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# Traveling for Football Events:

Supporters' Motivators and Restrictions

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The aim of this research was to discover what motivates people to attend various football events and what kind of restrictions they meet when trying to arrange the trip. The study was conducted in order to provide information on the differences between fans regarding all the factors that they take into consideration before travelling to a football game. In addition to that, the research aimed to reveal statistics about the sample's preference in football teams and football leagues.

The research method that was used was a qualitative method of study. The study was conducted via a private interview between the author and the participants. The main reason for choosing a qualitative method of study was based on the fact that the aim was to have control of the sample and focus only on real/true supporters of this specific sport.

The results of the study revealed that the most common motivators for football supporters to travel to a football event was their urge to support the team and watch them live followed by the importance of the game. The youngest group below the age of 26 years old was interested more in the opponent of their team and the significance of the match whereas the other age groups prioritized their favorite team. As restrictions are concerned, financial reasons/situation gathered the most answers within the whole sample while lack of free time came second.

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Keywords      traveling, football, events, supporters, motivators, restrictions

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The idea for this particular research was created after various conversations with close friends and colleagues about football. Each person had a different opinion and perspective about what team they support and why, what being a fan meant and how far they would go for their team. During these conversations there was a formation of two sides. One side was realistic and expressed that it is good to have a team in order to show a constant preference and make the sport and its games more interesting whereas the opposing side mentioned that being a supporter of a team is so much more than that and they had to give something back to the team.

Human beings tend to differ from each other and often see things differently. It is not easy for everybody to agree. People have different needs, different interests and they are raised in diverse environments that affect their way of thought and decision making process (Revelle 2013). Therefore, the reasons for this thesis is to analyze and identify how much alike football fans think, what things they prioritize. Furthermore, this research investigates what motivates football supporters to travel in order to see their favorite teams or what limits them from doing so.

## 1.1 Aim of the Thesis

The main goal of this thesis is to examine and analyze a specific customer segment, football supporters, in relation to travelling domestically or abroad in order to see their beloved team perform. The focus of the research is on the different factors every single individual chooses as the most important motivator or the largest restriction in his decision making process when planning to attend a football event.

The aim is to provide answers to:

- ❖ What team they support?
- ❖ Which football league they like the most?
- ❖ Why are football fans so passionate about football?



- ❖ What is the main reason they travel for a football game?
- ❖ How many times per year do they travel to football events?
- ❖ How many times do sport tourists travel to the same destination?
- ❖ What is most often the reason when they do not travel?
- ❖ What emotions do they feel when watching their team perform live at the stadium?

In addition to receiving answers to many football related questions, the research will present which answers are more popular and how similar opinions football fans might have. Statistics about the repeatedness of similar answers will be provided at the end of the interview analysis.

Finally, reaching a conclusion about this topic might help people that are not so passionate about sports in general, understand what other people see in them and perhaps show them what they have been missing.

## **1.2 Structure of the Thesis**

This research is divided into three parts section: an introduction, a theoretical study and lastly an empirical study.

In the introduction, the reader gets the opportunity to become familiar with the fundamentals around football as a sport, the main difference between the terms: fan and supporter and also becomes informed about the aim of the thesis and any restrictions regarding it.

The theoretical study consists of four chapters. At the beginning of the theoretical study, sport tourism and its three different forms are going to be presented. In the second chapter a definition of event management is provided in an effort to create a better and a complete understanding of the thesis topic and the perspective the study is aiming for. The third chapter concerning consumer behavior and decision making process analyzes all those concerns, motivators/determinants and differ-

ence in people's needs and preference when they are about to plan and book the actual trip towards their football related destination. The last chapter provides examples of the impact sport tourism has both on the traveler but also on the chosen destinations.

During the empirical part of the study the results of the performed research are going to be presented, along with the chosen preferred research method, an analysis of the participating sample, a demonstration of the interview model and a recommendation for further research.

### **1.3 Restrictions**

This study is strongly focused on supporters who are passionate and emotionally committed to their team instead of casual viewers of a team or a specific football player. The main focus of the research is to determine the factors that make these people passionate and motivated to follow their team in home games or away games but also record what type of restrictions can keep such supporters away from traveling and supporting their teams live. The goal is to illuminate their criteria in the decision making process, present information about event preference and also examine the most common travel limitations.

The sample of this particular paper is going to be people of European origin, from various age groups and both male and female. Therefore, the outcome of this study cannot be identically similar to any previous or further research. The sample is going to be divided in three different age groups and the analysis of the results is going to be based on the answers given by these age groups.

## **2 FOOTBALL**

Football might not have been the first sport in the world but it was most probably the first thoroughly planned and regulated team game. It is considered arguably as the king of sports with the biggest influence in recent times (Jeffery 2007, 9).

This particular sport, even with a lack of official laws and rules during its early years, could be played on the streets, could be played by anyone no matter the social class of the players. Through the ages there have been various examples of civilizations that wanted to kick something around either truly or symbolically (Radnedge 1997, 8-9).

Nowadays football has managed to progress and develop into a sport played on a worldwide stage thus making it the top rated sport in the world. Still, the future appears even more promising (Jeffery 2007, 7).

### **2.1 History of Football**

Trying to locate and be totally accurate and precise about the origins of football has proven to be a very hard task due to the large amount of similar games played (Jeffrey 2007, 9). A research through previous eras showed a minimum of six games that had some similarities but also differences to what is now known and called football (FIFA.com<sup>1</sup>).

Scientists and researchers worldwide have been tracing all the possible venues to define the origins of football, some of them trying to allege their culture as the true inventors of the sport (Radnedge 1997, 8). Forms of the game that have proven evidence can be dated as early as sometime between the second and third century BC in China (May 2004, 7). The game was then referred to, by that society, as Tsu' Chu and was mainly used by military soldiers. Two different teams would be created. Those teams would be playing as opponents and they would kick a ball aiming towards a net that was being held by long bamboo canes. The ball was made out of leather and filled with hair and feathers (FIFA a). No use of hands on

the ball was permitted but the people participating could both defend and attack. Variations that looked very much alike this form have been documented also in Egypt and in Greece (History Channel).

Between 100 BC and AD 400, there is a record of the Greeks and the Romans taking part in a newer version of the sport (May 2004, 7). The activity held by the Greek civilization was called “Episkyros”. Not much documentation about it exists apart from the fact that it differed mainly because it was played with the use of hands. It is considered to be an early stage of the American version of football. On the contrary, the Roman soldiers played a game that consisted of 2 teams in a rectangular pitch that had distinctive line limits trying to get the smaller ball from their own half to the opponent’s one while passing the ball to teammates. The Roman’s society name of the sport was “Harpastum” (FIFA.com<sup>1</sup>).

The first time football is mentioned in England is during AD 800. The games have developed more than in its early stages but has a rather more violent form than before and the ball used was in fact an inflated animal bladder. Most common participants were entire neighboring villages (May 2004, 7). Not only British people but also troops liked the sport to such an extent that they considered it a way to socialize and express their emotions. The games continued to be violent since there were no referees and very few rules to maintain the chaos. Due to those incidents but also its high popularity, it was deemed to distract the troops (Edward II was about to enter a war with Scotland) but also as very loud & noisy and therefore along with Edward the II it was banned by Henry the IV, Edward the III and many more (History Channel).

The more recent history of football as we now know it, is based in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (FIFA a). Football had re-emerged, away from violence and bans and this time it was particularly appealing within public schools in England. The first regulations regarding the games and mostly the goal kicks, what the goalkeeper is allowed to do and the rules about the throw-ins were decided at Cambridge during a meeting (History Channel). In 1863, after the separation of the football association from

the rugby association, the English Football Association was created in an effort to be specifically in charge of football and to demonstrate that football is now different from rugby. The English football Association followed the previously formed laws and rules of Cambridge (May 2004, 7).

After introducing the sport within their country, the British somehow managed to spread football into other parts of the world and also acquaint others to the rules and the way the game must be played. Firstly, the neighboring countries would benefit from that. Students were witnessed to play in Portugal and miners to play in the Basque parts of Spain. It did not take long after those events that football would be introduced all over the globe via merchants, students, workers or professors (Radnedge 1997, 10).

### **2.1.1 FIFA and the World Cup**

As previously mentioned, the English Football Association was the oldest football committee created. It was responsible for the first ever rules and regulations of the game that were to be followed in the near future from other countries at least until their re-examination (Betts 2006, 6). The original rules of the game were subject to a change since everyone was getting more experience the more the actual game was played. Therefore as the game progressed there was a change in the offside rule, bringing it closer to the standards that viewers have now. Goal-kicks were added in 1869 and corners were used first time in 1872 whereas referees were introduced in the game in 1878 and penalties started being awarded in 1891 (Fifa.com <sup>2</sup>).

Since football had spread all over the globe, mainly due to the British influence away from Great Britain, it was believed that in order for the sport to progress into a world-wide power there was a demand for one organization to take power and lead all existing football association towards the creation of a major tournament (Radnedge 1997, 12).

In 1904, the Football Association of France decided to take an action and try to bring to life what many countries had been thinking about. All the associations that shared the same dream or ambition, were invited to a meeting in Paris, France. The countries from Great Britain declined the invitation leaving present at the meeting officials from France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden (Betts 2006, 6). These countries were the first members and created FIFA, Federation Internationale de Football Association, an organization whose goal was to unify the rules of the sport and make them clear to everyone involved but also be responsible for a world competition and football's further development (Radnedge 1997, 12).

FIFA became in charge of the Olympic Games and implemented a worldwide football tournament within the competition. By then, the list of members was on a constant increase. However, the amount of members decreased after the resignation of the English Association during the World War I the reason being that they did not feel comfortable being a part in a same organization as their war enemies, Hungary, Germany and Austria (Betts 2006, 6).

Finally, it was Jules Rimet, a French lawyer who decided to create the first world international football tournament. The name of the tournament was: FIFA World Cup. Jules Rimet was FIFA's president from 1921 to 1954 and along with bringing to life a historic competition he also moved the federation's headquarters from Paris to Zurich in 1932 (Radnedge 1997, 12). It has been believed that it was Uruguay's success during the Olympics that motivated Jules Rimet and his assistant Henri Delaunay to establish a competition that was specifically for professionals (Betts 2006, 7).

The proposal for the tournament was widely accepted and six countries directly volunteered to host the World Cup. It was Uruguay, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Sweden and Holland that originally submitted their plan and suggestions for their bid but after some time four of them resigned, leaving only Italy and Uruguay as possible candidates to host the first tournament (Betts 2006, 7). Although FIFA was

based in Europe, the authorities decided to provide Uruguay with the honor to host the first World Cup since they were about to celebrate their centenary Independence in 1930 and also because they had won the gold medal in the two previous Olympic Games. In addition to that, the Uruguayan committee offered to pay the entire costs of the tournament including transportation and accommodation for the teams that would be involved (Fifa.com<sup>3</sup>).

Despite the generous offer from Uruguay, many European national teams could not afford the time to travel there due to the long distance and in the end only four European countries attended the World Cup (Radnedge 1997, 7). Along with France, Romania, Yugoslavia and Belgium from Europe there were Peru, Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and the hosts from South America and United States from North America (Betts 2006, 8). The opening game of the competition was between France and Mexico which ended in a 4-1 win for the French team. The final was held in the Centenario Stadium of Montevideo and it was between the hosts, Uruguay versus their big rivals at the time, Argentina. The fairytale ended in the best possible scenario for the hosts that managed to record a triumph of 4-2 and win the World Cup (Betts 2006, 11).

The competition would be of high importance for all the countries involved and with some changes in the playing structure any barriers would be eliminated, allowing more teams to participate and the World Cup would be a successful event occurring every four years.

### **2.1.2 UEFA and the European Cup**

Since the establishment of FIFA, football became a powerful sport in Europe and its image travelled all over the world, even reaching Asia, Africa and the Far East. In other continents there were already examples of championships for the national teams and therefore there was a need for Europe to target and focus on its own continent (Radnedge 1997, 13). Henri Delaunay, a member and close associate of FIFA's president Jules Rimet, was pressuring for such a competition since the

1920's. Delaunay's proposals did not find any supporters until the creation of the: Union of European Football Association also known as UEFA in 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1954 in Switzerland. Delaunay's position in FIFA and the success of that tournament provided some expertise and trust in his work. The proposal that was provided to FIFA was for a European cup that would be consisted of any of the European Associations and the competition would happen along with the World Cup with a difference of 2 years (Uefa.com).

UEFA's goal was to aid European Association members towards a common international benefit where every country could benefit and co-operate. The first president was Ebber Schwartz from Denmark and the Union was involving 25 national federations. Henri Delaunay's concept and proposal was agreed to be launched in 1960 but unfortunately the first UEFA general secretary would not be able to witness it due to his death in 1955. To honor him, it was decided that the name of the cup given to the final winner would be called as "Henri Delaunay Cup" (Radnedge 1997, 14)

For the first European Nations Cup, as it was originally called, half of the national federations that were UEFA's members participated. Since the number was odd (seventeen instead of sixteen) two teams were randomly picked by a lottery draw and faced each other. The qualifying game was between Czechoslovakia and the Republic of Ireland, ending in a 4-2 aggregate win for the Czechoslovakians that went through the finals of the competition (Uefa.com). The standards to qualify through the next round were direct elimination after two games, one home and one away. The opening game of this new competition was between the Soviet Union against Hungary in Moscow, which found the home side winning by three goals to one. The semi-finals were all held in France and they were in the form of knockout. The winning teams would qualify for the big final and the losing teams would compete for the third place. The final was Yugoslavia against the Soviet Union in Paris and it was decided in extra time when Russian striker Viktor



Ponedelnik scored the second goal in a 1-2 victory for USSR (Radnedge 1997, 17).

