holding the third place in world rankings at the moment in men (FIVB Senior World Ranking – Men). The strong history in volleyball in Poland can be deduced also from the fact that Poland was one of the founders of the FIVB in 1947 (Polska Siatkówka – History).

Volleyball was however played in Poland earlier than 1947 and the first national Championships were organized in 1929 for both genders. In the 30s some international relationships with other Baltic clubs were established and international competitions were held after the Second World War in 1948. Interestingly, women made their debut two weeks earlier than men. 1970s was successful time for Polish men's volleyball team when they won World Championships 1974 in Mexico and Olympic Games in 1976 in Montreal. Furthermore, Men National Team five times obtained title of the European Vice-Championship (1975, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983). Over the last decade, Polish Volleyball Federation has said to have a leading role in increasing the popularity of volleyball. It has had several international competitions to hold and works as an active member of European volleyball family according to its own words (Polska Siatkówka – History.)

The FIVB Men's World Championship 2014 tournament atmosphere was praised by many. The event broke previous spectator records clearly by having 563, 236 spectators during the 23 days. In Italy four years ago the amount of spectators was 339 324 and Japan in 2006 totaled 298, 352. The capacity of Katowice hall was not big enough when Poland made its way to the finals. 12, 528 fans made it to the hall despite the fact that the maximum capacity was 11, 000. 15, 000 spectators followed the game outside the arena from big screens set up for them. The tournament got a happy ending when Poland won the title by beating the number one in the world, Brazil, in the finals (Record numbers watch Poland triumph). Thus, volleyball is one of the most popular and successful sports in Poland. Its role has risen also in Finland as a sport.

Finns started to play volleyball in 1920 and the volleyball committee of Finland was accepted as a member of the FIVB in 1957. The Finnish Volleyball Federation was

established two years later in 1959. There were 118 000 volleyball players in Finland in 2009-2010 and the biggest outdoor volleyball tournament, Power Cup, is arranged in Finland every year. The popularity of volleyball has risen in Finland at least partly due to the success of Finnish men's national team. The latest success story is from the last year when Finland reached respectively ninth place in the World Championships 2014 and is currently ranked as 17<sup>th</sup> (FIVB Senior World Ranking – Men). Volleyball is now the third most interesting team sport in Finland and World League is the second most interesting sport event for Finns after Ice Hockey tournament called Karjala which is an improvement from previous years (Lentopallo on kolmanneksi kiinnostavin palloilulaji). These rankings demonstrate the trend that volleyball is getting more attention in the media and is raising its popularity in Finland.

## **7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN A NUTSHELL**

As a summary of the theoretical background, the introduced theories (human value theory, consumer behavior theory and consumer-based brand equity) support the plot of this research that human values of people are the basis for motivations and can further on predict consumption. Aroused needs lead to motivations that are affected by different situational factors and ultimately, cause behavioral response like consumption (Gau & James 2013). The personality of an individual and also the societal demands do have an effect on values of one as well. This pattern can be found from the figure 4 (p. 26).

Therefore, it is interesting to discover which kinds of associations consumers relate to volleyball and evaluate the image of volleyball by consumers. In addition, the user's value profile might reveal insights that can help in the formation of a certain kinds of groups of volleyball fans (also called as segmentation in marketing). When connections between values and attributes are discovered, also some motivational factors to watch volleyball could be deduced. This should be possible based on the findings in the theoretical part (i.e. Gau & James 2013). So the motivations that volleyball can satisfy (based on the attributes it has) correspond with the image of the sport in consumers' minds. The figure 9 illustrates the relations of the theories and research focus.

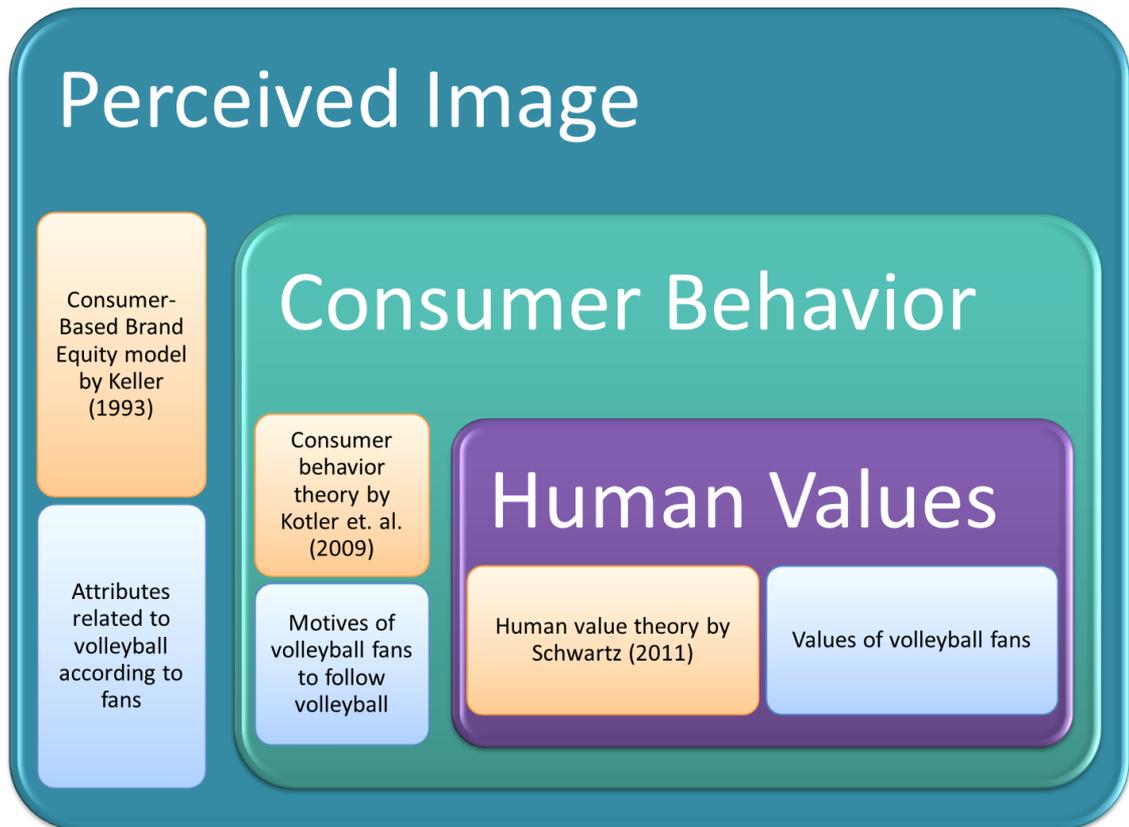


FIGURE 9. Conclusion of the theoretical framework in relation to the research problem of the thesis.

## **8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

The research question of this study is “What kind of values and attributes volleyball provides from the fans’ perspective in FIVB Men’s World Championships 2014?” The sub research questions are the following:

1. Which are the most common attributes that fans associate to volleyball?
2. Which are the most common motives of the fans to follow volleyball?
3. Which are the most common personal values of the volleyball fans?

The purpose of this research is to provide meaningful information about associations attached to volleyball by the actual consumers of the sport. These consumers are classified as fans. They follow the sport and at the same time create an environment surrounding the sport as they consume it. For instance, Keller (1993) argues that the image of a brand equals the perception its’ consumers have in their minds. Therefore, this paper will also hopefully reveal the perceived image of volleyball from fans’ perspective. This research bases on Keller’s brand knowledge theory (1993) which shows the pathway in the creation of a brand image according to the perceptions of the brand (volleyball) by its consumers (fans).

By investigating the attributes with the help of refined Human Value Theory by Schwartz (2006), there is a possibility to deepen the understanding of what kind of motives and values are related to volleyball according to fans. Additionally, the aim is to discover personal values of the fans and gain more knowledge about volleyball fans. This paper therefore deals with matters of psychological and social drivers of consumer behavior. The hypothesis of this research is that volleyball fans attach certain attributes to volleyball that are experienced as expectations and as fulfilled motives in the Men’s World Championships 2014. The figure 10 is demonstrating the research process.

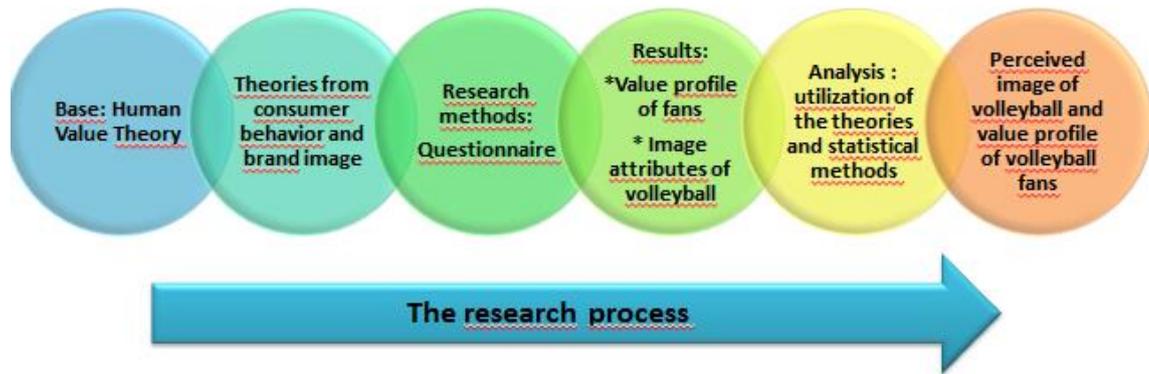


FIGURE 10. The research process of the thesis.

The research aims are related to the investigation of individuals interacting in a social context of sport event. It is linked to social influence which then refers to constructivist view of reality as the reality is understood to be socially constructed according to the world view (Smith 2010, 8). The aim of the study is to discover the brand image perceived by volleyball fans. Thus, the interpretivist epistemological position is appropriate. Results via interpretative approach are not perhaps generalizable to other settings as such but it allows me to describe and explain the relationship between the consumers and the sport. The chapter below explains in detail why the research strategy of this paper will be a survey, research design a case study and method will be a questionnaire.

This study investigates the brand image of volleyball through attributes and values by utilizing the brand image theory by Keller (1993). Values are explored because they are considered as motivational factors in behavior (Schwartz 2006). This research is supposed to broaden the understanding about volleyball fans and how they perceive the sport, volleyball. Therefore, the design of this research has descriptive features as it describes past or present day situation and investigates the relationships between variables (Tenenbaum & Driscoll 2005, 75) which in this case is the situation of volleyball at the moment of the event.

Moreover, because this thesis examines the characteristics of a population (people surrounding volleyball), it fits with the survey research approach which takes the form of a questionnaire wherein different factors are statistically compared and analyzed

(Smith 2010, 29.) Survey is aimed at discovering attributes of the larger population of which the individuals are members of (Smith 2010, 105). Thus, because the opinions and values of the fans of volleyball are going to be examined, survey research strategy is suitable.

