

Åse-Line Dysvik Eide

A stakeholder perspective on the value co-creation of
the Youth Olympic Games brand.

A qualitative case study in a Norwegian context

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Summary

The purpose with this case study research has been to understand the stakeholders' perception of the Youth Olympic Games brand (YOG), in a Norwegian context. The research was conducted from a marketing perspective using a framework by Helm and Jones (2010) to illustrate how the value co-creation of the YOG brand may work. Eleven stakeholders from various stakeholder groups were interviewed based on their experience with the YOG.

The three research questions for this thesis were:

1. Are the stakeholders of the YOG co-creating the brand?
2. Has the YOG achieved brand equity?
3. Has the extension of the Olympic brand been a success?

Parent, Kristiansen, Skille and Hanstad (2013) identified the most salient stakeholders of the Innsbruck YOG, and these were used to contact stakeholders in a Norwegian context. The research indicates that the majority of the stakeholders' co-create value to some extent. The full value co-created is unclear due to vague expectations of the brand delivery among stakeholders. Their level of brand loyalty was tied to their professional relationship with the brand, and it has consequently been difficult to determine whether they will stay loyal to the brand on a personal basis in the future. The sponsors were not included in this research as none of them accepted to the research inquiry. Few Norwegian journalists covered the event, and the journalist included in this research did not have a positive attitude towards the brand. As a result the sponsors and the media do not seem to be in a co-creation of mindset with YOG at this point of time.

As the YOG is still in the initial stage of the product life cycle it is too early to determine whether the brand contribute to the overall strength of the Olympic brand. The IOC did not have a clear understanding of the YOG brand. This seems to have created some confusions (i.e. stakeholders' expectations), and consequently the brand extension has been quite challenging. This gives a reason to indicate that the co-creation has not been as effective as it could. For the YOG brand to become a successful extension and contribute to the overall value of Olympic brand, the brand must attain all the intangible assets that lead to brand equity.

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The minute after I typed the last sentence in this thesis, I felt relief and joy, but also a slightly hint of emptiness. This project has more or less controlled my life for almost a year, and it has certainly been a year filled with challenges. Throughout this period I have learned a lot about myself in the role of a researcher, individual, co-student, girlfriend, sister, colleague, and master student. Filling all these roles at one time have made me stronger, more calm, and off course more efficient.

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Abbreviations

ARMs	Athlete Role Models
AYOF	Australian Youth Olympic Festival
CEP	Culture and Education Programme
EOC	European Olympic Committee
EYOF	European Youth Olympic Festival
IF	International Federation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IYOG	Innsbruck Youth Olympic Games
IYOGOC	Innsbruck Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee
LYOG	Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games
LYOGOC	Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee
NIF	Norges Idrettsforbund (Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of sports)
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NSF	Norwegian Ski Federation
OCOG	Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games
OG	Olympic Games
OM	The Olympic Movement
SYOGOC	Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee
SYOG	Singapore Youth Olympic Games
YOG	Youth Olympic Games
YOGOC	Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee
YOV	Youth Olympic Village

1. Introduction and Overview

This chapter seeks to provide the reader with a general introduction to the concept of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). The background for choosing the YOG as a case will then be presented, before previous research forms the basis for presenting the research questions.

1.1. Introduction to the Youth Olympic Games

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the former IOC President, Jacques Rogge, proposed the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) on April 25, 2007 (IOC, 2012). The IOC Executive Board unanimously accepted the President's proposal, and the project was officially approved at the 119th IOC Session in Guatemala City in July 2007 (IOC, 2012). The YOG is the first new event to be staged by the IOC since 1924, when the first Olympic winter Games were launched (Parry, 2012). The YOG is based on the European Olympic Committees (EOC) property, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), which is a multisport event for young athletes, organized every second year in a European city (Ferrand, Chappelet & Séguin, 2012).

The vision of the YOG is to engage and inspire the youth around the world to live by the Olympic values, and to participate in sport (IOC, 2012). Depending on the sport discipline and gender, the young athletes must be aged between 15 and 18 to participate in the sport competitions (IOC, 2012). A unique feature of the YOG is the Culture and Education Programme (CEP). Through the CEP the YOG seeks to deliver an event with a combination of sport and education. Apart from the CEP, the YOG is based on many of the same principles, symbols, and traditions as the Olympic Games (OG). This includes the Torch Relay, the Olympic rings, the Olympic flame, opening and closing ceremonies, and summer and winter events that are held every four years (IOC, 2012). The summer YOG is held at the same year as the winter OG, and the winter YOG is arranged the same year at the summer OG. In addition, the brand name has a strong resemblance with the OG. The YOG brand name contains "Olympic" and "Games" as well as the Olympic rings in the logo, consequently raising associations between the

new extension of the Olympic brand and the traditional OG (Hanstad, Parent & Kristiansen, 2013).

Singapore (SYOGOC) hosted the inaugural summer YOG in 2010. 3,524 young athletes competed in 26 sport disciplines, with 201 medal events (IOC, 2012). 204 National Olympic Committees (NOC) within the IOC, and one independent participant were represented (IOC, 2012). The event lasted for 12 days, and had a staggering amount of 20,000 volunteers (IOC, 2012). Innsbruck (IYOGOC) followed two years later by hosting the very first winter YOG in 2012. In total, 1022 young athletes participated in seven sports disciplines for ten days, with 63 medal events (IOC, 2012). There were 69 NOCs represented, and about 1440 people from over 50 countries worked as volunteers (IOC, 2012).

The summer YOG is a larger event in terms of competing athletes, NOC representation, and number of sports, days, and volunteers. Based on the numbers presented above, the summer YOG is about three times the size of the winter edition. In comparison, the OG in Vancouver 2010 had 2566 competing athletes represented from 83 NOCs (IOC, 2013a), whilst London 2012 had 10,568 athletes represented from 204 NOCs and four individual Olympic athletes (IOC, 2013b). This means that the size of the winter OG is comparable to the size of the summer YOG. The second edition of the summer YOG will take place in Nanjing (China) in 2014, and Lillehammer (Norway) will host the next winter YOG in 2016 (IOC, 2012).

1.2. Background

To map the worldwide awareness about the YOG in 2014, Google Scholar and Google Trends was used to assess the YOG's popularity on the Internet. According to Google Scholar on the 27th of January 2014, 173.000 related articles appeared when searching for "Olympic Games". This is an extensive amount compared to "Youth Olympic Games" that had 958. Although the YOG is a more recent event compared to the OG in terms of traditions, this number gives an indication to believe that there still is a lack of research about the new Olympic phenomenon, almost seven years after it was proposed by Jacques Rogge.

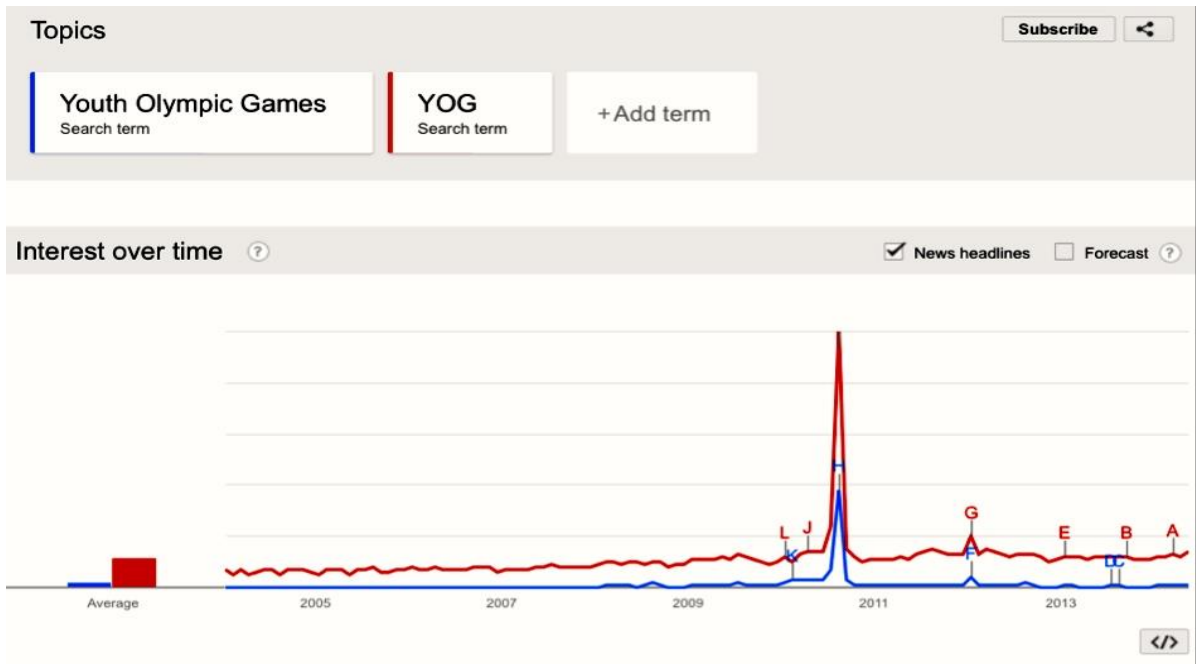


Figure 1.1. “Youth Olympic Games” versus the “YOG”. A graphic illustration of the public interest towards retrieving information about the “Youth Olympic Games” and/or “YOG” from 2005-2014.

Google Trends was then used to find a graph that could illustrate the online search history of the YOG. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the search history for the “Youth Olympic Games” and “YOG”. YOG (red color) is noticeably a more popular keyword, and 2010 marks a clear peak in interest, the year Singapore hosted the inaugural summer YOG. Innsbruck 2012 has a low peak compared to 2010, which is an attention-grabbing result, as one would expect the awareness to be higher since Innsbruck was the second city to host the YOG.

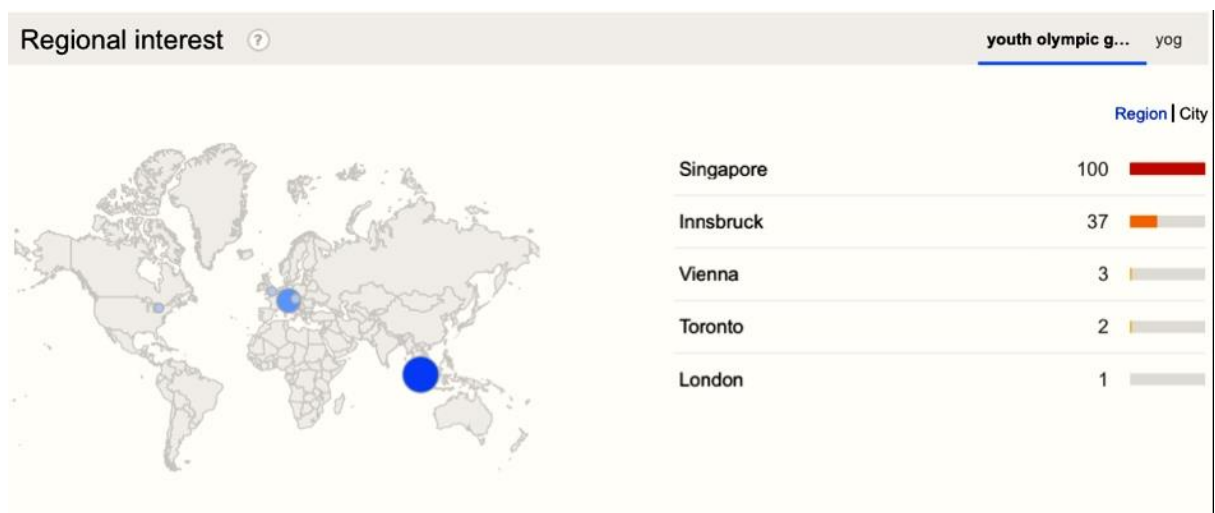


Figure 1.2. Map of regional interest in retrieving information about the “Youth Olympic Games” or “YOG”.

Figure 1.2 demonstrates which countries or regions that retrieved most information about the “Youth Olympic Games” or the “YOG” from 2005-2014. The map shows that Singapore is the number one region and city to retrieve information about the YOG. Innsbruck, although listed as number two, cannot compare their online interest with Singapore. Even though there are more people in Singapore compared with Innsbruck, one should expect the results would be higher for Innsbruck and other European cities.

When “YOG” and the Norwegian translation of the brand “Ungdoms OL” were compared, “Ungdoms OL” got a flat curve because it did not have enough data. This is an interesting result since the upcoming winter YOG in 2016, will be hosted in Norway. To further investigate the worldwide interest for retrieving information about the YOG, the “Olympic Games”, “Youth Olympic Games”, and “YOG” were compared. In this search the color of the latter two alternatives was more or less invisible compared to the OG. This result provided a foundation to indicate that even though Singapore might have the highest YOG score altogether; the interest in searching for information about the YOG is minimal compared to the OG.

In addition to Google Trends and Google Scholar, a third search monitor was used to map the status of the YOG in Norway. “A-tekst Retriever” is a database that monitors relevant information from magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, web, and social media. It was used over a longer period of time to track everything that was published about the YOG in Norway. The majority of the results found on the topic were minor columns from local newspapers, promoting their local youth athletes. These findings expresses that there exist some awareness about the YOG in Norway, but the question is rather if this awareness contributes in strengthening the Youth Olympic brand?

Figure 1.1 and *Figure 1.2* are included to illustrate that there is a difference in awareness and/or interest about the YOG, depending on where you are in the world. Even though there are only 958 findings on the YOG on Google Scholar, one should be able to expect a more ascending graph, as Nanjing will be the third city to host the YOG in 2014. The interest and awareness about the YOG is minimal, and this led to pursue further research on the brand.

1.2.1. Personal Motivation

The reason for choosing the YOG as a case to study started back in 2012, when the first winter YOG was carried out in Innsbruck. The author is a big fan of the Olympics, but had never heard about this new Olympic phenomenon until after the inaugural winter YOG had been completed. Why was this so? How could it be that even a student, specialized in sport management, learned about the YOG five years after the IOC approved it? Where were the promotional efforts? Was there conducted any background research prior to approving the YOG? And what about other stakeholders, what was their opinion? These were some of the questions that triggered the researchers mind, consequently leading the author to choose the YOG as a starting point for further research.

Personal motivation is very important when conducting a research project, especially when previous research is limited. The motivation for conducting this research was the passion for sport. Sport is a universal activity that has the power of generating emotions, overcome barriers, outshine difficulties, and to promote friendship across nations, culture, and social differences. The power of sport is unique, and this is also why sport events have become one of the most attractive venues for sponsors to invest in, for spectators to attend, and for the media to show interest.

The unique atmosphere of thousands of spectators cheering for their favorite athlete, and the joy of sportsmanship was one of the reasons why the researcher wanted to study sport, and to specialize in the YOG. It is evident that an introduction of a new Olympic phenomenon is a rare incident, since the last extension of the Olympic brand happened 90 years ago. It was therefore an additional boost to have the privilege to participate in the production of knowledge within the first decade of the YOG.

1.2.2. Development of the study

The initial thought was to conduct a case study on the Olympic sponsors (TOP). The aim was to understand the TOP sponsors' perception of the YOG, and their perception of its brand value. Several methods such as e-mails, text messages, and personal phone calls was used to get in touch with the right department and persons affiliated with the TOP companies. Unfortunately, all declined the research inquiry. Plan B was then to contact the TOPs national offices in Norway. This attempt also proved to be difficult, as

several of the companies contacted had never heard about the YOG. This was not a surprise though, since the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (LYOGOC) was only in its initial phase of contacting sponsors at the time being. After re-evaluating the project, the perspective of the study changed from focusing on one stakeholder to include all stakeholders (except for funding sources: i.e. the government and sponsors) involved with the YOG - in a Norwegian context.

