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WHOSE EXPECTATIONS COUNT?

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1 INTRODUCTION

Business is mainly driven by the future discountable today, i.e. expectations. Within a network economy, a broader perspective to expectations than that of customers is called for to manage the different stakeholder expectations of a company or an organisation. From a marketing perspective, giving and keeping promises (Grönroos 1991) is a tool for managing relationships. These activities also create and develop expectations both within an organisation and among actors with which it interacts.

Expectations exist along a time continuum and can be expected to be changing throughout time. Expectations prior to the consumption of goods or services, and at the point of performance vary to a large extent depending on the time span between. Reinterpretation of expectations may happen along the consumption stage as well as in the aftermath stage of consumption. Accordingly, confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations is a dynamic process affected by many factors, both internal and external. According to Teas and Palan (1997), current theoretical discussions of the disconfirmed expectations theory of consumer satisfaction tend to be vague with regard to the precise temporal linkages among expectations, performance and disconfirmed expectations concepts.

The IMP (Industrial/International Marketing and Purchasing) Group's interaction model recognises two aspects of the interaction process: the episodes which involve exchange between the parties, and the long-term aspects of a relationship which affect and may be affected by each episode. Different actors have a substantial role in building up relationships; their expectations, reactions and evaluations in individual episodes condition the ways in which the overall relationship develops. Furthermore, the role, level, and function of central people in the interaction affect future development in a collective relationship.

The purpose of the paper is to empirically analyse expectations and their disconfirmation at the episode level of a collective network relationship to gain further understanding of the role of expectations in network relationships. The empirical episode is an event, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti in 2001.

The methodology used in the study is a qualitative desktop research. The empirical data was collected from newspaper clips and magazine articles during the spring 2001, and from the websites of different organisations involved in the event. First, an overall picture of the event network was formed by reading all the collected data. Thereafter, the data was analysed in respect to expectations, performance and disconfirmation of expectations. Based on the empirical study, a model of an episode level dynamic expectations was formed.

The report will continue in the following way. In the second chapter, there is a theoretical literature review concerned with expectation concepts and the nature of expectations. In chapter three, skiing as business is discussed, the organisation behind the event is introduced as well as the event itself. In the following chapter, the analysis is presented. It is followed by a discussion, and finally, conclusions are drawn.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of expectations to marketing dates back three decades when Alderson (1965) identified expectations as one of the concepts that he considered fundamentally important primitive terms in marketing. During the last decade, expectations have been a concern of some researchers and practitioners (e.g. Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Perry 1990; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1993; Saunders and Schere 1995; Wallace 1995; Teas and Palan 1997; Gibbons 98; Ojasalo 1999; Ludwig, Ringbeck, Schulte-Bockum, Forsyth, Lavoie and Mc Guire 2000; Miller 2000; Somers 2001; Mittilä and Järvelin 2001) during the last decade. Earlier, expectation concepts have been integral to theories of consumer satisfaction (Oliver 1980; Churchill and Suprenant 1982).

Expectation Concept

In the marketing literature, there are many understandings and several definitional frameworks of consumer expectations which resulted in the proliferation of expectation concepts. They represent alternative concepts that play complementary and/or competing roles in marketing theory.

Expectation concepts have been integral to theories of consumer satisfaction (Oliver 1980; Churchill and Suprenant 1982) and consumer perceptions (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1993). Contributions made by the researchers, particularly those of Oliver (e.g. 1977, 1980, 1981), have been significant in the development of the disconfirmed expectations theory. Numerous researchers have offered extensions of the theory and conducted empirical tests (e.g. Churchill and Suprenant 1982; Bearden and Teel 1983; Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins 1983; Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987; Oliver and DeSarbo 1988; Tse and Wilton 1988; Oliver and Swan 1989).

In the consumer expectations literature, it is commonly understood that expectations function as standards for comparison: Performance along various product or service dimensions is compared with expectations, and this comparison results in consumers' reactions to the products in the form of satisfaction or perceptions of quality. Many of the expectations concepts used in marketing are incorporated into the disconfirmed expectations theory of consumer satisfaction. The theory

includes predictive expectations as its primary expectations concept. Teas and Palan (1997) have stated that the terms used to designate “predictive” expectations designate multiple concepts. The terms ‘expected’ and ‘expectations’ are used to designate predicted outcome levels with an evaluative dimension — the definitions contain terms that suggest the predictive level of performance is evaluated for its desirability, importance, favourableness, positiveness/negativeness, or satisfaction potential.

Researchers have investigated also other expectations concepts in the context of consumer satisfaction models. These include ideal product attribute level (Tse and Wilton 1988), equitable performance (Tse and Wilton 1988), experienced-based norms (Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins 1983), desired performance (Bolting and Woodruff 1988), and minimum tolerable performance (Miller 1977).

The concept of ideal performance is often used in discussions of expectation comparison standards. Miller (1977: 75) notes that the ideal is one of four potentially distinctive types of expectations an individual might have regarding anticipated performance levels. Teas (1993) distinguished in the nominal definitions of ideal performance such properties as the classic ideal performance level and the feasible ideal performance level. The classic ideal point is associated with ideal-point attitudinal models. It represents perfect or utility-maximising attribute magnitude. The feasible ideal point concept is more complex because it appears to be a combination of the concepts of ‘perfect’ and ‘what is possible’.