Over the years through practicing and due to an increase in the popularity and demand of the competition, UEFA decided to make some changes. Those changes included the increase of participating teams in two groups during the 1980's competition in Italy and during the 1996 tournament in England where there were four groups of four teams allowing the top two teams to qualify thus creating more games for the people attending and watching the games (Radnedge 1997, 26-34).

At the moment UEFA is still in charge of organizing the European Championship games every four years. UEFA consists of fifty four European Football Associations which promote football through fair play, peace and no discrimination to any minorities. The association has also created two of the most highly watched and profitable club competitions called, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League (Uefa.org 2014).

## **2.2 Popularity of Football Events**

The definition of popularity is when something is liked and enjoyed by the majority of people in a particular group (Collins Cobuild 2001, 1190). Popularity for sport events in general but specifically for football events can be measured by number of viewers via internet or television, number of people playing the sport and number of people actually attending those events live in the stadium.

Football is a game for everyone. It is the highest viewed and mostly played sport all over the world. It can be played on various surfaces and even poor children can substitute a ball with a rock or a can in order to enjoy the sport (May 2004, 6). The game is played in more than two hundred thirty countries by approximately more than 250 million people. The fact that it has over one billion fans all over the world makes it the most popular sport (Mughal 2013).

The game appeals to most races and both sexes. Some people find it appealing and connect it to art by saying that football ought to be considered a basic element of art due to the movement, confrontation, speed and dribbles it has. This fact along with the extended television coverage and advertisement present a wider area of people interested in the game along with the fact (Lanfanchi, Eisenberg, Mason & Wahl 2004, 206).

Football events are being widely promoted by television channels, newspapers, magazines, online streaming, sponsors and athletes in selling advertisements. It has become a major business generating a big amount of money (May 2004, 5). During the past twenty years television coverage has allowed the sport to enter every home creating football supporters in every country. The more publicity football events would receive the more recognizable the players would be and more popular the upcoming events were going to be (Lanfanchi et al. 2004, 209-225). Approximately over 1.1 billion people viewed through their television the World Cup final between Germany and Brazil in 2002 (May 2004, 5).

Apart from satellite or cable television, football clubs benefit from more sources. Their major source of income is selling tickets for home games, merchandize and membership fees. Therefore football teams need to have the proper facilities, a competent team, star players and a good marketing team in order to attract customers and football supporters. Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium can accommodate 99,354 people (Fcbarcelona.com), Bayern Munchen's Allianz Arena has a total capacity of over 71,000 people for a single event (Fcbayern.de) and Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu offers a capacity of about 81,044 people (Realmadrid.com).

Since the major European clubs have the biggest revenue they often have a higher capacity and attendance during their games. However, stadium's capacity cannot change from game to game and therefore the final decision of how many people attend a football event depends solely on the individual and his or her preference.

Personal preference can be dependent on the opposing team, the competition in question or just the importance of the game. Worldwide events such as the World Cup or the Euro Cup are amongst the Champions League one of the most popular football competitions.

The Champions cup final in 1957 between Real Madrid and Fiorentina in Santiago Bernabeu had an attendance of 100,000 people and the one between Manchester United against Benfica Lisbon in 1968 at Wembley Stadium gathered 100,000 stadium spectators (Radnedge 1997, 82). The European championship final in 1964 between Spain and the Soviet Union attracted more than 125,000 people (Radnedge 1997, 19) whereas about 76,000 people witnessed Germany beat the Czech Republic in 1996's European championship final held in England (Radnedge 1997,35)

### **2.3 Football Fans & Supporters**

Football would not be the same if there were no fans/supporters. It is a widely popular and followed sport that includes an enormous money investment but with no one to watch it in person or from the television, it would not have the appeal it has now. The survival and progress of a team depends on its supporters (May 2004, 20). Fans and supporters often address themselves as the twelfth man in an effort to describe their important role and impact to the club.

Football is similar to a company or a business industry. It must produce a very good product and implement proper strategies to keep its customers happy and make them loyal in order to narrow the expenses of attracting new customers (Webster & Clements 2007, 1).

Since the early stages of the sport the spine of football was the supporters and those people that follow their club passionately in any given situation, without caring if the team is one of the most popular teams in the world or one of the smallest in a lower division (May 2004, 8)

According to Ian Holloway, an English ex-footballer and manager, people sometimes cannot understand the importance of a football supporter, the difference they can make in a home game and how they can help or boost the team to a win (Holloway 2015). In addition to the previous opinion, Micah Hall, a Portsmouth fan, mentions that fans are not very important to the club they support but they are the ones consisting the football club itself. They provide the club with their personal money and they do not expect to get the money back (Fazackerley 2013). Last but not least, Liverpool's manager during 1959 to 1974, Bill Shankly, once quoted:

“At a football club, there is a holy trinity: the players, the managers and the supporters. Directors don't come into it. They are only there to sign the cheques.” (Grove 2015).

### **2.3.1 Fan Definition and Supporter Definition**

The terms 'fan' and 'supporter' are widely being used and mentioned when it comes to describe people that attend various sport events all over the world. Although these two terms seem to be synonyms, there are a few minor differences between them and for the purposes of this research there has been an effort to differentiate one from another. This might be proven a hard task to do due to the different usage of those terms in other cultures, e.g. British and Americans.

A fan is described by Cambridge University as someone who supports a sports club or admires a person, thus a fan club member (Cambridge Dictionary <sup>1</sup>) but also referred to as an enthusiastic follower of an artist or a sport but mainly as a viewer (Merriam-Webster Dictionary <sup>1</sup>). The word seems to have originated from the word fanatic (Collins Dictionary). There is a slight preference in the usage of this word instead of the word supporter in the United States when people want to describe someone that follows a team passionately. Due to the term's origin, addressing someone as a fan might have a negative meaning.

A supporter is defined by Cambridge University as a person who has a preference in one particular team to win and might express that choice by attending a live game at the stadium (Cambridge Dictionary <sup>2</sup>). A similar explanation of the term is that when someone supports a specific sports club they should present that feeling by actively participating in the club's home or away games (Cambridge Dictionary <sup>3</sup>). The usage of this term is mostly favorable by British people who also express that the word describes someone who is very much active in his/her team's activities, wishes them success in a passionate and emotional way without ever trying to hurt the team's image or people. Therefore it has a stronger positive meaning than the term fan (Oxford Dictionary).

Even after providing definitions for both terms regarding a football enthusiast, people's personal experience and opinions might vary in the issue. A big amount of debates regarding which one of these characterizations is stronger and better have been witnessed by the writer of this study. Mainly due to the origin and negative relation the word fan might have and secondly due to personal experience and influences. For the purposes of this research the term supporter will be given to the people being interviewed later on.

A fan can be anyone who likes something from a car brand, a team, a specific player of a team to a singer or an actor. This means that they might follow news regarding that specific individual, probably attend concerts of the artist or watch the movies they create without a big care in the result (Menzel 2007). They could be regarded as just casual football followers that only watch games when possible or are interested in one specific player (e.g. Messi or Ronaldo fans) or a major tournament. The football fan will choose to become a member of a fan club in order to travel to away games and interact in any way with opposing fans. The fan's mentality tends to be more hardcore than a simple supporter and this can probably cause riots, fight incidents and eventually harm the team they are in favor of. In case of a loss the most common feeling is anger (The United Religion 2011).

Supporters on the other hand are people that tend to take action and show to their football team that they are supporting it in good and bad times. They are more loyal than fans, they want only the best for their team, and they love the team instead of only an individual player. Supporters pay for a season ticket directly to the club, they buy official merchandise, follow their teams news and have a strong emotional bond that can lead to misery when the team loses and in excitement and happiness if the team wins a title or big derby match (May 2004, 8). Some supporters might even plan their daily schedule and life around the team. Watching their favorite club perform is number one priority for them. The football supporters can be best described with three words. Dedicated, loyal and passionate. Dedication to the whole club and not changing teams if the star player leaves. Loyalty even if the team battles for relegation and is underperforming. Passion to be there close to the team and do whatever possible in the teams' interest (Menzel 2007).

### **2.3.2 Hooligans**

One particular type of extreme football fans are called hooligans. Hooligans are people responsible for the violence occurring inside and outside the football grounds. Those people have rivalries with other team's fans that are mainly caused by their teams sharing the same goals or the fact that both teams are located in the same area. The goal of a hooligan is during the away game to light flares, break property that doesn't belong to him and perhaps enter the pitch in order to provoke the home fans whereas in the home games they prioritize in defending their territory, intimidating the opposing fans to singing abusing chants (May 2004, 24). This phenomenon increased during the 70's all over across Europe. Incidents that involved extreme football fans could be found in the Italian Serie A (fans called Ultras), the German Bundesliga (St. Pauli fans etc.), most of the English competitions and many other countries (May 2004, 25).

Hooliganism is a menace to families and healthy acting supporters because it is hurting football and also damaging the reputation of a team or even the area this specific team is in. When asked upon their behavior, hooligans stated that they act

in such way in order to gain respect (amongst fellow fan members but also opposing ones), build a name of themselves and create the element of fear (May 2004, 25). Unfortunate events that led to football tragedies include: the European Cup final in Heysel, Brussels between Juventus and Liverpool in 1985 causing thirty-nine deaths, a game between Argentina and Peru where a fan entered the pitch heading towards the referee with bad intentions causing the police to use tear gas and resulted to three hundred people losing their lives (Arshad 2014) and in the year 2000 when two Leeds fans were stabbed to death by Turkish fans of Galatasaray before the UEFA Cup clash between the two teams (May 2004, 27).

### **3 TOURISM**

Tourism can be defined as a short-term movement of individuals away from areas they work and live towards destinations of some distance in order to participate in activities they enjoy or miss doing. It can be expressed as an enterprise that includes customer service industries like transportation and hotel and restaurants (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 4). Traveling involved is mostly domestic within the same country and then international. The duration of the trip could vary from at least one night to a year. Reasons regarding the purpose of tourism depend on the individual and the most common ones could be business, leisure, educational, religious or recreational reasons (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 1-6).

In this chapter the focus will be on sport tourism along with an analysis of its three different types and the impact this method of tourism has to the visiting destination.

#### **3.1 Sport Tourism**

In order to proceed deeper into the topic a thorough description and definition of what sport tourism is, needs to be given. However, to provide only one specific meaning might be proven to be hard since there is more than one definition.

In simple words, for some people sport tourism is the activity of travelling abroad in order to attend a sport event, take active part in a sport or just watch and experience a sports attraction no matter of competition. It can be divided in two sub-categories: motivational travel for watching the sport and motivational travel for the actual goal of doing the sport itself (Hudson 2003, 22-24).

According to Professor Schwark, sport tourism can be achieved without the need to travel far from someone's own "home", meaning that participating in any sport that a person is not familiar with or self-participation in sports that exist but are



not so often and well known in his/her normal living environment applies as sport tourism (Schwark 2007).

Some people who can capture the whole meaning of a term in a few words say that: Sport tourism is holidays that involve spending time as a player or a spectator of sporting activities (Weed & Bull 1997).

Last but not least, there are two very similar definitions that in the author's opinion capture the essence of what sport tourism is all about. The first one defines sport tourism as every form of passive and active participation in sporting activities, either commercial or not, that necessitates going (travelling) away from home (Standeven & De Knop 1999). The second very accurate definition describes sport tourism as the phenomenon when people (either alone or part of a group) participate actively or passively in various sports or recreation activities (competitive or not) while travelling to and/or staying in areas different than their normal living environment bearing in mind that the sport itself is the primary/basic reason of the trip (Gammon & Robinson 2003, 4).

According to the last two mentioned definitions there are three different types of sports tourism: Active Sport Tourism, Sports Event Tourism and Nostalgia Sport Tourism (Gammon & Robinson 1997).

However, during the research for all the definitions and analysis of sport tourism, the writer witnessed separation between two similar at sight terms in order to separate them and mention the difference to avoid future confusion. Those two terms are sport tourism and tourism sport. Although both concepts consist of the same words, difference is made by the hierarchy in their use. As seen in Figure 1 below, Sport Tourism is based on the primary need of the tourist to engage participation is the sport of his choice whereas in Tourism Sport being active on a sport was not the main concern of the tourist and it may happen by accident (Gammon & Robinson 1997).

<u><b>SPORT TOURISM</b></u>	
<p><u><b>Hard definition</b></u>  passive or active participation at a  <b>competitive sporting event</b>  National / International events  Rotterdam Marathon  Olympic Games  Soccer matches  Wimbledon  International cricket</p>	<p><u><b>Soft definition</b></u>  Primarily active <i>recreational</i>  <b>participation in sport</b>  "Fun Runs"  Hiking / walking  Skiing / Skating  Cycling tours  Canoeing  Disney World of Sports / Fantasy Camps</p>
<u><b>TOURISM SPORT</b></u>	
<p><u><b>Soft definition</b></u>  Visitors who engage in some minor  form of sport or leisure; their  <b>participation is purely incidental</b>  Mini-golf  Bowls  Swimming  Tennis court hire  Rowing / Punting  Pool / snooker</p>	<p><u><b>Hard definition</b></u>  Tourists who as a <b>secondary</b>  <b>reinforcement</b> passively or  <b>actively participate in sport</b>  Landal Green Parks  Centre Parcs  Halls of fame  Sports Cruises  Sport museums  Stadia Tours</p>

**Figure 1** Difference between Sport Tourism and Tourism Sport (Gammon & Robinson 1997)

Trying to create a specific customer profile for each tourism group is a very hard procedure due to the fact that we are dealing with the human factor thus many different variables need to be taken into consideration. Geographic, Demographic, Socio-economic, behavioristic and psychographic variables can provide the main principles of what kind of people are mostly interested in Active, Event, Nostalgia tourism by analyzing factors such as: culture, income, country's sport resources,, location of living environment, number of spectators, popularity and growth of sport, occupation of the individual person and recent public trends (Hinch & Higham 2011, 43-51).