1.3. Previous Research

Although there has been an extensive amount of research conducted on the Olympic Games, this has yet to be the case for the YOG. According to Kristiansen (2012) there is a lack of research in the field as the concept is new for the IOC, and the concept has been given minor attention by scholars and the media (Hanstad, Parent & Kristiansen, 2013).

Judge, Peterson and Lydum (2009) studied the level of awareness of the YOG in the US sporting communities prior to the first YOG in 2010. The findings revealed that there was a low level of awareness about the YOG, amongst the American athletes and coaches included in the study (Judge et al., 2009). Judge et al., (2009) suggested as a part of their conclusion that the YOG had to increase their marketing and promotional efforts, to achieve more awareness about the concept.

Since the study by Judge et al., (2009) was published, two editions of the YOG have been conducted. This has naturally increased the knowledge and awareness about the event, and scholars have since 2010 given the YOG more attention. Wong (2011) discussed the YOG's position in the past, present, and future. The YOG mirrors the OG in format and the European- (EYOF) and Australian- (AYOF) Youth Olympic Festival in concept and purpose (Wong, 2011). The decision of mirroring the OG at the youth level is a risky decision according to Wong (2011), where she states that the outcome is either a celebration of what sport should be, or the succumbing to what has become a sporting model that is led by excessive competition (Wong, 2011). Wong (2011) conducted a historical review of the YOGs impact, debating the positive aspects of the CEP and the fight of childhood obesity up against early specialization, stress from premature exposure to the media, and the pressure to perform at the competitions.

In addition to much negative publicity, increased competition and technology from other events are threatening the YOG's ability to establish a strong and unique brand (McNamee & Parry, 2012). The true values and the aspects that differentiate the YOG from the competition was emphasised in an editorial by McNamee and Parry (2012). They discussed what the true values that run the Olympic movement are, and how these can be realized and transformed into the YOG (McNamee & Parry, 2012). Parry (2012) examined some of the ethical issues associated with a youth edition of the OG. According to Parry (2012) there have already been incidents with age falsification, cheating, and talent identification, and he argues whether this is unique for the Olympic Movement or if it has a wider application. Although the YOG has been criticized for its ethical position, Parry (2012) honours the YOG for seeing the first Saudi Woman compete in Singapore 2010, and for the first time ever giving a medal to an African athlete competing at the winter YOG.

Judge et al., (2011) studied the public awareness in the Greek sport community in a period before the YOG in Innsbruck 2012. They found that there was a low level of attention by the media and low awareness by the public (Judge et al., 2011). Judge and collaborators (2011) suggested that there should be a more effective messaging around the YOG to increase the awareness, which are critical components for long-term success.

Parent, Kristiansen, Skille and Hanstad (2013) studied the YOG potential sustainability by using stakeholder-, network-, and institutional theory in their research of the inaugural winter YOG in 2012. Parent et al., (2013) revealed that the IOC, the media (press and broadcasting), and the athletes' parents were listed as the most central stakeholders at the Innsbruck 2012, while the Olympic stakeholders are the IOC, the media, and the sponsors.

Hanstad et al., (2013) named their research "the best of the Olympics or a poor copy?" In this research, the authors reflected around the various perceptions of the YOG's position as a new member in the Olympic family. Hanstad et al., (2013) listed the sponsors and media lower in salience compared to other stakeholders, and pointed out that there was a low level of awareness about the Games, even amongst the local residents of Innsbruck. This gives us an indication to believe that the YOG is still in the

process of positioning itself in the mind of the consumers, a process that is time-consuming and difficult to conduct.

Kristiansen (2012) examined the athletes' experience with the CEP in Innsbruck 2012 from a psychological perspective. The aim with the study was to understand how the Norwegian athletes balanced the CEP with the sport competitive program (Kristiansen, 2012). Kristiansen (2012) emphasized that there was a dilemma between the time the athletes had to spend competing, and the time where they could engage in other activities (such as the CEP). The results indicated that the athletes rated the competition as their main reason for participating at the YOG, and that it was a concern for them to balance the CEP with the competitions (Kristiansen, 2012).

Nordhagen (2013) studied the CEP in Singapore and Innsbruck for his master thesis, and found that there was a big gap in how the two nations implemented the program. The reports from the IOC stated that the CEP had been a success, but the athletes did not agree on this (Nordhagen, 2013). Krieger (2013) analyzed eight German athletes' perception of the YOG from a sociological standpoint. The athletes' experience was compared with the goals of the CEP, as defined by IOC. Although the athletes disliked some parts of the CEP and felt that knowledge was "forced" on them, they did find the informal meetings with other athletes at the YOV very enjoyable and contributing more to knowledge (Krieger, 2013). These findings were in line with Nordhagen (2013), and revealed that the athletes' perception of the CEP did not correspond with the IOC's statement of the CEP being a successful experience (Krieger, 2013).

Schnitzer, Peters, Scheiber and Pocecco (2014) went further in depth on this matter and studied 662 participating athletes and 6 focus groups with 43 athletes in Innsbruck, to determine the athletes' overall experience and perception of the CEP. The result concluded that the athletes enjoyed the CEP very much, but that the training and competition schedule interfered with the CEP. This finding is in line with the research findings by Kristiansen (2012).

The research by Schnitzer and colleagues (2014) was quantitative and had a much more positive outcome, compared to the qualitative research mentioned above. This positive outcome may stem from the researchers' close connection with the event, as all the authors were employed in various organizations within the city of Innsbruck. The

research had however a much larger range of athletes included; compared to the qualitative, as 60 of the 69 NOCs participated in the study (Schitzer et al., (2014).

The common feature found in the research papers by Krieger (2013), Kristiansen (2012), Nordhagen (2013), and Schnitzer et al., (2014), was that the CEP should be designed to have a better fit the athletes' age and level of interest. The competition schedule should be designed to fit the time of the CEP activities, and that CEP should be planned more carefully to raise awareness and interest among coaches and NOCs. The aim with these suggestions was that more athletes could have the opportunity to participate in the CEP (Krieger, 2013; Kristiansen, 2012; Nordhagen, 2013; Schnitzer et al, 2014).

In 2014, the very first book about the YOG will be published by several of the authors cited in this chapter. The book will include the history and rationale for the YOG, the contrasts, the similarities between the YOG and the OGs, and other relevant questions (Hanstad, Parent & Houlihan, 2014).

1.4. Purpose of the study

Although chapter 1.3 only present some of the research conducted on the YOG, much of the research published is editorials, reviews, historical reviews, and considerations. There is a lack of extensive qualitative and quantitative research, especially on the YOG seen from a sport marketing perspective.

The purpose of this study is to increase knowledge about the YOG, and to promote aspects that can contribute in further developing a strong brand. This research aims to fill the gap of previous research, and to produce knowledge and information that is important for the upcoming YOG Organizing Committees (YOGOC). Based on principles of brand equity, stakeholder theory, value co-creation, and brand extensions, this thesis seeks to focus on how the YOG can become a stronger brand based on the stakeholders' ability and willingness to co-create the brand.

1.5. Research questions

A natural stage in this process is to define the general issue of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The research published on the YOG so far, has mostly focused on comparing the OG with the YOG, discussing the athletes' perception of the CEP, identifying stakeholders, or arguing its ethical position. The YOG as an extension of the Olympic brand has hardly been mentioned in previous research, and a study of the YOG brand is yet to be conducted. There is a lack of research on the YOG seen from a sport marketing perspective, which leads to the issue that no one has so far conducted a research on the stakeholders' perception of the YOG brand.

The research question is the specific query to be addressed in this research (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The question(s) are designed to set the perimeter of the project, the choice of method used to collect data and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Based on this background and the preceding chapters, this research aims to find out:

1. Are the stakeholders of the YOG co-creating the brand?
2. Has the YOG achieved brand equity?
3. Has the extension of the Olympic brand been a success?

2. Contextual Background

It is applicable to describe the contextual background when examining the YOG and its stakeholders. This chapter will provide for an introduction of the Olympic system and how the NOCs and OCOGs are organized. Furthermore, the chapter will present an overview of the YOG content, visions, and history.

2.1. The Olympic System

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is a non-governmental, not-for profit organization. The IOC is the central organization of the Olympic Movement, placed under the Swiss law (Ferrand et al., 2012). The IOC has ruled the area of international sport relations since the OGs were resurrected in 1894 (Chatzigianni, 2006). It was

Baron Pierre de Coubertin who revived the Games, and he is often referred to as the founding father of the Olympic Movement (OM) (Judge et al., 2009). Coubertin introduced the concept of Olympism, a social philosophy that emphasizes the role of sport in world development, peaceful coexistence, international understanding, and moral and social education (Judge et al., 2009).

The fundamental purpose of the IOC is to serve as guidance to the expansion of the Olympic Movement and to promote Olympism all over the world (IOC, 2013c). According to the IOC *“the Olympic Movement is the concerted, organized, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism* (Ferrand et al., 2012, p.17). The Olympic Charter is the systematization of the fundamental principles of Olympism, rules, and byelaws adopted by the IOC (IOC, 2013c). *“It governs the organisation, action and operation of the Olympic Movement and sets forth to the conditions for the celebration of the Olympic Games”* (IOC, 2013c, p.9).

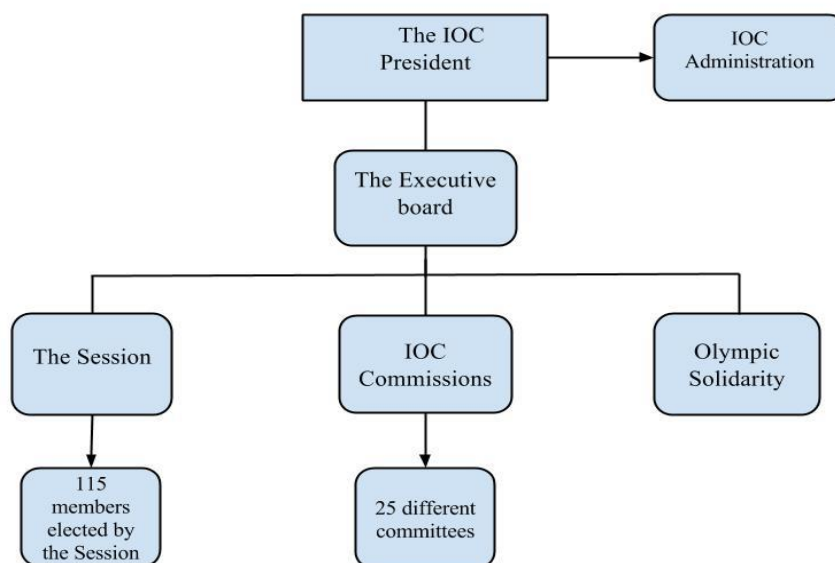


Figure 2.1. The IOC organization chart

Figure 2.1 illustrates the organizational structure of the IOC organs, and serves as an illustration to on how the organization is structured. The IOC has a central hierarchical

body where the President of the committee is the chief executive (CEO) (Chatzigianni, 2006). The president is head of an administration consisting of 450 employees, run by a General Director (Chief operating officer) (Ferrand et al., 2012). The IOC headquarters is based in Lausanne, Switzerland. The IOC administration is divided into 15 departments, responsible for areas such as the Olympic Games, finance, sports, NOC relations, communication, the Olympic museum, and the Olympic Solidarity program (Ferrand et al., 2012). The departments are run by a director, which again reports back to the Director General.

The president is elected by the IOC session, the position can be held for eight years with the possibility to run again for a second four-year term (Ferrand et al., 2012). The president has limited power, as most of his decisions must be submitted to the Executive Board, which is a type of collegial government for the IOC, elected by the members of the IOC (Ferrand et al., 2012). Because of the President's position as head of the administration, he has significant influence over strategies on a day-to-day practice (Ferrand et al., 2012).

The IOC organs can be organized into five groups: The IOC Session, members of the IOC, the Executive Board, IOC Commissions, and Olympic solidarity (Ferrand et al., 2012). The IOC Session is the General Assembly, much like the parliament, that forms the supreme body of the IOC. The President of the IOC chairs the Session, which is held once a year to review all matters of policy (Payne, 2006). The Session is also responsible for important elections and decisions (Ferrand et al., 2012). There can be up to 115 members of the IOC, all of whom are elected by the Session. The members of the IOC participate on a voluntary basis, and meets annually at the IOC sessions. On a daily basis they act as representatives for the IOC and OM in their countries, and not as representatives of their respective countries (Chatzigianni, 2006). Their role as members is to partly provide the IOC with the necessary access to the country and regions where they come from (Chatzigianni, 2006). Prior to the London Olympics in 2012 there were 109 members of the IOC, representing 77 countries (Ferrand et al., 2012).

The Executive board is the government of the IOC, and consists of the President, four vice presidents, and ten members (Chatzigianni, 2006). Their responsibilities are to ensure the respect for the Olympic Charter and to see to the management of IOC issues

(Olympic.org, 2013). The Executive Board is the only competent organ to submit names for elections, appoint the IOC Director General, and to propose Charter modifications to the Session (Olympic.org, 2013).

The IOC Commissions comprise of approximately 25 committees such as finance, ethics, culture, sport law, sport etc., (Ferrand et al., 2012). The Commissions are specialized in specific areas of interest of the IOC and its members, and their role is to provide for tailored advices and recommendations about specific issues (Chatzigianni, 2006). The Commissions consist of people with mixed memberships, as they are members representing the IOC, International Federations (IF), NOCs, athletes, technical experts, and other specialists (Chatzigianni, 2006).

Finally, the Olympic solidarity program is an IOC department that shares revenues to the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) (Ferrand et al., 2012). In addition, the Olympic solidarity program annually donates millions of dollars for a variety of causes, with the aim of helping developing nations with sport facilities, education, equipment etc. (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009).

2.2. The NOCs and the OCOGs

The NOCs, short for the *National Olympic Committee(s)*, are legally independent local representatives of the IOC (Ferrand et al., 2012). They act as local agents and cooperate with their national authorities on issues related to the Olympic Movement, providing the IOC with access to internal national politics (Chatzigianni, 2006). Each NOC consists of at least five national federations, which again represents national sport clubs and athletes (Ferrand et al., 2012). Through the Olympic solidarity the NOCs receive a limited portion of the marketing and television rights for the OGs in their countries (Ferrand et al., 2012). In 2012, the IOC registered 205 NOCs, which constitutes of more countries than the United Nations (Ferrand et al., 2012).

The OCOGs is an abbreviation of the *Organizing Committee(s) of the Olympic Games*, and are temporary organizations that are set up to exist for a limited time period. It is the local authorities and the NOCs that establish the OCOG, after being elected to host an edition of the winter or summer OG or the YOG (Ferrand et al., 2012). The OCOGs are legal bodies and they must sign a “Host city contract” with the IOC, to ensure that

all the rights and obligations are legally set (Ferrand et al., 2012). The most important OCOG is that of the upcoming Games, followed by future OCOGs and bid committees (Ferrand et al., 2012).

2.3. The Youth Olympic Games (YOG)

The main objectives for the YOG are to celebrate and bring together the world's best young athletes, and to offer them a unique introduction to Olympism (Kristiansen, 2012). The YOG is based on the same principles as the OG, meaning that the event follows the rules of the Olympic Charter and is in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Olympism (IOC, 2012). Each NOC has reserved spaces for a minimum of four athletes from each nation, an initiative that is made to encourage universal representation (IOC, 2012).