In their article, Teas and Palan (1997) discuss the theoretical meaningfulness of conceptual definitions and their improvement using specification of formal language systems. They argue that there is ambiguity in consumer expectations concepts. To demonstrate, we discuss the conceptual realm concepts of “predictive expectations” and “ideal performance”, which are often designated by the linguistic realm terms ‘expectations’ or ‘expected’ (ibid.: 7).

Nature of Expectations

The nature of expectations can be explicit, implicit, fuzzy, realistic or unrealistic (Ojasalo (1999). Actors having explicit expectations have clear, conscious picture what they wish from the future co-operation, actors having implicit expectations, in turn, do not actively think about all the aspects of the future co-operation. Actors with explicit expectations know whether their expectations are met or not. Explicit expectations represent what the people expect to happen, and they are measured against norms, specifications or goals. Explicit expectations involve static performance, dynamic performance, technology, profit, and interpersonal interactions. Static performance expectations concern how performance and quality for a specific product, application or activity are defined.

Although each company's performance measures are unique, general expectations relate to quality of outcome and include accessibility, customisation, dependability, timeliness and accuracy of information and products, tangible elements, i.e. premises, options, technology, flexibility, profitability and inter-personal communication. "Static performance expectations are the visible part of the iceberg; they are the ones we see and – often erroneously- assume are all that exists" (Miller 2000: 93).

The implicit expectations are revealed when they are not met. In case of fuzzy expectations, actors expect something, but are not sure what that something is. If these kinds of expectations are not met, actors are unsatisfied, but do not know what exactly went wrong. Unrealistic expectations are set on an impossible high level and they are not likely to be met. Realistic expectations are reversals of unrealistic expectations. (Ojasalo 1999: 82-84)

Expectations can also be official or unofficial. Official expectations, used by an actor in an evaluation, are based on the goals and strategies implicitly or explicitly expressed. Unofficial expectations are linked to an evaluator's own individual wishes or even desires. (Järvelin, 2001, 58) It has to be noticed, however, that evaluators never use official expectations as such, but their own individual interpretations of them (Kotsalo-Mustonen 1996, 208). The unofficial/official nature of relations together with the content of a relation can be used when highlighting the sources of the expectations. It can be argued that expectations partly stem from the official sources, and partly they originate in personal, unofficial expectations of the evaluator. (see Mittilä 2000; Järvelin 2001, 59).

Performance expectations can be divided into economic (financial), technological and social (interpersonal), political and spatial expectations. Economic expectations relate to profit margins, cost efficiency, shareholders' returns on investments as well as to competitive position in markets and changes in currency. Technological expectations relate to how an organisation's technology meets the evolving state-of-the-art technology. Technological expectations change over time as technology changes and require meeting positional goals regarding evolving and new technologies.

Social expectations involve creating, maintaining and enhancing as well as terminating relations and relationships between human representatives of business parties. Because human communication in business, interpersonal relations can outweigh technological and even economic performance in evaluating performance. Some specific interpersonal dimensions include technical and economic competence, problem solving and consulting skills, courtesy, helpfulness, empathy, verbal and written communication skills and shareholder perceptions regarding professional image and even appearance. (see Miller 2000)

Political expectations include both internal and external politics of an actor. Organisational policy refers to the values, visions, strategies and goals of an organisation. External policies are those of the industries an organisation is operating in. Furthermore, different governmental policies and those of larger units, for example international associations, dictate expectations.

Spatial expectations relate to geographical, ecological and traditional versus virtual modes of doing business. An organisation may act locally or domestically, it may be international or global which all create different internal and external expectations. The role of environmental threats in one's business varies remarkably from an industry to another. Some industries, for example oil industry, are therefore highly regulated. Expectations concerned with virtual (electronic) business have over recent years varied from hype to realistic. In sports, ecological expectations play a role in, for example, orienteering and car racing.

Taking into account the multidimensionality of expectations, the holistic picture of the phenomenon is hard to catch. Next, an attempt is made to draw a picture of different actors' expectations concerned with an empirical episode.

3 THE CASE

Skiing has existed since time immemorial. The old Scandinavian legends bear witness to this. Its practice as a sport was developed in Norway first after 1850. From 1870 onwards, The Alpine countries were in turn affected by the rapid expansion of skiing as a sport. The first competitions were in Germany 1879. The first Swiss club was founded in 1893. National Ski Associations appeared in Russia 1896, Czechoslovakia 1903, the United States 1904, Austria and Germany 1905, and Norway, Finland and Sweden 1908. From 1910 to 1924, the international Skiing Commission strove to monitor the development of competitive skiing throughout the world. The First Winter Olympic Games were held in 1924 in Chamonix. At that time, on 2nd February, the commission gave birth to the Federation International de Ski (later referred to as the FIS). Today 101 National Ski Associations comprise the membership of the FIS. (<http://www.fis-ski.com>).