The answers for the research questions should be possible to be discovered through a well-planned questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire gives answers about the image of volleyball which answers to the research sub question number 1. The second page investigates the fans' personal values that provide answers to the research sub question number 2 as values are motivationally distinct in Schwartz (2012) theory. Third part of the research is to analyze these results from the perspective of brand image theory (Keller 1993) and consumer behavior theory (Kotler et. al. 2009) and comprise the perceived brand image of volleyball.

Different attributes of the sport and values of the respondent can be investigated via questionnaire and it also allows us to collect quite large amount of data. Using a questionnaire as an instrument links the study to a quantitative methodological position (Smith 2010, 42.) Additionally, this research is about gaining information about a particular event (FIVB Men's Volleyball Championships 2014) and fans of the event, and therefore has also qualities of a case study. A case study as a research design is appropriate for this research as people interpret events in their lives differently and questionnaires can be used to investigate them. A case study also allows me to collect information about these sources of social reality (world of volleyball) and then gives tools for further analysis and interpretations.

The research form follows the features of **quantitative research** where the emphasis is on formalized questions and predetermined response options. The quantitative part of the research aims at revealing the attributes of volleyball and values of volleyball fans. The objective is to reveal important features of the nature of volleyball.

The survey research strategy fits with the needs of the research as it is possible to collect information about the attributes and values with a questionnaire. In addition, a large number of people will be surveyed when quantitative data analysis is considered more suitable. (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2006, 171.)

## 8.1 Data collection

The data collection technique is questioning since the research is done by asking questions (Tenenbaum & Driscoll 2005, 103). This particular research questionnaire was used because it had already been validated in different events by the Sport Business School Finland and was perceived to provide meaningful information on sport fans and their values. It has been used for example in UEFA Euro Cup 2012 in Poland, Ice Hockey World Championships 2012 in Finland, so the pattern of the research is well established and is appropriate for this study. The questionnaires were collected by using iPad devices thus the answers will straight away be saved to the device and the possibility of human error is therefore diminished.

The research questionnaire (see appendices 1-3) is based on Schwartz' refined value theory (2012). Thus, the variables to describe volleyball are derived from human values (which values does he/she attach to volleyball) and these characteristics of the sport were asked on the first page. At the beginning of the first page the respondents were asked to fill their nationality, age and gender. Next respondents moved on to determine the attributes of volleyball where they were given 40 different adjectives and to choose how well this word described volleyball in their opinion. The alternatives were from one to seven, one to be "not relation at all" and seven "strong relation to volleyball". Therefore, the scale followed the 7-point Likert scale which has proven to be distinct enough to separate the answers with human value theory (Schwartz et al 2012). Every respondent has their own opinion and it was highlighted before answering: there are not right or wrong answers.

The other side of the questionnaire is also based on the value theory where it is determined what kind of a person the respondent is (what values he/she considers important). The question on the second page is "How much is this person like you?" and a person is described e.g. "he/she likes to be in charge and tell others what to do". Here the respondents answer by ticking the alternatives that describe them the best. The alternatives differed between "not like me at all" and "very much like me". All respondents filled both sides of the questionnaire. This side of the questionnaire gives answers about the values of the respondents - each of the questions equals one value in Schwartz' value theory (2012). Therefore, the answers of the second page will create a value profile of the fans.

The data for the research was collected during 30.8.2014 and 8.9.2014. Thus, the data are collected at a single point of time when the design type is going to be cross-sectional (Smith 2010, 115). Collection took place at the Ergo arena in Gdansk where the games of the pool A were and nearby the Ergo arena. According to the previous experiences, collecting questionnaires is easier before the game and so it was also this time. During the match people are not eager to spend time with questionnaires and after the match they often leave quite soon.

The data collection method was face-to-face as all the surveys are done at a single point of time with the respondents. It provided a chance to contact with people and also check they understand everything. For instance, some of the respondents (majority) were not native English speakers. Thus, we often elaborated some of the attributes for the respondent so that he/she understood what i.e. the word “obedient” means.

Online questionnaires were collected by iPads which were borrowed from the JAMK University of Applied Sciences of Jyväskylä. Paper versions were also available if something went wrong with iPads but they worked fine. Possible issues with iPads are rainy weather and dying batteries so we took these concerns into consideration but luckily neither of them occurred. The paper versions were used mostly with Polish respondents as we got a translated version of the questionnaire in Polish during the tournament. Polish questionnaires helped the data collection remarkably as it was quite difficult to get Polish fans to answer questionnaires in English.

An advantage of face-to-face data collection is that researchers are able to monitor that respondents answer the questions when there are less responses to be disqualified. Additionally, we were able to build reports per day and adjust our goals accordingly. Mr. Risto Rasku from the JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä was the head of the research project. Osmo Laitila (master student in Haaga-Helia University and research assistant in the JAMK) acted as the research assistant in the project and monitored the response rates and the overall validity of the sample collected. Mr. Laitila could also disqualify some of the responses immediately if for example some vital information was missing or the questionnaire was otherwise incomplete or invalid. The major concerns of collecting data this way was the time consuming nature of the collection and the expenses of flying and accommodation for the entire trip. Both of the concerns stayed however reasonable and did not raise major issues.

The research group consisted five students from University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä (JAMK), one teacher from the JAMK, one research assistant from JAMK and myself from the University of Jyväskylä (JYU). All the members of the research group had been given training sessions by the JAMK and rehearsed conducting the surveys. Training increased the skills of the researchers and most likely had a positive impact on the response rates when e.g. approaching the respondents and communication with them was professional.

## **8.2 Participants/Data**

Volleyball and the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014 were the unifying factors of the event participants. The respondents of the survey were the spectators of the volleyball event and were chosen as they were considered to be the fans of this sport.

The target population of the sampling was not based on any certain fan profile of volleyball since this kind of information about volleyball fans was not found. Fans were picked for the survey based on the fact that they had bought a ticket for the event and seen a match/matches and therefore, considered to have an opinion about volleyball as a sport.

Samples were selected based on the needs of the research questions and included one basic respondent group (fans) so the sampling procedure is called non-probability sampling. Therefore, it can be stated that not everyone could have a similar chance to be picked for the survey. People had to be members of this group in order to be valid for the purposes of this research. (Smith 2010, 118-119; Tenenbaum & Driscoll 2005, 93.) A volunteer sampling was used because people were asked to volunteer for the survey. (Tenenbaum & Driscoll 2005, 96). However, it should be noticed that people participating the event are already a part of the target group.

### **8.3 Data analysis**

The aim of this analysis is to break down the massive and detailed data into understandable correlations and themes that are related to the research questions. In other words, data analysis is the process of finding relevant meaning and capturing the essence of the data. (Tenenbaum & Driscoll 2005, 105.)

The statistical analysis was conducted using Webropol surveys and analysis software. I had used it also in my bachelor's thesis and all the data from the collected on-line questionnaires is uploaded directly into the system when the respondent clicks "send" button. Thus, coding of the data has already determined and the codes are ready to be used as soon as the answers are saved to the system. The questionnaire included questions that are answered with scales. Each of the responses is allocated a logical numerical value, e.g. the option of "very much like me" has a numerical value of 6 and "not like me at all" has 1.

The data was checked for possible errors three times. First, the researchers checked the form that every point was filled and then the research assistant also checked the database and uploaded answers after each session. iPads as a collecting devices diminished the possibility of human error as it required answers to every point by offering alternatives to pick. Thus there should not be chances for e.g. making a keystroke mistakes or unreadable handwriting.

Data analysis is descriptive, and calculations of the data include the measures of tendency including means, standard deviations, modes and medians of the group. Then tables and bar charts were formed to demonstrate those results that offered explanations for the research questions.

Additionally, the answers of the respondents should be spontaneous because it was the highlighted before participating that there are no right answers, answers should be based only their own opinion and thoughts. The research group was also trained not to lead the respondents in any way. The presence of the researcher was essential because it often determined how successful the researcher was in getting a respondent to participate.

## 9 RESULTS

### 9.1 Description of the data

The total amount of questionnaires collected was 276. There were 184 of 193 respondents who answered their age and the average age of respondents was 36, 32. The median age was 31. The amount of male respondents was 148 (55, 02 %) and females 121 (44, 98 %). Seven respondents did not answer the question. See the Table 2.

TABLE 2. Descriptive table of the background variables of the respondents in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
Nationality Polish	143	55		
Nationality Finnish	98	36		
Nationality other	35	13		
Male	148	55		
Female	121	45		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	
Age	267	36	31	

Different nationalities among respondents in descending order were Polish (n=143), Finnish (n=98), German (n=23), Canadian (n=4), Swedish (n=2), Russian (n=2), Turkish (n=1), Norwegian (n=1), Dutch (n=1), and Mexican (n=1). Dividing fans to categories based on the most common nationalities, the following groups can be formed: Finnish fans (35, 51 % of the respondents), Polish fans (51, 81 % of the respondents) and other nationalities (12, 66 %). Some comparisons between these groups are made as these groups emerged from the results and it will be interesting to investigate if there are differences between nationalities.

There are a couple of reasons for the large amount of Polish and Finnish respondents. Firstly, the research group operated mainly in Gdansk, where pool C played. This pool included Russia, Mexico, Canada, Bulgaria, China, and Egypt and there were quite a few fans who came to support their national team from these countries. Timing of the data collection was another reason since the collection of the surveys happened during the first round games so they appeared to be less attractive for fans than expected. As

the sport is popular in Poland, most of the spectators and fans attending the first round games also in Gdansk were Polish, despite the fact that Polish national team did not play there.

The rich amount of Finns in the survey is due to the data collection in the city of Katowice where Finland played. Many Finns traveled to watch their national team play the first round games in Katowice, where two data collectors of the research team were sent to collect data. Ultimately, Finns became the second largest fan group by nationality in this research.

## **9.2 Volleyball is international, fun and exciting sport**

The most common attributes related to volleyball in the minds of all fans (n=276) were international (6,45), fun (6,33), exciting (6,22), ambitious (6,21), pleasant (6,2), successful (6,02), and strong (6,01) (Figure 11). The digits in the parenthesis are the average values of each attribute scored by the fans. These attributes were chosen to be mentioned because of scoring above the value of 6,0 out of 7. The lowest scored attributes were below the value of 3 and were in descending order: inefficient (2,53), formal (2,5), routine (2,37), weak (2,16) and boring (1,59). The attribute above inefficient was “expensive” that scored 3,14 so there was 0,61 units to distinguish the least popular attributes. The least related attributes were the same in all of the groups; only difference was other nationalities adding attribute “expensive” instead of “formal” in their listing. Thus, volleyball is not inefficient, formal, routine, weak or boring sport according to fans.