### 3.1.1 Active Sport Tourism

Being active means doing things that need energy and body movement but also participate or involve action in an activity. Synonyms of the word can be: alive, lively, operating, moving, in process or in play (Merriam-Webster Dictionary <sup>2</sup>).

Therefore, Active Sport Tourism is the category that focused on those tourists that aim and pursue potential future participation and involvement in sports activities (competitive or not) when they are travelling (Hinch & Higham 2011, 42-44).

The sports activities taken by the individual travellers may vary a lot and can include anything from tennis, golf and volleyball to bungee jumping, mountain biking and fishing as long as they are actually members of the activity (Gibson 1998, 5).

Professor Colin Hall went a step further and categorized the group of individuals into two subcategories: the “Hobbyists” and the “Activity Participants”. Hobbyists group is consisted of existing participants of sports, perhaps amateurs, who travel around the world in order to compete in the sport they have chosen whereas the Activity Participants group is made of people that choose a sport and participate actively in that while travelling as a form of leisure (Hall 1992).

In addition to the two above mentioned groups, the group “Sportlovers” was introduced by Gibson and Yiannakis (1992). The term defines as sport lovers the tourists that are active in their living environment but want to keep being active even when they travel abroad for either leisure or business. It is those people who travel because of their passion for a sport in specific locations where they can achieve their goals, them being: finding challenging competition, creating a really good experience or develop their knowledge or abilities around that particular sport (Higham & Hinch 2009).

It has been very challenging for researchers to accurately trace back to the beginning of this specific sport tourism group. Various examples like athletes back in 776 BC travelling in order to compete into races and pay their respect to Greek god Zeus (McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie 1995), introduction of golf games in late 19<sup>th</sup> century on various Southern US resorts or even spa visits recently for recreational activities instead of just healing purposes have been given in an effort to distinguish the meaning and goals of this way of travelling (Gibson 1998, 6-8).

### 3.1.2 Sports Event Tourism

Sports Event Tourism is the category that involves the sport activities/happenings that can attract a big number of visiting audience/viewers or participants (Hudson 2003, 34). It is related to the travelers that visit a destination city in order to watch the particular event someone else has created.

This type of tourism includes various events like a friendly football game between Panathinaikos and A.C. Milan, a European Championship qualifier game of Finland against Spain, the World Cup competition, the Olympic Games etc. The event can be either competitive or not but there needs to be a location, a specific date and time of it and two teams or individuals taking part. By meeting those requirements and with the publication of the event, those people that are interested in sports activities can make the arrangements in order to attend it.

The spectators of each sport event differ between each other and some might be more driven than others, meaning that some people travel with the purpose of watching a specific team or athlete that they support play (fans) whereas some people attend the event because of the competition without a particular preference in a team or an athlete (e.g. Wimbledon Tennis Championship, Olympic Games, World Cup competition, NBA games etc.) but because they want to witness the whole experience of a big tournament and perhaps an historic one. The attractions and games often attract interest from fellow athletes, technical personnel and big media channels all over the world (Hudson 2003).

Event tourism markets can include many different reasons of attending. Many tourists are only interested in the event itself and they don't express any desire in participating in anything before or after the game. Usually, that segment group is travelling abroad for a small amount of days and then goes back to their living destination. An example of such tourists, is "sport junkies" or "fans/supporters" that travel on Monday to a destination for a Champions League game that occurs on Tuesday and then leave Wednesday morning after the game has finished with-

out any interest in seeing the city or do shopping (Faulkner, Tideswell & Weston 1998). Other people attend the Americas Cup for fashion reasons, the Camp Nou stadium because of Barcelona's star players and the Wimbledon Tennis Championship because of its tradition and heritage (Hinch & Higham 2011). Last but not least, there are those visitors who travel to sport events with the goal of reuniting with the friends/colleagues/classmates while watching an event that matches their interests (Rinehart 1992).

This form of sport tourism is the biggest one of the three mentioned here. It is still on growth since in a way athletes everywhere perform for personal gain but also for the audience's appraisal and satisfaction. This increasing way of travelling is able to motivate people move from one place to another thus generating thousands or even millions and billions of dollars/euros in a local economy (Mules & Faulkner 1996). Even the smallest events like Santa's run, Color marathons or children's tournaments (e.g. Wasacup Football Cup in Vaasa, Finland) can be beneficial for the locals of the destination (Hudson 2003, 22).

### **3.1.3 Nostalgia Sport Tourism**

The third and last type of sport tourism is Nostalgia or sometimes also called Celebrity Sport Tourism. It consists of mainly travelling towards popular historic sports attractions (Gibson 1998, 5). Those historic sports-related attractions can be anything from sport reunions, football museums (e.g. Manchester United, Liverpool etc.), basketball halls of fame to themed bars and heritage events (Hinch & Highman 2011, 195-197). Everything that is related to a small part of a sport's history can make a difference and attract people from all over the world in order to witness it and create somehow a memorable experience to the tourists. People who are passionate and supporters of a sport usually connect to even the smallest thing. From a shirt worn by their hero to an autograph they received from a sign-

ing day at the football ground or a picture taken with a professional athlete while he/she was in action.

In addition to travelling to sports-related attractions (stadiums, museums etc.) there is another rising type of Nostalgia Tourism and that is getting acquainted with celebrity sports athletes during a vacation. Many cruises in the United States have worked towards that direction of including meeting points with either active or retired personalities from various sports inside the boat or outside when actually passengers could spend some time with them, get an autograph or a picture and talk with them. Some examples of such trips are: the NBA Basketball Cruise and the Norwegian Cruise Lines related to golf professional players (Gibson 1998, 5-6).

From all the Sport Tourism types, Celebrity Tourism is perhaps the newest and least studied (Gibson 1998). Researchers have tried studying and following the trends about Nostalgia Tourism and see the numbers. A study focusing in North America revealed that this form of travelling industry is growing and tourists seem to be focusing on sport museums, stadiums and hall of fames (Gammon 2002, 69).

### **3.2 Sports Tourism Impact**

The first step of creating a city's appeal towards sports enthusiasts should be taken by the local authorities and communities. Sport activities for participation or sport events should be organized. In the case of football, the local teams are the ones that have a great effect and contribute to the host industry. A football club that participates in a competitive league or competition in general can assist in drawing investments, new businesses, artists or industries that could have ended up somewhere else. Plenty of shops, hotels, restaurants and other companies depend their existence in the football team's life and good form (May 2004, 20).

The first way of impacting a location is the purchase of football tickets. This is the top priority for the football supporter, to attend a stadium and watch his team or nation compete against another club or nation. The home team receives revenue via the ticket sales but also through any official merchandize or food and drinks the guest might consume during the game. That income for the football club can go to the working personnel of the stadium, the players or staff members or even in the local producers for products needed in the stadium. Sometimes the teams contribute with their actions such as the example of Romanian team Steaua Bucharest which decided to build a new church for every winning European game. Another act of a football club giving back is players' visits in the hospital or in schools where they help, teach or chat with the students or sick kids (May 2004, 21). But what else is there for the city to gain from the incoming sport tourists?

Domestic travelers have a higher chance of attending the game and returning to their hometown on the same day. The international guests, however, need more time in the area and plan beforehand all their necessary needs like: accommodation, food, transportation and perhaps shopping. By staying longer in the area the traveler spends more money in the local restaurants, supermarkets, shops and hotels. If the team is successful and performing well then there is probably a bigger number of future visitors. This fact enhances the local industry and more jobs are generated in order to handle the busy weekend. A cash flow creates job opportunities as more people are need to interact with the tourists (Shone & Parry 2004, 112). The tourist's currency does not stay in one place since a part of the hotel's income goes for salaries, another part goes for buying food products from the market but also to a partner. As long as the circulation of money continuous then the barkeep, the butcher, the baker and many other owners will have an income (Krippendorf 1987, 48).

Unfortunately the increase in tourism has converted the authenticity and warmth of hospitality into a profession towards trading and making money. The negative aspects of frequent tourism are when those visited areas lose their authenticity by

the high number of foreign visitors, when the life style has to change to fit in with the new trends or habits brought to the city or when the sense of local neighborhoods is lost because the people are focusing on making a profit. In addition, tourism related work is not always considered very attractive since it offers undesirable working hours, a stressful working environment, overtime and busy seasons (Krippendorf 1987, 45-49).



## **4 EVENT MANAGEMENT**

Management is a key element when it comes to strategy towards being in charge of an event and how to utilize it in the best possible way. The event planning team spends a lot of time organizing all the important aspects of the given happening they are in charge and someone invests a lot of money so that the final outcome will reach the interested audience (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 12).

There is demand for new ideas, new venues and various types of events all over the world and this is where management is required. Someone needs to be responsible for hiring and managing the right group of people, investing money and create ideas for present or future events. In order to do so, there ought to be an event committee that includes a president, a manager, an operations manager, a marketing team and so on. Those people and teams need to work together, brainstorm, plan, analyze the market and reach the goals set in the beginning (Shone & Parry 2004, 64-68). Event management can be described well in four stages: Planning, doing, checking and acting.

### **4.1 Definition of Events**

An event can be described as an organized and planned occurrence that varies from a music concert to a football game and from a wedding to a normal social meeting (Collins Cobuild 2001, 526). It happens at a certain location and time and it may involve the presence and work of agents or planners. An event can be a result of previous happenings or just the beginning of something that is about to unveil later on (Businessdictionary.com).

One other definition characterizes events as a phenomenon that appears from non-routine happenings that offer personal, social, cultural or leisure objectives that would not be reached on a usual daily basis. The main reason of those events is to

entertain, please and provide a memorable experience to the people attending (Shone & Barry 2004, 3).

Most events, if not all, have an impact on the people attending. They play an important role in people's lives and have a strategic use since events tend to impress their audience. Some people consider them as a different type of communication between the supplier and the target customer group. The participant of the event often attaches an emotional memory for the rest of his life to the whole experience of each particular event. Even if the event occurs only once, the audience will evaluate it at the end and decide whether it was worth it as something to remember or as an unfortunate experience that did not fulfill his expectations (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 4-5).

Examples of events are: the World Hockey Cup or any other sports tournament, the Olympic Games, a music concert, a Christmas gathering, a business meeting, a wedding and many other happenings. The Olympics, which first started in 776BC, were a religious event to honor the leader of the gods named Zeus. The games attracted people from all over Greece who wanted to attend this religious festival. The Olympics reappeared with a new focus and participation from more nations in 1896 and the years after (Shone & Barry 2004, 7). Like the Olympic Games, if it is a big scaled event a combination of interested parties are strategically involved into branding and advertising it with the goal of benefiting from it. Events are considered as from big companies as their communication campaign towards their customers and a way of creating a memorable brand that people will remember (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 5).

## **4.2 Characteristics of Events**

The form of events can be either something that can be repeated several times or of something that can be planned only once in the same way (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 5). Regarding the subject of this thesis, both types apply depending on the perspective of the viewer. If it is a mini tournament taking place on a weekend,

the marketing team will follow the same procedure to advertise all the games being played. However, even if the games are for the purposes of the same tournament each individual match is unique in the way that the stadium, the opponents, the date and the time cannot be exactly the same again. Even the fans or players that participate in the game might be different. This is only one characteristic that events have.

Other basic characteristics attributed to events are the fact that the team planning the event is responsible for making it public and inviting the interested parties and that their aim is to build an emotional connection between the consumer and the actual event. Besides that, creating an experience that delivers more added value to the customers is a key target from the organizers in a way to ensure that they will attend another event in the future (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 6).

In addition to the above mentioned, there are more event characteristics that are connected with the customer service nature of the events. Those include: uniqueness, intangibility, perishability, ceremony along with ritual and atmosphere (Shone & Parry 2004, 13).

#### **4.2.1 Uniqueness**

Perhaps the key characteristic of events that makes them exciting, memorable and interesting is their uniqueness. Although the same type of events can happen in various occasions, each and every one of them is never going to be exactly the same. There are many variables that might differ such as: the venue, the environment, the weather, the spectators or participants, the time and even more (Shone & Barry 2004, 14). As for football events, the same conditions apply. Even when hardcore supporters attend the stadium either home or away the whole experience is going to differ. A lack of a friendly face, an injured player that might cause the team to underperform, different audience, different weather conditions may well alter the way the client is perceiving the event.

Unfortunately, opinions vary on the topic of whether it is good or bad for an event to be unique. This is based to the fact that everyone is seeking for an outstanding atmosphere that is usually connected to their favorite team's win. This does not seem possible since there are two teams battling each other and there is a chance of someone's feeling being hurt. If a person's first unique experience of a football event is accompanied by a good performance of his/her team then that person will desire the same uniqueness in the next encounter of the same type of event. For others however, a unique event is something that really happens once and they will cherish the memories and every moment they lived during that day. Experiencing again the same feelings would lessen the importance of their first event participation.

Event organizers focus on this characteristic in a way to attract customers. It is a key ingredient towards their work being successful. Even though event planners might create and work repeatedly on similar tasks and happenings, the objective is to provide some kind of uniqueness that would also enable previous users to attend again the same kind of event (Shone & Parry 2004, 14).