Skiing as Business

As competitive skiing at the top-level gradually turned into business, athletes, coaches, team leaders and other practitioners became professionals in their occupations. Consequently, better performance was and is needed to survive in the competition. Today, money plays a substantial role in sports. Sport events are services with strategies, tactics and economic goals. Furthermore, athletes are

products themselves. To sustain their competitive advantage and attraction in the eyes of sports organisations and the public they have to enhance their performance continuously. This performance can be seen as the human technology of skiing business, the other part being sports equipment.

As in business in general also in sports a product is an outcome of many actors. Coaches' roles in athletes' training is by no doubt decisive. Coaching has experienced a big change over the last decades. Up to at least the sixties, coaching used to focus on physical training with different programmes the aim being in training more diligently and more efficiently to gain competitive edge in rivals. Later, coaching also came to encompass mental training. As the amount of physical training could no longer be increased and as medical sciences and their applications developed, it was supplemented by so-called chemical training. Today's athletes have, in addition to their physical training programmes, a regime of several kinds of supplementary substance. In addition to this, for instance in cross-country skiing, dehydration is treated with sugar-saline solutions or glucose. (Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce, 2001)

The move towards chemical training was inevitable. Society itself is increasingly chemicalised and medicalised. It is impossible to prevent the development of new methods for achieving better results and better athletic performances. The sports organisations themselves have to determine their stands on chemical training. This has taken the form of doping rules. Only the means of chemical which are considered to be artificial performance-enhancement or hazard to health have been prohibited as doping. (Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce, 2001).

As in other businesses, sports industries are prescribed by laws and industry norms. Doping regulations have been laid down with the view to preventing risks to the athlete's health and to ensuring that the rules of the game are the same for all competitors. It is easy to transgress doping rules. The responsibility rests with the athlete. It cannot be shifted to the coach, physician or anybody else in the entourage. Doping is an offence against the rules and results in penalisation, irrespective of the degree of guilt. (Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce, 2001).

Organisation behind the Case Event

The International Ski Federation consists of the Congress, the Council, the FIS Court and committees, sub-committees and working groups. The Congress establishes and modifies the Statutes and the International Competition Rules (ICR). It also reviews the business reports of the Council, the accounts and reports of the auditors; and grants discharge to the Council. The Congress approves the budget including the annual subscription and fees, elects the Council and auditors, affiliates and excludes Member Associations including associate members. Furthermore, it decides

on the proposals of the Member Associations and the Council as well as decides on appeals against Council Decisions, imposes sanctions and decides appeals imposed by Council, and introduces, modifies and cancels events. (<http://www.fis.org>)

The Council, in turn, is the supreme authority of the FIS between Congresses. It represents the FIS and takes care of the relations with other sports federations and organisations. For the overall conduct of business, the Council submits proposals to the Congress, executes the decisions taken by the Congress, appoints organisers of World Ski Championships, determines contributions of candidates and organisers of World Ski Championships in favour of small and developing member associations, and establishes and amends regulations and the ICR. Further duties and responsibilities include the ensuring that the Statutes, the international Competition Rules and the decisions of the Council are observed, the drafting of Rules and recommendations for recreational skiing, the consideration, and where appropriate, the approving of proposals of the Committees, the preparation of the Congress, and the arbitration in disputes arising from FIS approved international competitions and the imposing of sanctions. (<http://www.fis.org>)

The FIS Court deals with infringements against anti-doping regulations, damage to the reputation of the FIS, unsportsmanlike behaviour, and other cases on request of the Council. The court members are appointed by the Council. In addition, the Council appoints the Chairman and Members of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups that are responsible for the technical and other specified activities of the FIS. The day to day management and administration of the organisation is handled by the FIS General Secretariat in the headquarters in Switzerland.

The FIS Events

The FIS World Championships take place every second year. In Alpine, Nordic, Freestyle and Snowboard events are organised every uneven year and FIS Ski Flying World Championships every even year. They are the FIS own competitions open to all National Ski Associations affiliated to the FIS. They are to be organised in accordance with the FIS rules and under the control of the FIS. The organisation and the carrying out of the Championships are delegated to a National Ski Association and a site respective Organising Committee. The FIS Council elects, at least 5 years (Ski Flying 4 years) before the World Championships are to take place, the organising National Ski Association and the Site. The National Ski Association, in turn, appoints an Organising Committee for the Championships.

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in 2001

The Nordic events should, in principle, be organised in the second half of February in order to have them carried out under the best possible snow conditions. The FIS Nordic World Championships under scrutiny was organised by the Finnish Ski Association 15-25.2. 2001. The venue of the World Championships was in Lahti, Finland. Lahti also hosted the World Championships in 1926, 1938, 1958, 1978 and 1989. For the 2001 Championships, Lahti Sports Centre undergone several improvements to attract the visitors. Furthermore, as presented in their home page (<http://www.Lahti2001.fi>), organisers had focused on public safety of the visitors "...to create safe conditions for the public, so that these World Championships will stay in the minds of all guests as an unforgettably happy experience."