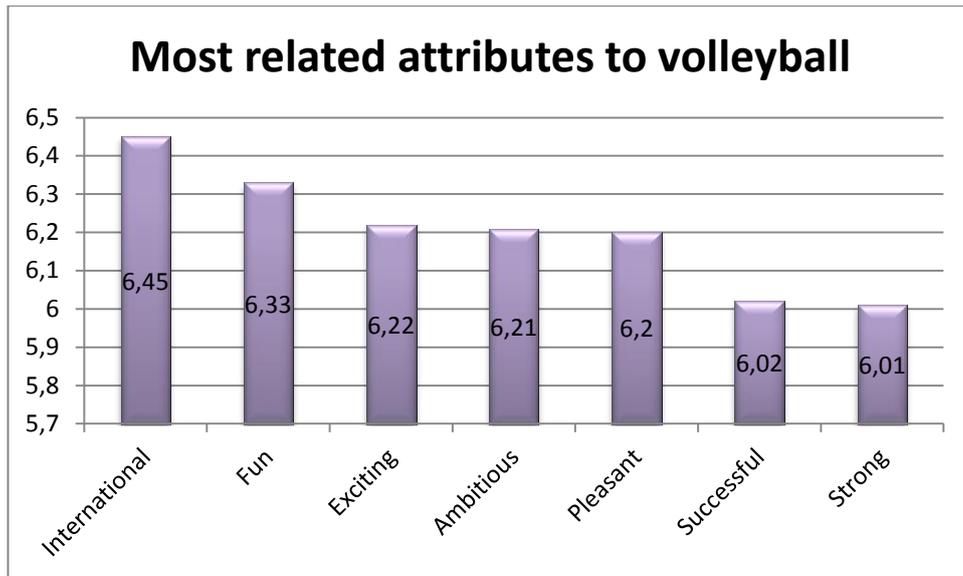


FIGURE 11. Most related attributes to volleyball by the fans in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

According to the results, fans perceive volleyball to be international, fun, exciting, ambitious, pleasant, successful and strong sport. Examining these attributes between the different nationality groups, some minor differences emerged. "International" attribute had a P-value of 0,008 when examining Polish and Finnish respondents. However, both of the groups perceived international to be the most related attribute of volleyball, the difference emerges between the digits where Finns valued international to be 6,68 and Polish 6,32.

Other statistically significant difference emerged with the attribute "exciting" where P-value was 0 when comparing Finnish and Polish. Polish gave exciting the average value of 5,96 which means that it is not the top 5 attributes of volleyball for Polish whereas Finns ranked exciting to be the second most related attribute to volleyball with the average value of 6,58. Again the attribute is still in the top five by both nationalities but the value is higher by the Finns, which separates them statistically from the Polish.

"Ambitious" attribute shows a difference in the groups as well when other nationalities' group gave the attribute an average value of 5,77 and it was placed eighth. Polish and Finnish fans related ambitious more strongly to volleyball as Polish' number was 6,29 (2<sup>nd</sup> most related attribute) and Finnish 6,26 (5<sup>th</sup> most related attribute). Therefore, the

P-value compared other nationalities to Finnish was 0,042 and to Polish 0,022. One possible reason to explain this could be that Polish have a reason be ambitious in this sport due to the success of Polish in volleyball when they relate ambitiousness more strongly to volleyball. The same could be said about Finns as well even though they have not been nearly as successful as Polish in volleyball but lately, the Finnish national team has been improving its performance and playing ambitiously to reach the top of the world. Probably also the fans who came to Katowice to support their country, believe and support the ambitious goal of the team to get to the Olympic games in Rio 2016 and can strongly relate ambitious to volleyball.

Another difference between the countries emerged with the attribute “pleasant” where the P-value between Polish and Finnish is 0,02. Finnish gave pleasant the average value of 6,49 and Polish 6,12. For Finns pleasant was the third most related attribute to volleyball and for Polish, the fourth. Thus, even though there is 0,37 difference in digits, pleasant is still ranked in top three attributes to describe volleyball by both of the nationalities. A bigger difference was in the other nationalities group that gave pleasant the average value of 5,71. Pleasant was only the tenth most related attribute for them, which explains the P-value of 0,001 compared to Finnish and 0,096 compared to Polish.

Male’s most common attributes related to volleyball that scored 6 or more were international (6,42), fun (6,22), exciting (6,13), and ambitious (6,01). Female’s equivalent attributes were pleasant (6,50), international (6,48), fun (6,46), ambitious (6,45), exciting (6,32), successful (6,27), and strong (6,20). Thus, female gave higher points in general and for more attributes than male (Figure 12).



FIGURE 12. The most related attributes to volleyball by genders that scored above the average value of 6, 00 in the FIVB Men’s World Championships 2014.

When exploring the most related attributes by all respondents (international, fun, exciting, ambitious, pleasant, successful, and strong) and comparing these attributes' based on how genders ranked them, some differences occurred. In the descending order male related these attributes to volleyball in the following way: international (6,42), fun (6,22), exciting (6,13), ambitious (6,01), pleasant (5,96), strong (5,85), and successful (5,83). Female's ranking of the same attributes is pleasant (6,50), international (6,48), fun (6,46), ambitious (6,45), exciting (6,32), successful (6,27) and strong (6,2). Only one attribute had the same place (ambitious in the 4<sup>th</sup> place), others differed from each other. International and fun were ranked in the top three by both genders (Figure 13).



FIGURE 13. The most related attributes to volleyball by all fans compared between genders in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

The most significant difference emerged with the attribute of pleasant which P-value was 0,0 when comparing genders with the top six attributes by all respondents. Males gave pleasant the average value of 5,96 and females 6,50. Other statistically significant differences emerged with ambitious (P-value 0,001), successful (P-value 0,002), strong (P-value 0,016), and fun (P-value 0,05). So it can be said that statistically there are significant differences between genders and the order of the attributes varies between genders also as it can be seen from the figures 12 & 13.

However, the same pattern can be perceived as between Finnish and Polish that the deviance in digits might be significant but still mostly the same attributes are ranked in the top by both genders when examining the attributes that had the highest scores by

them. Then international, fun, exciting and ambitious are in the top six attributes of both genders. From this perspective, the gender differences are minor.

### 9.3 Value profile of volleyball

Moreover, as the attributes were linked to the values of Schwartz' theory (2012), values behind the attributes can be discovered (Figure 4, p. 26). By making connections from the attributes to the values, it is possible to make assumptions of what kinds of experiences and matters fans are (probably) experiencing through volleyball since values are motivationally distinct and connected to different goals. In other words, some motivational cues might be discovered, what fans expect to experience when they attend a volleyball match.

Based on the results, fans relate the attribute of international to volleyball the strongest. The attribute *international* belongs to the universalism value category in Schwartz theory (2014), which allows some predictions to be made, based on the distinct, motivational goals of each value group. Universalism meant understanding, tolerating, appreciating, and protecting the welfare of all people and nature (Schwartz 2014). This could be understood as one goal that volleyball could fulfil when fans attend a volleyball event. *International* as a word has probably been related to the various nationalities that play volleyball in addition to the internationality of the sport. So the assumption could be that the fans think volleyball therefore is a sport that provides a link to the welfare of all people and especially nature. It is not the reason per se why they come to watch volleyball necessarily, but volleyball surely offers aspects of universalism as it is played in all the continents and is internationally popular sport.

The second and third most scored attributes by all respondents were *fun* (6,33) and *exciting* (6,22) that both lead to the value of stimulation. Stimulation refers to the need to seek excitement, novelty and challenge in life (Schwartz 2014). Volleyball therefore could be expected to provide some excitement and variety as a sport and be one of the reasons why fans attend volleyball matches. Stimulation has been often linked with sports in general also before since it offers excitement and variety in life for people (i.e. Gladden & Funk 2002). Now the same can be confirmed about volleyball as well.

Third attribute was *ambitious* (6,21) that links to achievement value. As *successful* (6,02) relates to achievement value as well, it is discussed in this paragraph too.

Achievement as a value relates to the goal of achieving personal success and it is also important to achieve objectives and demonstrate the competence (Schwartz 2014). Through volleyball, fans can experience these matters as they perceive volleyball as strong and ambitious sport.

Fourth attribute in order is *pleasant* (6,2) that belongs to the value group of hedonism. The goal in hedonism is seeking pleasure or sensuous gratification of oneself and the ways to satisfy them. So it could be claimed that volleyball provides pleasure for the fans and therefore, satisfies the need for enjoying life and self-indulgent at least partly.

*Strong* (6,01) is the last attribute that scored above 6,0 and it is connected to the value of power. Power value refers to the motivation to seek social status and prestige as well as control or dominance over people and resources (Schwartz 2014). Thus, fans could attain e.g. prestige through volleyball and experience control.

To discuss what the power might represent for the respondents, sports can be perceived quite powerful in itself as a physical hobby or it can be considered as powerful, influential agent for example in peace projects. Sports could therefore probably attract people with power values. This could be true especially in sports that are more physically demanding and provide chances to build a social status. American football for instance is often related to mentally and physically big strong men. Thus, if a person seeks competition and domination, sports offers one platform for him/her to express these values.

People also believe that sports is a way to influence and reach masses of people, e.g. campaigns against racism or to support healthy lifestyle. This point of view might also be on the background when evaluating a sport to be strong. Some people might also refer to the look of athletes and perceive the sport to be strong if the athletes/players seem strong, fit and powerful for them.

As a summary of the values; international refers to the value of universalism, fun and exciting to stimulation, ambitious and successful to achievement, strong to power, and pleasant to hedonism. So forth, the values that fans find from volleyball are **universalism, stimulation, achievement, hedonism and power** which create a certain kind of image of the sport together with the attributes. These values then refer to the desirable goals that motivate action if the Human value theory by Schwartz (2012) is

working as explained. Figure 14 demonstrates the results so far: which attributes fans related the most to volleyball, which values are behind those attributes and what kinds of motivational goals volleyball might therefore fulfil.

The findings are somewhat consistent with an earlier study done about the values and football during FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa. Kuosmanen (2011) discovered attributes international, exciting, fun and colorful to present the football as a sport and the most important motives for football fans were to meet other people and achieve emotional experiences.