A head of the first summer and winter YOG, the International Federations (IFs) were challenged by the IOC to adopt a creative and flexible approach to the existing sport disciplines. For example, in the Singapore YOG, basketball was played according to the 3-on-3 formulas. The teams consisted of three athletes on each team competing on one half of the court (IOC, 2012). At Innsbruck, speed skating with mass start and ice hockey skill challenge was introduced (IOC, 2012). The YOG sport programme has also several mixed gender and mixed NOC team competitions (IOC, 2012). The purpose of this innovative approach to sport is to encourage athletes to cooperate, overcome language difficulties, and to see sport as creative and fun. To de-emphasize nationalism and the international competition aspect, the Olympic anthem and Olympic flag is raised during the medal ceremonies (Schmitz, 2010).

In addition to the sport competitions, the YOG focuses on education through sport. Through the Culture and Education Program (CEP), the young athletes' get the opportunity to learn about the Olympic values and Olympism, the risks and danger of using performance enhancing drugs, the positive effects of doing sports, social responsibility, and to respect their fellow man (IOC, 2012). The CEP is considered an innovative element of the YOG. The programme runs during the Games in form of trip excursions in the host country, interactive workshops, forums, and other various activities (IOC, 2012).

The Olympic Village (YOV) is considered the heart of the YOG. The YOYV is the residence for all the young athletes, and is the place where the participants come together and share their culture and experiences (IOC, 2012). Most of the CEP is featured in the YOYV, as well as a digital media centre where the participants can communicate through social and digital media (IOC, 2012). The Young Ambassador Programme consists of young persons elected by a number of NOCs, to promote the CEP to the participants at the Games (IOC, 2012). The Young Reporter Programme is also a part of the CEP. In this programme, students or newly educated journalists receive training and assignments from highly qualified professionals during the YOG (IOC, 2012). They are encouraged to blog about YOG topics while they receive journalist training and on-the-job experience (IOC, 2012). The latter program is the Athlete Role Models (ARMs). The ARMs spend time with the athletes to mentor, inspire, and educate them through their personal experience of being a top athlete (IOC, 2012). Multiple high-profile athletes have been invited to be ambassadors for the YOG. Their role is to promote the YOG worldwide through marketing campaigns, to provide the young athletes with advice, and to attend the YOG if they are available (IOC, 2012).

The YOG is an opportunity for smaller cities and nations to apply for the Games. It also opens for past host cities of the OG to reuse their Olympic venues (i.e. Innsbruck and Lillehammer). The YOG does not require sporting-, media-, and living facilities to the same extent as the OGs, and thereby allowing cities that have not had the opportunity to host the OG due to economic restrictions, a chance to become “an Olympic City” (IOC, 2012). According to the IOC, cities are not recommended to build new venues specifically for the YOG, and there are no requirements to upgrade railways or road infrastructure (IOC, 2012). The YOG is to be kept small so that more cities and nations can apply without fearing the costs. Once a city has been elected to host the YOG, the local government establishes an organizing committee named “YOGOC” with the host city’s capital letter placed in the front (e.g. Innsbruck: IYOGOC).

The YOG is a sporting event of the highest level for young athletes. It complements a new dimension to the Olympic Movement, balancing what has already been achieved through the OG and the many IOC projects, to promote the Olympic values (YOG, 2011a). The YOG DNA is the ongoing movement for all of those who identify

themselves with the values and the DNA of the YOG (YOG, 2011a). The YOG DNA has no time constraints, and is considered the spirit of youth blowing through the Olympic Movement (YOG, 2011a). The identity of the YOG DNA is distinguished by youthful initiative and creativity within the Olympic Movement (YOG, 2011a). The label of the YOG DNA has a simple and easily identifiable shape: On the left hand side, a square containing the Olympic rings, on the other side a speech bubble with the brand name, YOG DNA (YOG, 2011a). The speech bubble aims to visualize the symbioses of action, commitment, dialogue, and communication (YOG, 2011a). The YOG DNA does not perceive their label as a logo, but more as a signature stamp. The stamp authenticates persons, posters, events etc. as proud ambassadors of the YOG values and a defender of the values linked to sport (YOG, 2011a).

3. Theory

To understand how the YOG brand is positioned in the market and how the stakeholders perceive this new Olympic brand, it is applicable to use theories from sport marketing. The following chapters will describe branding, the concept of brand equity and how the stakeholder theory can serve as an approach to brand equity, how the YOG is an extension of the Olympic brand, and how the YOG brand can achieve value co-creation from its stakeholders.

The aim with this chapter is to explain how the YOG can establish a strong brand, through the use of principles and theories from sport marketing. The latter part of the chapter addresses the conceptual framework used in this thesis. A value co-creation model will be presented to illustrate the process of value co-creation for the YOG and the stakeholders.

3.1. Branding

The concept of brand has been widely studied in the marketing industry, but it is only in recent years that branding has become more apparent in the field of sports marketing (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol that are meant to identify the services or products from another, and to differentiate these services or products from the competition (Aaker, 1991). According to Kotler and

Keller (2012) a brand is intangible and represents one of the most valuable assets of a firm. It protects both the consumer and producer from competitors that are trying to sell a product that appears to be identical (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

A brand consists of three main concepts: The brand name, brand-marks, and trademarks (Shank, 2009). The brand name is the written and vocalized element (e.g. Olympics). It should be short and easy to pronounce, be positive, and represent strength and confidence (Shank, 2009). The brand-mark, or the brands' logo, cannot be expressed or spoken (Shank, 2009). It should be designed to reflect the image of the product (the five interlaced rings) (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Finally, the trademark validates the company's legal registration of its brand name and logo, and to prevent other companies from using it or associating them with it (Shank, 2009).

The Olympic brand is the strongest brand in sport (Roberts, 2012). The Olympic brand is estimated to be worth approximately US\$ 47.6 billion, and is considered one of the best-known brands in the world (Séguin, Ferrand & Chappelet, 2013). Research carried out by the IOC found that approximately 94% of the people questioned across 17 countries recognize the Olympic rings (Roberts, 2012). The five interlaced rings have been associated with the event since the beginning of the 20th century, and are what differentiates the Olympic brand from other brands in the same category (e.g. FIFA world cup) (Ferrand et al., 2012). The five interlaced rings have a worldwide awareness as being the symbol representing the OG, but the symbol is also a property of the IOC, illustrating their "corporate brand" (Séguin et al., 2013).

The Olympic brand name has great value, a statement that is confirmed by the strong interest of stakeholders, such as sponsors, fans, broadcasting companies, and the bidding committees competing for the opportunity to host the OG (Séguin et al., 2013). The Olympic brand is also associated with symbols such as the torch relay, the Olympic flame, the Olympic truce, and spectacular opening and closing ceremonies, which contributes in making the Olympic brand unique and favorable (Séguin et al., 2013).

The YOG brand is based on the same symbols and traditions as the Olympic brand. But since the YOG is a much younger brand, it has to follow certain guidelines to achieve a successful position in the market. The YOG brand is considered a service, which is an intangible non-physical entity that offers specific benefits to the consumer (O'Reilly &

Séguin, 2009). For example, the experience of attending the YOG venue during a competition does not offer a physical object, but rather a feeling of the atmosphere that benefits the consumer (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). It can also be exemplified by the recognition of the brand's logo and the associations attached to it. This intangible service is a product that is considered the core of the marketing mix.

The marketing mix consists of four components: product, price, place, and promotion (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). A product evolves over time and comprises the introduction, growth, maturity, and decline stage (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). The YOG is in the initial stage, which means that when the product first enters the market, few consumers have heard about the brand and the sales are low (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). This stage requires extensive promotion to establish awareness. If the introduction stage is successful the outcome will be a slow and steady increase in sales (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009).

In the growth stage, most of the consumers are able to recognize and accept the brand. This stage can be characterized by a rapid but steady increase in sales, as well as the introduction of competitors (e.g. junior world championships). When the competition is firmly established and the sales have leveled off, the product has reached the maturity stage. During this stage the level of competition is the most pressing issue, and the cost of competitive pricing strategies and promotion campaigns will eventually lead to further profit decline. The decline stage symbolizes the latter part of the product life cycle, which is the stage where the product becomes obsolete (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009).

3.2. Brand Equity

Marketing scholars view brand equity as the most important asset of an organization (Séguin, Richelieu & O'Reilly, 2008). Branding and brand equity has proven to be tactical tools for marketers in various industries, helping firms to create positive brand images, building consumer loyalty, and by extending brands to enter new product categories (Séguin et al., 2008). Brand equity is defined as “*a set of liabilities and assets linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customer*” (Aaker, 1991, p.15).

These assets and liabilities must be linked to the name and/or symbol of the brand to underlie brand equity (Aaker, 1991).

Brand equity represents the total value of the products or services. It is based on assets and liabilities that differ from context to context, and can be grouped into five categories: Brand awareness (name awareness), brand associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and other proprietary assets (O’Reilly & Séguin, 2009). “Other proprietary assets” is a collective term for other liabilities and assets (such as properties, trademarks and symbols) the brand will be associated with (O’Reilly & Séguin, 2009). For instance, a trademark will protect a corporation’s brand equity from competitors that can confuse the costumers by using similar brand name or symbols (Aaker, 1991). This thesis will not use “other proprietary assets” when discussing brand equity, but it is important to mention that there exist several other factors held by the firm that can add to brand equity.

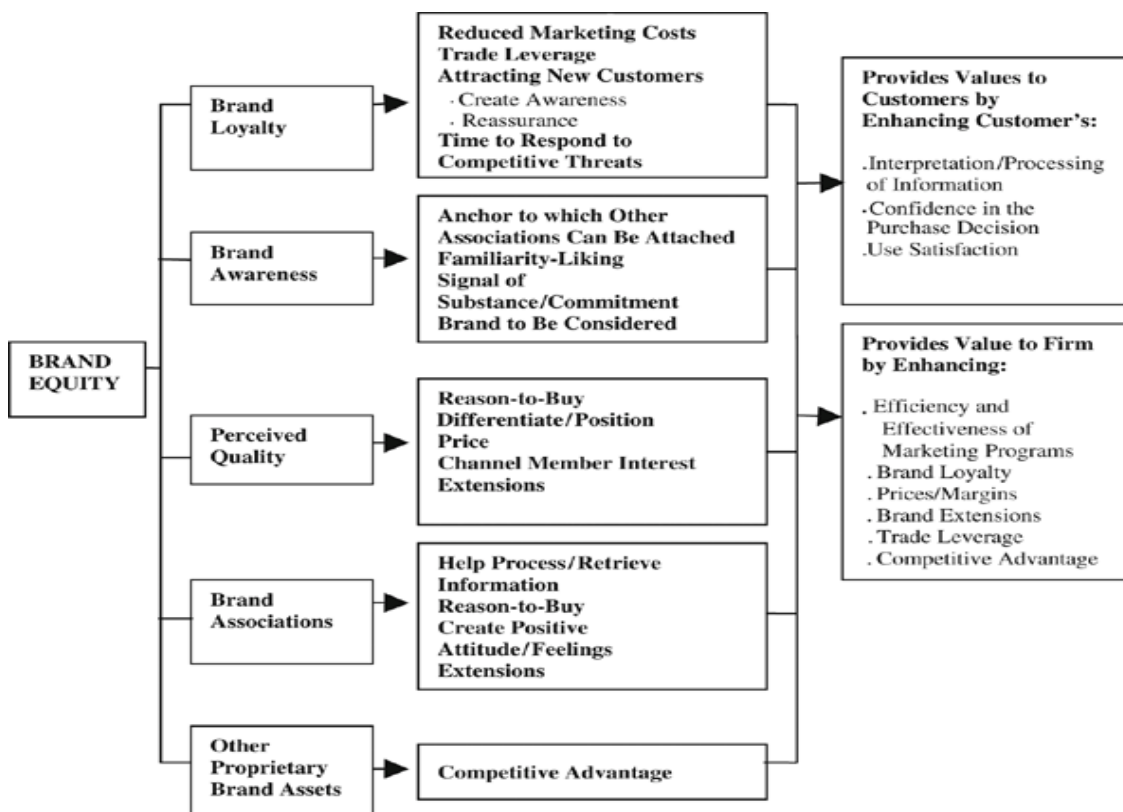


Figure 3.1: Brand equity model. Developed by Aaker, (1991), in N. O’Reilly and B. Séguin, 2009, p. 159.

Figure 3.1 visualizes the process of brand equity. It is placed to illustrate the various marketing efforts that should be prioritized when attempting to achieve brand equity. According to Aaker (1991), a high level of brand equity will add value to the customers and the firm. The value of brand equity enhances the consumers' confidence in a purchase decision, provides user satisfaction, and enhances their ability to process information about the brand (Aaker, 1991). The value added to the firm enhances their brand loyalty, effectiveness and efficiency of marketing programs, provides a competitive advantage in the market place, and the ability to extend the brand.

The Olympic brand contains a high level of brand equity. It provides the company with many competitive advantages and significant assets that adds value and loyalty to the brand (Ferrand et al., 2012). The outcome of high brand equity provides value to the consumers and the company. To provide value to the consumers, the Olympic brand must have a strategy or a market plan that enhances the consumer's and other stakeholders' interest towards processing information about the brand (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). The strong brand equity has become an attractive value for stakeholders. Sponsors for instance, seek to link their brand to the strong brand equity of the Olympic brand, where the purpose is to transfer this value back to their own brand. A sponsorship with an event that holds a high level of brand equity will provide the sponsor with a unique opportunity to associate their company, and their products, with a brand that contains high awareness.

Brand awareness refers to the likelihood of a name being recalled or recognized by the consumers (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Aaker (1991) writes about brand awareness as the anchor to which other associations can be attached, and is considered the first step in establishing or enhancing brand equity. A brand that attains high brand awareness is quickly recognized, and will often be selected over an unknown brand (Aaker, 1991). The OG has incredible awareness all over the world. The high brand awareness is a result of the major media coverage of the OG, as well as the sponsors and other stakeholders' activity to link their project and companies with the brand (Ferrand et al., 2012).

Awareness about the Olympic brand has been built over a longer time period. The ancient OG are traced back to 776 BC, and it was originally a Greek religious festival to

honor their supreme god, Zeus (Judge et al., 2011). The festival was held every four years for nearly 1200 years, until it was discontinued in 393 AD (Judge et al., 2011). The games was, as previous mentioned, revived in the latter part of the 19th century, making the OG a sporting event based on strong traditions and history. The Olympic traditions have evolved to a high amount of media coverage and stakeholder involvement. Their participation has contributed into making the Olympic brand one of the most recognized brands in the world (Ferrand et al., 2012; Séguin et al., 2013). A company sponsoring the Olympics sees brand awareness as one of the most important intangible assets to achieve. Corporations get involved with sponsorships to enhance brand awareness and to establish, change, or strengthen brand image (Henseler, Wilson & Westberg, 2011).

Brand association and brand image are closely tied to awareness. Brand association is anything linked in memory to a brand, and increases the likelihood of a brand being considered and/or chosen by the consumers (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Brand associations represent the emotional identification the customers have with a particular team or athlete, or the unique atmosphere derived from attending a sporting event (Gladden, Milne & Sutton, 1998). Such associations have been categorized as symbolic (those benefits that satisfy fundamental needs for personal expression and social approval) and experimental (how it feels to use the product) (Gladden et al., 1998). Associations with the Olympic rings often generate associations to sport excellence, high standard, sporting events, international cooperation, and a feeling of national pride (Ferrand et al., 2012). These associations are closely linked with the essence of the Olympic brand, as the consumers often associate the Olympics with excellence, friendship and respect (Ferrand et al., 2012; O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009; Séguin et al., 2013).

The associations made by the consumers contribute to differentiate the Olympic brand from other sport brands and properties (Séguin et al., 2013). Brand associations are also closely related to brand image, as they both represent perceptions that can reflect reality (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Brand image is defined as the impression a brand communicates to consumers (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). The concept of brand image is often transferred through brand associations, and a high level of brand association and

image increases the likelihood that a brand will be recalled in the marketplace (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009).