The number of different actors engaged in the realisation of the event was high. The Finnish organisers were The Finnish Ski Association, Lahti Ski Club and Lahti City. The athletes' village was build by an independent entrepreneur whose intention was to sell the apartments after the championships. The city invested in the new stands and other constructs at the Stadium. Sponser Service Finland Ltd. was responsible for marketing of the Championships as well as for national sponsorships and partnerships. International sponsor agreements were managed by the International Management Group IMG. (Jaakkola 2001). The event had both international and national partners, suppliers and sponsors. In its home page (<http://www.lahti2001.fi>) the event presents six official sponsors, three official suppliers, six official partners, six national partners, and 21 national suppliers. In addition to this, many local companies and organisations adopted their offerings to the needs of the event.

The Championships was a massive media event as well. 380 reporters, 170 photographers, and 600 representatives of TV- and Broadcasting companies hade enrolled for the event. According to the summary by the organising Committee, a total number of 1372 members of the media were accredited. The signal from the Host Broadcaster YLE was sent to 20 different countries. In Lahti there was – in addition to YLE which broadcasted appr. 60 hours of Championship programmes domestically - television commentators from 15 different countries and radio commentators from nine countries. (<Http://www.wintersport>, release posted 26.2.2001)

As to the number of competitors in Lahti, there were 485 enrolled athletes for the championships representing 37 nationalities. The total number of team members was 987, resulting from team positions in coaching, servicing and leadership. (<Http://www.wintersport>, release posted 12.2.2001)

The number of volunteers working in the event was in all 2100, of whom almost 650 worked in competition organising roles, 250 persons in servicing, almost 800 persons in security and 150 persons as attaches. Over 300 000 spectators visited the World championships. On 18th and 21st

February, the number of visitors exceeded 50 000. ([Http://www.wintersport](http://www.wintersport), release posted 26.2.2001)

4 CASE ANALYSIS

Expectations of Actors

When trying to analyse expectations in as large a network as in the case event it is necessary to focus on only a small amount on them to make sense of the phenomenon. The number of objects different expectations can be directed to, the nature of expectations as well as the confirmation/disconfirmation of them varies to an extreme extent among all the actors involved in the event. Only some actors' expectations and their disconfirmation with consequences at individual, organisational and network levels are dealt with in the following analysis.

Actors setting expectations of an event are many. In the case we can identify such collective actors as the FIS, the Organising Committee including the Finnish Ski Association, Ski Club Lahti and Lahti City; local and governmental authorities, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), sponsors and partners, and media. At the individual level there are athletes, coaches and leaders, event volunteers, visitors and the publics of ski sports in general. Expectations may be concerned with economic, functional, technical, social, phenomenal etc. performances. To narrow the focus, the rest of the analysis will concentrate on the expectations and their disconfirmation of the organisers, funding sources, visitors and athletes.

The main organiser of the Nordic World Championships, the FIS, publishes very detailed rules and general information about the championships (see e.g. <http://www.fis.org>). The rules (e.g. the International Ski Competition Rules, Book II, cross country; Rules for the Organisation of FIS World Championships; Rules for Public relations and Media Work) can be interpreted as official explicit expectations of the performance of the championships both at the organisational and at the individual level.

The cross-country rules' first section includes joint regulations for all competitions, such as classification and types of competitions, calendar conference and FIS calendar, FIS licence, qualification of competitors, competitors' obligations and rights, sponsorship and advertising, advertising and commercial markings as well as television and film rights. Further rules given in this section concern with the organisation of competition including the organisation, insurance, programme, announcements, entries, team captains' meetings, draw, publication of results, prizes and service personnel, suppliers and firms' representatives, medical examinations and doping as well as competition equipment. (The International Ski Competition Rules, Book II, 2000)

The second section of the above rules deals with the event organisation (part A) including the organising committee, the competition official, the jury and its duties, the role of technical delegate, reimbursement of expenses, FIS race director and team leaders' meetings. Other parts of the rules encompass the cross-country courses, homologation, technique definitions, preparations and stadium (part B); the competition and the competitors (part C); starts, timing, finish and results (part D); relay competitions (part F); guidelines for popular cross-country competitions (part G); and disqualifications, protests, sanctions and appeals (part H). (The International Ski Competition Rules, Book II, 2000)

Similar explicit expectations of different parties are expressed in the agreements between and among the event network. As identified by Ojasalo (1999), these expectations may be realistic or unrealistic. In the latter case, the expectations are not likely to be met. In rules and agreements exist also expectations that may be disconfirmed in some respects. This is manifested by the sanctions of violating the rules or breaching the agreements.

In the event, official expectations are set to organisers, partners, sponsors, athletes and other participants etc. at the collective level. Unofficial, implicit expectations also occur as was identified in the Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce (2001). Next, unofficial expectations will be discussed.

Expectations of Organising Committee

An article published in the Finnish magazine Kauppalehti Optio on 15th February was headed "Varma Voitto" (Certain Victory). The writer of the article states that even though the event was only to start, the organisers could be sure about their victory. There were great expectations of success both in economic issues and in competitions due to the fact that Finnish athletes had performed well earlier in the winter. The event had many sponsors and the tickets sold well in advance. The organisers expected 300 000 visitors to attend the stadium if the weather was not too cold to attract the people stay home and watch the championships in television. 15 % of the tickets had been bought by foreign visitors which ensured also tourist incomes to the city of Lahti. The organising committee's economic expectations were € 10 million. The financial input was € 7,5 million. In their calculations, tickets were expected to bring € 2,67 million. This was, however, too low an estimate while the quota was fulfilled already in the pre-sale of the tickets. The rest of the income was gathered from sponsors, partners and television rights negotiated by the FIS. (Jaakkola 2001)

Expectations of Sponsors and Partners

The national sponsorships of the event are limited by the agreements with the international sponsors who expect as high television visibility as possible. Accordingly, national sponsors could expect only occasional visibility in TV broadcastings. Instead of that, they expected visibility in the event's advertising and materials. Also different rights, hospitality services and other communication elements were expected to create value for their money. The event had a central position in the marketing and communications of many sponsors.