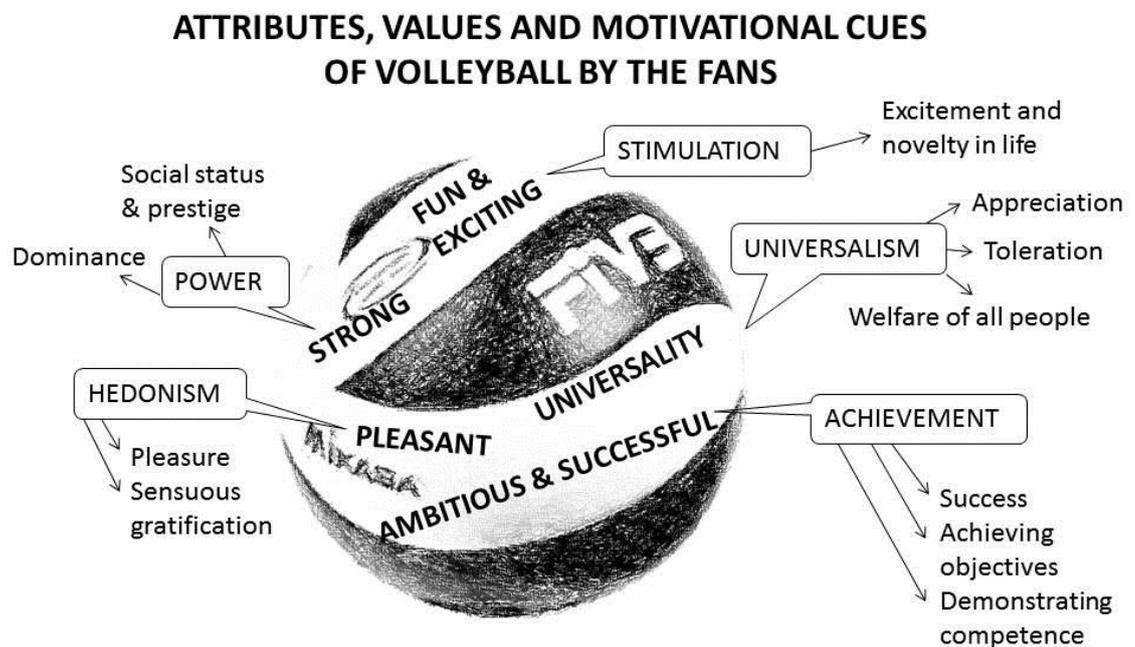


FIGURE 14. Attributes and values of volleyball perceived by the fans in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

Another way to discover the values behind the attributes is to examine the bunch of the attributes related to certain value category (see figure 4, p. 26) and count the average of all the adjectives of each value. The difference to the earlier method is that the latter method counts all the attributes of each value instead of the highest scored one. As a

result, the values differ slightly from the previous findings. *Achievement* value got the highest scores (5,99) followed by *universalism* (5,92) and *security* (5,50). Security was not mentioned above in the top five. Neither was *tradition* (5,49) or *benevolence* (5,43) values which both are now in the top five. *Stimulation* comes sixth with the same mean as *benevolence*: 5,43. The new values (face and conformity) in the refined human value theory by Schwartz (2014) are not included in this calculation since the questionnaire did not include new adjectives corresponding to these values and therefore, could not be chosen.

Hedonism is surprisingly low in the table 3 though it is in the top in the first calculation. The reason most likely is that the word expensive is also included in this value category. As a word it has (most likely) been linked to the idea that volleyball is expensive sport in respondents' minds. Volleyball is usually not considered as an expensive sport which could explain the low score. However, the original idea of the word expensive to be linked with the *hedonism* value was more about the thought of prestige and precious image. I would exclude the word from the calculations therefore in the future since expensive seems to have rather negative connotation for the value.

TABLE 3. Descriptive statistics of the values of volleyball in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

Value	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Achievement</b>	259	5,99	0,85582
<b>Universalism</b>	261	5,92	0,87627
<b>Security</b>	264	5,50	1,13867
<b>Tradition</b>	265	5,49	1,475
<b>Benevolence</b>	257	5,43	1,07503
<b>Stimulation</b>	246	5,43	0,903
<b>Self-Direction</b>	257	5,11	1,17441
<b>Power</b>	263	5,10	1,07916
<b>Hedonism</b>	262	4,97	0,88846
<b>Conformity</b>	263	4,84	1,447
<b>Universalism Nature</b>	261	4,58	2,034

According to these results, calculations between the nationality groups were also made. Taking a closer look for the highest rated values that are *achievement*, *universalism* and *security*, there were no statistically significant differences in P-values among

nationalities in *achievement*. *Universalism* had a significant difference between Polish and Finnish fans since the P-value between these two was 0. Also, between other nationalities and Finnish the P-value was 0,001. Thirdly, *security* value did not have statistically significant difference between nationalities.

These results indicate that nationalities agree that volleyball is related to the values of *achievement* and *security*. It means that volleyball is perceived as a sport that allows fans to obtain feelings of success, competence, capability, achievement and is also seen to provide safety, health, harmony, and stability. Finnish also strongly relate volleyball to be connected with *universalism*.

In addition, there are significant differences in values related to volleyball between nationalities. These values are gathered in the table 4. Thus, eight values of the thirteen shows statistical differences. Polish and Finnish have the most differences in values so this finding suggests that different nationalities think differently about volleyball.

TABLE 4. Statistically significant differences in values related to volleyball between nationalities in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

<b>Value</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Benevolence</b>	Polish	Finnish	0
	Finnish	Other	0,005
<b>Tradition</b>	Polish	Finnish	0,001
<b>Universalism</b>	Polish	Finnish	0,005
<b>Conformity</b>	Polish	Finnish	0
<b>Hedonism</b>	Polish	Other	0,002
<b>Stimulation</b>	Polish	Finnish	0,004
<b>Self-Direction</b>	Polish	Finnish	0
<b>Universalism-Nature</b>	Polish	Finnish	0
	Finnish	Other	0,001

From this perspective, the value profile of volleyball is somewhat different than the first one. The latter findings indicate that volleyball is seen as healthy and safe sport (security) that also represents success and ambitiousness (achievement) as well as softer values like internationality and broad-mindedness (universalism). The earlier findings showed volleyball's values to be universalism, stimulation, achievement, hedonism and power.

To conclude, values that appeared on the top of both listings were *achievement*, *universalism*, and *stimulation*. These values therefore relate to volleyball most significantly but the others are not worthless either in a sense. It can be stated that volleyball is seen as successful and ambitious sport that is fun and exciting to watch but also provides a platform to experience togetherness, appreciation and understanding for the welfare of people and the world.

The benefits of watching volleyball can be concluded based on the findings in the upper paragraph. Bauer et al (2008) mentioned pride in place, fan identification, and peer-group acceptance as symbolic benefits in team-sport spectatorship. *Stimulation* and *achievement* values could be linked with the benefit of fan identification as being a fan creates excitement and feelings of competence and success if the team succeeds. *Universalism* is connected with togetherness and being in harmony with other people so it could correspond with the benefit of peer-group acceptance because most likely, the fans are being "accepted" as a part of the volleyball fans' group.

Experiential benefits identified by Bauer et al (2008) were nostalgia, escape, socializing and companionship, emotions and entertainment. *Stimulation* value meant that fans related volleyball to fun and exciting which brings variety and novelty in their life so it can work as an escape from the daily life as well as entertainment. *Hedonism* provides enjoyment also in the form of entertainment, escape and emotions as the motivational goal is to seek pleasure, adventures and enjoyment. Socializing and companionship could be attached to *universalism* since it has features of togetherness and taking into account the welfare of others in the world. Especially the companionship part since fans are could be considered as one unit. It is often also said that fans are the seventh player on the court. Therefore, the benefits that could be obtained through spectating volleyball are escape, emotions, entertainment, (socializing and) companionship and peer-group

acceptance based on the results and the theory of experiential benefits by Bauer et al (2008) (Table 5).

The social part of watching volleyball does not emerge from the results but there are no attributes relating directly to social aspects. Thus, in the future, attributes such as “social”, “partnership”, “communal”, “collaboration” etc. could be added into the adjectives to also investigate more the importance of the social aspect of each sport.

Wann’s (2008) motives to follow team sports were are eustress, self-esteem, group affiliation, entertainment and family. Mirroring these to the results of the research, volleyball could fulfil the motives of entertainment, eustress and self-esteem. Entertainment, since fans perceive volleyball as fun and exciting sport, eustress through the feelings of excitement and achievement value and self-esteem also through the value of achievement when the team is successful.

TABLE 5. Values, motives and benefits of volleyball based by fans’ perceptions in the FIVB Men World Championships 2014.

Values of volleyball	Motives volleyball can satisfy	Benefits of viewing volleyball
Achievement	Feelings of competence, success and achievement	Emotions, entertainment, fan identification
Universalism	Appreciation, tolerance, social justice	(Socializing and) companionship, peer-group acceptance
Stimulation	Excitement and novelty	Emotions, entertainment

#### 9.4 Volleyball fans are hedonistic and benevolent people

The three most common values of all respondents (n=276) derived from questions seven, ten, and three. Seven equals with the value of *benevolence* (average value 5,03) in human value theory by Schwartz (2012). Number ten leads to the value of *safety* (4,94) and three to *hedonism* (4,79). The three least describing values of the fans were numbers 1, 11 and 12 where all scored below 3,8 according to the results. These questions lead to values of *humility* (3,79), *achievement* (3,66) and *power* (3,51). The order of the numbers of the questions and values behind the questions are listed in the table 6.

TABLE 6. Values behind the questions of “How much this person is like you?”

NUMBER	VALUE
1	POWER
2	ACHIEVEMENT
3	HEDONISM
4	STIMULATION
5	SELF-DIRECTION
6	UNIVERSALISM
7	BENEVOLENCE
8	TRADITION
9	CONFORMITY
10	SAFETY
11	FACE
12	HUMILITY
13	NATURE

Next table (table 7) demonstrates the results of the most common values by all respondents and by the different nationalities. The most distinct group was “other nationalities” that had biggest differences compared to other groups that were more similar. “Other nationalities” group’s different value in the top three was *self-direction* that replaced the *safety* value that Finnish valued the most and Polish the second most. In other nationalities group *safety* was the second most valued attribute. The least common values had minor differences among nationality groups. *Power* value was mentioned in all groups. Two times mentioned were *achievement* (Finnish and Polish) and *humility* (Polish and other nationalities). Finnish were the only group that valued *face* the least and other nationalities group the only one to value *conformity* the least.

TABLE 7. Personal values of the fans in the FIVB Men’s World Championships 2014.

FINNISH	POLISH	OTHERS
1. <i>Safety</i> 5,14	<b>1. Benevolence 5,11</b>	1. <i>Hedonism</i> 5,47
2. <i>Universalism</i> 4,90	2. <i>Safety</i> 4,87	<b>2. Benevolence 5,15</b>
<b>3. Benevolence 4,86</b>	3. <i>Hedonism</i> 4,77	3. <i>Self-direction</i> 4,85
4 <i>Hedonism</i> 4,54	4 <i>Universalism</i> 4,74	4 <i>Safety</i> 4,71
5 <i>Universal-nature</i> 4,47	5 <i>Self-direction</i> 4,70	5 <i>Achievement</i> 4,65

Polish gave *benevolence* a value of 5,17, Finnish 5,90 and other nationalities 5,24. Comparing P-values between the groups, the P-value of *benevolence* between Finnish and Polish is 0,15 although both of the nationalities graded it in the top three. It means

that statistically there is a significant difference between the nationalities what comes to the value of *benevolence*. Therefore, it cannot be stated that all the nationalities are equally benevolent. However, it could be claimed that volleyball fans in general would be mostly benevolent people as all of the nationalities had the value among top three. Between the Finnish and other nationalities group the P-value is 0,335 and between Polish and other nationalities 0,983 so there are no significant differences between these. Standard deviation was 1,07 in the value of benevolence. The closer the number is to 0, the closer the data points are to the mean value.