Brand loyalty is the ability to retain and attract new customers (Aaker, 1991). It is considered the core of a brand's equity, as satisfied consumers tend to choose this brand above others (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Loyal customers are familiar with the brand because they know what to expect, and they have already established associations with it (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Brand loyalty is a key consideration in brand value because loyal customers make it possible to predict sales and profits (Henseler et al., 2011).

In the case of the Olympic brand, the brand enjoys a strong loyalty from its stakeholders (Séguin et al., 2013). This is proven by the high rate of renewal by commercial partners and stakeholders, such as the TOP sponsors (Séguin et al., 2013). The brand also has a high interest of fans. A loyal fan of the Olympic brand knows that the event aims to represent sport excellence and associates the event with high quality. Their expectations are based on an ongoing satisfaction, which in turn contributes in developing brand loyalty. It is also possible to identify brand loyalty based on the strong competition amongst bid cities/governments (Séguin et al., 2013). Maintaining brand loyalty is critical for upholding brand equity. It provides a protection against aggressive competitors as well as it gives an insurance of predictable level of sales (Gladden et al., 1998). In order to achieve or maintain brand loyalty, the Olympic brand must ensure that the brand lives up to the customer's expectations.

Perceived quality is the latter asset in the brand equity model. According to O'Reilly and Séguin (2009) perceived quality is the overall feeling about a brand. It refers to the customers' perception of a product's overall quality or excellence with respect to its intended purpose (Aaker, 1991). The higher perceived qualities of a brand, the more likely the customers are able to build associations with it and (in time) become loyal customers (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Perceived quality provides value because it is perceived as different from other products, and thereby giving the customers a reason to buy (Aaker, 1991). The investment in advertising and promotions are more likely to be effective if a brand attains high brand equity (Aaker, 1991).

The Olympic brand is closely connected with the world's best athletes, and consumers believe that there is no greater achievement than winning an Olympic gold medal (Séguin et al., 2013). The strong associations the Olympic brand supports the perception that this is a brand that has superior quality (Séguin et al., 2013). Perceived quality is considered the most important asset in brand equity, especially when thinking about extending the brand (Gladden et al., 1998).

The Olympic brand has close connections with its stakeholders, and according to Merz, He and Vargo (2009), the market is currently in a stakeholder-focus brand era (2000 and forward). This era sees brand value as being co-created through network relationships, meaning that all stakeholders co-create brand value. In order to build brand equity there is a need to establish a thorough understanding of how value is created for stakeholders (e.g. sponsors, spectators, IFs, NOCs, athletes, etc.) and how this value can be translated into for example financial value for the IOC or the YOGOCs (Ferrand et al., 2012).

3.3. Value creation

“Brand value considers the role of relationships in value creation, and brand equity consider the assessment of the value that is created through these relationships” (Jones, 2005, p.13). Brand value is created when a numerous stakeholders interface with a brand (Jones, 2005). According to Jones (2005) brand value constitute of an average of 50% of market value for major multi-brand companies and fast-moving consumer goods. Successful brands are the primary source of present and future value for a company, and it is often rated as their most valuable asset (Helm & Jones, 2010).

The creation of value is a diffuse process that is particularly focused on the value in which the brand creates for a wide range of stakeholders. It is called “total equity” of the brand, although it is difficult to measure the brand as an asset compared to brand valuations (in financial terms) (Jones, 2005). Helm and Jones (2010) attempted to define the creation of value in a more simplistic manner: *“In a market-oriented view, value is created when a buyer and a seller enter into what they see as being a mutually beneficial exchange”* (Helm & Jones, 2010, p. 584). Series of stakeholder relationships creates brand value, and this value must be assessed on the grounds of each individual relationship (Jones, 2005).

One of the main issues with brand value is that managers often tend to focus on the tangible assets to value the brand instead of focusing on what creates value, and to secure the future value of the brand (Jones, 2005). According to Vargo and Lusch (2004), this perspective generally see units of output (goods) as a fundamental basis of economic exchange, and this approach to management has often been referred to as goods-dominant logic (GDL). The GDL perspective suggests that goods, the production and selling of products and/or services, are what create value for the firm (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The customers are the recipients of the value because they consume the products. GDL may be described as a “value-in-exchange”, which reflected the price the consumers are willing to pay for the goods (Woratschek, Horbel, & Popp, 2014). The GDL perspective has been a subject in many research papers, consequently leading the various researchers into creating new names and abbreviations. Jones (2005) also discusses the value of goods, but refers to it as a resource-based view (RBV).

Value co-creation is a central subject in this research, and in order to determine the stakeholders’ willingness to co-create the YOG brand, it is necessary to understand the value the brand creates for its stakeholders. On the basis of this it will allow us to understand how the brand itself create and co-create value for the organization (firm) and the stakeholders (Jones, 2005). Vargo and Lusch (2004) suggested a new perspective of markets, named the service-dominant logic (SDL). It is a broader and more innovative perspective compared to the GDL. The SDL do not perceive goods as the basis for social and economic exchange, it focuses on service, knowledge, and skills as the fundamental resources of social and economic exchange (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

In the GDL the producer creates value and the consumer uses the value, whereas in the SDL both are seen as “resource integrators” that co-create value (Merz et al., 2009). To exemplify, this means that value is being co-created in a collaborative process between the sport organization (event) and the stakeholders. Both parties participate in the value co-creation process by integrating one or more resources from service providers with their personal knowledge, skills, competencies, and other resources (Woratschek et al., 2014). As value co-creation is depending on so many stakeholders, value must be understood in the complex context of networks where the SDL might be considered “value-in-context” (Mertz et al., 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Woratschek et al., 2014).

Value co-creation is a central part of the SDL, and refers to the joint value creation by the firm and its stakeholders (Woratschek et al., 2014). Value co-creation is a result of a development of the marketing concept, which has always considered value as a source to be found in successfully serving the market needs (Helm & Jones, 2010). The Olympic brand has gained universal appeal by celebrating aspirations and values that unites people all over the world (Séguin et al., 2013). As a result, the Olympic brand has become an attractive brand for a variety of stakeholders who seeks to be a part of a brand that offer unique benefits through co-creation of value (Ferrand et al., 2012; Séguin et al., 2012).

Value co-creation highlights the importance of a firm's value by focusing on providing quality of the total experience, instead of the narrow notion of product quality (Helm & Jones, 2010). In order to further develop a brand, it is necessary to understand the context where the brand exists and the value it created for its stakeholders (Jones, 2005). This can be done by strengthening the connection with the stakeholders', though experiential marketing (Ferrand et al., 2012).

Experiential marketing can be described as a form of theatre, where the brand owner provides the stage on which the consumers and other stakeholders play the role as value-seekers (Helm & Jones, 2010). The brand experience is a complex mix of intangible and tangible elements, where the competition for value in the marketplace is to deliver a superior experience (Helm & Jones, 2010). The brand owner (The IOC and YOGOCs) deliver benefits that is social (friendships, a venue to meet new people), affective (generate emotions), hedonistic (provides joy and pleasure etc.), aesthetic (quality, sense of beauty, etc.), through general thought processes, and logic to create a unique experience (Ferrand et al., 2012; Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009). These benefits, provided by the organization, are experiential because the value can only arise from experiencing the situation/event (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009). In the end it is the stakeholders that determine the value of the experience based on aesthetics, socio-cultural benefits, the symbolic experience, and user-friendliness (Helm & Jones, 2010).

So far brand-value, value creation and value co-creation has been elaborated. Although they have many similarities, it is essential to emphasise that there is a difference between them. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), there is a difference

between value creation and value co-creation. Value creation and brand value creation is created within the organization before being exchanged with customer. Value co-creation occur when an organization and its stakeholders uses the brand to create value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The value co-creation process is the essential perspective in this thesis, and the following chapter will present how stakeholders co-create value by using the value chain model by Helm and Jones (2010).

3.4. A Stakeholder Approach to Brand Equity

To properly examine brand equity from a value co-creation standpoint, it is necessary to present the stakeholders since they are a central part of the value-creation network (Ferrand et al., 2012). Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as any person or group who is affected or that can affect the actions of an organization. This definition has been criticized for being very broad, and because it does not specify who is affected or what it can affect. On the opposite side, it exist several definitions that again are perceived as being too narrow. Donaldson and Preston (1995) defines stakeholders as “*any persons or groups with legitimate interest in procedural and/or substantive aspects of corporate activity*” (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p.67). This definition can be perceived as narrow because it only considers stakeholders that affect the organizations’ strategic objectives (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009).

Hence, the definition of stakeholders can have a different meaning depending on the recipient’s knowledge and associations. This thesis focuses on stakeholders in a narrow sense to denote the most important organizations, persons, and entities that have a relationship with the YOGOC in a Norwegian context.

Aligned with the definition of stakeholders comes the natural presentation of the stakeholder theory. The stakeholder theory is an approach to management, and elucidates the notion that organizations exist within a complex network of stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder theory suggests that an organization should consider the needs and values of all groups, individuals, and/or organizations that can influence the organization (Freeman, 1984). The theory provides a framework to analyze various the relationships and interactions between the actors involved with the organization (Ferrand et al., 2012).

The stakeholder theory is extensive, but the purpose is to explain and guide the operation and structure of the established corporation (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The development of the stakeholder theory has led to a displacement of the organization-based vision of marketing, where stakeholders are primarily perceived as entities to be managed for the only benefit of the organization (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Today, there is more focus on a network-based vision, which takes into account the relationships between the various stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Ferrand et al., 2012). This approach provides a more comprehensive picture, when looking at sources of brand equity and value within the Olympic system (Ferrand et al., 2012; Jones, 2005).

According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), there are three aspects of the stakeholder theory; descriptive/empirical, instrumental, and normative. The descriptive/empirical dimension provides a model that explains the corporate decision process (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The model can be used to pursue corporate goals by addressing the stakeholders' expectations, or by involving the stakeholders' concerns in the particular decision-making process (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). It covers the relationship between the stakeholders and the organization in its environment, which is perceived as a constellation of competitive and cooperative interests that possesses intrinsic value (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Moore, 1999).

The instrumental aspect of the theory establishes a framework for studying the possible connections between the practice of stakeholder management, and the achievement of multiple corporate performance goals (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). It provides the manager with a framework for analyzing stakeholders' resources and interests, thus allowing them to design and implement collaborative strategies that will create value (Ferrand et al., 2012). The latter aspect is the normative dimension, and concerns the moral and ethical frameworks where the network operates (Ferrand et al., 2012). The normative dimension has dominated since the beginning of the classic stakeholder theory statements, and the normative aspect is often used to interpret the function of the company, which includes the identification of moral and/or philosophical guidelines for the management and operation of corporation (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

Each of these stakeholder aspects is helpful principles on which to base actions (Friedman & Miles, 2006). In this thesis, the instrumental dimension is the most applicable when discussing the value co-creation between the YOGOC and its narrow sense of stakeholders. The aim is to use the instrumental dimension of the stakeholder theory to provide for a framework that improves the organizations performance, by bringing together different stakeholders in a value-creation and co-creation process (Ferrand et al., 2012).

In a sport context or Olympic context, all organizations, groups, and individuals that have a relationship with the brand are considered stakeholders (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009). The stakeholders usually have different expectations and needs, depending on where they stand in the lifespan of the project. One stakeholder can be extremely important at one period of time, and become almost negligible at a later point. This is however individually set and it is up to the project managers of the organizing committee (YOGOC) to determine which of the stakeholders to engage and satisfy at all times (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009).

The stakeholder approach encourages the organization (i.e. YOGOC and IOC) to assess how brand equity is created through the relationships with the various stakeholders. It also provides them the opportunity to examine the range of relationships where the Olympic brand is engaged (Ferrand et al., 2012). The stakeholder theory is an important tool for managing the stakeholder relationships, because it creates a visual overview of those relationships that are strategically important and must be prioritized (Jones, 2005).

The stakeholders of the Olympic brand are a part of a network of relationships, where each stakeholder contributes to value co-creation (Ferrand et al., 2012). This value co-creation creates value to each stakeholder and the Olympic brand, which is essential to maintain a strong brand and high brand equity (Ferrand et al., 2012). The IOC has classified their stakeholders as either being part of an internal or external network of stakeholders (Ferrand et al., 2012). The internal network of stakeholders concerns the Olympic family (the OGOCs and YOGOCs paid staff and volunteers), and external stakeholders are the governments, media, international delegations (including athletes and their staff), sport organizations (e.g. IFs, NOCs, and other sport events), sponsors, and the community (residents, activists, local business, community groups, and schools)

(Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009; Parent, 2008; Parent et al., 2013). Although the stakeholder map of the IOC is known and relatively well understood, it is not given that the YOGOC obtain the same stakeholder saliency as the OG (Hanstad et al, 2013).

3.5. Brand Extension

Brand extension occurs when a brand uses their brand name to enter new product categories (Aaker, 1991). When the IOC decided to implement the YOG, they also decided to extend the Olympic brand. The Olympic brand attains a high level of perceived quality. This value can be exploited by introducing brand extensions such as the YOG (Aaker, 1991). Brand extension strategies are appealing for firms and organizations that possess strong brand equity. It can help the organization strengthen its brand association and image, increase and broaden its customer base, and contribute to long-term viability of the brand (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004). The brand is usually the most powerful and important asset that a firm holds, and one recipe for strategic success is to leverage this (Aaker, 1996).

Sport organizations frequently introduce new products to the market. The purpose behind this is to exploit the popularity of the organizations brand name (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004). There are different approaches and strategies that can be used to leverage the brand: line extension, leveraging the brand up and down in existing product category, brand extension, and co-branding (Aaker, 1996). A line extension (LE) occurs when an already existing product line is extended to new forms. LE is frequently used as a strategy when the aim is to reach new consumer segments within the existing product class (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). Leveraging the brand up and down also happens in the existing product class, and includes better or lesser versions of their traditional brand product (Aaker, 1991). This is often strategically necessary, but it has significant risks for the firm.

Brand Extension (BE) is perceived as the ultimate way to leverage a brand (Aaker, 1991). A company uses BE when an already established and existing brand name is extended into completely different product categories (Séguin et al., 2013). A BE can give the new product a faster acceptance and instant recognition, because the brand is already known for the consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). This saves the company for high advertising costs, which are usually required when establishing a new brand

(Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). Co-branding is a strategy to use when a company seeks to enter new product categories, and to cooperate with another brand that already has strong brand equity in the product class (Aaker, 1996).

When discussing the YOG and their position as an extension of the Olympic brand, a LE is the most applicable strategy. LE is when an existing brand name, such as the Olympic brand, introduces additional items of their brand to new forms in an existing product category (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). The existing brand name can be called the “parent brand”, and uses its recognizable name to introduce a new product in a sub-category of the parent brand (Séguin et al., 2013). The LE gives the new product a faster acceptance while saving the advertising costs to build a new brand name (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). It aims to expand the consumer base, to provide variety, manage innovation, energize the brand, and to inhibit or block competition (Aaker, 1996).

The winter OG and the YOG are line extensions of the traditional Olympic brand. They possess the same fundamental values as the OG, including the use of the Olympic symbols, appearance, and traditions. The difference is that they are extended to reach other market segments. Consumers that are loyal to the summer OG perceive the brand as serving their unique and particular needs, but consumers without these particular needs may think that this brand is not for them (Aaker, 1996). A LE can overcome these obstacles by expanding the brand’s appeal. For instance, the OG is the flagship of the Olympic Movement, and is a mega-event that is broadcasted worldwide. The extension to the Olympic winter Games gathered more nations under the Olympic umbrella, and made it possible for new countries to participate and send their athletes to the OG. This was a strategic extension that made the Olympic Movement an event greater movement worldwide. Furthermore the YOG reaches out to those who prefer smaller events, youth and education. This product can appeal to new consumers (i.e. youth segment), as well as providing loyal consumers with an option to enjoy a variety without switching brands (Aaker, 1996).