The national partners acted as suppliers in the event and expected both business incomes and visibility. To some partners like Valio, the event was also an important opportunity to take care of its own customer relationships. They brought about 600 customers to the event. (Jaakkola 2001).

Expectations of Visitors

Skiing is national sport in Finland. Therefore, the expectations of the Finnish visitors of the event were high which can be interpreted from the demand of the tickets and number of actual visitors which exceeded the expectations of the organisers. Expectations may naturally have varied within individuals depending on personal valuations and situational factors. They may be based on earlier experiences of World Championships and other skiing events in Lahti, the events reputation, the success of Finnish skiers, advertising and other communication in media, word-of-mouth communication etc.

The objects of visitor expectations were many. They involved the place, fluent services such as transportation, food, drinks, sanitary and accommodation, event's atmosphere, weather, the competitions and the athletes' success, race and results display, auxiliary programmes for children and adults, social communication among visitors etc. Expectations of the visitors can be tracked in the newspaper and magazine articles which indicated their disconfirmation. They will be discussed later in the connection of event performance.

Expectations of Athletes

The discussion of athletes' expectations of the event is here limited to those of Finns concerned with their own success in the World Championships. Of course, they have similar expectations of the event to those of visitors, media representatives, volunteers and other professional but as core performers, their expectations also differed from those of the others.

It can be anticipated that the athletes' core expectations were directed to success of their own and of their team. As discussed earlier, the success of a skier is an outcome of teamwork. The core team in the World Championships consists of the competitor, the coach and the physician responsible for

the health and chemical training (in the sense of conducting the operations needed) of the competitor.

In the Championships, at least some athletes did not expect themselves to be successful without using some prohibited substances or methods. Accordingly, the expectations were directed to the athletes themselves as well as to the competition. Furthermore, athletes expected either not to be tested for the substances during the event or the traces of the prohibited use not to be found in the tests. Here, their expectations were directed towards the anti-doping function of the Championships. As indicated by the Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce (2001), athletes also had expectations of the coaches' and physicians' knowledge of the prohibited substances and methods in addition to expectations of other athletes' use of doping.

Event Performance

1. Arrangements

The expected number of visitors was exceeded three days before the end of the Championships. At that point, the General Secretary stated the number of visitors to have been the biggest problem in the event. However, in the organiser's opinion they were doing great regarding the situation. In three days, the stadium was so crowded that the organisers had to stop selling tickets. There were also some trouble when 50 000 people were moving on the icy ground in a small area, especially on the three narrow bridges. Consequently, there were some minor injuries. Despite the mass, people kept fairly calm. One additional problem recognised by the organisers were the pickpockets: by the day before last, 27 reports of an offence were made. (Aamulehti 25.2.2001).

According to the customer satisfaction survey, which was conducted over a period of four days, the total evaluation amongst all answers given was 4,3 (on a scale from 1 to 5, 1=bad, 5=excellent). 93% of the given answers rated the Championships atmosphere as good or excellent. The service standard was rated as good or excellent by 85% (<http://www.wintersport.as>; release 26.2.2001)

Among the visitors, there was some dissatisfaction and anger because of the postponement of ski-jumping competitions due to bad weather. Because they had to cancel the team ski jumping race and the evening ball, organisers decided to give back half of the ticket prices to those who demanded that. (Aamulehti 25.2.2001).

Some reasons for visitor dissatisfaction are presented by a sports columnist in Aamulehti (22.2.01). He mentions things like the price of food in the stadium, the crowds in the event restaurants, the crowded toilets, and the difficulties to get close enough to the jumping hills, starts

and finishes. Another issue he brings up is the discussion and disappointment of visitors in Isometsä, the Finnish cross-country skier who had submitted a positive result in a doping test.

Foreign media representative gave some negative feedback to the organisers about the arrangements but the FIS was satisfied. The Jury of the Championships demanded the organisers to change technical arrangements of cross-country skiing and ski jumping only a day before the actual competition which causes extra work for the organisers and was, according to the General Secretary, partly in vain. However, he underlined in the interview that the overall impression of the event stays positive. (Aamulehti 25.2.2001).