*Safety* was the second most popular value according to the results as its mean was 4,94. Polish' mean was 4,87 whereas Finnish' 5,14 and other nationalities' 4,71. P-values lower than 0,005 did not emerge; the lowest P-value was between Finnish and other nationalities, 0,163. *Safety* value can be said to be one descriptive value of volleyball fans therefore.

The third most popular value was *hedonism* that had a mean of 4,79. Finnish' mean was 4,54, Polish' 4,79 and other nationalities 5,47. Here statistically significant difference emerged between Finns and other nationalities as the P-value was 0,00.

Other values are quite similar when investigating the five most common values of the respondents. Values that are favored in all of the three groups are marked in *cursive letters* in the table. Thus, volleyball fans could be claimed to be people who value *safety* and *hedonism* in their lives in addition to *benevolence*.

The confidence interval in the other nationalities' group is 4,36 - 4,59 (0,23 digits) and standard deviation 1,22. The average was 4,47. Skewness was -0,76 and kurtosis was 0,21. Median was 5. Negative skew means that the distribution is a little left-tailed in this case.

In Polish group the confidence interval was smaller than in other nationalities group: 4,3 - 4,43 (0, 13 digits). In addition, standard deviation was 1,43, average 4,37, skewness - 0,58, kurtosis -0,55. Median was 5. The distribution is a little left-tailed also in the Polish group as their skewness is negative (-0,58).

In Finnish group the confidence interval was 4,09 – 4,24 (0,15 digits), standard deviation 1,31, skewness -0,4, and kurtosis -0,61. Median was 4 and average 4,17. So

the distribution was also a little left-tailed such as in other groups but it was the closest to 0 of these three groups.

Kurtosis in all groups was small which refers to platykurtic distribution of the results meaning smaller probability of extreme values than of a normal distribution and the values are wider spread around the mean. Negative kurtosis means a flatter distribution which is the case in Polish and Finnish group.

The average tells that other nationalities gave the highest points whereas Finnish gave the lowest points for the values on average. Polish were in the middle. Also the median in Finnish group was 4 when the other two had 5.

There are no significant notes about the standard deviation in the groups, all of them varied a little bit from 1,43 (Polish) to 1,22 (other nationalities). The number means the distance from the mean value, so there was a little more deviation in the group of Polish than in other groups. As a conclusion; statistically, there was nothing peculiar about the results in each group.

To illustrate the results and their similarity in a sense, a linear graph was made (Figure 15). In this graph, it can be perceived that *hedonism* and *achievement* is more valued by other nationalities than Finnish and Polish. Finnish also rate *stimulation* and *face* less important for them than Polish and others.

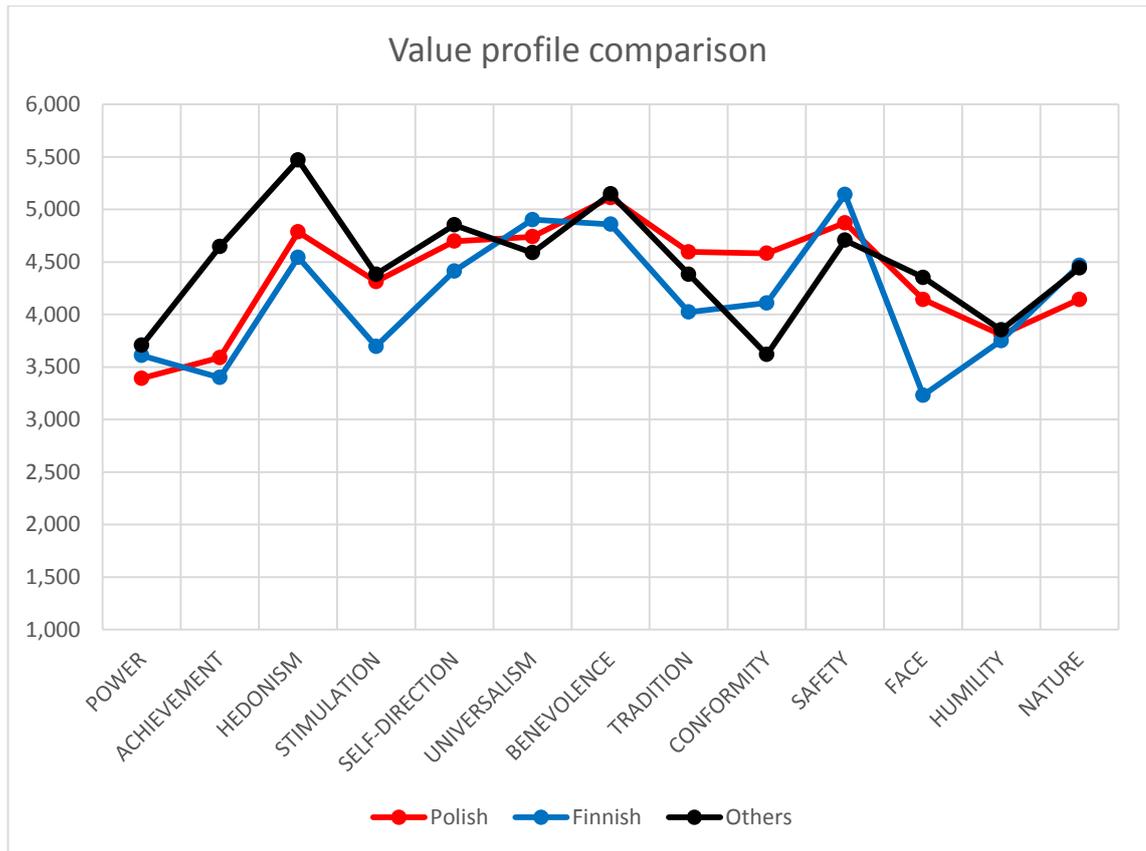


FIGURE 15. Fans' value profile comparison between nationalities in FIVB Men's World Championships 2014 in Poland.

Minor gender differences emerged among values as male's three most common values, in declining order, were safety (4,88), benevolence (4,88) and hedonism (4,81). Female's three most common values were benevolence (5,21), universalism (5,11) and safety (5,03). Thus, female gave on average higher points for values than male similarly like in attributes. These results are gathered in the figure 16. The least common values among male were achievement (3,27), power (3,42) and face (3,78). Female's equivalent values were power (3,59), humility (3,77) and face (3,88).

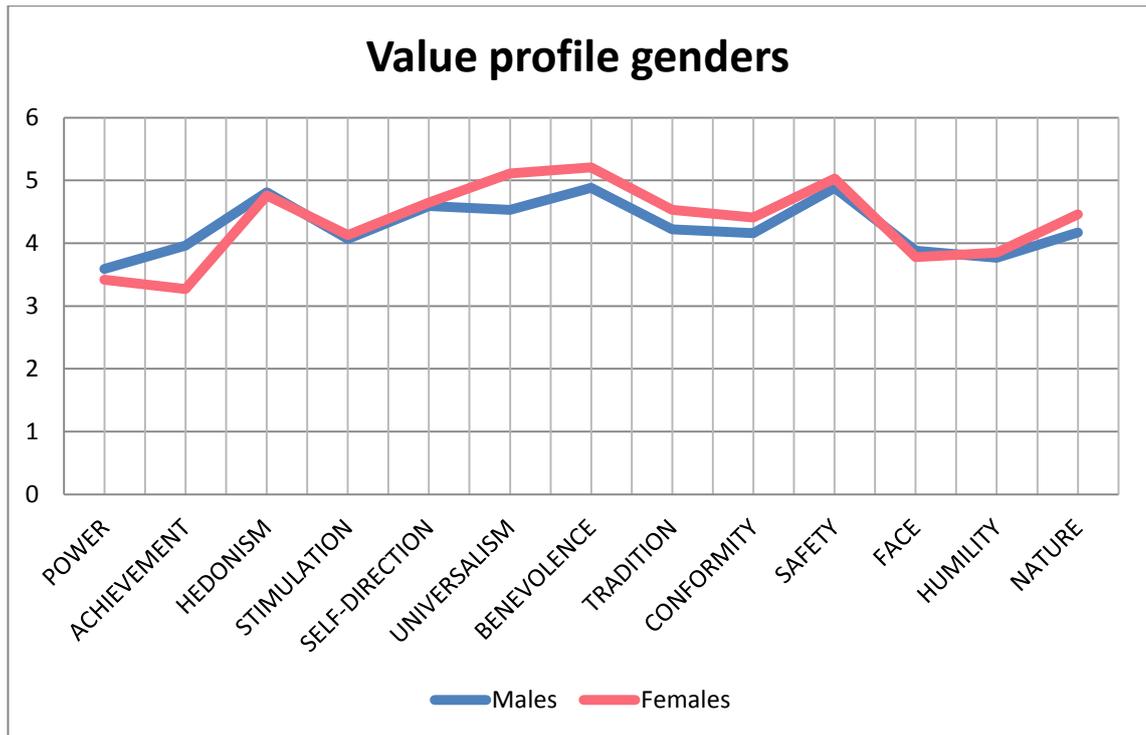


FIGURE 16. Fan's value profile by genders in FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.

All the mentioned results were put in the table 8 to summarize the results.

TABLE 8. Values and attributes with average values among nationalities.