The YOG is also a result of the Olympic brand extending the brand downward. An upward extension is an upscale version of the brand (Séguin et al., 2013). The downward extension on the other hand, is an inferior version of the traditional brand-product package within the same product category (Aaker, 1996; Séguin et al., 2013).

The reason for considering the YOG as a downscale extension is the fact that the level of athlete's performances is lower than the one of the OG (Séguin et al., 2013). Media and sponsors have not been promoting the event to the same extent as the OG, which again have resulted in a lower entertainment value (Hanstad, et al., 2013). Although the YOG may be considered a downward extension, it does not mean that the event is of a lesser quality. The Olympic stakeholders and fans can, however, interpret it this way, which is an issue that can harm the flagship brand, particular in the terms of perceived quality (Aaker, 1996).

There is always a risk when extending an already successful brand. An extension can increase costs without compensating with increased sales. It can also make the brand less focused and more difficult to communicate to the consumers (Aaker, 1996).

Inconsistent information about the extension process may also dilute the beliefs about the flagship product and the parent brand (Séguin et al., 2013). According Apostolopoulou (2002) the process of extending a brand that is closely related to the parent brand can increase the acceptance by the consumers. But the brand name alone does not guarantee success for the extension, especially not if the new extension occurs in a market with already established competitors (Apostolopoulou, 2002). Another risk worth mentioning is the potential damaging effect on perceived quality and negative brand associations. This may have long-term harmful effect on the parent brand if the extension proves to be unsuccessful (Apostolopoulou, 2002). A possible consequence of an unsuccessful brand extension is that the consumers adopt negative attitudes towards the parent brand, which may decrease the effectiveness of the brand (Aaker, 1996).

Apostolopoulou (2002) presents three keys to successful brand extensions; the relative strength of the parent brand, the perceived fit between the parent brand and the extension product, and the promotional support and positioning surrounding the introduction of a brand extension (Apostolopoulou, 2002). The strength of the parent brand means that the brand name is the fundamental basis for extension (Apostolopoulou, 2002). The perceived fit between the parent brand and the extension is determined by the consumer's acceptance of the new product as being a logical extension of the brand (Apostolopoulou, 2002). The latter key is to provide essential promoting support and positioning of the brand extension. The brand extension can be communicated to the consumers through marketing campaigns. By doing this, the

consumers will be informed about the fit between the parent brand and the new extension.

Another risk related to brand extension is that the Olympic brand name can become “overextended”. This means that the extension may create clutter in the market place, and the brand can lose its specific meaning and/or cause confusion among the consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). For example, when the Olympic brand introduces the YOG, the consumers may wonder what this is and why they should care for another Olympic product. They might perceive the YOG as an excellent substitute, or an event that is unnecessary and/or uninteresting. But if the consumers are not informed about the extension of the brand, it becomes difficult to attract new and loyal consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). Furthermore, an event for adolescents without famous athletes can injure the Olympic brand of sport excellence.

There is also a threat that the sales of an extension can come at the expense of other products in the brand line (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). This risk is known as “cannibalization”, which involves the new LE taking the attention away from the original product and weaken the original flagship brand. The main purpose with a line extension is to take sales away from other competing brands, and not to “cannibalize” the company’s additional brand lines (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). According to Séguin et al., (2013) the risk of cannibalization does not seem to be an issue for the Olympic brand, as the objectives for the YOG does not appear to be driven by income from sales, but rather by a desire to elucidate sports and values associated with Olympism to the youth (Séguin et al., 2013).

To exemplify the risk of cannibalization, there is a risk of the YOG cannibalizing the EYOF in the future. There are many similar features between the events as the athletes are within more or less the same age category, and the sport competitions are the same. The level of quality in the sport competitions may be perceived as higher at the YOG, since EYOF do not have a system for qualification (EOC, 2012). The EYOF charge the NOCs for the athletes’ attendance (EOC, 2012), while the YOG is free and includes the CEP. This may lead to the risk of the YOG to cannibalize the EYOF, as the EYOF may have a difficulty in differentiating the brand from the competition.

Reddy, Holak and Bhat (1994) found in their study that LE of strong brands would have a greater chance of success compared to those of weaker brands. Since the Olympic brand is rated as one of the most valuable brands in the world, there is a high probability that the YOG will become a successful extension. To achieve this, the IOC must provide a lot of attention to protect tangible aspects of the brand such as symbols and words, as well as intangible aspects like reputation, image, associations, and values (Séguin et al., 2013). Doping scandals and rumors of corruptions are tangible and intangible threats that can harm the brand's value. Lately, a growing concern for the IOC has been the increasing number of childhood obesity and illness related to unhealthy and inactive lifestyles, and the sedentary lifestyle of video games and smart phones (Séguin et al., 2013). These growing concerns can be interpreted to disconnect with the Olympic core values, and lead the IOC and the OG to lose a new generation of Olympic fans.

3.6. Conceptual Framework

The aim with the preceding chapters was to create an overall understanding of how it all comes together. Branding, brand equity, stakeholder theory, and co-creation of value are keynotes of importance when answering the research questions. The marketing theories are also essential when presenting the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework in this thesis is a model by Helm and Jones (2010), and will be used to illustrate the establishment and co-creation of value. Brand extension is however not a part of the framework, but is included in this research to determine to what extent the extension of the Olympic brand (YOG) has been successful.

The understanding of how stakeholders co-create brand value allows the YOGOCs to properly prioritize the various stakeholders in the future. Moreover, it encourages the organization to identify and evaluate each stakeholder relationship. In addition to this evaluation, the categorization also allows the organization to assess those elements that contributes into creating long-term value for the brand (Jones, 2005).

The brand is a part of a larger system of reciprocal value seeking and creation processes among companies, consumers, and other stakeholders (Helm & Jones, 2010). Helm and Jones (2010) developed a model (*Figure 3.2*) that offers a holistic view for managing the governance of value, co-creation, and brand equity as an interlinked system where a

set of activities represented within the company's value chain is only a part of a larger system.

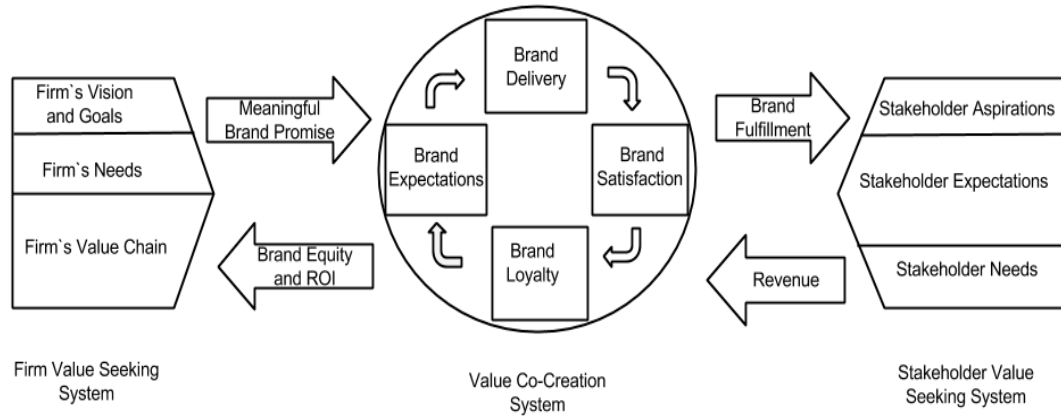


Figure 3.2: The value co-seeking and co-creation system model (Helm, C., & Jones, R., 2010, p. 586).

Figure 3.2 illustrates the value seeking and value creation process for the stakeholders and the organization/firm (YOGOC). The firm's internal value chain is only a part of a larger system where their visions, goals and return on investment (ROI) only can be achieved if the stakeholders are satisfied and respond by generating revenues. To explain *Figure 3.2*, it is most applicable to start with the circle named the value co-creation system, which is where brand value can be achieved. By successfully identifying the stakeholders' expectations, the firm can aim for a positive brand delivery. Then the firm must manage and satisfy the stakeholders' expectations to generate superior and sustainable returns, which again can contribute to the intangible value of brand loyalty (Helm & Jones, 2010). The firm and the stakeholders are both value seekers, but they can only achieve value co-creation of the brand if the cycle is complete. The co-creation circle is a continuous chain, where the overall aim is to establish a strong brand equity, which again co-creates value to the firm and stakeholders.

Brand expectations mark the starting point for further description of the value chain. For a stakeholder to become satisfied, the YOGOC must care for a successful brand delivery that satisfies the stakeholders' expectations. The consumers will become loyal

if their expectations are fulfilled repeatedly, consequently leading them and the brand-owner to derive value from the long-term relationship (Helm & Jones, 2010). According to Jones (2005), there are some speculations in today's competitive market, saying brands are losing their power in the marketplace. Established brands are faced with challenges to maintain their position, as new emerging brands (such as the YOG) create new expectations from the financial market, which increases their brand performance (Jones, 2005). But in order to challenge the already established market, the YOGOC will benefit from having identified the various stakeholders expectations to achieve increased accountability and transparency (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

The brand delivery process is where the firm delivers the brand experience to the stakeholders. This process is perceived as valuable if the delivery is distinctive and meaningful (Helm & Jones, 2010). To achieve success in delivering the brand, there is a deeper need for understanding the stakeholders needs, expectations, and their perception of experienced quality (Helm & Jones, 2010).

Brand satisfaction reflects the stakeholders' attitudes towards the brand delivery. The chain creates value if the stakeholders are satisfied with the delivered brand experience. A successful brand experience creates brand satisfaction, which again contributes into strong brand equity. If the stakeholders of the YOG brand co-create value, they will have expectations that require a lot of attention from the brand owner (IOC and YOGOC). If and when they are satisfied, the brand owner and the stakeholder will derive value thus completing the cycle of value co-creation illustrated in *Figure 3.2*.

A part from the value co-creation system, the firm and the stakeholders are placed on each side of the circle. The firm has already established their needs, visions and goals, and to reach these they have to aim for a meaningful brand promise. The stakeholders on the other side of the circle have set their aspirations, needs, and expectations towards the brand. If they perceive the brand promise to fulfill these points, the stakeholders respond by generating revenue. The optimal result is then brand equity and ROI to the firm.

Figure 3.2 was developed by Helm and Jones (2010) as a way to illustrate the value co-creation process based on theory on value co-creation. The model was developed by using existing theory, and is only a proposal to illustrate how the process works. This

means that the model has not widely used in research yet, but it has a good fit with what this research seeks to accomplish, and this was the reason for choosing this model to illustrate how the YOC brand can achieve co-creation of value.

Figure 3.2 can be seen as both complicated and simple, depending on how deep one seeks to analyze this process. In the case of the YOG brand, it is unclear where the value occurs and if it occurs at all. This is what this research aims to answer. Parent et al., (2013) identified the stakeholders of the inaugural winter YOG in 2012. As Innsbruck has many similar features with Lillehammer, it was seen as a possibility that the same stakeholders will be salient in a Norwegian context as well. Parent et al., (2013) listed the IOC, media, and the parents as the most important stakeholders, in addition to the staff, athletes, NOCs, IFs, and coaches. In this research these stakeholders have been interviewed in a Norwegian context to determine if the stakeholders are co-creating the YOG brand.

4. Research Methodology

This chapter will provide for a detailed description of how this study was conducted. The purpose is to enable the reader to evaluate the suitability of the method used and the reliability and validity of the results. Some basic definitions on research methodology are also included to elucidate that there is a fundamental understanding of the terms used in this thesis. Further, the research method, coding and analysis, ethical considerations, and weaknesses and limitations are included. In order to shorten the names of the cities that has hosted or will host the YOG, abbreviations such as IYOG (Innsbruck YOG), SYOG (Singapore YOG), and LYOG (Lillehammer YOG) will sometimes be used in this research.

4.1. Method

Methods are a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). There are different methods depending on the research

project, and this study used a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is defined as;

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world, and consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

The most common research method in qualitative research is in-depth interviews, a method that was also used to collect data in this research process.

4.1.1. Case study and design

The starting point for this research was the identification of stakeholders conducted by Parent et al., (2013). The stakeholders represent the unit of analysis or the “case” to be studied. A case study is defined as “*a study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-world context*” (Yin, 2014, p.237). Case study research is a common practice in sport management research, and this may stem from the importance of understanding the sport issue in its real-life context (O’Reilly & Séguin, 2009). According to Yin (2014) the distinctive need for a case study research occurs out of a wish to understand a complex social phenomenon. This phenomenon can be understood by using three types of case studies, such as explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory case studies (Yin, 2014). These types are common in marked research, and the choice of type depends on the purpose of the research.

Explanatory case study seeks to explain why or how some condition came to be (Yin, 2014). A descriptive case study seeks to describe the case/phenomenon in its real-world context, and is used to determine the accurate answer of a real issue (Yin, 2014; O’Reilly & Séguin, 2009). Exploratory case studies try to determine the real issue or problem, when the outcome is unknown (Yin, 2014). To exemplify this is when a marketer gets in a situation where a problem is vague, an exploratory case study can be used to gain new insight and a better understanding of a case (O’Reilly & Séguin, 2009; Yin, 2014).

This thesis used an exploratory case study approach, since the aim is to gain new insight and a better understanding of the stakeholders' perspective of the YOG brand. The research questions fit the criteria of exploratory research because the concept of the YOG is relatively new compared to the OG, leaving more room for issues and problems that have an unknown outcome.

Single case and multiple case designs are the basic types of design for case studies (Yin, 2014). Multiple case designs involve two or more cases, whilst a single-case study involves one case. This thesis focuses on the stakeholders of the YOG in a Norwegian context, consequently placing this thesis in the category of a single case study.

In addition of having the option between single and multiple case studies, both can be either embedded or holistic (Yin, 2014). Embedded, when the study uses multiple units of analysis, and holistic when the research only involve a single unit of analysis (Yin, 2014). Even though this research is a single case study, all the stakeholders' perceptions and statements were included in the data analysis, and for that reason this study used an embedded single case study design.

4.1.2. Sample

In qualitative research, sampling is best described as purposeful in which an effort have been made to gain as much information as possible about the context (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). The context in this study is defined as the YOG in Norway, and the population included all people that are considered a stakeholder of the YOG in a Norwegian context. The sample was determined based on a convenience sample, a technique where the researcher selects a sample based on the convenience of access (Andrew, Pedesen & McEvoy, 2011). As described in Chapter 1, it was a challenge to find enough informants for this study and a convenience sample was found to be the best option. According to Sparkes and Smith (2013) this sample is not ideal, but it is often chosen when there are limited resources of people and time.