Some German newspapers wrote about their disappointment in Lahti event because they did not regard the Championships the very best. According to Marjo Matikainen, an ex-skier who was working in the event, the feedback in the team leader meetings had been positive. What she found negative was Isometsä's cheat at doping which throw a shadow over the whole team. (Aamulehti 23.3.2001)

2. Sports Performance

In regard to the sports, sprint skiing competition, a newcomer in the Championships, appeared to be a success. It was praised by the FIS General Secretary as well as the General Secretary of the event. Positive feedback was also given by TV spectators in Finland and abroad. According to the FIS General Secretary, the FIS decided not to have mass starts in the Championships. She, however, found that in the future mass starts cannot be ignored because they are, as the spring skiing competition, an excellent way of enhancing the popularity of cross-skiing. To the FIS General Secretary, the atmosphere in the event as well as the increased number of ski jumping teams were positive. In the negative side she mentions the doping issues. (Aamulehti 25.2.2001)

The Finnish skiers perform very well in the Championships. For instance, Isometsä came fourth in the 15km Men's classic cross-country race and achieved the second place in the pursuit. The audience in the stadium was totally enraptured when the Finns won the men's relay competition. This was the first time since 1976 when the Finns won this competition in the Olympic Games. The Finnish skiers were praised. Their level was said to be 'hard as iron'. (Aamulehti 23.2.2001)

Also the Finnish women performed well. They achieved 5 medals, which according to the columnist Matti Kauhanen "must be a sum of lucky coincidences." After the Finns achieved the second place in the ladies cross-country relay, he wrote in Aamulehti (24.2.2001):

"The bluewhite noise at the award ceremony on Lahti market square has bet all previous records despite the fact that the medal hopes of Kaisa Varis seemed to have fell in December and that Mika Myllylä, who in Ramsau had bet all previous records in hoarding medals, was not able to attend. Even though the barrel of hopes in regard to women's success seemed to be

filled with only Pirjo Manninen last December, we are back on the international top level with such a great racket which is hard to understand.”

Disconfirmation of Expectations

At his point, at least the Finns were satisfied. The World Championships seemed to be a success both in an economic and in sports aspects. Some of expectations were disconfirmed positively, for instance, the economic expectations of the organisers. Expectations concerned with the ‘purity’ of the Finnish athletes had, to some extent, disconfirmed when Isometsä submitted a positive doping sample. Even though the public still had expectations of this to be an individual case, in the inner circles expectations of the wider use of Finnish doping were born. This led to the testing of the Finnish athlete teams by WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) out-of-competition doping control on 22nd February 2001 on the request of the Finnish Minister of Culture on 20th February and of the Finnish team leaders on 22nd after the Finns won gold in relay. Four of the samples turned out to be positive which confirmed the expectations of those who had suspected the misuse of substances.

At the athletes’ team level, the expectations seemed to have changed during the Championships. Based on ignorance or willingness to take the risk, the athletes expected not get caught of the prohibited substances. On 14th February Yhtyneet laboratoriot Oy announced in a daily newspaper that plasma expanders will be tested for the first time in Lahti. The head coach also read in text-TV that they will be detectable in the Lahti tests.

According to the report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce (2001), after Isometsä submitted the positive test, the head coach advised another skier not to finish his race. The skier broke his pole and did not finish. Another skier, the winner of the first leg of the pursuit, did not start the second leg, pleading flu. Within the team leaders there existed suspicions that more positive doping tests might be expected. The head coach and the director of cross-country skiing denied that possibility.

At the press conference on 18th February, Isometsä took the blame for the doping incident and denied that anyone else was involved. In this way, he again reshaped the expectations of the public. At this point, the Finnish Minister of Culture stated her explicit expectations to the Finnish Ski Association. She demanded the explanation of the doping incident from the association, which promised to give it to the Ministry of Education.

Further expectations were created when the Police informed that a bag with drugs prescribed by one of the athletes’ physicians was found. On 24th February, the two physicians resigned from the Finnish team saying that their integrity as physicians has been compromised. At the official hearing at the Ministry of Education on 26th February, the head coach claimed that he was the one who had

administered the plasma expander even though it was done by one of the physicians, thus creating diverse expectations of the truth.

Consequences of Disconfirmation

The negative disconfirmation of expectations directed towards the arrangements of the event as a service encounter led to minor dissatisfaction among visitors, and to some rearrangements with unexpected costs to organisers. However, from the economic point of view, the event outperformed the expectations.

The doping scandal negatively disconfirmed the expectations of many stakeholder groups, i.e. general expectations in respect to the purity of cross-country skiing. Earlier, after the doping events that shook the world of cycling in the summer of 1998, the World Anti-Doping Agency was established in November 1999 to promote and coordinate the fight against doping in sport internationally. The WADA was set up as a foundation under the initiative of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) with the support and participation of intergovernmental organisations, governments, public authorities and other public and private bodies also fighting against doping in sport. WADA received its first two years of funding solely from the Olympic Movement. According to its statutes, as of January 1st 2002, the WADA's funding is sourced equally from the Olympic Movement and the governments of the world. (<http://www.WADA.org>.) The FIS has adjusted its International Competition rules in 2001, concerned, for instance, with the rights of jury and penalties.

At the national level, disconfirmation of anti-doping expectations led, in addition to police investigations, to the appointment of an independent Taskforce by the Ministry of Education to look into the doping cases. As a result of their work, the Taskforce put forward proposals in respect to the responsibility level of activities in the Finnish Ski Association, education and responsibility of anti-doping work, the Finnish Anti-doping Committee, the government's financial aid channels to top-level sports, criminalizing of doping, and participation activities in international anti-doping both within WADA and in intergovernmental contexts. (Report of the Enquiry Taskforce, 2001) At the time of the event, Finland's reputation was increased also in the developing countries of skiing, unfortunately because of the doping and not because of their success (<http://www.verkkouutiset.fi>).