GROUP (number of respondents)	Most common values (average value)	Least common values (average value)	Most related attributes (average value)	Least related attributes (average value)
<u>Finnish</u> (n 98)	<u>Safety</u> (5,14) <u>Universalism</u> (4,9) <u>Benevolence</u> (4,86)	<u>Power</u> (3,61) <u>Achievement</u> (3,4) <u>Face</u> (3,23)	<u>International</u> (6,68) <u>Exciting</u> (6,58) <u>Pleasant</u> (6,49) <u>Fun</u> (6,34) <u>Ambitious</u> (6,26)	<u>Inefficient</u> (2,44) <u>Formal</u> (2,4) <u>Routine</u> (2,32) <u>Weak</u> (1,98) <u>Boring</u> (1,68)
<u>Polish</u> (n 143)	<u>Benevolence</u> (5,11) <u>Safety</u> (4,87) <u>Hedonism</u> (4,79)	<u>Humility</u> (3,81) <u>Achievement</u> (3,59) <u>Power</u> (3,39)	<u>International</u> (6,32) <u>Ambitious</u> (6,29) <u>Fun</u> (6,27) <u>Pleasant</u> (6,12) <u>Successful</u> (6,04)	<u>Inefficient</u> (2,41) <u>Formal</u> (2,35) <u>Routine</u> (2,25) <u>Weak</u> (2,17) <u>Boring</u> (1,56)
<u>Other nationalities</u> (n 35)	<u>Hedonism</u> (5,47) <u>Benevolence</u> (5,15) <u>Self-direction</u> (4,85)	<u>Humility</u> (3,85) <u>Power</u> (3,71) <u>Conformity</u> (3,62)	<u>Fun</u> (6,57) <u>International</u> (6,34) <u>Exciting</u> (6,23) <u>Creative</u> (5,94) <u>Healthy</u> (5,86)	<u>Inefficient</u> (3,27) <u>Routine</u> (2,97) <u>Expensive</u> (2,71) <u>Weak</u> (2,65) <u>Boring</u> (1,49)
<u>All nationalities</u> (n 276)	<u>Benevolence</u> (5,03) <u>Safety</u> (4,94) <u>Hedonism</u> (4,79)	<u>Humility</u> (3,79) <u>Achievement</u> (3,66) <u>Power</u> (3,51)	<u>International</u> (6,45) <u>Fun</u> (6,33) <u>Exciting</u> (6,22) <u>Ambitious</u> (6,21) <u>Pleasant</u> (6,2)	<u>Inefficient</u> (2,53) <u>Formal</u> (2,5) <u>Routine</u> (2,37) <u>Weak</u> (2,16) <u>Boring</u> (1,59)

As it was explained and illustrated in the chapters above, there were some differences between the different nationalities but also some similarities were found. According to the similarities in the results, **volleyball fans can be stated to be benevolent and hedonistic people who care about safety and security.** They seek enjoyment and pleasure in their lives but care much about their closed ones and are giving and helping people. They value true friendship, loyalty, forgiveness, honesty, and responsibility. In addition, volleyball fans appreciate the safety of their country as well as harmony and balance in the society. *Security* value includes also the stability of relationships and the self as motivational goals and value sense of belonging and togetherness.

These personal values are useful for the sport as i.e. Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) stated that if a brand can provide a platform for consumers to reinforce the perceptions they have of themselves, they can identify themselves better with the brand. This further on means more loyal consumers which is one of the cornerstones of successful business.

## 10 CONCLUSIONS

The most important theories supporting the research were the human value theory, postmodern consumer behavior (in relation to sport), and brand image theory. Previous research of volleyball fans and the image of volleyball does not exist thus the mentioned theories gave solid foundation for the thesis.

Motivations lying behind the discovered value groups of volleyball were revealed as values are distinct by their motivational goals. The values of volleyball were *universalism, stimulation, and achievement*. The value of *universalism* means that people wish to understand and tolerate to maintain or enhance the welfare of all people and also nature. *Stimulation* offers excitement, challenges and variety in life as goals. *Achievement* refers to the desire of being capable, successful and competent.

These are the motivational goals that volleyball can offer for fans and might explain why fans come to follow volleyball since they can obtain feelings of achievement, success, excitement, fun and internationality via volleyball. Some symbolic benefits such as fan identification and experiential benefits such as escape, emotions, and entertainment can therefore be fulfilled as well.

The value profile of volleyball fans reveals that volleyball fans are benevolent, hedonistic people who value security. The differences among nationalities were minor and to some extent this finding is consistent with the findings of Schwartz as there is consistency of values universally.

Spectator sports have always attracted people and the same reasons to follow the competitions are still present than in the history: excitement, stimulation, novelty, drama, etc. Spectators however have changed along the globalization, and the change is constant. The values of people are more permanent but the changes in behavior have been inevitable. People are motivated to do or follow sports and different sports for different motivational reasons which are now researched more widely in order to gain insights of the unexpected behavior of people. It might be due to the fact that needs of human being in a Western society are not that urgent and easily explainable anymore

but more about the fulfilling the upper needs of Maslow's hierarchy such as social belonging, self-fulfillment etc.

**Reflection.** The theoretical framework began with chapter about sport management and it was said to be more than the play. Profit making has a big role in sport management and it has expanded sports to have many other aspects to be considered and managed in addition to the play and leisure, for example fan apparel and live coverage. Thus, fans are often understood and therefore also seen or treated as profit makers which might soon be also partly disadvantageous for the sport. According to this research, volleyball fans hoped to experience i.e. excitement, stimulation, and achievement through volleyball. Those are rather strong feelings that require also focusing on the play in order to obtain these feelings. It might be refreshing therefore for the fans to attend a sports event where the focus would be switched solely on the fans' comfort and the game itself to enhance the feelings aroused by the game. Now the game and focus has been interrupted by attempts to sell and advertise something for the fans in every moment when possible, i.e. timeouts. It should be noted that this kind of action also most likely disturbs fan's possibility and wish to immerse himself/herself in the match.

After all, the personal experience matters the most and if people follow sports because they wish to escape the daily life and wish to feel excitement and drama of sports such as this research indicated, should that be the goal for the sport practitioners as well in order to satisfy fans' expectations? Let fans feel and be part of the spectacle without interruptions that they face constantly outside of sport events and matches anyway. By turning the focus from the commercialism to enjoyment and fostering real escape from the daily living might be worth trying.

Fan culture and fandom is understood as one part of the sport management and sport fandom was one of the main themes of the research. Sport fandom has often been compared to have same features than religion. Religion in some Western countries has in a way lost its purpose or "position". For example, many people in Finland are members of the church but do not follow religious routines such as going to a mess or church on Sundays. Somehow, it could be that sports have replaced some religious habits since people still do want to go together to spend time and enjoy sport together with their families or peers. It is concerned as quality time with others. Previously people might have gone to read bible together, now they might attend a football match

on Sunday. In a sense, sports events represent the social gatherings that people used to have the religious meetings for but now the form of gathering has changed from religious to sportive.

People still, however, have the need to feel comfortable and find their place in the universe and religion has been said to offer certain kind of comfort, support and security. Security was one of the main personal values of volleyball fans, and security consists of also aspects of health, sense of belonging, stability of relationships and of self in addition to material environment such as a safe stadium. Sports such as volleyball therefore, could emphasize these matters (social belonging, comfort, support and security from the sports) to enhance the social togetherness and create routines that people would continue coming to the games.

One characteristic of fan culture and fandom are the international stars and in team sports they are the players. Few countries have volleyball players as recognizable stars but Poland is one of them. Volleyball players are famous or even celebrities in Poland and especially in men's volleyball. Considering the strong position of volleyball in Poland that was perceived during the tournament, research project and partly also in the results (Polish gave high scores for strong, successful and achievement attributes), stardom could be one of the side effect or the cause of the popularity of the sport.

Poland has a strong league where these stars can grow and become famous if they do well. As a comparison, usually the best players of Finland go abroad to play and they are not that familiar to big audiences. Now the level and competitiveness of the Finnish league has improved and the international success and positive media attention has also raised stars into the Finnish sporting culture. They might not be that familiar to the big audience yet but nevertheless, there has been a change to positive direction. Fostering the celebrities enhances also the image of the sport in addition to the fan culture when some athletes are known, followed and admired. This research provides an impression of the perceived image of volleyball but the celebrities' role in building the image of the sport should also be considered. For example, when the Polish players (and the national league) are considered as strong and successful, Polish fans might relate those attributes more strongly to volleyball consequently.

Thus, volleyball is one of the main sports in Poland and the values attached to volleyball were universalism, stimulation and achievement. It could be pondered if

volleyball and its values could reflect Poland as a society if the theory holds that sports mirrors the values of the society as Wann et al (2001) suggested. If so, Poland's society would be linked with the values of universalism, stimulation and achievement. Most likely the pattern cannot be this simple and straightforward and definitely needs more research but it might have some seeds of truth. Perhaps those values are appreciated by the Polish or they might wish their society to be alike if the theory of self-enhancement is valid when people follow sports that enhance and support their ideal self-image (Kotler et al 2009). If reflecting the same pattern of Finnish society, even though volleyball is not as popular sport in Finland as it is in Poland, it would be a society that represents universalism, stimulation, hedonism and achievement according to the attributes.

These kinds of thoughts need a lot more research to be done before it could be concluded that sport mirrors the values of the nation. However, perhaps it could be thought that the values of fans of a certain sport, and the sport itself would reflect the values of that certain community or subculture which seems more realistic and rational. These sportive subcultures could be one way for similar minded people to gather and express themselves today.

Fans and their behavior were discussed in relation with human values and motives and as sport consumers who are often unpredictable. Some socioeconomic variables in the research would have brought more information about the fans and help in compiling profiles of the fans, but at the same time it can be questioned is it necessary? In a sport event, fans do not classify the persons next to them and ask or care about their occupation but they still might talk during the game about sports and the match. Should the socioeconomic matter for sports practitioners if they do not matter for the fans? Fans are in a way one group of people who share a common interest towards that one match and sport at that point of time. Certainly it would be valuable information for i.e. a car sponsor of an event if 20 % of the viewers are planning to buy a new car but maybe it is enough to know what kind of car they wish to buy instead of the socioeconomic information. If the fans support some values of the sport or their home team and this car sponsor has similar values that it can share, it might turn out to be more useful tactic if the theories hold about values affecting buying decisions in the form of motives.

One of the sub research questions was about discovering the motives of the fans to follow volleyball and consumer behavior theory was one of the core theories in order to discover the answer. In addition, Kim, James and Kim (2013) suggested in their theory (relationships between sport consumer motives, spectator commitment and behavioral intentions) that hedonic motives of the fans strongly relate to affective commitment which further on reflects positive, emotional attachment to a sport. Volleyball fans had hedonic motives to follow the sport according to the results. Thus, the commitment of the fans to volleyball could be claimed to be affective and mirror positive emotional attachment to volleyball. For the sport, it is a positive result when fans are emotionally involved with the sport as it seems to be one of the keys for loyal fans.

Considering volleyball as a sport, it is indeed a team sport. One needs at least two players of the six players in the court in one rally (in addition to the opponent). When there are six players in a rather small court, compared to for example soccer or baseball field, lots of communication and team play are often needed in order to succeed. The play is rather fast as well and players are in the constant move and they work more as a whole than as individuals especially if compared to i.e. baseball that is considered more slow paced. Sure there are always individuals in the team but it is impossible to play / win by yourself, even the star players need someone to assist them in order to be able to shine. For example, there are mostly three touches in each action/ball rally of volleyball and the next person touching the ball must be different than the previous one. Volleyball is therefore about the team play more than some other team sports. Volleyball fans are more collective than individualistic persons at least according to this research as they value security and benevolence so perhaps there lays a connection between the sport and the fans.

Team play is an element that could therefore be one of the reasons behind the popularity of volleyball. Teams who play together as a team, and not just as a bunch of strangers, are often more successful and probably also draw more viewers as loyal fans since it might lead to stronger feelings of belongingness, togetherness and family. Strong communities in the field seem to have extended impact also on the surrounding of the team and the whole club setting can be considered as a family. Since one of the motives stemming from basic values of human being is to find a social belonging (Schwartz 2012), a team sport such as volleyball might offer a platform to experience or to find it. Thus, the individualization and fragmentation of the society especially in Western

cultures might create at the same time a need for people to seek for secure and social belongingness - desires of being part of a family.