#### **4.2.2 Intangibility**

The term intangible refers to things, experiences, activities that are not able to be perceived by the senses, mostly those of touch. An event is something people attend with the purpose of listening, watching, perhaps eating and being social with others. In their majority events are about the experience and the ambience, which both are considered as intangible (Shone & Parry 2004, 15). This is proven to be partially true. The football supporters cannot touch the actual game, the ball, the memories or the fun they might be having but they can find tangible items within the event. There are several elements that the consumer can touch and feel. Regarding traveling for football games, the attendee can choose between items such as the football ticket, the seat inside the stadium, a memorabilia obtained by the club's store, the flight or train ticket and any photos they might take during the event.

The final product that is being offered to the attendee of a football match is a result of customer service by the provider which is the reason behind the event being not touchable. Intangibility or tangibility is a factor to be seriously taken into consideration by the event provider because a tangible item is much appreciated by the customer. (Shone & Parry 2004, 15).

#### **4.2.3 Perishability**

As it was previously mentioned when an event is unique it means that it cannot exist again in the same form or the same way. Perishability has a similar definition. People need to realize that even two music concerts featuring the same bands, at the same destination, with the same amount of spectators cannot be exactly similar. It is the nature of the events that cause the offered product to be perishable. Events exist mostly for a short period of time and the items along with the supplies used are on a single use basis making them unavailable for the future (Shone & Parry 2004, 14).

The outcome of the organizer's choices when trying to offer a perishable event to the client is similar to offering uniqueness. It provides the football spectator of the event with an unforgettable experience that he will probably not get again in the upcoming fixtures of his team. Perishability depends mainly to the happening's managers (Shone & Parry 2004, 15).

#### **4.2.4 Ceremony and Ritual**

In the past various authors when characterizing an event as special they attributed that to the ceremony and ritual that existed in that specific happening. That was because the majority of historical events like the Olympics, a burial of a well know person or a political ceremony included some kind of a ritual. It used to be popular and very important to have a certain ceremony before the event starts. Yet this particular characteristic is gradually disappearing from the occurring events

lately. They are witnessed usually in areas or events that have kept close to their traditions (Shone & Parry 2004, 15).

As for traditions and rituals within football there are a couple of examples that could be described as such. The formation of both squads in a line at the center of the pitch along with the sound of the Champions league anthem during a European game is a noticeable example of a ritual that happens in every Champions League football match. Another obvious example is the announcement of the national anthems when two countries face each other in any competition. These two are the easily recognizable examples related to football events all over the world. Other rituals or ceremonies are possible, depend on the occasion and are deemed as rare.

The lack of traditional aspects within the game of football in recent times is something that not all fans are in favor of. There is a portion of football supporters that appreciated and enjoyed a certain ritual either in the beginning or the end of the game.

#### **4.2.5 Atmosphere**

An event and how that is perceived from its consumer relies in the atmosphere noticed and experienced during that time. If the atmosphere is exactly what the client expected it to be or even better than the event was successful, the guest is happy and there is a high chance that he/she will be again a customer in the future. If the atmosphere is far from satisfying then it would be described as a failure. The ambience of the event is perhaps one of the most crucial characteristic towards the desired result. (Shone & Parry 2004, 16).

The atmosphere within the happening can depend on various factors and the judges of it are the spectators that attend it. Although people's opinion might be subjective if the majority of the crowd present finds it to be good then the final result should be that it had a nice atmosphere. The factors affecting the outcome of the event could be the weather condition if the event was outdoors, the performance

of the band or the football club, the decorations in the venue, the other spectators of the event or the food and drinks (Shone & Parry 2004, 16).

Due to their unexpected nature, football events cannot be guaranteed of a good atmosphere. At the same time it is so because in most of the games there are supporters from both teams although the majority consists of the home team's fans. A winning side's audience will be chanting and having fun when the opposite crowd might be discouraged to do anything and end up leaving the stadium earlier than the final whistle.

### **4.3 Events Planning**

Planning is considered a key element towards the success of events mainly due to their complex nature, their high requirements and the inexperience of event planners. A plan could be described as a future guide and a way of checking the progress being done towards the final event (Shone & Parry 2004, 81). In order to begin with the event the people working on the project need to understand the type of activities involved in the event and what the actual goals are and whether those are main or supporting ones. So, it should be realized by all event organizers that knowledge and expertise is a necessity in someone's work. Knowledge meaning know the subject of work, assign the right people in the proper position for the event and be prepared to handle any obstacle that might appear (Shone & Parry 2004, 65).

Sport tourism is blooming and it does so in a dynamic industry that sometimes might need an intervention of some way during the development stage in order to stay focused on the customer's objectives (Hinch & Higham 2011, 64). To do so, the event manager is responsible for making the right decisions and taking those actions in the planning process that would be the best for the event in question (Shone & Parry 2004, 83).

A successful plan ought to be broken down in smaller parts so that everyone in the event team understands their part and can concentrate on their role. By delegating

duties any future problems are going to be minimized and there will be a higher chance of success (Shone & Parry 2004, 81).

Regarding the football events around the world, the planning procedure seems to be clear and very similar every single time. The initial stage of organizing a football event involves the team finalizing the crucial information about the actual football game which are the date, the time, the venue and the opponent. It is an absolute necessity for the organizers to get familiar with these elements at least a month or two prior to the event so that there is enough time to plan everything but also advertise it towards any interested party giving plenty of time to book transportation, accommodation or football tickets.

The second step for the planning team would be to check the available funds and budget towards the advertising of the football match or the entire tournament/cup. In order to do so, the right people like shareholders, advertisers and people handling social media for the team's purposes need to be contacted along with the best available advertising venues. Although it might sound as an interminable procedure, most of the football clubs count on television contracts they have had in the beginning of the season or in their own use of social media. In a way it is a reasonable thing to do. Television companies need to show when and where they have the live coverage of the football match so that people are aware of it and they can gain spectators. Football supporters are getting notified by the television about the game and if they are available and willing they buy the tickets and attend the club's ground instead. Social media, as an alternative way of making the event public, eliminate the competitive approach the television coverage has to offer and reach more hardcore fans that follow their favorite team (Masteralexis, Barr & Hums 2009, 404).

After all these details have been taken care of, the organizers have to choose the appropriate pricing strategy for their audience. The decision over how much the match ticket costs, together with the name of the opposing team, can decide if the stadium is going to be full or not. Following that all ideas and paperwork have



been finalized the football club itself has to choose all the personnel involved in the customer service department such as ticket sellers, stewards, security and other staff members.

Sport tourism developers, when consciously organizing a sport event, do not only work towards their own benefit but at the same time they achieve in contributing to the economic, cultural and environmental platforms they participate and live in (Hinch & Higham 2011, 65).

#### **4.4 Marketing for Events**

Marketing involves all the planning procedures that occur when selling a product like designing the product, agreeing on the pricing strategy, the locations it will be available and the proper way of advertising it (Collins Cobuild 2001, 948). It is an approach that creates interest from organizations and companies. It is based on the communication between the provider and the client, creates added value and increases the sales numbers (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 31-32).

Event marketing can be used on different occasions such as a marketing communication tactic for companies, promoting a city or a whole region to possible future residents or visitors, creating a connection between partners and branding a product (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 5). For the company in charge the event is the core product that needs to be advertised in order to lead to the target which is sales revenue. However, the target of the customer is to attend a happening and achieving the goal of an emotional experience (Gerritsen & Olderen 2014, 35).

Football games or football events in general are mainly advertised by three different sources. The first source is the organization in charge of the tournament or league which could, for example, be UEFA or FIFA, the Spanish league or any other nation. This group of people is responsible for making the official league or cup draw and publicly announcing it to all the interested parties thus making the approximate dates two football clubs or nations are going to compete for. The second source of marketing the football games are the teams themselves. Either

by using the official webpage of the club or the social media, the team is both informing and inviting its fans to attend and watch them play. The third party that advertises the event and has something to gain from it is the television network that has the license for live coverage. The success of the channel depends on the number of viewers. Therefore, advertising a popular live program beforehand increases the chances of attracting more viewers.

## **5 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

There has been a rising differentiation on people's needs and activities while being on a holiday (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 13). It has been witnessed that even though tourists travel away from home on many occasions they do not really forget their everyday habits. People can have many deep-rooted routines which cannot be easily avoided (Krippendorf 1987, 31-32).

Consumer behavior study is the key towards a proper marketing strategy that can successfully create, advertise and sell tourism products to specific customer segments. In order to increase the efficiency in the marketing methods organizations have to research and understand how customers decide to purchase or consume products. However interesting the subject may be it is difficult to study since some of the decisions purchasers make are due to emotions. Customer are often, if not always, persuaded by both internal or external motivators and determinants during the selection of products (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 3). Along with that issue, the fact that tourism is not an individual activity but an obscure project with various characteristics makes it hard to be researched (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 157).

### **5.1 Tourists' Consumer Behavior**

Companies focus on the consumers' needs and activities in order to provide them with the right product to be chosen instead of a competitor's product but also into convincing consumers to use their services more often. Due to the importance of tourists' behavior, organizations will try to find a pattern to consumers' wants and desires which will aid them to be beneficial in the future (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 6-7). After gathering the information from the research on peoples' interests and habits while on travel the companies try to manipulate the four elements of the marketing m (Price, Product, Promotion and Place) to offer to their target segments (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 180).

Engel, Blackwell and Miniard describe the term as:

“Consumer behavior is those activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services including the decision making processes that precedes and follows these actions” (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1995)

As previously mentioned, tourists’ behavior depends on many external or internal factors. As hard as it might seem to predict peoples’ patterns researchers have managed to identify some of them. The main factors influencing how tourists behave and make decisions are: nationality, economics, age, lifecycle, location and time.

Nationality affects the tourist’s motivation when deciding where to travel. This is based on the patterns that have been noticed between populations. For example, cricket is more popular and interesting than the Olympic Games in India whereas in Finland supporters prefer hockey to football (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 20).

Economic factors are always important when it comes to making purchasing decisions. Money affects the type of vacation but also the expenses the traveler will have during the trip. The two main economic characteristics are income and price. Income defines the total amount of money the consumer has and can define the amount that is disposable for products such as flights, accommodation, transportation and sports merchandize. If the income is low the consumer must either consider cheaper alternatives than the desired one or avoid travelling in an effort to generate disposable income (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 76-77). Price has a similar affect due to its close connection to income and it seems to be a constant in many decision making processes. Asking price for products and services is dependable on someone’s income and can determine whether the consumer feels to make the booking or not (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 157).

Age and lifecycle are arguably the most important behavioral influencers. Both factors are related and determine how people react in different stages of their

lives. Priorities and interests can change as noticeable moments can initiate a switch to a new life stage. For example, young people under the age of 20 usually do not have a steady job, therefore not so big disposable income to purchase everything they need. In addition to that, young people tend to look for relaxation and entertainment when travelling whereas tourists in the age group of 26-30 for exploration (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 21-37). Senior travelers will sacrifice money and time originally saved for tourism purposes towards family interaction. Inexperienced young travelers tend to visit the largest and more well-known cities around the world whereas a bit older and more experienced people would try to visit a whole region. Lastly, consumers who are relatively young are more acquainted with the use of the internet and mostly book for products or services online (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 21-37).

Regarding location and time Swarbrooke and Horner (1999,157-158) mention that location can vary from a hotel destination or any attraction away from the guest's place of living and time can be described either as seasonality for popular or unpopular destinations or as the actual timing and situation the consumer is at when book the trip details.

## **5.2 Main Concepts in Consumer Behavior**

Throughout the years many researchers have tried studying consumer behavior, with different levels of success. The aim has been to identify the significance of all the information surrounding the various stages of the peoples' decision making process. Some authors have created their own consumer behavior models in an effort to present the correlation of the diverse factors that affect consumer behavior. These factors can be ranging from marketing purposes and the weather conditions of a destination to personal travel knowledge and motivators (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 41). For the purposes of this particular work two models will be mentioned and focused on.

The first model to be considered and analyzed is the Nicosia model which is named after its author. The Nicosia model focuses on the purchase process of a new product of the customer. It involves four stages that include the organization's efforts to approach potential customers and their reaction, the client's evaluation procedure and external influencers, the decision making and purchase of the product and then the post purchase feedback proceeding. The main concept of the results presented created an argument between researchers since there were those commenting on the lack of the specified variables (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 41-43).

The second concept around the consumer behavior stages was demonstrated by Schmöll (1977) in the book 'Tourism: Principles and Practice (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 1993). The model cogitated that the decisions made by consumers were based in four distinct elements:

- I. Personal and Social Determinants
- II. Features of the Service destination
- III. Travel Stimulants
- IV. External Variables

The first element mentioned of social and individual determinants consists of all factors that can cause someone to travel. Any reason deemed to be influencing the decision making process by any means, belongs to this category including peoples' needs, wants, motivators and prospects. The second mentioned elements group contains the characteristics attached to the visiting destination like available attractions, service quality, amenities provided and interaction with locals. Travel stimuli incorporates the information gathering process for the traveler. The methods used in order to create an image of the potential trip either with the use of written information (newspapers, magazines, travel books) or previous users comments and evaluation of the destination. Lastly, the external variables contain restrictions due to time and cost, previous experiences related to tourism, destina-

tion images and confidence to the parties involved throughout the whole trip (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 47)

### **5.3 People's Needs and Interests**

Two very important factors that can pinpoint to tour operators but also other tourists to what people are aiming for when travelling and why people decide the way they do, are personal needs and interests. Even though these two terms can be described as ambitions or wishes, theorists studying people's needs debate that human needs are more important and necessary than human interests. Furthermore, researchers mention that interests and needs differ in the way that interests can also be tangible whereas needs cannot (Maiese 2004).