At the organisational level, according to the Finnish Ski Association, no sustainable harm was caused to Lahti city by the doping misuse. (Aamulehti 17.3.2001) Before the doping scandal, it was expected that the next time Finland could arrange the FIS World Championships was around 2015 (Aamulehti 25.2.2001) However, still in May 2002, the leading article of *Näköaloja*, a magazine

published in Lahti, was worried about the possibility of being labelled as a doping-city due the fact that the 2001 Championships are referred to as the sadly famous Lahti Championships.

In the Finnish Ski Association, the Managing director resigned on 6th March. On 8th March, the Association leadership appointed a working group to prepare a reorganisation of the association. (the Enquiry Taskforce, 2001) During the Lahti event, main sponsors of the association published a release in which they announced to implement sanctions based on the doping paragraph of their agreements. The loss of partners had economic consequences to the association while two thirds of its annual budget has been funded by collaborative agreements. (Aamulehti 26.2.2001) The Finnish Ski Association has a TV broadcasting agreement with European Broadcasting Union (EBU) with no doping paragraph. Consequently, there was no direct negative connection between the scandal and the economic outcome to the association at that time. However, the managing director of the Finnish Broadcasting company YLE expected that the big European companies become suspicious after this kind of scandal. (Aamulehti 27.02.2001) Furthermore, the governmental financial aid was announced to be withdrawn at least to some extent by the Minister of Culture who also demanded changes in the leadership of the association (Aamulehti 04.03.2001).

Local ski clubs expected their economic situation to become worse due to the decreased number of amateurs interested in joining ski clubs. At the individual level, people were disappointed and even bitter, which came out in many opinions in Aamulehti during the spring 2001. Cross-country skiing as a genre lost its attraction in favour of other skiing genres among amateurs, sponsors and other funding organisations.

As to the athletes and their team members, they experienced financial as well as professional losses. The Finnish Ski Association announced a two-year ineligibility for all the Finnish skiers who had given positive samples. Furthermore, the physicians and the coaches were announced ineligibility for life as officials. These sanctions were later confirmed by the FIS. The physicians were also reprimanded by the Finnish Medical Association. (Report of the Enquiry Taskforce, 2001) At the athletes' level, their personal sponsor agreements were violated and thus, the future of them became unsure (Laaksonen in Aamulehti 22.2.2001). The Finnish Olympic Committee decided to quit their financial aid to the athletes who submitted positive tests. Furthermore, the Committee suggested that Finland should be one of the pilots to employ an anti-doping passport, an agreement signed by an athlete who commits themselves to the ethical rules of an athlete. (STT in Aamulehti 10.03.2001).

All the above consequences are in connection with the social relationships of individual actors. Dissatisfaction, blaming, guilt etc. affected them. Furthermore, many role relationships ceased to exist even though personal relationships may have been continued. The social status and position in

an athlete's network changed as when one of the athlete was dismissed from the website of his municipality. Some athletes have tried to polish their image by writing books and press releases. However, it can be expected to take quite a while before the image and reputation of athletes, officials and cross-country skiing is rebuilt.

5 DISCUSSION

The concept and nature of expectations was earlier discussed in the theoretical part of the paper. In addition to that discussion, the empirical study implied that expectations can also be categorised as **general** and **specific**. According to Miller (2000), general expectations relate to quality of outcome. Here, the term is used in a wider meaning. General expectations seem to be implicit. They exist at all actor levels as identified in the empirical study: individual, team, organisational, national, international and global, and have multiple 'abstract', conceptual objects. They may be realistic or unrealistic. In the focal case we can identify, for example, general expectations of sports, skiing, athletes and behaviour. Specific expectations may be implicit or explicit, but they have a certain object or objects. They are directed towards 'real' empirical objects like an event, organisers, competitors, activities etc.

As Teas and Palan (1997) pointed out, expectations are dynamic and exist along time continuum as verified by the empirical evidence. As a result of the study, a model of expectations at the episode level is depicted in Figure 1.