In addition, some sports are more acknowledged with violence (i.e. ice hockey players' fights in the rink, American football as a sport, fan hooliganism in soccer) and often it is not a positive mark for the sport. So here volleyball has also a chance to be positively different and highlight matters such as the respect towards each other and nature, benevolence and security in practice and not only in the advertisements. It does not mean that volleyball would be a soft sport because of the "softer" values maybe that it may have since fans also attached attributes like successful, strong and ambitious to volleyball that reflect power and achievement. So even though the sport is reflecting fair values, the sport itself is perceived physically demanding, strong and powerful which sounds like a good combination.

Another thought stemming from the results of how fans see volleyball and considering this era of green and eco friendliness could be that volleyball could be accentuated more and more as a green and benevolent sport. It cares about nature and the people, and promotes harmony in the society. These are the matters that fans already attach to volleyball thus it could be emphasized more, especially when the fans themselves are benevolent, hedonistic and care about safety.

All in all, the importance of sport fandom to a society is inevitable; it is uniting people and providing them an important addition to their daily living and routines. Sports' original purpose of leisure and play is therefore still present and it should be maintained or something original will disappear from sports. Sports and fandom is a joy for the people in the postmodern society and offer opportunities to unite people and feel united despite the growing individualization and fragmentation of other parts in life.

***Future research.*** The results of this research and the process of doing the research, aroused some further research ideas and thoughts. One of the most interesting one would be to do similar research about Women's FIVB World Championships to discover if there are differences in attributes and values between women's and men's volleyball. Women's volleyball is a popular sport as well and one of the few sports where female can also become professional athletes. Therefore, there definitely is also a fan culture in women's volleyball to be examined.

Continuing about genders, the results indicated that female considered volleyball to be more pleasant than male which could bring another subject to further discuss and research. Aesthetic was one motive to be a sport fan by i.e. Wann et al (2008) so it could be researched if female consider men's sport performances more aesthetic than female and if male would then consider female's sports more aesthetics than their own sport. In other words, do genders think the opposite gender's sports to be more appealing and aesthetic or female's sports in general or is it more dependent on the sport itself.

A larger variety of nationalities could be included in the future research to see if the findings of this research are valid also among other nationalities. This research was based on mostly on Finnish and Polish fans' opinions and values. By reaching more nationalities, some cultural comparisons could be done. Further on, also investigating the fan culture and its characteristics of each country and reflecting these historical and sociological perspectives of the fan behavior nowadays (in volleyball) would be an interesting piece of research. For example, fan cultures in the USA and in Finland are different so can it be seen in the behavior of the fans nowadays in a (volleyball) match?

Polish fans' values were benevolence, safety and hedonism whereas Finns' were safety, universalism and benevolence. It would be interesting to compare these personal values of volleyball fans firstly, to the other sports' values. With this same questionnaire there is already data existing about ice hockey fans, football fans, rally fans, ski jump fans, field hockey fans and now about volleyball fans collected by Sport Business School of Finland. A paper comparing these fans from different disciplines to another would be interesting. Secondly, comparing the people outside of sports and their value structures to sports fans values overall would be interesting in order to discover if sport fans have different values than "other people". Thirdly, researching the values of different sports and then comparing them to sport fans' values could provide information if certain sports attracts certain type of value profiles more than others.

The values of nationalities can tell something about human behavior as it has been claimed in the theories. Another research could be done basing on the human values of the different nationalities and aim to discover, what it means (or does it mean anything) that Polish' most popular values were benevolent, safety and hedonism? More precisely, does their behavior in the games and as fans differ from other nationalities with

different values? Or do the fans act the same way despite their value background when it comes to sport fandom?

Another interesting research in the field of consumer behavior would be surveying the same matters from different perspective of the model of relationships among needs, values and motivations by Gau & James (2013). The motivational factors to attend the event could be discovered by asking the fans to tell the most motivating reason(s) why they participated in the event. Then the values of the fans could be asked as in this research and finally compared if the persons with same motivational reasons have similar value background and if not, what kind of differences among values and motivations emerge. Now the pattern was sort of vice versa since it started from the attributes of the sport itself and then continued to values deduced from the attributes and further on to motivations and benefits linked with the values.

Loyalty of the fans was not the target of this research but researches have pointed out that motives and loyalty have connections. These connections could be investigated as well now when some of the motives to follow volleyball have been researched. For example, Neale and Funk (2006) stated that excitement as a motive predicted loyal spectators in AFL. Thus, the links between strongest attributes and loyalty could be investigated; are there correlations and are they strong enough to explain loyalty.

Considering only volleyball, there was a lack of information about the fan culture in volleyball. If compared to football, researches about the behavior and culture of football fans and fandom for example have been done so similar kinds of research and information would be interesting to gain also about volleyball. For example, investigating the history of volleyball in the countries where it is a popular sport and how it has become a big sport would provide new information: what are the factors in that country that made volleyball so popular? Moreover, would it be possible to apply these features in fostering the growth of the sport elsewhere?

In this research, there was a lack of direct social factors in the attributes that would refer to social interaction in/of the sport that might have been a strong influencer of attending. So further on, the social aspects of volleyball could still be researched in more detail in order to discover the impact of social interaction as a reason to attend a volleyball event or match.

Also research with more qualitative data would be interesting in order to gain more understanding of the phenomena. Qualitative interviews could give deeper meanings and explanations behind the results. Deeper data could include i.e. an examination about the roots of the volleyball fans, how they became volleyball fans, what matters attracted them in volleyball in the first place, why they think volleyball is attractive as a sport etc. Additionally, the reasons of why fans consider volleyball to be exciting could be investigated for example by using laddering and means-end-chain model in interviews. It would reveal more about the reasons of what makes volleyball the sport that it is for the fans.

To have more complete brand image of volleyball, the other parts of the brand image theory by Keller could be investigated as well. This research focused solely on perceived part of the brand image by fans so there are other parts to be researched. Naturally, there are also other theories how to evaluate a brand image that could be tested as well to see if the results are similar at all with different theories.

Talking about the event itself, and how people require more and more from the sports event, it would be valuable to know more in detail, what are the most often used reasons why volleyball people would not attend a volleyball match or event. Is it a television show, work or party with friends? In other words, what matters for volleyball people so much that they might skip the game and do something else (what is it?) instead? The opinions outside of volleyball could be researched as well to discover why people do not follow volleyball or have not bought a ticket to spectate it?

In addition, there are many stakeholders present in sport events and sports in general. Therefore, research about the values of the different stakeholders and what kinds of attributes they hold in mind could be worth of discovering. For example, are all the stakeholders surrounding volleyball similar type of people and think similarly about volleyball or are there differences i.e. how players and organizers see the sport and if the sport attracts people with similar values despite their role around the sport? Answers to these questions provide information if the tournament is for example built based on the organizers' values instead of being aligned with players' or fans' values. Which one is more important to be aligned with is the question if the stakeholders' values and attributes differ largely from each other.

***My role as a researcher.*** The results gained from the research questionnaire can be transferred into values of the respondents which refer to interpretative world view as the goal is to understand fans' perceptions about volleyball. My relationship with the topic is quite close as I have played volleyball all my life, so it is the passion of my life. However, the purpose was that it does not have effects on the questionnaire or interviews because the aim is to be objective and let the respondents form their own opinions freely. The questionnaire is mainly filled by ticking the boxes that best describes the person and volleyball as a sport so my role as a researcher was to give clear instructions but not influence in filling the survey, which I feel I succeeded in.

Consent forms were not used separately but the respondents were explained the reasons of the questionnaire and asked to read the information on the beginning of the questionnaire before filling it. Respondents were also informed to comment if something in the research felt contradictory or unclear.

***Limitations and considerations.*** As constructivist approach was chosen for this study and survey, there are some issues to be considered. The views of the reality that were examined are from the people who are in the middle of the phenomena investigated. Therefore, all the results are subjective in nature as they are subjective opinions and interpretations of the social world the surveyed people live in. This can be a positive feature of the study as well but also a negative because causalities cannot be stated. In addition, it cannot be assured that the sample in this research would reflect the overall opinions of the entire group (people surrounding volleyball). Thus, generalizations cannot be made as such to other settings but results provide insights about the group in any case.

One possible limitation of the results is the lack of socioeconomic variables of the respondents. It is therefore impossible to classify the fans into different categories, i.e. the higher income volleyball fans are more benevolent than the lower income fans. In this research, fans can be categorized based on their age, gender and nationality. However, as the claim was that socioeconomic variables have lost its meaning and credibility in business, these variables were not considered valid for this particular research.

The research was done during Men's World Championships and it is likely that the brand image would differ a little if the research would have been done during Women's

World Championships. Therefore, it should be beard in mind that all the results are based on the men's volleyball and its image and fans. Also the amount of other nationalities group was rather small (N=35) so the predictions and insights of this group are not as reliable as for example of Finnish or Polish group.

The international environment of World Championship tournament will always produce more international atmosphere than national level league games for example. The internationality comes from i.e. teams and athletes participating from different countries. This probably affects the internationality of the results to be highlighted in any discipline compared to for example if the same research would be conducted in one national level match of the same discipline.

Some of the respondents most likely have attended the event also from other reasons than pure will to see the matches (i.e. free tickets from work place). The assumption was in the research therefore, that when the people attend the match, they do have some kind of opinion about the sport despite the primary reason of attending. In addition, we did not interview volunteers or workers of the tournament and often ensured by asking if the respondent is a fan of volleyball to have as much "real" volleyball fans as possible. Another viewpoint is to consider that when a spectator buys a ticket to an event, he/she invests his/her leisure time in order to participate as a spectator and therefore, is classified as a fan in a sense.

According to Kim, Trail and Magnussen (2013), attendance decision in sport events explained by motives are lacking variance. Their study reveals that team identification levels improve the predictive capabilities of motives rather than only motives. Considering this argument, it highlights the importance to know your consumers' personal values since that was stated to increase the likeliness of fans to attach more strongly with the team and brand.

Additionally, the new values of face and humility did not have attributes related to them in this questionnaire so they should be included in the next research. They were only added in the second page where the personal values of fans were investigated. The value of *face* was added in the theory to fulfil a gap between the values of *security* and *power*. *Face* brought up the point of view that some people consider it important in life to maintain a public image and avoid humiliation. Public image is considered as one source of power especially from individual aspect and avoiding shame reflects the wish

to maintain personal security. By maintaining personal security, a person can avoid threats to oneself. (Schwartz et al 2012.)