There are numerous theories surrounding people's needs and traveling. Some scientists believe that tourists leave their country in a search of finding what they miss. People who tend to work a lot take their holidays in order to rest, fill up and take a break from the pressure and obstacles of everyday work. Those who experience risk on a daily basis seek security, those who lack sleep are looking for sleep and rest and so on. Other scientists suggest that people travel in order to live our lives and survive. The daily schedule people experience is usually dictated by other people and the everyday environment is surrounded by monotony, stressful situations and mental or physical exhaustion. To counterbalance those negative effects of routine and cope with life in the future, people have to fulfill their needs (Krippendorf 1987, xiv- 16). Two concepts will be described more under the following subheading.

Interests can be expressed in form of a desire. They are not a necessity that people cannot do without but something that people like or enjoy spending time with. Interests can be goals set by individuals that create a feeling of being motivated, proud and self-satisfied. They diagnose what subjects are appealing to people and are the answer to the questions "why do you feel like that?" and "why do you want that?" (Maiese 2004).

### 5.3.1 Hierarchy of needs

An American psychologist who researched and studied human needs was Abraham Harold Maslow. Maslow was known for designing a pyramid with the hierarchy of needs featuring five motivational needs (Figure 2).



**Figure 2** Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod 2007)

The five motivational needs consist of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The idea of this concept is that people need to satisfy the needs in the bottom first and move the way up. The needs in the lower section of the pyramid include those basic needs like food, water, sleep and oxygen. The second level contains security in the sense of health, body, property, employment and life in general. Social needs can be achieved when a person is able to interact with others. Examples could be creating friends, feelings of family love and sexual affection. Esteem needs involve the feeling of reaching a wanted achievement, gaining respect by others and also self-confidence. Those needs can be achieved only when the individual himself is proud of achieving what was needed. In the top tier of the pyramid lie the self-actualization needs, those needs are the hardest to be fulfilled due to the big number of obstacles the person needs to face in the earlier stages. Only when the indi-



vidual reaches the stage of feeling complete, capable and creative and have high morale (McLeod 2007).

### **5.3.2 Travel career ladder**

Another concept related to people's needs is the 'travel career ladder' developed by Pearce and Lee (2005, 228). It is regarded to be a combination of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the motivations of a tourism career. By travel career the two authors wanted to present a theme which argued that travelers have detectable stages while having a trip. Pearce and Lee continued to point out that people's travel career can be affected by the lifecycle of the individual but also past experiences related to traveling (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 33-34).

The travel career ladder, as displayed in Figure 3 (next page), is formed by five different ranks of motivation. The lowest level of the ladder is occupied with the relaxation needs, the second level includes the stimulation needs, respectively the third tier consists of the relationship needs whereas the fourth rank includes the development and self-esteem needs and lastly on the first tier of the ladder someone can find the fulfilment needs. In comparison to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the traveler is possible to have a mixture of the previously mentioned motivations at the same time. One level of those motivational needs is bound to dominate however but that is dependable of the tourist's lifecycle. The dominant level of motivations can change due to the influence of prior trip experiences. The more the tourist is getting acquainted with various destinations worldwide the more different priorities that person will have in the future (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 34-35).

In a nutshell this concept is a theoretical design of tourism related motivation via motives and needs the traveler has witnessed in the past. By tracing back to every example of vacation or traveling people can understand if at some point they have changed their behavior. Perhaps in an early stage of their life someone seeks for development skills and glamour (level four) and accomplish a dream (level five) while in a later stage the only thing they desire is love from friends and family

(level three) or to relax and have their health (level one) (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 34-35). It is just a matter of perspective and state of that specific moment.

Sport consumers traveling for a football event can have the mix of relaxation since having a break from work, stimulation from being excited to travel to watch the team play but also being in a group with fellow supporters demanding the same goals from their football club. Some football supporters might even experience the feeling of fulfilling a dream by attending the stadium and museum of their favorite team.



**Figure 3** Travel Career Ladder by Pearce & Lee 2005 (Bowen & Clarke 2009,

### 5.3.3 Interests

There has been a prevailing trend displaying that the more involved a person is with some activity in a daily basis the higher the chances that person would try to engage in that same activity while on a holiday. People that have a hobby of eating often outside will probably be interested to do so while on a vacation whereas people interested in movies or theatrical plays will seek an opportunity to visit a local theatre or movie cinema abroad (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 43). Nonetheless, travelers who participate in an activity on a new location differ on the engagement and competitiveness level. For example, a sports exercise can be experience by a casual sports traveler, a mass sports fan or an elite professional top athlete (Hinch & Higham 2011).

From the previous examples it has been noticed that everyday life is affecting tourist behavior and experience while away from home by means of leisure activity (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 45). People devote their free time in subjects that they find appealing, interesting or close to their personality for one reason or another. Interests are topics or activities that someone can spend a lot of time into because they like it, it can be fulfilling or they might have a previous connection to it. They enjoy doing it so much that it becomes a hobby that satisfies them and in the end a part of their routine.

In regard to football supporters, their interests are clear. Football supporters enjoy spending time reading news about their team, watching the games either live inside the stadium or through the television and also be involved in anything surrounding the sport they love. There is also the feeling of being a part of a “team” that has the same interests, beliefs and likes in the meaning of a supporters club. The interest people might show in a specific team can be due to the playing style of that team, the location it is based in or the admiration of specific players on that football club. Usually football fans appear to be more passionate about the team’s performance and results which is something that presents how serious they are about football and how they differ from the casual fans.

#### **5.4 Sport Consumers**

The phenomenon of a high number of tourists traveling for either active or passive participation in sporting events can be described as a recent one. Sports are recognized as tourist attractions for people whose motivations are from the love to their team or game in general to being part of a unique atmosphere that completes them as supporters. They are being considered as a major traveling purpose no matter if they serve a basic or a secondary trip reason. Most common examples are: the Formula One championship, the Olympic Games, the Champions League, the FIFA World Cup and others (Hinch & Higham 2011, 3-22).

The travelers are considered sport consumers who visit a certain destination and spend at least twenty-four hours in the event area with the sole reason of attending the sports happening. The destination itself can be a secondary reason of selecting this city or country but the sport event must be the basic purpose of traveling (Nogawa, Yamaguchi & Hagi 1996, 46-54). However these travelers can be separated in two further groups: the 'sport junkies' and the 'casual sport consumers'.

The first group name was created by Faulkner et al (1998) and consists of people who travel to an area just to attend the sports event. This group either has none or little need for pre- or post- game activities/plans. The group of casual sport consumers includes those tourists that have a simpler relationship with the sport itself or the team they like. General interest depends on the teams' performance, the weather condition at that time and the condition of the venue (Hinch & Higham 2011, 54-55).

#### **5.5 Motivators**

Motivation is a procedure including three steps: creation of a certain need, taking an action towards satisfying it and lastly fulfilment of that specific need (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 88). Those needs can be expressed as motivators or determinants for every event and they can be primary or secondary. For example, sports' event main goal is to allow athletes compete against others and the secondary one is to

offer a social gathering for people with similar taste but also generate income for the organizing club (Shone & Parry 2004, 26-27). However, many authors have discovered a number of difficulties while studying people's motivators like the big variety in cross-cultural differences, human interests and wants (Pearce & Lee 2005, 226). People have different interests and tastes and therefore the thing that motivates someone not necessarily motivates another person (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 96).

The difference between human beings reflects also on the reasons they are motivated by. Main factors affecting the tourist's motivators as defined by Swarbrooke and Horner in 1999 are:

- Lifestyle affects the purchase stage meaning that some focus on their health while others in partying or what clothes to buy and wear.
- The past experience the customer of the event has had, both positive and negative.
- Personal image of how someone is perceived by others.
- Personality meaning what kind of type the event user is for example a loner, an outgoing, an adventurous or a cautious person.

A typology of motivators in tourism events shows that the motivators can be personal, cultural, social, emotional or physical and that the satisfaction of customer's need might vary. Participation in events could be because the company sent the person to the event or because of social interaction with friends that attended it. It can be due to personal expectations or just because the person needed some time off to relax (Shone & Parry 2004, 27). The reason could vary from escaping routine schedule and want to exercise to trying to begin a new hobby and making new friends (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 56-59).

As was previously mentioned, due to the differences in people it is hard to be totally sure about the motives everyone has. Especially if it is mentioned that the motives can differ for the same individual depending on the time of considering

purchasing a product or booking a ticket. It is affected on the tourist's status on that time, the income, the duration of the planning and the purpose of the trip (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 60-61). Even though it is hard to predict patterns on tourists, researchers will continue to explore and study clients' motives to travel for the purpose of profiling them into different segments (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 96). By doing so event planners or travel agents understand what people are looking for and can reach them more easily although that does not necessarily mean that they can predict the exact number of participants/users (Shone & Parry 2004, 28).

## **5.6 Determinants**

The determinants of how people behave when traveling or how they decide on the trip are various and complicated. They consist of personal influencers and external determinants that differ for every individual. As a result the tourism industry examines and takes advantage of specific determinants for the sake of profit or future control. A good example of exploiting the determinants people have is by influencing the price factor (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 64-68).

Personal determinants rely on someone's individuality. It is based on their age, the lifestyle they follow, their work status and personality. The age factor usually dictates a certain taste in things like clothes, music and places to go out. Younger people tend to party, dance and drink more than older people who prefer to relax and have an occasional drink. Lifestyle reflects on a person's choices so far. Choices regarding the brands they wear and the car they drive to the way they behave. Current work status clearly influences the income the tourist has available and the shopping needs he/she can afford. Personality is perhaps the most important factor because everything is based on the person's interests and likes (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 57-59).

External determinants include all those factors that cannot be controlled by the decision maker but can affect his/her final decision. These external factors can be

of a political nature, economic nature, a religious nature, social nature or media and agency controlled. Politics affect the tourist's behavior during the decision making process. If political unrest exists in the potential destination, for example there are a lot of bureaucracy and visa requirements, then people may be discouraged to choose that location. Television and travel agencies provide information, brochures, advertisements and television shows related to tourism that can make many countries or cities appealing to various customer segments (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 64-65). As far as religion is concerned, there are some destinations like Mecca or Jerusalem that vast numbers of tourists for pilgrimage reason at specific times of the year. Two key economic factors are the money the event consumer earns and also the price of the trip. A low price can motivate the client and make it quicker to decide on actually booking the trip whereas a higher price may delay the decision or even cause them to not travel. Social reasons are the most common since people are usually surrounded by friends or family with who they share experiences and opinions (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 75-82).

People with extrovert characteristics tend to get influenced by external determinants like suggestions from friends whereas introverts do not. Depending on the timing a determinant can be dominant or secondary even for the same person (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 62-65).

### **5.7 Purchase of the trip**

The procedure of booking a trip to a football destination or purchasing a ticket for a football event is very complicated and it involves various factors that relate to motivators, determinants, consumer behavior and influencers such as the type of travel, the duration of the trip, the destination and much more (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 73). The consumer does not only buy a specific product but a whole experience when finalizing the holiday's details.

The purchasing process includes crucial steps that every traveler has to consider prior to leaving for the actual trip. The initial stage has the tourists collecting in-

formation related to his/her needs and interests. Then they have to gather additional information about the destination or other important aspects of the journey. Later on the trip consumers can assess secondary destinations before eliminating the not so probable ones. The last step includes a thorough consideration of choices provided and making the final decision (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 105)

The internet provides plenty of information regarding destinations, companies and tour operators that are advertising their services and products in search of potential customers. Libraries, magazines, bookshops, television shows and brochures are alternate sources of tourism knowledge and information that can aid the consumer towards finalizing the deal of booking the entire trip (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 104). The more informed the tourist is the better s/he is prepared towards avoiding any future problems or undesired trip complications.

Sport consumers go through the same procedure when planning a trip for sporting events. After knowing the exact dates, supporters can visit football related webpages in order to acquire a football ticket to the game of interest. The football ticket is the top priority since if the search for it is not successful then the trip will be cancelled. After evaluating the price and availability of football tickets, the sport consumer purchases the ticket and begins the search and evaluation of the remaining elements of the trip including: flights, accommodation, transportation etc. Only when the traveler is truly satisfied with the alternatives, the trip details are finalized. Even though someone can wait longer in hope of a better bargain deal the majority of sport tourists time the planning of the trip months in advance in order to secure the necessary elements of it and anticipate the travel date in a stress-free environment (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 60-61).



## **6 RESEARCH METHODS**

This chapter provides an analysis of the research methods, covers the reasons behind the chosen method for this specific paper and offers a short summary of the interview model used on the thesis respondents. Furthermore, the data collection technique and the information analysis are presented.

### **6.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods**

In the scientific world research occurs on a daily basis. To do so there is a number of techniques used depending on the goals of each study. Research methods are instruments applied in drawing results and conclusions in an effort to clarify social phenomena and people's preferences (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 7). There are two clashing methods aiding in finding answers to a research problem: the quantitative method and the qualitative method (Burns 2000, 3).

Although the above mentioned research methods differ from each other on the tools used when collecting the data and also on the purpose they are trying to serve, it is possible to use both methods together in order to diminish any possible weaknesses on the results. However, it is of high significance to be absolutely certain which method is more suitable for what survey but also to use the right sample of people to participate in the study (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 37-40).

Quantitative methods have a nomothetic manner. They are applied with the goal of creating general laws and patterns. This style of study integrates generality, authenticity and objectivity (Burns 2000, 3-4). It is a research technique employed to collect quantitative information that can be categorized and measured. It is widely used when attempting to calibrate and generalize results from a considerable amount of people participating. Quantitative methods provide answers to questions like "how many", "how long" and "to the level of". The most common used tool in collecting data is a survey in a way of a questionnaire distributed either through email, on a website, as a part of a telephone call or joined. The analysis

and output of the final results is in the form of statistics and numbers (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 8-16).