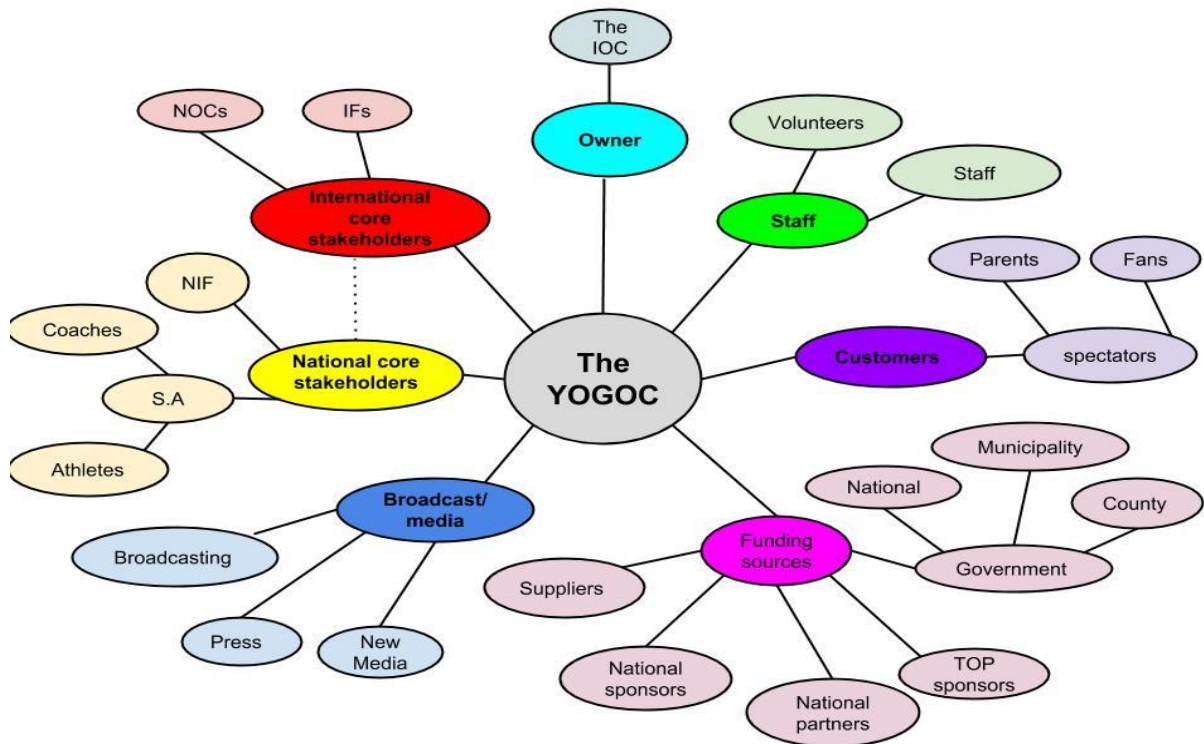


Figure 4.1. The YOGOC stakeholder map. A modified illustration of the identification of stakeholders by Parent et al., (2013).

Figure 4.1, The YOGOC stakeholder map, was created by the researcher and used as a guide when contacting potential research informants. The figure is a modified illustration of the identification of stakeholders found in Innsbruck by Parent et al., (2013). In total, 31 persons affiliated to the various stakeholder groups were contacted by e-mail or telephone. Eight of these were journalists working for local and national newspapers. Their contact information was listed on the accreditation lists for the IYOG. Only three of the journalists attended the IYOG, and the latter five declined the inquiry, as they never attended the IYOG. It also turned out that two of the journalists contacted worked together, and that they had only been in Innsbruck a couple of days before the IYOG took place. Consequently one journalist was interviewed.

One of the NOC representatives provided contact information for the athletes. The athletes were then contacted by e-mail, and both were positive to participate in the research. Only one athlete, a curler, was included in the study because the other athlete did not find any time to be interviewed. Six sport associations were personally

contacted, and the research inquiry was sent to six coaches within the Norwegian Ski federation. Four of them did not respond to the inquiry, and two coaches were positive and were interviewed.

A Norwegian member of the IOC was personally contacted by phone. The person concerned was at the time the Chair of the marketing Commission at the IOC, and the aim with this conversation was to have him share some of his opinions and knowledge while answering some of the research questions. Unfortunately, the individual declined the invitation to participate in the study due to time constraints. He recommended contacting the NOC for information, but they had already been contacted. This was a disappointing result, as one would expect the Chair of the marketing commission to be eager to spread the word about the YOG.

Facebook was used as a tool to find volunteer groups from the Innsbruck and Singapore YOG. A group named “Innsbruck 2012 Volunteer Community” was still active, and information about the study was posted on the Facebook wall. The members were encouraged to send a private message if they wanted to participate in the study. The inquiry was on the wall for three weeks without any response, and was then removed.

Seven TOP sponsors were contacted by email and telephone. Two responded by referring to their web site to find answers and information and the latter five never responded. It is also worth mentioning that some of the TOP sponsors national offices in Norway were also contacted (Samsung, McDonalds, P&G, Coca-Cola), but none of these companies had knowledge about the YOG and could not respond to my research questions.

Twelve stakeholders responded that they would like to participate in the study, and eventually eleven were interviewed. The informants were provided with detailed information about the study before they gave their consent. Within this paper the informants could read that the research was approved by the NSD (explained in chapter 4.2.1), that their participation in the study could be withdrawn at all times, that their identity would be kept anonymous, as well as an overview of the subjects that would be discussed. Ten of the informants gave their oral consent to participate in the research project, the latter informant approved by signing the “information about the study” form as well as giving an oral consent.

Although all stakeholder groups were contacted it was not possible to attain an interview with all stakeholder groups. This was because the contact persons either declined or did not respond to the research inquiry. The stakeholder groups that are not included in this study are the “Funding sources” (which include the sponsors and the government). The Government was not contacted as data saturation was met after eleven interviews.

Table 4.1. Contacted stakeholders and their reasons for declining the research inquiry

Who	Number	Declined	Reason for declining	Accepted and interviewed
YOGOC staff	3	0		3
NOC representatives	2	0		2
Journalists/ media	8	5	Lack of interest and lack of funding was listed as main reasons why they did not cover the IYOG.	1
Athletes	2	1	Did not have time to schedule a meeting due to training and school.	1
Sport Associations (coaches)	6	4	Three did not respond to the email inquiry, the latter directed the researcher to another (who was interviewed)	2
Parents	3	0	One did not respond to the research inquiry. Two accepted.	2
IOC Member	1	1	The researcher personally phoned the IOC member, but the member did not want to provide information about the IOC and the YOG.	0
TOP Sponsors	7	7	Coca-Cola, Omega, Samsung, Dow, & Visa did not respond to the research inquiry. McDonalds, P&G referred back to their web sites.	0
Total	31	18		11

The requirement for participating in the case study was that the participants had to have experienced at least one YOG event in person or worked with the YOGOC prior, during, or after one or both events. This was to ensure that all the informants more or less had the same background and basis for answering the research questions, although it was seen from different perspectives as they represented specific stakeholder groups.

Two of the informants did not have any lived experience from any of the YOG. One of the informants was both a coach and an administrative employee within the Norwegian ski federation, working with the event prior, during and after the YOG in Innsbruck. The second informant is involved in the LYOG and had not started his job when the previous editions of the YOG took place. The reason for his involvement in this study was because of his knowledge about the YOG brand. Chapter 4.2.2 presents a table with more detailed information of the stakeholders' and the data collection method.

4.2. Data collection

4.2.1. Research process

The data collection process began in October 2013 and ended in February 2014. This period required a lot of time and energy in order to conduct proper in-depth interviews with so many various informants. To present the process in a clean and structured manner, the process can be explained by four main stages.

The first stage was to contact The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). The NSD is an organization that assists and authorises research projects and secures that the research is in line with privacy and research ethics (nsd.uib.no). The NSD is much respected, and consequently it was devoted a lot of time to produce an application of an acceptable quality. The research project was approved in September 2013, and that marked the starting point for further research.

The second stage involved mapping the stakeholders by using the stakeholder categorization by Parent et al., (2013), to create an illustrative stakeholder map. *Figure 4.1* demonstrates the main stakeholder groups of the YOG. This map made it possible to create a more holistic perspective of all the stakeholders affiliated with the YOGOC.

The third stage was to contact the informants and inform them about the study, before setting a date for the interview. The acceptance for participation came continuously and the interviews were also conducted nonstop during this period. Altogether, eleven individuals were recruited for interviews through purposeful and convenience sampling procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Ten interviews were conducted and transcribed in Norwegian, the native language of the researcher and the informants. The remaining

interview was conducted and transcribed in English. The data collection process was therefore a bi-lingual process.

The fourth stage was to write memos during this period and to transcribe the interviews. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim in the same language that was used during the interviews. This was to ensure that all information was included and interpreted in the correct language and context, before being analyzed and translated to English. Memos can be defined as written records of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The memos contained questions, thoughts, impressions, new ideas, and inputs that were used later on in this project. These memos were very important in the process of analysis, because they contained impressions and interpretations that otherwise would have been forgotten.

4.2.2. Collection Method

There are many alternative sources of data in qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), but interviews are the most common alternative found in case study research (Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014) interviews represent one of the most important sources of case study evidence, and can be conducted in person, by telephone, or by IP teleconference. These techniques enable researchers to incorporate a human element in the data collection process (Andrew et al., 2011).

The majority of the interviews in this study were conducted in-person, but to make this process most convenient for the informants, telephone, and Skype calls were also used. The face-to-face interviews took place at the informants work locations. Six of them were conducted in closed conference rooms. This created a nice and calm atmosphere where the informants and researcher could speak freely without any interruptions. The latter in-person interview was conducted in a cafeteria. Although the location was almost free of people, the atmosphere was noisy and uneasy. It was the informant that suggested this room, and she did not seem affected by these troubles. Four interviews were conducted on telephone because the informants lived in other cities, and the latter interview was conducted on Skype.

The interviews followed a consistent line of inquiry to ensure that all information was included. This type of interview is commonly known as either “in-depth interview” or

“unstructured interview” (Yin, 2014). A standard semi-structured interview guide was designed and used throughout the collection period. But as more experience was gained throughout the interview period, some questions were edited, added, or deleted. A number of questions were also ignored or added based on the informants’ background and experience.

The same interview guide was more or less used throughout the whole data collection process. Although the questions asked were the same, each interview appeared unique since semi-structured interviews were used. A semi-structured interview is neither an open nor a closed survey conversation, it is rather a conversation that is carried out in accordance with an interview guide that involve specific topics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The reason for choosing this type of interview technique was to let the interviewees have the opportunity to express their feelings, ideas, opinions, and attitudes beyond the questions raised (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Furthermore, the informants could also provide the researcher with a deeper knowledge about them and their situation, as they had the opportunity to reveal much more about the meanings they relate to their experiences (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

According to Yin (2014) this study conducted “*shorter case study interviews*”, because of their duration in time. The interview guide included five main topics; about the YOG, the YOG brand, value creation and value co-creation, brand extension, and sponsors and the media (see appendix). There were about 5-10 questions in each topic. Not all questions were asked to all the informants, due to the natural time of the semi-structured interview. In some cases there were also asked more questions to follow up on the informant’s answer. The interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes. The shortest lasted 26 minutes and the longest lasted approximately 1.33 hours. A total of a hundred (100) pages of single space raw text were personally transcribed verbatim before being systematized and analyzed

Table 4.2: Information about the stakeholders' and the data collection method

Stakeholder Group	Method	N	Experience with YOG	Time (min)
Parents	Phone	2	Attended the IYOG	26
				28
Athletes	Phone	1	Competed at the IYOG	33
Coaches	In-person	1	Attended the IYOG.	29
	In-person	1	Worked with the YOGOC prior, during, and after both events.	33
NOC	In-person	2	Both attended the SYOG and the IYOG	45
				63
Staff IYOGOC	In-person	1	Worked during the IYOG	80
	Skype (English)	1	Worked during the IYOG	58
Staff LYOGOC	In-person	1	No experience from being at the YOG venue	25
Media representative	Phone	1	Attended the IYOG	38
Total		11		8,13 h. (488 min)

Note. The stakeholders were contacted based on their knowledge and experience with the YOG.

4.3. Analysis

To extract any sense and meaning from the descriptions found in the data collection, it is a natural process to undertake a thorough analysis of the data material. In order to understand how the stakeholders of the YOG co-create value and to interpret their perception of the YOG, an analysis of the transcribed interviews was conducted. The purpose was to search for opinions and interpretations that were common. Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed the importance of a thorough transcription, but emphasized that the text should appear as smooth and straight forward as possible. The transcriptional process was done very thorough and included all sentences and words such as “ehhmm” and “oh”, because these “break words” illustrated that the informants needed some time to think about some of the questions. Despite the “ehms” and “ohs” the advice by Miles and Huberman (1994) was followed, to aim for a clear and straightforward text to ease the process of analysis.

4.3.1. Coding and Categorization

“Data coding means extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 159). To increase the understanding and familiarity of the information, and to interpret prominent aspects found in the text, all of the transcribed interviews were read through at least twice before the coding started. The pile of raw data along with a book of memos and documents was the starting point for this chapter, and the challenge was to reduce this data to find useful information.

Coding of data is the key process in the data reduction stage (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). The purpose of coding is to describe and to acquire a new understanding of a phenomenon of interest (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). According to Corbin & Strauss (2008) there are five major types of coding: Open, theoretical, axial, selective, and thematic coding.

This research started with an open coding, which means that the transcribed data was segmented and classified based on their units of meanings (Flick, 2002). The purpose of an open coding is to aim for an open-minded researcher that can explore surprising and unforeseen empirical patterns, phenomena's, and coherence (Flick, 2002). The open coding procedure helps to elaborate an understanding of the text, and sometimes the result ends in a hundred of codes (Flick, 2002). The open coding for this research ended with 18 codes.

These codes were then grouped around the newly discovered phenomena's that was of a particular relevance for the research question (Flick, 2002). The text was coded by sentences and paragraphs since it was desired to have the excerpts in its natural context. The open coded data was then categorized in Numbers 2013, a spreadsheet application by Apple. This data program did not conduct any analysis on its own, but rather functioned as a technical tool to store and organize data that easily could be edited. This was the only sort of computer-assisted tools used in this research, and as Yin (2014) states, one must be aware that the tool is the assistant, not you.

The codes organised in this program represented the content for each category (Flick, 2002). The original 18 codes were reduced to four categories (in addition to the

thematic coding) of relevance for further investigation. The result was a list of the codes and categories that was taken out of the text and placed in an organized sheet. These four categories were: “The athletes’ development”, “Finance”, “The Olympic values”, and “the IOC”.

Table 4.3: Example of Open Coding

Thoughts about the YOG	NOC representative (R1)	Parent (P1)	Coach (C2)
<p>Early specialization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not different from other youth sport competitions • Athletes had already made a choice • Norway has good traditions and attitudes • Selection process • Not always the best who qualify 	<p>I do not believe that the YOG promotes early specialization more than other youth events. When an athlete qualifies for the YOG he/she has already made a choice to specialize in that specific sport.</p>	<p>Yes it does promote early specialization in some way, but Norway has a good attitude towards this and only sends athletes to compete in the oldest age categories.</p>	<p>I believe it is wrong to select maybe three or four athletes to the YOG when in reality there are about 2-300 athletes that have the same prerequisite to do well. In addition we have to start spotting them at an earlier age, and who knows maybe the best athlete today is not the best in 3 years. They are too young to be selected at this stage.</p>

Note. The column to the left illustrates the bullet points that were noted as being the most important about this subject.

A thematic coding can be conducted either inductive or deductive. Traditionally, qualitative research has had an inductive approach, which means that the theoretical perspective is developed on the basis of data analysis (Thagaard, 2010). It can also have a deductive character by starting the research process with hypotheses from previous theories (Thagaard, 2010). Most studies alternate between inductive and deductive phases, and this research is no exception. In the analyzing process it was shifted between inspection of data and development of ideas from overall theoretical perspectives (Thagaard, 2010).

The chapter on theory and conceptual framework served as guidance for categorization, and the interview guide was used to create categories based on the most important aspects of the study (i.e. brand delivery, brand satisfaction etc.). The text was coded, labelled, and categorized in a way that transfers meaning to the words (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process of thematic coding followed the theoretical framework, and the headings were: Brand expectations, brand delivery, brand satisfaction, brand equity, and the YOG brand.