In this research, Finnish did not value *face* as much as the other nationalities, which was somewhat surprising as Finns are generally considered as shy and as people who wish to avoid the spotlight. On the other hand, maybe the fans who were interviewed for the survey represent the “braver” part of the Finnish people who have the guts to travel abroad and cheer for their national team. Because often Finns’ behavior in the sport stance in Finland is rather lame compared to for example the fan and audience culture in Italy where people sing, cheer together and are just noisier than Finns. The Finnish fans are also kind of known for their rather large or common use and consumption of alcohol during fan trips and perhaps that also refers to the fact that they are fine with the possible cracks in their public image.

Humility was the second new value included in the research which underlies multiple motivations from growth/self-protection to self-transcendence. Humility was one of the least common personal values of the volleyball fans especially among Polish and other nationalities’ group. Humility has features of expressing more anxiety-free goals of protecting others’ interests and renounce self-interest (Schwartz et al 2012). So forth, it was also rather surprising that this new value did not score higher as being humble seems to me at least to be a value to pursue in life. Finnish scored this value higher than others so maybe my opinion is somehow connected to my Finnish roots and how I personally value humility in people.

There are few things that I would do differently if I would need to repeat this research. I probably would have chosen a different time period for collecting the questionnaires and probably a different city and pool. It is not always possible to decide when the questionnaires would be the best to collect and this time the cooperation with Polish partners affected that Gdansk was determined to be the headquarters where majority of the data collection work was done.

The dates of data collection were determined by the JAMK University of Applied Sciences and their research group. I would change the point of time from the very first games to latter rounds, maybe to the pool phase or playoff phase in order to have more fans and also from different countries. Now it was obvious that countries that did not have a chance to qualify did not attract viewers from those countries (i.e. Mexico) and

big volleyball countries' fans arrived later because they trusted their countries to get to the next round with less support in the first phase of the tournament (i.e. Italy). It seemed that Polish were the biggest nationality in the stance in the other pools as well.

The countries playing in Gdansk's pool probably were not the best countries to be interviewed in English so it could have also been taken into consideration. Luckily, we could get a translated version of the questionnaire in Polish which helped the collection process notably. If possible, checking and evaluating the countries in each pool can provide hints for future, for example, Mexico and Egypt will not bring masses of people to the stands like Poland and Italy would bring.

About the questionnaire itself, there are a couple of modifications that could have been done. Firstly, it has been stated that socioeconomic variables are not that valid anymore in the market. If these socioeconomic variables would matter for some practitioners, it would have been nice to test this theory if i.e. the income and education level do not distinguish the fans anymore from each other and prove the claim.

Secondly, as mentioned in limitations, the refined human value theory by Schwartz (2014) could have been included also in the first page of the questionnaire by adding attributes related to the new values stated in the newer theory (face and humility) that were now missing. The results also indicated that the social aspect of the sport was difficult to investigate since these attributes related to social matters were missing. Social aspect of sport events is very important one for the fans so it should be taken into consideration more carefully in the future. It is after all one of the core reasons why people attend sport events and become fans: to consume the event together with others.

About the research process, I would have included more theory about the fan culture to have wider base to examine volleyball and the fans more also from social sciences' perspective. Now my base to make these conclusions is not as clear and obvious as they might be with more distinctive social framework.

It has been quite a long process to write this thesis and there are some things that I would do differently but overall, I am content with the way I could combine the different theories and how I managed to do this work independently while I was in Germany. All in all, the goal of the research was to produce new information about the fans of volleyball and discover the attributes and values of volleyball. From this perspective, the goal was fulfilled and some valuable information was gained via research.

## 11 SUGGESTIONS

This research aimed at comprising some understanding about the fans of volleyball and how they feel about volleyball. Knowledge of the sport consumer enhances the ability to maintain or modify various products and services to meet interests and demands. It seems reasonable to know more about the product and what kinds of associations are related to it to be able to foster the growth of the sport better. Now some of the associations related to volleyball in the form of attributes and values as well as value structures of the volleyball fans have been discovered and some suggestions can be made based on the results.

Segmenting customers into tight categories might not work well anymore according to the postmodern specialists but the claim here is that knowing more about the product (volleyball) and how people feel about it would offer some help in the crowded marketplace. For example, if there is one person in charge of marketing volleyball, his/her associations of the sport might be communicated in marketing messages. But, if the messages could be aligned with commonly acknowledged associations of volleyball by the fans, the possible promises made in the marketing messages have better chances to be fulfilled.

The discovered motives to follow volleyball and attributes of volleyball could be used in creating strategic marketing plans so that marketing messages are aligned with motivational goals. Also these marketing plans could be done based on the value profiles of the fans and catch the attention of certain types of people perhaps better than before.

In addition, if the organization has determined its' own values, it can be beneficial to follow up stakeholder's/stakeholders' values and/or the sport's values which are determined by fans. Otherwise it can lead to a situation where the organizations' messages are alienated from the fans' perceptions. This might then cause some blocks in the communication channel or the expectations of customers might not be met.

Being successful in today's market is strongly related to the success of the branding process of the product/service. A strong brand will help organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors and avoid potential negative financial outcomes (Gladden & Funk 2002). Thus, now when perceived image of volleyball has been constructed, it

would be possible for leagues and teams to utilize these attributes and perhaps create more loyal and sustainable fan bases, extend the fan base by finding new consumers with suitable marketing actions based on the found attributes and values, and strengthen the image of volleyball, the league and/or the club. It is not enough to know what to do but also why to do things in a certain way.

It was also stated by Keller (1993) that when buyer or user considers a brand to have unique, sustained added value in addition to the need, brand is identifiable and therefore, also successful. The uniqueness of brand association might be crucial for the success of the brand since it implies the superiority over other brands. Now when the perceived image part of the brand image of volleyball has been discovered, it could be used as a unique advantage to differentiate volleyball according to the attributes and values fans perceive volleyball to have and that way create a competitive advantage. As an example, a fan meeting could be organized in a volleyball event that is organized basing on the security and benevolence values found in this research and create a feeling of togetherness in that event.

World and its people are diverse, so are the offerings for leisure time and so should the different sports be as well. By embracing the qualities, associations and characteristics of the sport it already has, the attention of likeminded consumers and fans would more likely be caught. This could be done i.e. by communicating messages that always have the same core idea (e.g. benevolent values) and through different channels. Further on, it might turn out little easier to get, maintain and increase the amount of loyal and satisfied consumers since consumers who share similar values with a brand have been researched to be more loyal (Kaynak, Salman and Tanoglu 2008).

Values have stated to motivate an individual and, at the same time, forward a positive attitude towards physical activity and sport at all ages (Gómez, Kase & Urrutia 2010, 16). This statement is intriguing also from the viewpoint of obesity problems since the challenge has been to discover ways to motivate more people to participate in sports. Ideally, if we would know more about postmodern people's values and what motivates them, there might be i.e. a chance to find more suitable sports for people with certain values easier and get more people to participate in sports. In this case, it has been researched that volleyball fans are people with benevolent, safety and hedonistic values. It would be interesting to test if it would be possible to motivate people to participate in

sports more that offer these similar values. For example in volleyball's case the test would be if people with benevolent, hedonistic and safety values would more likely choose volleyball as a hobby than i.e. boxing or curling.

The values of volleyball fans tell more about themselves. They wish that everybody should be treated equally; they care about their families and their safety and also want to enjoy life. So maybe in this society where achievements and goals are always present and should be reached, they hope to obtain a balance and need time to breathe and enjoy life as well. Here sports events can participate and offer them a platform to i.e. have enjoyable moments with family or watch an entertaining match in safe surroundings. It has also been raised in the media lately that it is important to remember to enjoy life and take time to relax as well. So this kind of phenomena sounds to be a good chance for sports like volleyball that can offer a sport suitable for whole family to watch and enjoy. Utilizing the phenomena starts also from the grassroots and should be noted that the people surrounding volleyball in different stages can have an impact, for example volleyball clubs could provide camps or practices for the whole family to spend time together in addition to family ticket packages for the games.

Sport and events have the chance to impact people's lives directly and indirectly. While obesity rates, declining sport participation, life expectancy, feelings of isolation, and fragmentation due to market forces occur, sport and events provide one aspect to influence health and wellbeing by knowing more about sport consumer behavior. (Funk 2008.) In a big picture, the knowledge about values surrounding a certain sport, could perhaps aid and increase the participation of one (personal involvement), choosing a team or sport to follow (brand choice) and the actions of one surrounding a sport (behavior) could be better understood or explained. Then also fostering growth and development of a sport or a brand (i.e. club, federation) could be assumed to be more effective.

Being a fan is one way to find social belonging in this world and volleyball fans perceived volleyball to be linked also with value of universalism where togetherness is expressed as well. Fans should perhaps be treated more often as members of the volleyball family by i.e. creating fan clubs/environments and possibilities for fans to gather and connect (also virtually). If this kind of family environment and unity among volleyball fans around the globe in addition to the excitement, ambitiousness and enjoyment factors of the sport could be combined and strengthened, it might be valuable combination for volleyball.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Research questionnaire in the FIVB Men's World Championships 2014.



### VALUES BEHIND VOLLEYBALL

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

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

Thank you for your participation!

#### 1 Nationality:

- Polish
- Finnish
- Swedish
- German
- Canadian
- Dutch
- Mexican
- Norwegian
- Russian
- Turkish

#### 2. Age:

---

#### 3. Gender:

- Male
- Female



**5. How much is this person like you?**

	Not like me at all	Not like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Like me	Very much like me
1. He/She likes to be in charge and tell others what to do. He/She wants people to do what he/she says.	<input type="radio"/>					
2. Being successful is very important to him/her. He/She likes to stand out and to impress other people.	<input type="radio"/>					
3. He/She really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is very important to him/her.	<input type="radio"/>					
4. He/She looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He/She wants to have an exciting life.	<input type="radio"/>					
5. He/She thinks it's important to be interested in things. He/She is curious and tries to understand everything.	<input type="radio"/>					
6. He/She thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He/She wants justice for everybody, even for people he/she doesn't know.	<input type="radio"/>					
7. He/She always wants to help the people who are close to him/her. It's very important to him/her to care for the people he/she knows and likes.	<input type="radio"/>					
8. He/She thinks it is important to do things the way he/she learned from his/her family. He/She wants to follow their customs and traditions.	<input type="radio"/>					
9. He/She believes that people should do what they're told. He/She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.	<input type="radio"/>					
10. The safety of his/her country is very important important to him/her.	<input type="radio"/>					
11. He/She seeks security and power through maintaining his/her public image and wishes to avoid humiliation.	<input type="radio"/>					
12. He/she is humble and recognizes his/her insignificance in the larger scheme of things.	<input type="radio"/>					
13. He/she cares about nature. It is very important for him/her to preserve the natural environment.	<input type="radio"/>					

**6. What are the 3 most motivating reasons for you to come to the FIVB 2014 Men's World Championships?**

1.

2.

3.