On the 'competing' side of the above mentioned research, exists the qualitative method. In contrast to the quantitative method, qualitative studies focus in the quality of the information gathered from a small amount of respondent in the study. The goal of this approach is an effort to recognize motivations and likes that people have when taking an action but also how they illustrate what they experience (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 8). This naturalistic means of study display the value of the subjective experience of human beings. The aim is to apprehend what a person says and does as an outcome of the environment that surrounds those (Burns 2000, 3-11). The most popular technique of approaching the target group of the research is the researcher making a personal interview. The output of the results is with the use of figures, objects, pictures and in the form of words, usually enriched and detailed. The analysis itself is interpretive (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 8-35).

## **6.2 Qualitative Research Methods**

The qualitative method can provide information to the researcher about what people think, what they like, how they feel but not how the total amount of the correspondents feels. The correct timing to work with this method is when a big variety of settings is applied and the aim is to collect various kinds of data and explore them in a detailed way (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 35).

The tools and techniques of a qualitative research can vary and the choice is made by the analyst. It can be done through a social survey or a questionnaire, it can be done via an interview or by observing the sample or even in discussion groups. The most commonly used way of interacting with the target group of the study is interviews. It can vary from a casual talk to a formal discussion either face to face through the telephone or an online meeting with a camera and a microphone. By doing so, the researcher can apply prompts to generate more detailed answers

from the participant of the interview but at the same time notice and study the body language. However, perhaps the biggest problem with the method is for the interviewer to be neutral and not affect or guide in any way the answers of the interviewees. (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 35-43).

In order to increase the chances of selecting the necessary target sample for the interview, theoretical sampling and the snowball effect can be used. In theoretical sampling the information gathered is influenced by a developing theory and the interviews taken. The interviewer gets more acquainted with other compatible groups. Regarding the snowball effect, the investigator can be introduced by an existing member of the study to other potential participants that matches the requirements of the sample needed (Burns 2000, 389).

The style of the interview can be either structured (systematic use of certain questions), semi-structured (key categories and flexibility) or unstructured (on-going procedure) (MacDonald & Headlam 2009, 35-43).

The reason behind choosing a qualitative method of study was mainly to control the sample. It was of high significance due to the aim of the study and also the subheading of the thesis "Supporters' motivators and restrictions" to be able to handle the sample. The participants of the interview had to be football supporters and not just casual supporters of football or even perhaps another sport. If the chosen method was a quantitative research such as a distributed questionnaire, there could be no guarantees about the nature of the respondents and whether they belonged in the target group set at the beginning of this research. In addition to that, conducting interviews provides a more personal contact between interviewer and respondent thus eliminating any possible barriers and misunderstanding of the interview questions. Qualitative studies allow freely a vast participation of people which in this specific case is not a desired outcome because the results of the gathered information could be irrelevant to this study. Lastly with the use of a qualitative study additional questions were asked prior to the interview to determine football habits and observe the participant's body language.

### **6.3 Interview Model**

The interview paper applied in this specific qualitative study is divided in four group categories and contains twenty four questions in total. The majority of the questions provided are semi-structured and open ended but a few closed ended questions are included. The categories involved are personal data, background information, motivators and restrictions and consumer behavior.

The first group of questions is about personal details of the people taking part in the interview. The questions are basically trying to create a small profile of the correspondent's demographics. There are four questions regarding different characteristics. The basic one is the age information since the analysis of the results will be based in the three created age groups. Second question asks the gender of the interviewee, the third one is about the nationality and the last question is about the current employment status.

The second category of background questions has the objective of increasing the details of the interview's member connection to football as a sport but also as a supporter of team. By answering these questions, preference and perhaps passion for the team can be measured. The respondents' team preference and favorite football championship are asked with reasoning behind the answers along with a few other questions involving game attendance.

The motivators and restrictions questions focus on the reasons that cause people to travel away from the place they live in order to see their team play live and also the reasons why they cannot travel so often. This section of the interview explores not only what motivates people when traveling and what restrictions they have experienced but also the level/influence of those motivators and limitations. In addition to that, the interviewee is asked to reveal his feelings during a sport event but also declare his decisions in hypothetical situations.

Lastly, the consumer behavior category reflects previous and future purchase habits regarding football in general. The answers provide information concerning

how far the supporter is willing to go for his team, how much money he is comfortable in spending and what his first concerns are. Likes and desires upon destinations, competitions and ambience are also submitted.

#### **6.4 Data Collection**

The tool used for the purposes of this particular study was interviews. The interviews were conducted with all the participants of this research. The reasons behind this decision was first of all control over the sample and then a more personal interaction that would eliminate any misunderstanding of the questions asked but also guarantee that the people taking part fit the requirements set.

The requirements for someone to be eligible are reflected on the title of this paper. People who support a team or teams and that either have travelled for football events or are interested in doing so. There needs to be a good connection between them and their team but also a big interested in the sport. They ought to be spending a lot of time watching games or follow team news in order to differentiate from casual fans. The majority of the correspondents were already familiar with the researcher, nevertheless the snowball method created additions to the members of the interview procedure.

The interviews were performed either face to face as an online call or over the telephone. The people who participated in the interview were informed prior to it of the purposes of the thesis and that their identity would not be published. The process further included a couple of introductory questions to demonstrate their real connection to football and the support to their team. The answers were recorded and drafted during the conversation. The duration of each interview was approximately fifteen minutes depending on the complexity of the questions or the reaction time and how detailed the answers of the interviewees were.

## **7 RESEARCH RESULTS**

In this chapter the answers to the interview questions are introduced and analyzed. The total number of people taking part in the interviews was 22 people. The discussion was carried out in English but also in Greek for those that did not feel so comfortable or strong enough with the English language. The interview paper that was used to conduct the interviews included 24 questions that were divided in four different categories of information. The categories were: personal information, background profile, motivators and restrictions and lastly consumer behavior.

### **7.1 Personal Information**

The initial stage of the interview involved collecting personal information about the participants of the study. Gathering primary data can provide help when studying people's likes, consumer behavior, intentions and habits (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 99-100). Therefore, the questions focused on demographic information such as age, gender, nationality and working status.

Age was the first factor to be analyzed and it is of high importance since the further examination of the results is going to be based on the groups created. Age is connected with the lifecycle stage of people. This concept offers a better understanding of how people behave the way they do and age affects their needs and priorities since people change while getting older (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 27). The three different age groups created were: under 26-years-olds, between 26 and 30-year-olds and lastly over 30-years-olds. The youngest group consists of four participants whereas the rest of the sample is divided equally in the other age groups.

The following question addressed the gender of the correspondent. The sample used was all male with the exception of a female participant who was placed in the middle group of the above mentioned age groups. Gender can indicate person-

al motivators and also interests. Different products may not be successful or interesting to both genders, however, here the difference between the sexes is not that significant (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 58-59). In this paper that studies traveling for football purposes the majority of people able to engage in the study proved to be male.

The next question of the personal information category inquired the nationality of the sample. All the people interviewed were of Greek origin with the exception of a Finnish person who belongs to the youngest age group. As was mentioned in the previous question, nationality can display cultural differences but also explain choices made (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 59). In this research topic if a bigger variety in the sample was achieved it could support reasoning towards the preference in a specific team, the participant's connection to the team, but perhaps also the status of the nation's league.

The last question from the first group category concerned the current work status of the interviewee. This question was created in order to receive data for a possible source in income that can dictate a pattern of answers in many of the following questions. People spend money depending on how much they earn from their job. Expenses for basic needs and activities or products they like are in proportion to their income. The existence of disposable income provides a higher chance of participating in an event and in this case a football event (Shone & Parry 2004, 26). Economic influencers such as income and price can affect in the decision making process of both traveling for a game and buying official merchandize (Bowen and Clarke 2009, 75-76). The first age group is divided in half with employed and unemployed people, the second age group has a majority of people who have a job along with two unemployed members and one working part-time while in the last age group the majority of the participants are employed with the exception of one unemployed person and one person working part-time.

## **7.2 Background Profile**

The questions in this category were selected with the objective of creating a profile of the interviewees regarding their connection with football in general but also how active and close they are in relation to their favorite teams. The focus is given to personal preference and previous behavior regarding football events/games.

### **7.2.1 Which teams do you support and why?**

The goal of this question was to become familiar with the participants and their preference in football team or teams. The open-ended question provides a deeper explanation to the way of thinking when choosing a team to follow.

The members of the youngest age group provided a couple of answers for favorite teams. All members supported a local team due to location and family influence, with the Finnish person mentioning that he had been also playing in the academies of the team. The most followed teams were Manchester United from England and Juventus from Italy, with two votes, based either on the titles won or a specific player and other answers included Aris Thessalonikis from Greece, Liverpool from England and VPS from Finland.

The supporters belonging to the second age group mentioned a total of 17 teams. Specifically there was a member who supports four teams and three people who have a preference in three different teams. All the people of this group besides one said that they support a team within their country with a unanimous explanation of the location of the team and then family ties. The most popular answer for a Greek team was Paok Thessalonikis with three supporters, followed by Aris Thessalonikis with two and a simple mention of Panathinaikos Athens and Skoda Xanthi. The preference in other European teams was very even. The answers that emerged were Manchester United with due to their playing style and success, Juventus from Italy mostly because of an influential football player like Zinedine Zidane and the philosophy of the club and lastly the likes of Borussia Dortmund from a member quoting "They won a surprise title against a team I hate". The most



common reasons for following a team were: favorite players and that they liked the playing style.

The answers provided by the oldest age group differ from the previous groups. Although the majority of the people included in the group still chose a team from the domestic league, two people showed no interest in doing so. A total of 12 different teams were named with the most popular being Aris Thessalonikis with three supporters, Manchester United, Liverpool and Paok Thessalonikis with two people and some other teams chosen including Valencia, Tottenham Hotspurs and Real Madrid. The reasons for choosing a team comprise of the history of the club, idols being part of the team, attractive football and never giving up.

The reasons behind the choice of supporting a team can vary a lot. Although it is a personal decision and no actual reasoning towards another party is required, people might be influenced by others. In this study on team preference the strongest factor was influence by the father then the likes of a specific player or players followed by supporting a team due to its actual location (Wann, Melnick, Russell & Pease 2001, 7).

### **7.2.2 Which football league is your favorite and why?**

The aim of this question was to collect information about the likes of the participants in a league and compare them between the groups.

The most prominent league in the first age group was the English Premier League followed by more than half of the members and then a single response of the Italian Serie A. The explanation provided was that the league is full of surprises, consists of the best teams and great players.

Even though more options for a favorite league were given within the second group, the most popular leagues were the same as above. An answer that stood out was related to the Italian Serie A with a supporter mentioning that it is competitive although corrupt and that surprises can happen. The British league was

deemed to be tied for most liked due to it being very unpredictable and the quality of the teams.

Lastly in the third group, Premier League was preferred by more than half of the respondents, followed by Serie A in second place and then the Spanish La Liga. Once again, the British league was expressed to be as a league that “anything can happen since even the bottom teams can beat the champions”.

The way football is perceived by individuals depends on their preference but also priorities they have. Team supporters are not likely to betray their team. Loyalty to a team goes through logic and emotions of someone’s personality. The majority of all groups selected as favorite league the one that had a favorite team in. Only a small number did not follow this pattern (Tapp 2003, 2)

### **7.2.3 Do you have any previous connection with football?**

This question is connected to the theoretical study of the thesis discussing motivators. Past life and previous experience are motivators able to determine future behavior (Swarbrooke and Horner 1999, 55). People that are used to participating in sport activities tend to repeat this habit when on vacation (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 3). In addition to that, a stronger link or interest with the team and the sport is possible.

Only one of the members from the younger group did not have any previous experience in football activity while the rest of this group’s members have played in either football academies or the minor leagues.

In contrast to the first group, the answers from the age group in the middle presented that only two people had some previous kind of history with the sport. A person has been a football referee for many years and the other followed the same path after having played a little in the regionals. It has to be mentioned that almost all of the group’s members are playing for fun.

It seems that the most people with previous experience in football belong to the oldest group age. Half of the people in this group have followed a small career in football ranging from three years to 16 years. A small minority of the other members claimed to gather from time to time and play just for fun.

#### **7.2.4 Have you been an official member of the team you support?**

The focus is intended to be on the willingness of football supporters to publicly show their affection and support to the team they love. By becoming members to a supporters' club people get the chance to fulfill their social needs by feeling as a part of a larger group and closer to the team (Shone & Parry 2004, 25-26).

In the young age group only one person has not enrolled to a supporter's club. The people who have joined an official club have done it at least a couple of times.

In the next group the majority of the interviewees have not been an official member of the club they favor and one specific individual expressed his dislike to the whole concept of it by saying "I do not like what they do". The people who had a membership to a club were mostly associated with their local team.

In the final group almost all of the participants have joined a supporters' club either domestically or internationally. A negative response from a non-follower was expressed as "thankfully no".

#### **7.2.5 How many times would you say you have traveled for a football event in a year (domestically/abroad)?**

**How many home games of your team would you say attend within a season (approximately)?**

This set of questions is used in order to provide information of the participants' past attendance history to a football game and also of their support. Behavioral loyalty regarding a football club can be measured by checking team news, offer money in exchange for official team goods and the regularity of game attendance

(Funk & James 2001, 290). However, the total number of stadium spectators inside a stadium is dependent on the club's league standings, success rate and recent form (Tapp 2003, 2). Other factors affecting availability for attending a game are price, time, location, weather conditions and group of friends.

The youngest participants of the study have expressed that they are very close to the team with the majority attending almost all home games. Half of the group members have never traveled within the country they live in while the other half has traveled at least twice domestically. Regarding games abroad three people have attended once.