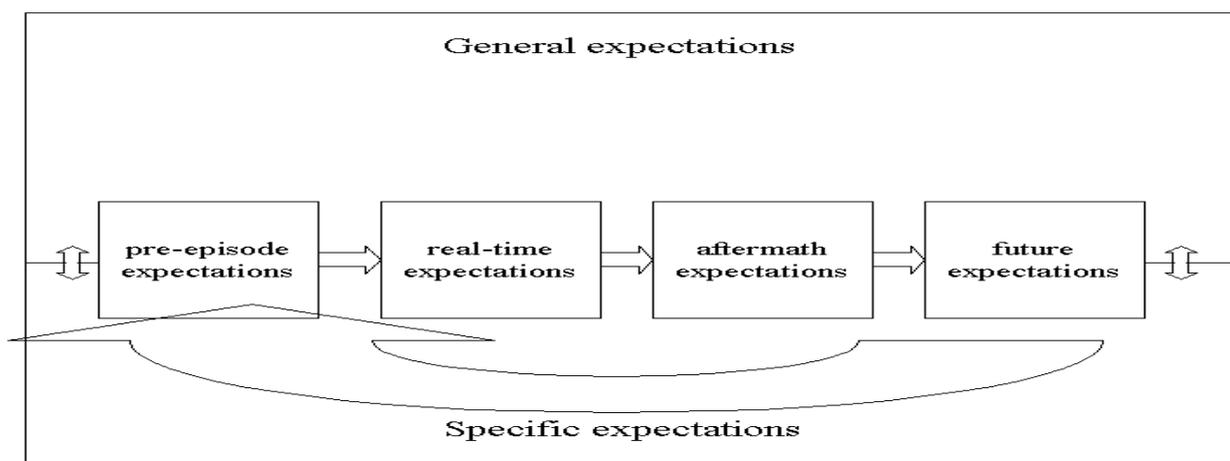


Figure 1. Dynamics of Episode Expectations.

First, there is the distinction of general and specific expectations. Second, expectations are classified into pre-episode, real-time, aftermath and future expectations. Pre-episode expectations are those actors have before an episode. In the empirical evidence these expectations are discussed under the title of 'Expectations of the Actors'. Real-time expectations occur during the actual 'moment of truth' when a good or service is produced and consumed. Depending on the interaction between or among the actors, expectations confirm, disconfirm, and transform in a dynamic process of performance.

After the 'moment of truth' is over, the consumption of it still continues. Especially in cases when pre-episode and real-time expectations are disconfirmed, post evaluation is common. In this phase, implicit expectations may become explicit as the work of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce indicates. According to the Associations Act, section 35.1, the executive board must manage the associations affairs with care in accordance with law and the decisions of the association. When the Taskforce applied the issue to doping in the Finnish Ski Association they found that doping matters or anti-doping work had no organisational status in the association. Neither were they specifically assigned to any organ or person. There were no medical committee, and the action plan for 2001 made no mention of doping matters. Consequently, the Taskforce states that "the elective leadership should have understood that doping may occur in the Finnish team just as well as in any other" (Report of the Doping Enquiry Taskforce, 2001, 18).

Future expectations are formed on the basis of experiences and on the evaluation of an episode. Like in the focal case, future expectations at the general level in respect to sports, skiing, different actors' positions in the network etc. They certainly differ from those before the episode. Also specific future expectations have changed as discussed under the title 'Consequences of Disconfirmation'. Because of the learning processes of all actors, and the lost of trust in some cases, future is re-evaluated and expectations re-established. In practice, expectations of collaboration in anti-doping work have deepen in the focal international network. Specific future expectations concerned with the forthcoming new episode, for example, the next FIS Nordic Ski World Championships, are naturally affected by new future expectations.

Whose expectations count? At the pre-episode stage, specific expectations are adapted between and among actors by accepting rules, by bargaining and negotiating over agreements or by an exchange transaction. At the performance stage, implicit expectations of parties may become visible and cause consequences of different levels. Positive disconfirmation of expectations may lead to higher future expectations while negative disconfirmation may case conflicts. There, the power, dependence and influence structures of actors involved dictate whose expectations are to be followed. Naturally, mutual new expectations can be negotiated at this stage as well. New explicit

expectations may also reshape implicit expectations of the future. In the dynamic process of expectations, unrealistic expectations become more realistic, as in WADA's case where it moves its Universal Anti-Doping Code close to reality (<http://stage.wada.netcomsus.com>, press release 4.6.2002). Vice versa, realistic expectations may turn into unrealistic as in the case of 'new' economy.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Expectations have mainly been studied in the consumer setting. In this study, the perspective was widened to a network encompassing both consumer and business actors in addition to governmental and association actors to gain understanding of the dynamics expectations, performance and disconfirmation on different actor levels.

In the business context, expectations have been classified as implicit, explicit, fuzzy, realistic or unrealistic by Ojasalo (1999), and as official or unofficial by Järvelin (2001). Furthermore, the content and level of expectations have been addressed (Holmlund 1997, Järvelin 2001). The study at hand introduces the classification of general and specific expectations. A model of dynamic expectations is presented as a result of the empirical study. The model consists of pre-episode, real-time, aftermath and future expectations. Depending on the timeframe of a holistic episode, aftermath and future expectations may exist during it and be directed to individual sub-episodes or acts within the whole. In future, the model should be applied to other contexts to test its functionality.

Studying expectations as a process instead of a static phenomenon highlights the constant need of organisations to manage different expectations. Not only the expectations of customers, employees, and shareholders but also those of competitors, authorities and society in general may play a crucial role in an organisation's success. Furthermore, an organisation cannot focus merely on economic expectations (as in the case of emphasising shareholder value) but also on other actors' expectations in the social system of business.

Further research on expectations in network context is needed to gain more understanding on the phenomena. Industrial settings may bring up different expectations and dynamics compared to the setting studied here. An interesting area to research is the relationship between trust and expectations in networks. The hierarchy of expectations in a company, an organisation, a dyadic relationship and network is another area of interest. The management systems of expectations should also be studied in the future as well.

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