Table 4.4: Example of Thematic Coding

Brand Satisfaction	NOC Representative (R2)	Coach (C1)	Athlete (A)	Coach (C2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standard • Quality • Social interaction over sport • Short amount of time to establish a team • Disturbance within the sport association • Not worth the fuzz 	<p>The YOG is an event of a higher quality compared with other events, and I believe that the athletes get a good experience as athletes by attending this event.</p>	<p>The YOG was a “mini Olympics”, and it was an event tailored for the young athletes. Although the Olympics has a great focus on individual achievements, the YOG was more focused on the joy of sport and social interaction</p>	<p>I am very satisfied with the YOG because we competed at untraditional terms. I liked that we had mixed teams, but I am not satisfied with the short time we got to gather a team and practice together.</p>	<p>I’m not sure if I can say that I am satisfied with the YOG. I do not think it was worth it compared to what we seek to achieve nationally. There was a lot of unhappy people and disturbance in our skiing community before and during the IYOG, and I don’t think it was worth all this fuzz in retrospect.</p>

Note. The column to the left illustrate the bullet points that were noted as being the most important about this subject

4.3.2. Analysis of the data collection

After the process of selecting, classifying, and coding had been conducted, the codes were analysed. Based on the topics of the thematic codes, important citations were manually cut out of the transcribed interviews and placed in envelopes labelled with the main topics from the interview guide (see chapter 4.3.1, p.54). At the end, five

envelopes were filled with the most important statements made by the stakeholders on each category. Each envelope was then carefully assessed and analyzed, making sure that all the findings were listed and prioritized.

4.3.3. Triangulation

To reduce the probability of misinterpretation, multiple methods can be used to secure the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in the case study research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2014). Multiple methods are also known as “triangulation”, and refer to the use of different kinds of data that can emerge from the same topic and produce more data that probably will improve the quality of the research (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). Patton (2002) discusses four types of triangulation, data, - investigator, - theory, - and methodological triangulation.

Theory triangulation is the use of various perspectives to interpret a solitary set of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study uses a stakeholder approach to brand equity to analyze how the stakeholders co-create value of the YOG brand. This research belongs to the theory triangulation. The strength of this triangulation is that the data could be analyzed from two theoretical perspectives, consequently leading this research to find out whether the YOG has brand equity and to find out the process of value co-creation for the YOG and the stakeholders. The triangulation process will not be explained in detail, but is included to provide for an added measure of reliability and validity in the final reporting of the results (Edwards & Skinner, 2009).

4.4. Validity and Reliability

The level of quality is often evaluated in terms of the validity and reliability of the study (Yin, 2014). *“A research account may be conceived valid if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorize”* (Hammersley, 1987, p. 67). According to Silverman (2004) validity is another word for truth, and the terms internal and external validity are often used as tests to determine the quality of empirical social research (Yin, 2014).

Internal validity determines to what extent the description of a phenomenon is accurate, and is mostly applicable in explanatory case study research (Yin, 2014). External validity, however, is more seen in explorative research. It refers to the degree the

research findings can be generalized beyond the immediate study (Yin, 2014). It is difficult to ascertain the degree of validity in qualitative research, because it does not provide for quantifiable findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

“Reliability is the consistency and repeatability of the research procedures used in a case study” (Yin, 2014, p. 240). It is highly desirable to achieve a high reliability of the interview findings to prevent random subjectivity. The purpose is to decrease the biases and errors in a study (Yin, 2014). However; too much attention and focus on reliability can counteract creative thinking and variations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore the researcher should practice walking a fine line between the desires of achieving a high reliability meanwhile maintaining a creative mind.

Throughout the research process, the researcher of this study was the only one present during the interviews. It was therefore natural that the interviews were transcribed verbatim solely by the author. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the ideal situation is to let a second person transcribe the interviews to double check that there is a mutual interpretation of the collected information. The downside is that this process is extremely time and cost consuming, consequently leading the researcher to do the job alone. The impressions that occurred during the interviews and the interpretation of the interviewees’ posture and gestures were always in mind during the transcription, evaluation, and analysis of the data collection.

Triangulation was used to take into account as many aspects of the case as possible, and this attempt may contribute into strengthen the validity of this research. The purpose of theory triangulation was to see different theoretical aspects and their point of view, to place them side by side to assess their strength and to elucidate the research question (Flick, 2002). In addition, the triangulation also aids the researcher to critically evaluate and identify the weaknesses of the material (Fielding & Fielding, 1986).

Qualitative research is hard to copy due to several natural and ethical factors that will limit the ability to get the exact results twice. Aside from validity, reliability, and triangulation, trustworthiness is also a possible criterion for qualitative research. According to Edwards and Skinner (2009) trustworthiness refers to a set of criteria that have been set to judge the quality of the qualitative inquiry. It can be determined based

on whether or not the findings can be trusted as a general perception, or a perception of the researcher, or as a combination (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

4.5. Generalization

As this research was based on an embedded single-case study design, analytic generalization is the most applicable when attempting to generalize the findings of this study. It is a common concern that case studies have an inability to generalize from case study findings, because qualitative data has a small sample size compared to statistical generalization (Yin, 2014). Usually generalization in science is based on multiple sets of experiments, and rarely based on single experiment such as a single-case study (Yin, 2014). This study did not aim for generalization, but rather to expand and generalize theories (Yin, 2014). Analytic generalization serves as an alternative method of generalizing the findings of empirical studies. It is the logic whereby the findings of a case study can be extended to concrete situations outside the initial case study, based on the relevance of similar theoretical principles or concepts (Yin, 2014).

This study included both male and female informants with different linkages and associations attached to the phenomena of the YOG. They were of a limited generalizability because all the stakeholders were represented within a Norwegian context. Still, the purpose with this study was not to aim for the largest sample possible, but rather to gain rich and informative data (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Saturation was accomplished after eleven interviews.

It is not easy to generalize based on such a small sample, but the study does provide for information about how stakeholders co-create value within a Norwegian context. There is a probability that a similar research on stakeholder value co-creation within another country's context will have the same interpretations as this study, given that the country had a similar culture as in Norway. But the results from this research will most likely not have the strength to generalize across other nations. Another sample of stakeholders' interpretations could have been provided within a Norwegian context, with a larger probability of finding the same results again. It would also be easier to generalize this study if it had a multi-case design, "*because when two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication can be claimed*" (Yin, 1994, p. 38).

4.6. Weaknesses and limitations

Although this study was conducted based on thorough planning and execution, there are some weaknesses and limitations attached to this research. According to Yin (2014), case study research has an absence of well-documented procedures and is thereby amongst the hardest types of research to conduct. This research was the most comprehensive project ever conducted by the researcher, and the lack of experience and training of doing case study research provided for new and unforeseen challenges. These challenges were mostly related to the interview execution, since this procedure of data collection was new to the researcher. The positive aspect was that lessons were learned from each interview and improved for the upcoming interviews. The negative part was that the interviews conducted in the beginning might have been of a lesser quality compared with the latter.

The research project was initiated based on the researcher's genuine interest in sports marketing and the Olympic brand. This provides a basis for suggesting that the author already had a preconceived understanding of the YOG, which may be a factor when conducting the interviews and analyzing the research findings. Within the field of hermeneutics it is widely known that the researcher contains this preconception (Thagaard, 2010). The challenge is however to be able to shut this understanding out during the research process. The researcher was aware of this factor and did her best to conduct the study with an open mind to avoid letting her preconception color the research analysis.

The author had an active part in this scientific project, as data collection, coding, and analysis was conducted on an individual basis. The limitation with this approach is that the researcher's subjective opinion and feelings might influence the case study (Yin, 2014). To prevent this from happening, the researcher often discussed the various situations with her supervisors and co-students to map their opinions and interpretations. The best way to prevent a subjective opinion from interfering with the analysis is to let another person transcribe, code, and analyze the data. This alternative would have been ideal, but due to limitations such as time and resources this was not possible.

In addition to face-to-face interviews, technological tools such as telephone and IP teleconference were used to collect data. As many of the informants were geographically dispersed around Norway and the research method required personal interviews, these tools were found to be the best solution to reduce costs without reducing information. According to Gratton and Jones (2010) online interviews are generally shorter and it is impossible to observe their non-verbal reactions to questions. Throughout the four telephone calls and one Skype call, no technological problems occurred and the researcher found the Skype call to be the second longest interview conducted. Although video calls worked perfectly, it is obvious that the telephone interviews were the shortest in time duration and thereby supports the arguments by Gratton and Jones (2010).

There is no correct formula to conduct a research project, but the choice of research method depends in a large part on the research question (Yin, 2014). As this research asked, “Are the stakeholders of the YOG co-creating the brand?” a case study became the clear alternative to use in this project. The case study contributes to our knowledge of group, individual, social, organizational, political, and related phenomenon, and is a common research method in many situations and fields of study (Yin, 2014). Since this case study is concerned with one specific group, the downside with this research is that one can never be guaranteed that the conclusions drawn in this case will be the same elsewhere.

In addition to the challenges linked to a case study research, there are also some limitations linked to the choice of a single-case design. According to Yin (2014) there is potential vulnerability that a case might end up being different than what the initial case was thought to be at the outset. Consequently, the use of a single-case study design require cautious investigation of the potential case, to reduce the possibility of misrepresentation and to exploit the access needed to collect the case study evidence (Yin, 2014).

4.7. Ethics

Ethics embraces the morality of human behaviour (Miller, Birch, Mauthner and Jessop, 2012). Regardless of the type of research, the attention to ethical concerns started long before this thesis was finished (APA, 2011). Issues related to informed consent,

institutional approval, participant protection, and description in research were included in the computation of this research (APA, 2011). In particular, issues related to the participants integrity and safety were considered the most salient and important of the ethical considerations.

As a part of the respect the researcher had for the participants, their rights and information about the study was repeated before the interview started. Even though the informants received detailed information about the study in advance, the researcher wanted to double-check this to prevent any confusion at a later point. The informants were also asked for a permission to use a tape recorder, a request that was accepted by everyone.

This research did not attempt to interfere with the informants' private life, but rather to learn from their professional experience with the YOG. However, a person's job or training situation is often closely related to their private life. As a result of these factors and as an attempt to minimize the risks of discomfort or harm to the informants', all information about them was kept confidential (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). The recorded interviews were deleted after the interviews had been transcribed, and the transcribed documents did not have any personal names or numbers that could lead someone to identify the participant (s).

The American Psychological Association (APA) writing style and guidance was followed to ensure accurate citations and references. This was to avoid plagiarism and to reward those who have contributed to science and to this research. Attached you will find the references in proper APA style, the scheme with information about the study in addition to the approval from the NSD (see appendixes).

5. Findings and Discussion

The thesis started with a presentation of Google Trends statistics on the population's interest in retrieving information about the YOG. The purpose was to illustrate the worldwide awareness about the brand, and to see if there was any need for more research about the new Olympic phenomenon. Google Trends illustrated that there was

an interest about the YOG in 2010, and since then the online search on the YOG have declined. This graph functioned as a starting point for further research on this brand. Since Lillehammer (Norway) will host the winter YOG in 2016 and it is possible to assume that this research can contribute for the LYOGOC to safeguard the stakeholders' needs and wants prior to Games time. But, for this to be accomplished there are some research questions that must to be answered:

1. Are the stakeholders of the YOG co-creating the brand?
2. Has the YOG achieved brand equity?
3. Has the extension of the Olympic brand been a success?

First the chapter looks into the theory on branding and how it applies to the YOG brand. Then, the empirical findings will be presented based on the open and thematic coding, elaborated in chapter 4. Chapter 5.2 and 5.3 addresses the findings found in the open coding process. The open coding also identified the “Olympic values” and “the IOC” as being important, these are included in chapter 5.4.2 and 5.4.4 to avoid any recurrences when discussing the findings. Chapter 5.4.1-5.4.4 presents the finding from the thematic coding, and uses the framework by Helm and Jones (2010) to assess the stakeholders' willingness and effort to co-create the YOG brand. The latter part of the chapter seeks to answer the additional research questions, before the conclusion and suggestion for further research will be presented.

Quotations by the informants are provided to elucidate the stakeholders' attitudes and meanings regarding the various subjects that were discussed. The stakeholders' have been given codes when being cited in this chapter. The NOC representatives are cited as (R1) and (R2), journalist (J), athlete (A), Coaches (C1) and (C2), Staff (S1), (S2), and (S3), while the parents are (P1) and (P2).

5.1. The Olympic and Youth Olympic brand

The IOC defines the Olympic brand with three essential pillars: (i) *striving for success*, (ii) *celebration of community*, and (iii) *positive human values* (Séguin et al., 2013). These pillars represent the overall values, and are perceived as the essence of an emotive and powerful brand that extends above sport (Séguin et al., 2013). The IOC developed a communication platform to support the brand essence, consisting of

friendship, excellence, and respect. Friendship is considered a value, as the OG serve as an example of how humanity can overcome economic, political, religious, and racial prejudices to promote friendship instead of differences (Ferrand et al., 2012).

Excellence is the example of the OG bringing together the best sporting achievement in the world, inspiring us to strive to perform our best in our daily lives (Ferrand et al., 2012). The OG is about striving for excellence, and about being the best in the spirit of fair play (Roberts, 2012). Respect represents the OG profound meaning of the word, encouraging the humanity to respect yourself, your fellow man, and to respect the rules of sport (Ferrand et al., 2012).

The Olympic values represent the core/essence of the Olympic brand, but they are also the “brand promise”. It is a promise to the consumers and stakeholders to deliver a specific set of benefits, features, experiences, or services on a consistent basis (Séguin et al., 2013). The Olympic brand promise is to deliver emotional, symbolic and social benefits through the features of friendship, excellence and respect. The experience is delivered through the interaction the consumers and stakeholders have with the OG, which should be delivered on a consistent basis (Séguin et al., 2013).

Although the Olympic brand has high value and strong brand equity, this value cannot be directly transferred to the YOG brand. Previous research has indicated that there is a low level of interest among the stakeholders of the YOG (Hanstad et al., 2013). The TOP sponsors have not played an active part in the previous editions of the YOG, media has been somewhat absent from the YOG venue, and during the bid for the second edition of the winter YOG, Lillehammer (Norway) was the only applicant city (Degun, 2010).

The YOG brand is similar to the OG in many ways. It is established on a quadrennial model, they have a bidding process, it is based on the Olympic values, they provide for a wide range of sports, it provides for political exploitation or political opportunities, and it has already had some incidents with cheating and doping (Parry, 2012; Houlihan, 2013). One of the main differences between the YOG and the OG is that the YOG is an event of a smaller scale. Furthermore, in the OG only 10% of the countries competing wins 75% of the medals, while at the YOG there is a wider distribution of medals, providing second or third nations with the opportunity to win medals (Houlihan, 2013,

May 24). The difference in the percentage of medal distribution is clear, and a reason for this may be that the level of competition is not as high at the YOG, and thereby it is possible for Africans to win medals at the winter YOG. Another reason may be the economic aspect of it. The athletes that are competing at the OG are professional and the goal candidates often bring a scope of help personnel to the competition venues. The athletes at the YOG are not there yet, and this may also be a factor to the wider distribution of medals.

The positive aspect with the YOG is that it has a greater progress in gender equity; there are mixed gender teams, mixed national teams, mixed discipline events, and a greater emphasis on culture and education compared to the OG (IOC, 2012). Although there are several different and similar features with the brands, it is clear that the YOG mirrors the OG in format (Wong, 2011). It seems like the IOC has implemented the event without developing specific objectives and strategies for the brand. Although the IOC has developed many factsheets where the YOG brand is described, this description does not mirror how the consumers perceive the brand. By using the already existing traditions and symbols for the brand, it has proven to be difficult to state that the YOG brand is different and unique. In addition, the similarities have also made it challenging for the brand to find a proper position in the market. A reason for this may be that the line extensions allow the Olympic brand to reach a different market segment while saving the costs for advertising. The issue here may be that the consumers do not see the YOG to be a logical extension of the Olympic brand, because the similar features are very prominent.