More than half of the age group from 26 to 30 have traveled within Greece, except for a male and female participant who have not traveled either domestically or abroad. The most given answer was that supporters have attended either all or almost all home games of their team. Other responses included going to the stadium at least once or five to six times in a year.

For the last age group two answers that can be singled out involved the highest number of games attended. One member who is not following a domestic team had travelled 10 times to the United Kingdom for a game while the highest domestic games was achieved by one of the members who does not currently have a job. The same unemployed person along with two more people answered having attended almost all of team's home games.

### **7.3 Motivators & Restrictions**

In this section of the interview process the participants of the research were asked to express what drives them towards travelling for a football match and what limits them from going as often as they would like. In addition to the above mentioned core questions, hypothetical questions regarding personal feelings and motivators were included in the interview model.

### **7.3.1 What are your motivations to travel for football events?**

This question goes right to the point of this specific study. People who participated in the research had to explain what are the ‘push and pull’ factors regarding travelling and which are the most dominant ones.

The youngest participants of this study mentioned as top motivators the importance of the game with two votes and then watching the team play live and the stadium experience. In the second place, the most popular answer was the whole experience again with two answers followed from “a getaway from home” and the team’s opponent. Lastly, a group member added another priority in motivators, entertainment.

The situation is a bit more complex for the following age group, perhaps because of the higher number of people in it. As a top priority that makes them want to travel, members of this group agreed on the importance of the game with three replies, support their team and the whole experience with two replies followed by seeing new places and having fun. For the second priority opinions could not vary more than they did. There was not a single answer repeated. Some of the replies included interest in seeing a specific player, interaction with the opposing fans and being part of a bigger group. People who provided more motives answered as a third priority the trip destination and the interest in the game itself.

Watching the team live and supporting the team they love gathered the most replies (three each) while the rest of the third group responded: entertainment, destination and importance of the game. There was a conflict of opinion for the second most important motivator. Going to a new destination was commented the most while other answers included support of the team, the stadium experience, watch the team perform and feeling as a member of a greater group. Last but not least, travelling for an important game was placed as a third priority while someone quoted “the high chance of a win”.

Football and sports in general have been studied a lot in the past. A few of those surveys presented that supporters can be motivated by different things (Beech & Chadwick 2007, 93). Motivators presented regarding being a part of a larger group or joining friends reflect on the need for human interaction, social acceptance and mutual support (Shone & Parry 2004, 26). Those that were promptly interested in the importance of the game focus on the excitement of the game and the experienced feelings during the whole process. Sports cause excitement, stimuli and anxiety to fans which could be a motivational factor (Beech & Chadwick 2007, 92). Supporting the team live can offer a feeling of fulfillment and bonding with the team. Hardcore supporters tend to attend football games from a young age which makes them feel proud with their connection to their team (Tapp 2003, 10).

### **7.3.2 What are your limitations that do not allow you to travel for football events?**

Together with the motivations question, this inquiry is one the most important for the whole study. It concerns the restrictions experienced by football supporters when considering a trip to a football match. The basic two restrictions all group agreed on were financial reasons and time.

Time was addressed as the biggest limitation for the first group although for a person without a job, money was the biggest restriction. Financial reasons were a second or a third obstacle for the other participants. The most noticeable answers were one from a 20 year old student who said it is hard to find tickets for a game abroad and one from another student of the group who mentioned he does not have any friends interested in joining him.

The top restriction for the majority of the next group was financial reasons, then lack of free time followed by uninterested friends in joining or friends supporting different teams. What needs to be said is that money was not a hurdle for the unemployed person of the group whereas six people who are currently working men-

tioned it either as the first or the second limitation. Other replies involved the distance between the area of living and the game destination, relationship status and laziness.

The last age group is quite similar with the previous one. People also placed economic factors as the first thing that does not allow them to travel so often and then lack of free time and a single response of their team underperforming. Time was placed as the most popular second restriction while the rest of the interviewed participants answered relationships and other hobbies.

Socioeconomic factors have been explained and analysis in the previous chapters of the thesis. Time can be a common restriction to people who have full time job. People who do not work tend to face more financial issues but have more free time to do something they enjoy. Both time and money are very influential in the decision making process but they change in relation to the individual's life stage (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 26). At this point it has to be suggested that even though people deal with obstacles while trying to attend something they love, some of them find a solution or balance the situation and manage to still do it.

### **7.3.3 Would you attend a football game that your team was not involved in if your friends were going?**

With this question the study seeks to understand how lenient and willing supporters are to watch another team perform live because their friends have asked them to join them. The results showed that almost all of the participants did not have a problem in doing so. People's motivation for participation in sports can be both shared and unique motives. A research done about college football showed that the factors can be the competition itself, prestige and friendship or companionship (Reeves 1999, 31).

The youngest group of people gave a unanimous decision on the topic. All of them would join their friends.

All of the participants from the following age group have agreed in the past to go together with their friends to see a football match and would do so again. Only a single individual could not give a clear answer and therefore said that it depends on the teams competing.

The majority of the last age group answered positively to the inquiry while one person answered negatively due to the fact that he supports only his team and another individual mentioned that only if it was a big game he would accompany his friends.

#### **7.3.4 Would a free football ticket for a game abroad (of your team) guarantee your presence to it? Yes or no and why?**

This hypothetical question has the objective of seeing what people would do if they had the opportunity to cut down on expenses for a football match. It was a motivation situation against the financial restriction.

This was another unanimous decision for the smallest age category. Everyone said yes to the free football ticket and commented that it required less expenses and they could find cheap flights and accommodation.

Four members of the middle group gave a negative response since they believed that the other expenses for the trip were still expensive along with a few people who commented on language problems, lack of friends and that the football ticket is the cheapest of the elements needed for the trip.

The oldest category of people had the slight majority saying yes (good motive and chance to travel) and maybe yes (depending on the game and cost of other expenses). The other correspondents said no because of the high cost of the remaining arrangements but also other details such as the dates and the opponent.



### **7.3.5 How would you describe your feelings while in a game?**

The answers given can provide a better understanding of how people react during a game of the team they support but also how different reactions they might have depending on the level of bonding with the club.

Feelings expressed in the first age category by order of frequency included excited (in the start of the game or going there), happy (when winning or scoring a goal), stressed (while losing or after the first whistle) and sad (if the team is not winning thus losing the game).

Feelings provided by people from 26 to 30 years old by order of frequency were happiness (when winning, scoring or just watching), anger (when the team is underperforming, losing or losing unfairly), nervous (during the game and while losing), excited (when inside the stadium), sad (after a loss) and proud (if the stadium is full or team's anthem is on speakers).

Feelings mentioned by the older age group by order of frequency involved happiness (if their team wins), passion (during the whole game), stress (if it is a close and even game), sad (if the team loses) and proud (for the team's effort and performance).

### **7.3.6 Would a new transfer signing of your team increase your motivation to travel in order to see them play?**

Another hypothetical question provided for the sample of the research focusing on the motivation factors. It would be interesting to see the reaction of the supporters to a new star transferring in their team.

Only one of the young interviewees gave a positive response to the question asked. That person suggested that he would probably go anyway but if the transfer did happen he would do that a bit earlier.

In the age group of 26 to 30 years, the answers are split. The majority answered that a new transfer does not motivate them more into going to see their team play live. They claim that they would travel for the team and not just for a specific player. However, the other members of the group believe that it provides some extra interest and would be fun to see.

Lastly, the final age group seems to agree with the previously mentioned opinions. A 35-year-old supporter quoted that "I would not be motivated because big names do not really make a difference". Most group members agree on that matter while two people added that they support the team and not just a player.

Although Reeves (1999) claims that people's motivation may differ depending on the age criteria, in this particular study all age groups tend to agree.

#### **7.4 Consumer Behaviour**

This is the last group of questions used in the interviews and it represents the theoretical study of the thesis about consumer behavior. The questions include buying behavior of official merchandize, interest in a specific competition and preferences regarding football events.

##### **7.4.1 How would you describe yourself as a sports consumer?**

The opening question of consumer behavior concentrates on the personality of the participant of the interview and on the purchase habits. The price factor is considered a constant influencer in almost all consumer behavior procedures (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 157).

Half of the youngest members in the research considered themselves as impulsive consumers. The price of the sport goods and disposable income does not seem to prevent them from purchasing what they like since they act on feelings. The Finnish supporter of this particular paper commented that he is sentimental, meaning

that he tends to buy memorabilia after a game attended. The other member of the group replied that he is normal in the way that he does not overthink things.

In the following age group the replies were even, except on the supporter who considered his sports related consumption was normal (buying from time to time). The rest of the answers were equally distributed towards people being either impulsive or conservative. The conservative side explains that they tend to think a lot before purchasing a product whereas the opposing side justifies their answer by comments of being emotional, spontaneous and big spenders for football merchandize.

A similar reaction occurred in the last age group. A supporter believed his habits were normal since he spends money in sports merchandize but does not overdo it. Half the group perceived themselves as impulsive due to fact of acting through emotion or love for the team. The other half answered that they have been conservative and they check their expenses and calculate things before deciding. One person commented that he used to be impulsive in the past but nowadays is much more careful.

The results given do not seem to provide any dominance of one specific consumer type. At the same time a personal opinion expressed makes it a bit harder to explain and analyze the buying behavior because people could have the same buying frequency but consider themselves as different a type of a buyer. Consumer behavior is changing from being spontaneous to being more conservative due to recession and crisis and that seems to be the case for the people who do not earn a steady income. However, football products and other sport related goods are designed to reflect on people's wants and likes so supporters continue to purchase them even during hard economic times (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 181).

#### **7.4.2 Have you ever been a season ticket holder?**

The information gained from this question can aid in creating a better profile of the respondent, especially with past behavior and bond with the team. The infor-

mation yet can be influenced by external factors such as friends and family, disposable income or the club's planning strategy.

Once again the responses in the first age category were even. Half of them had been season card holders with one mentioning that he had done for five years. The rest have not purchased a season ticket in the past but declared future intentions in doing so.

Most participants of the following age group have never purchased a season card. However those that did acquire one, presented a high frequency of years especially the supporters that are currently without a job with seven and 15 years each.

The oldest age group in the study, found the majority as season ticket holders. The frequency varied from one to four times in addition to a remarkable answer from the unemployed, at the moment, participant being 12 years a season ticket owner. That member further explained that he had to gather the money to show the support to his team. A member from those with no season ticket replied "I was not lucky yet (Manchester United supporter).

The analysis of the results presented that there are exceptions to the rule. Although occupation is something that can often change, the researcher's insight in the participating sample showed that lack of disposable income is not always a limitation to a supporter. Supporters have been diagnosed to maintain a range of devoted approach and behavior. Football clubs sometimes are portrayed as businesses and supporters as customers. Supporters still consider loyalty and following the team they love as a very meaningful part of their lives (Tapp 2003, 1-2).

#### **7.4.3 From where do you prefer to book your football tickets & would you prefer a travel package or to book it on your own?**

Next in the interview model is a combination of questions. The focus is on personal taste but also knowledge on how to prepare ticket arrangements before

watching a game in person. Together with that the answers can present how things usually work.

The members in the first group were unanimous regarding football tickets. All of them purchase the tickets from the stadium on the game day. About travelling only a single person chose the package instead of individually booking the trip details since it provided more comfort and it would be less time consuming.

The second group gave two possible suggestions as the dominant answer. People usually buy the football ticket from the team's grounds before the game starts but for their foreign team they prefer to purchase the ticket from the official website of the team. A member mentioned that he uses an actual agent to supply him with tickets due to a preference in human interaction and no trust in online use of credit cards. As for traveling bookings all except two people wanted to check on their own the possibilities for flights and accommodation. The only female participant chose the travel package because she considered it to be safer and immediate.

There is a slight difference between purchasing the tickets online via the official webpage and from the stadium. More people in the last group had as their main choice the digital method of the internet. As for the travelling decisions the majority once again liked to book their own arrangements and find a better price than a package could offer. A couple of people decided to choose the travel package and avoid looking around for the best or cheaper options.

By choosing to wait a bit before the game to purchase the match ticket people stated that it is a common procedure and this is how things work. Both in Greece and Finland it is a normal custom to behave like that since the chances of selling out are not that big unless it is a major derby involving the top teams. As for the choice between a travel package by an agency or individual bookings, those that wanted the package perhaps lacked free time or knowledge on where to check for better deals. The latest trend in many occasions is towards direct booking and not booking from an agency (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 161).

#### **7.4.4 Do you have a price limit and if yes what is it?**

With the use of this question a better understanding towards the economic limitation might be achieved. It is a way of discovering how much money supporters are willing to spend or feel more comfortable in using. The price limit was related to a football ticket and a trip booking (flights and accommodation).

The price range for a single football ticket within the youngest people of the study was from 40€ maximum up to 100€ for either a domestic or foreign game. The price range provided for the whole trip was different with bigger caps between the answers. The cheapest trip for a game needed to cost no more than 150€ and the most expensive price limit set was 500€.

Four members of the following age group answered that they do not have a price limit when it comes to seeing their team. One particular answer mentioned that “I have to seize the opportunity and attend as much as possible because I do not know how many chances I will have in the future”. It has to be pointed out that one of the unemployed supporters within this group also denied placing a price limit. The rest of the group felt more comfortable spending about 20-50€ for a single match and in the proximity of 200 to 250€ for the whole trip.

There was exactly the same reaction in the last group. Two people replied that they could not put a price on their team and that they could overspend if it was worth it. The lowest ticket and trip prices mentioned were provided by the currently unemployed participant of this age group. However, the individual does not support a foreign team and therefore the price range of 15-25€ for a domestic game and a total of 200€ for a trip seems reasonable. Other price limitations expressed were from 50-100€ for the game and around 300-500€ for the trip arrangements.

This question due to its nature is very hard to be analyzed. It was used to provide insight into how different people are and how differently they might think. The

factors influencing the limits mentioned can be income earned, disposable income, free time and knowledge of ticket prices.

#### **7.4.5 If you had to choose between a game of your national team or your team, what would it be and why?**

This question aims to create a dilemma for the selected sample and check what the choice would be between two theoretically important teams in a supporter's life.

All the group members under 26 years of age answered that their team is more important than the nation although the Finnish participant stated that within Finland he would choose the nation. The reasons for not choosing the nation were underperformance, disappointing at the moment and that someone prefers to see a game of his foreign team because he does not get that chance often.

Similar preference was declared in the next age group. Most people denied their nation by saying that they are more passionate for their team, some said that they do not care at all about the Greek national team and others that they just prefer it more. The female of the group along with another member were the only ones to pick the national team instead of their normal team. An interviewee could not choose between the alternatives since he gave priority to the best available game.

From the last age group there was only one person interested more in the national team. Although that person answered that Greece represents the whole country and it comes first, the other fellow members did not share the same opinion. Couple of answers that stood out were "I have a better connection with my team and an everyday contact" and "I hate the player's selection method in Greece".

People tend to follow teams due to their success or to something they saw and liked such as a particular footballer or the playing style. However, they always would have to make a decision and that choice can be affected by the atmosphere, feelings and motivation (Beech and Chadwick 2007, 91). Although during 2004 many Greeks were celebrating and put their team differences aside there were still

people that were not entirely happy with the way some things were done. Now that the team is underperforming, that number seems to have increased according to the answers provided. Another reason that people chose their 'normal' team can be the fact that they can see it play on a weekly basis whereas the schedule of national teams is not as compact and busy (The Social Issues Research Centre 2008, 43-44).

#### **7.4.6 Do you have a preference in a football competition?**

This question was made with the intent of collecting information about personal tastes and priorities in a variety of football competition. The extra hypothesis provided a scenario in which the interviewee had to choose the most important competition for him/her if he/she could attend only one game.

The answers were split in the smallest age group so that half of the respondents chose a World Cup game whereas the other half preferred a Champions League game with a member specifically mentioning the final.

In the middle age group interest was divided in Champions League and World Cup games with the exception of a member that was more excited to attend a local derby anywhere in the world.

In the next age group there were more different answers. Four people chose a World Cup game because as they claimed it was either the ultimate experience or something they haven't experienced yet. The next preferred competition was the Champions League with two people and in the meanwhile the rest of the individuals mentioned the Premier League, the European Championship and a unique response of a Copa Libertadores final.



#### **7.4.7 Would you prefer a home or an away game and why?**

In this question the respondents of all age groups had to decide between going to a familiar stadium and experiencing an away trip. The results are analyzed according to people's tastes.

The responses of the first age group were equally divided. Half of the group members preferred the atmosphere of a home game whereas the same number chose to travel to an away game to experience different feelings or as for a change (attended many home games domestically).

In the following age group there were four people that stated they would prefer a home game and three that chose an away game. Those people with an interest in a home match thought that the atmosphere is better in the home grounds, they apply more pressure to the opponents and interaction with fellow supporters. The ones choosing the away experience did so with an interest of seeing a new place and believed it to be more exciting. One member that has been an owner of a season ticket replied that he would choose an away game inside Greece for a change and a home game for his foreign teams.

In the over 30 years old category, more than half prioritized in a home match mainly because of the atmosphere, the higher chances of witnessing a win and for some it was just easier. The rest of the respondents chose an away game instead because they perceived it as a more intense and passionate happening, more fun and as a chance to support the team where they need it the most.

The people who show more interest in a familiar ground tend to differentiate themselves from the casual or passive fans. For loyal fans the stadium is sacred, they get the chills when the game starts and they can sing for a whole 90 minutes. Experiencing the home atmosphere helps them boost their sense of belonging to the football club (Social Issues Research Centre 2008, 15). In contrast to that, those that preferred an away game this can reflect to their dedication. This is because traveling long distances to contribute to their team's fight is a long proce-

dure and more expensive. In addition to that, travelling to an away game is a brave declaration of their loyalty (Social Issues Research Centre 2008, 15).

#### **7.4.8 Would you book a trip to the same football destination? Yes or no and why?**

This is the last question in the interview process and it is about the destination of the occurring trips. The interest is on the priorities of the supporters when choosing a place to travel and how willing they are in revisiting the same destination

All the members of the youngest age group gave a positive answer to the above mentioned question. The reasoning behind the answer yes included that the game itself is the top priority and since the team is based in one city they do not have a problem traveling there again.

The majority of the next age group also gave an affirmative reply commenting that one time is not enough and that they support the team but also since they like the team and possibly so the city, they can repeat the trip. Two people could not decide on yes or no so they responded maybe depending on the importance of the game and the opponent. Only one individual gave a negative response explaining that he would prefer to see a new place and experience something new.

A much clearer view on the topic was provided by the last age group. All members except one answered yes to the question since they would either see their team play or know the area already or they consider themselves mostly a supporter and then a tourist. The individual that answered no explained that he would prefer a new city or country.

There are many different approaches that tourists can follow when traveling again to a city they have been to before. Their choice depends on characteristics like age, previous experience, interests, money and the personality (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 161-162). Especially the past travel experience factor is very important since people create memories of each trip. If the memories were good then

the will remember that they enjoyed their previous visit and will probably end up going again in the future. The economic factor yet might work vice versa. People that do not have a big flexibility with money might prefer to spend money in a new destination and see as much as possible instead of the same attractions. For some people who do not get to travel so often the distance factor could be added to the above mentioned ones.

## 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the research was to gather information from football supporters regarding traveling for football events and to identify and analyze the motivational factors along with possible limitations that might restrain them from being close to their team. In addition to that the study attempted to provide data on the taste and personal preferences of those supporters in teams, leagues and competitions.

The theoretical study included topics such as the tourism industry, event management, consumer behavior and decision making process. Those theories were reviewed in order to create a basis that could explain the answers of the participants in the end. Most of the results analysis were connected to the hierarchy of needs from Maslow but also in tourist's personal influencers and external determinants.

Shone and Parry (2004) express that motivators and restrictions can be personal, social, physical or cultural, which is something that causes the needs of people to vary. The more differences people have the harder it is to compare them or understand their behavior. Personal influencers include the age, the nationality, the gender, the working status, the personality and the culture of the people included in the sample. Since, unfortunately, there were only two nationality involved in the research and the number of contrasts was low, the analysis of the results was done according to age criteria.

The results could be described as moderate as due to the length of the interview model both differences and similarities were recorded between all three different age groups. Perhaps the harder group to analyze was the one in the middle since the ages of the interviewees were close to both other groups.

The most mentioned motivators that the supporters claimed to drive them towards attending a game were first to watch the team live and support them and the second was the importance of the game. From the youngest age group the latter was

the biggest motivator whereas the other age groups prioritized their presence to the ground in order to help the team perform well and win.

Bowen and Clarke (2009) introduce as two very important key economic restrictors the income and price. That seems to be reflected by the results, however it is not an unbreakable rule. Unemployment does matter but it is not as clear as it might seem. When it comes to football or another topic that people are passionate about common sense seems to exist and an open mind should be kept. In the restrictions questions the most popular answer in total was financial reasons with only two “votes” more from time in the sense of free time to travel or enjoy a complete football experience. The exception of the rule can be witnessed in the fact that the youngest group that could be characterized as the one with a lighter routine chose time as the main factor that they cannot travel as much as they want and in addition to that two participants who do not have a steady income and therefore less money to consume did not answer the obvious. Perhaps their passion, feelings and attachment to their team overcomes money problems. Financial reasons were the main obstacle for the other two groups while another common reply was lack of friends to travel with.

All the age groups of the research agreed on the two most preferred competitions to attend to with the World Cup being the most favorable followed by the Champions League. In the dilemma between team and nation, again the answers were similar for all three groups that choose by far their team. Differences, however, were noticeable when the interviewees were asked if they would accept a free football ticket to travel abroad where a unanimous answer of yes was provided by the younger members of the study when meanwhile the other groups were either undecided or in favor of a “no” as an answer.

### **8.1 Validity and Reliability**

In the occasion of taking an interview and collection information, the researcher needs to try to have as accurate and valid data as possible that reflect to the re-

spondents of it. There are two measurement tools to provide help in doing so, both on a qualitative research method and a quantitative one, called validity and reliability (Burns 2000, 336).

Validity as a method is used to provide information and reveal how well a survey measures a certain topic, from what point of view it is handled and regarding which group (Burns 2000, 350-352). It is the deciding factor that presents whether the measuring assessment technique measures what it was supposed to measure (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 28).

Reliability as a concept is focusing on the consistency of the answers gathered by the chosen data collecting tool. It measures whether the results of the study can be identical if produced in different times with the same participants (Finn et al 2000, 28-29). Other equivalent words for a better understanding of the term are stability, dependability and accuracy (Burns 2000, 336).

The level of reliability and validity in this study could be considered relatively high or medium. The relatively high number of participants and the saturation in the answers could be deemed as a sign of validity. The data collected corresponded well to the data intended to be gathered. Preliminary questions that were asked prior to the interview aided into making sure the interviewees belonged to the target group of being a football supporter. The fact that the chosen method to gather the information for the study was a personal face to face interview minimized the chances of misunderstanding the questions or excluding any important comments. The interview process was pretested and the questions appeared to be understandable. A high number of references were used to provide further valid information on the subject of this thesis. However, the youngest age group does not have a high number of participants, the sample's knowledge on football ticket prices might seem unrealistic and the results of the study might not be applicable on other people since they did not belong to a group or a team.

As far as reliability is concerned, choosing a personal interview as a method provided a better interaction with the sample by not including answers from casual football spectators, using the same additional help to all of the participants and answering any questions they might have. For a qualitative study the number of participants was quite high and all the interviews were tape recorded for future use or as an archive. The time and date of the interview depending solely on the interviewees providing so a more relaxing and distraction-free ambience. The use of open ended questions allowed the study's sample to be more relaxed and precise with their answers thus providing more thoughtful and reliable answers. Yet, the fact that some interviews were conducted in Greek instead of English could cause a drop in the level of reliability with potential translating errors. Along with that, the length of the interview questions could be smaller making the interview duration even quicker. Unfortunately another factor affecting the stability of the results is the state of the respondent at the time being. The results reflect the work being done now, at this specific moment. If the interviews were to be conducted again in two or five years times there are chances that they would differ since other affecting variables might have changed such as lifecycle, working status or even family status (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999).

One last element that could influence the research's results is the human nature and especially the people involved in the gathering data process. The researcher himself is responsible for obtaining the information by asking the questions to the interviewees. It is a tough task to do since the interviewer must refrain from influencing, agreeing, disagreeing and guiding the respondents' answers (Burns 2000, 582). Clearly during the discussion the researcher has explained and helped in a better understanding of the questions but maybe unconsciously the participants' answers and behavior may have been affected. As for the answers of the interviewees, their honesty is difficult to be examined but the fact that their identity would not be published along with the fact that this paper's purposes were not in a cooperation with a company does not provide any valid reason of not being true and real.

## **8.2 Suggestions for Future Research**

The topic of supporters' motivators and restrictions when planning to be present in a game is rather interesting and more new surveys about sports in general seem to appear at a constant frequency.

This particular study was based on the age factor and with almost all the participants being from Greece. Future research could focus in another specific age group, another nationality or even with the same criteria but an increased number of Finnish people. If this is not possible another alternative would be to concentrate on differences between genders. Football might seem as a male occupied sport but with its increasing popularity that more and more women are interested in it and it could be interesting and useful to get a female perspective on the sport.

Advanced research could happen or continue from a marketer's point of view in order to further understand football supporters' wants, needs and tastes so that it could be understood what the best way to attract them is. Teams could also identify and correct their mistakes by recognizing future intent to purchase team products, creating thus a beneficial strategy to retain current fans but to also reach out to even more fans.



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## APPENDIX

**Traveling for Football Events**  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Personal Information:**

In which of the following age groups do you belong:

under 26

26-30

over 30

What is your gender (male/female)?

What is your nationality?

What is your current work status?

**Background Profile:**

- 1) Which teams do you support and why?
- 2) Which football league is your favorite and why?
- 3) Do you have any previous connection with football?
- 4) Have you been an official member of the team you support?
- 5) How many times would you say you have traveled for a football event in a year (domestically/internationally)?
- 6) How many home games of your team would you say you attend within a season (approximately)?

**Motivators & Restrictions:**

- 1) What are your motivations to travel for football events?

- 2) What are your limitations that do not allow you to travel for football events?
- 3) Would you attend a football game that your team was not involved in if your friends were going?
- 4) Would a free football ticket for a game abroad (of your team) guarantee your presence to it? Yes or no and why?
- 5) How would you describe your feelings while in a game?
- 6) Would a new transfer signing of your team increase your motivation to travel in order to see them play?

**Consumer Behaviour:**

- 1) How would you describe yourself as a sports consumer?
- 2) Have you ever been a season ticket holder?
- 3) From where do you prefer to book your football tickets & would you prefer a travel package or to book it on your own?
- 4) Do you have a price limit and if yes what is it?
- 5) If you had to choose between a game of your national team or your team, what would it be and why?
- 6) Do you have a preference in a football competition?
- 7) Would you prefer to attend a home or an away game and why?
- 8) Would you book a trip to the same football destination? Yes or no and why?