The Olympic ideals are a central part of the YOG, and according to the former IOC president, Jacques Rogge, the vision of the YOG is to inspire the youth worldwide to participate in sport, and to live by the Olympic values (IOC, 2011a). The Olympic values are a prominent factor in the YOG, as they are listed two times in the main objectives for the event (IOC, 2011a). According to Hanstad et al., (2013) the YOG is found to be closer to the Olympic ideals compared to the OG. This is because the brand integrates sport with culture and education, which was the main purpose of Olympism when Coubertin introduced it (Schnitzer et al., 2014). The following chapters will further discuss the concept and values of the YOG brand with the remarks and perceptions given by the stakeholders included in this research.

5.2. The athletes' development

The establishment of the YOG has had its share of critiques and public concern (Judge et al., 2011), and one of them is based on the accusations that the event is promoting early specialization (Brennan, 2007). In Norway there is a regulation named “Children’s right in sport”. It is established to safeguard the children’s right to enjoy sport, for the pure purpose of fun until they turn 12 years of age (NIF, 2007). Many of the informants referred to this document when discussing the relevance of the YOG brand in Norway. Some of the informants argued that the athletes are too young to compete at an international level before they are seniors. Others argued that this is an exclusive opportunity for the athletes to gain a unique experience that may serve as a motivational boost to continue pursuing for their sport.

One of the coaches said that it felt wrong to send 15 year olds to an international competition, and that this interferes with the Norwegian sport model. As the “Children’s right in sport” only counts until the age of 12, the athletes above this age range will have their personal results from sport competitions on public lists, regardless of it being the YOG or another youth sport competition. As an argument to the comment made by one of the coaches, the YOG will not keep or post the athletes records because they want them all to be seen as winners (Kristiansen, 2012). Although the argument from the coach is valid, and the response from the YOG to de-emphasize the competition aspect is sound, other informants wanted the opposite. One of the NOC representatives pointed that if you have managed to qualify for the YOG you have already chosen your sport and level of performance, regardless of the children’s policy form. *“I mean look at figure skating for example, in that sport you’re more or less retired when you’re 18”* (R1).

Another coach was more concerned about the situation of choosing 2-4 athletes in a young age group to represent Norway. *“It feels wrong to praise our young athletes at the YOG, when in reality we have about 200-300 with the same qualifications to be as good as those competing at the YOG* (C2). He further states that those who are a “child talent” today might not be the most prominent talent in five years.

As the concern of specialization at an early age became a recurring subject, the informants were asked if they saw any benefits of attending/competing at the YOG, and what the possible downsides would be. One of the coaches said that:

I believe the young athletes benefit of competing at the YOG because they gain a positive experience that their competitors' don't have (...) but I am sceptical to the selection process that happens ahead of such events, especially for athletes at such a young age (C2).

The qualification process that the athletes needs to go through to qualify for the YOG, has appeared as an issue for many of the stakeholders involved in this research. Many of them stated that they thought it was unhealthy to go through a selection process at such a young age. This gave an impression that many of the informants' feared that youth sport events enhanced the competition aspect, where the outcome would be that the athletes did not see the sport as fun anymore. This is in contrast with the IOCs aim to bring together the worlds' best young athletes and celebrate them, while offering them a unique introduction to Olympism (IOC, 2012). Since the qualification process is a common feature at almost all sports that contains a form of competitive aspect, it should not be a shock to them that this is also a factor at the YOG. It was commented by one of the NOC representatives that the athletes should be able to compete more beyond the regular competitive sport program at the YOG (R1). This is because the YOG is a unique opportunity for the athletes to acquire more competitive experience, and because the setting and sports are similar to the OG. *"It is exciting that the YOG competitions are more innovative, but the athletes should also be able to compete more since it is mandatory for them to stay at the YOV throughout the event period"* (R1).

Some of the athletes at the YOG are considered old enough to compete at the OG. The YOG can serve as a catalyst for athletes who wish to become Olympians, and it can be a motivational boost that gives the athletes' the proper self-esteem to go beyond and create world-class performances. They will at an early age learn how an Olympic event is staged, which can help them when preparing for the OG. Conversely it can also contribute in decreasing the motivation for those who did not qualify or succeed in the competitions. All the informants were asked about this, and the response was fairly

similar: No, the YOG is not likely to be the motivational turning point regarding the athletes' motivation. One of the parents that were present at Innsbruck 2012 said:

In another country the selection process could probably harm some athletes' motivation and self-esteem, but Norwegian sport has a good policy in this case. They only send the oldest and most experienced athletes to the YOG, although it is allowed for younger athletes to compete (P1).

Another parent (also present in Innsbruck) said that her daughter did not focus on qualifying for the YOG and that she would not have been very disappointed if she did not qualify. *“Back then there were so few that had any knowledge about the YOG, so the consequence of not qualifying would not be decisive for her future career” (P2).*

Youth sport events are not a new phenomenon, although the YOG was a new concept for many of the informants' involved in this study. For instance, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) has been hosted since 1991 and offers a competition for athletes within the same age group. This means that the risk of early specialization may have been a subject for discussion for a long time, and it is difficult to say if the YOG forms the basis for more specialization compared with similar sport events.

According to Judge et al., (2009), the YOG is thought to play a major role in improving the health of the youth and to decrease the level of childhood obesity worldwide. Although childhood obesity is a growing concern, it is arguable whether the YOG is the proper venue to discuss this subject. This is perhaps because most of the participants are probably not within a group of concern regarding this matter. Wong (2011) concludes in her research that no Olympic host country has so far managed to demonstrate a direct benefit from the OG when it comes to a long lasting increase in sport participation. During the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer, Norwegian sport clubs established an initiative to get people in shape to the Olympics. The activity level did increase during this period, but the number also decreased after the initiative ended (Hanstad, 2013, July 7). It is a challenge to argue the IOCs objective regarding the fight against childhood obesity, especially when the flagship brand has not succeeded in establishing sustainable initiatives to increase the activity level. One can only hope that the repercussions from the YOG and the YOG DNA can contribute to enhance the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle on a long-term basis.

The YOG can enhance the focus on childhood obesity by educating the athletes in proper nutrition, but it remains uncertain whether this focus will reach those who actually need it. One of the aims with the YOG is “*to bring together the world’s best young athletes and celebrate them*” (IOC, 2012, p.1), and consequently the focus on obesity seems misplaced in this setting. The risk of early specialization will be a factor as long as there is youth sport events, and the results from this research are not valid enough to state that the YOG may contribute to this. Furthermore, the finding in this research indicates that the stakeholders are not worried about the YOG harming the athletes’ motivation to continue their sport. This is mostly because the YOG has low awareness and standing in the local sport communities. The YOG will however continue to grow and raise in awareness, consequently one cannot preclude that this will become a bigger issue in the future.

5.3. Finance

Regarding the costs related to stage the YOG, the IOC has been more restricted when it comes to host nations building new venues for the event. In fact, they encourage nations to apply with their existing sport venues and housing facilities. The IOC also provides the YOGOCs with their TOP partners to ensure financial support. This research found that the TOP partners and national sponsors have not shown much interest in the YOG brand so far, and as a result it has proven to be a challenge for the YOGOCs to attain additional sponsorship revenues. Previous research has also shown that the general public is not interested in watching the YOG at the Olympic venue (Parent et al., 2013), thereby neither the sponsors nor the spectators contribute in creating financial value.

The sponsors’ and the medias’ responsibility towards raising awareness about the YOG became a subject during the interviews, as there were various opinions about the stakeholders’ involvement in the event. One of the stakeholders from the staff group said:

Why should a guy in Alaska know what the YOG is? This is an event for, by and with the youth, so is not it more important that we do it for ourselves? I mean, the IOC has the money, they have the TOP providing the organization with money so they don’t need to boost the event, the sponsors are already there (S1).

The YOG should absolutely be an event for, by, and with the youth, but in order for the YOG to sustain, the economic aspects of the brand must be addressed. A guy in Alaska does not need to know about the YOG, but the sponsors' needs to have some incentives for raising awareness about the sponsorship to measure their ROI. If the IOC wants to achieve what was set out to do with YOG (i.e. tackle obesity problems and sedentary lifestyle of young people), it would need to raise the awareness and build the brand with this in mind.

It is correct that the TOP sponsors are a part of the YOG, but this is mainly because they are Olympic sponsors of the IOC. This means that they are included regardless of their additional sponsorship activations with the YOG. According to Mickle (2012), only seven out of eleven TOP sponsors did any sponsorship activation in Innsbruck. It seems like the TOP is more focused on the upcoming OG than the YOG, a result that is not ground breaking as the OG have a much more extensive broadcasting and media coverage. One of the LYOGOC staff members confirmed this, and further added that since the sponsors are investing millions of dollars in an Olympic sponsorship agreement, it is logical that they will use the majority of their marketing efforts at the big scene (S3).

As Parent et al., (2013) stated in their research, the sponsors were not listed as the most salient stakeholders of the IYOG, a result that was also found in this Norwegian context. The sponsors have so far not contributed into creating much additional revenue, and according to one of the staff members of the IYOGOC, it was difficult to fill the sponsorship packages. *"The YOG is a small property, it happened for the first time (Innsbruck). No one had experience, so I guess the sponsors were much more focused on the London Olympics"* (S2). The informant from the LYOG agreed that it was difficult to get in touch with the TOPs because they were so busy with the upcoming Olympic events. *"I hope we will get their attention after the Nanjing YOG, but I fear that they at that point will have their full attention on Rio"* (S3).

During the interview process it became apparent that the YOGOCs are worried about attaining enough financial resources from the sponsors. The reason for this may be that the TOP and national sponsors have had a "wait and see" attitude towards the brand. The fact that the YOG is hosted in the same calendar year as the OG can be a limitation

for the YOG, and although the IOC feared that the Olympic brand would be vanished if held each year, it seems like the solution has caused more harm than expected. It has caused additional pressure on the YOGOCs in reaching their financial objectives. Based on this, there is no reason to expect that the TOP will do more sponsorship activation at the LYOG, as the awareness and marketing efforts about the YOG is still low.

The sponsors' ability to invest in the YOG was a big issue in this research. This was mostly because they have so far not been very interested in investing additional resources in the YOG. The YOG is an unknown brand and concept, and as one of the coaches said: *"I understand the sponsors' attitudes because what do they get in return of investment? The right of using the logo of an unknown brand..."* (C2). According to Séguin et al., (2013) the YOG extension was something dear to the former IOC president, but remains unclear what role the marketing department had regarding this extension. Without a proper market research it must have been difficult to predict how the consumers would accept the brand, and how the stakeholders' would perceive this new extension.

The YOGOCs are concerned with the TOP and other sponsors' lack of engagement, but one of the staff at the IYOG was not worried about the future.

If you activate not as much as for the OG, but let's say in some reasonable share of that, this would have much more impact, than it would at the OG (...). No one had experience, but with the upcoming YOG there will be more awareness about the YOG brand and there will be more experience with how to attract and attain sponsors for the event (S2).

The YOG is a small property compared to the OG, where there are multiple sponsors that activate and a countless number of ambush marketers that create clutter. If the sponsors had seen the value of investing in the YOG brand, there is no doubt that the marketing efforts could have made a big impact in the host nation.

Continuing on the matter of finance, the IOC funds some of the expenses for the various NOCs and YOGOCs, but the stakeholders' must provide the majority of the costs on their own. All the NOCs' participating at the YOG will have their travel expenses covered by the IOC, a great gesture as that the NOCs' must finance training camps and

uniforms for their troops. But, in order for the IOC to manage this expense, they look for the cheapest tickets available, and thereby exposing the athletes and staff for long waits and bus transfers (R1).

Well, there are some aspects about the YOG that concerns me. That it especially the financial issues that arises when including yet another Olympic event on the sport calendar. In addition to the Olympics, Paralympics and EYOF, you've got the YOG and in 2015 there will be the European Games in Baku, so the total load on the NOCs is extensive both work-related and financial (R1).

The situation of having too many events on the sporting calendar was also mentioned by Wong (2011), which stated, *“The YOG runs the danger of becoming just another sport spectacular in a crowded sports programme (p.1845).* Wong (2011) further stated that the financial costs of organizing these events are a point that cannot be ignored. The costs are not only a concern for the YOGOCs, as the national sport federations also see the increased expenses for sport equipment as a concern. *“Doing sport becomes more expensive for each year, especially for the young downhill skiers, and it's starting to become a sport for the athletes from wealthy families. This is a big concern for us...”* (C2).

Although the costs related to the sport performance is not directly linked to the YOG brand, it is understandable that this is a concern for the Norwegian sport federations. It can create a gap between athletes with resources to continue doing their sport, and those who cannot compete on the same basis due to lack of sufficient sport equipment. The YOG can enhance this concern as athletes at a younger age see the importance of having “the best” sport equipment to become the best. The YOG is however a brand that is established to reach the youth, regardless of the athletes' background and resources. A good example here is the IOCs principle of universal representation at the YOG, which means that there are reserved places in the qualification system for each sport so that each NOC can bring at least four athletes, regardless of their economic situation (Wong, 2011).

The YOG provides for a youth event that lasts between 10-12 days, but the YOGOCs' are officially established right after the applicant city is announced. The planning

process for an upcoming Olympic event takes years, regardless of it being the OG or YOG. Concerning the subject on finance one of the NOC representative said: *“Although the IOC promotes the YOG to be a cost efficient event, it is still a big event and those are costly. The Lillehammer YOG was so expensive that they needed a government guarantee”* (R2).

The informants were never directly asked about the costs and expenses related to the YOG, but it was evident that this was a big concern for the stakeholders involved. The stakeholders were concerned with the IOC's perception of costs, the expenses they had to expect when prioritizing the YOG, and especially the sponsors' ability to invest in the event. When looking at the upcoming applicant cities for the OG and YOG it is apparent that it is still popular to host the mega events, in spite of the much-debated costs linked to the applicant cities. These trends may however vary, as Lillehammer was the only applicant city for the winter YOG in 2016 (Degun, 2010; Olympic.org, 2011).

The findings of the open coding indicate that finance is a common concern among the stakeholders of the YOG. It became evident that it is a challenge for the NOC to prioritize and organize all the various sport events on the sporting calendar. The costs related to training camps, clothing, travels, and salaries for coaches and Chef de Missions are a big issue, and must be further monitored. This also applies for the costs related to the development of new expensive equipment for the specific sports. The sponsors' minor interest in the YOG brand is a critical component when looking at the future of the YOG brand. The Sochi Games 2014 received a lot of media publicity because of the big exceed in the budget. This may harm the Olympic brand, as the cost of hosting the Games may lead to fewer nations applying for the OG and YOG in the future.

5.4. Brand value co-creation

This chapter seeks to highlight the main findings from the thematic coding, where the aim is to answer the research questions. The chapter is structured according to the model by Helm and Jones (2010), which is used to illustrate the process of value co-creation of the brand (see chapter 3.6, p. 41)

5.4.1. Brand Expectations

Brand expectations can be seen as the starting point for value creation within the value co-creation system. It is a big benefit for the YOGOCs' to identify the stakeholders' expectations towards the brand, because enhanced expectations can lead to increased accountability and transparency from the organizations' stakeholders (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). The YOGOCs' is constantly a subject to scrutiny from their stakeholders, who expect the organization to deliver a product of high quality that matches or exceeds their expectations of the brand delivery (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

During Innsbruck 2012, Hanstad et al., (2013) examined the stakeholders' perspective of the YOG, and found that there was a low level of awareness even among the residents of Innsbruck. This was an interesting result, as one would expect at least the inhabitants of the host city to be aware of the YOG. Despite the low level of awareness worldwide, the stakeholders interviewed for this project had some expectations for the YOG. Although it is common to have expectations before a big happening, the expectations towards the YOG were mostly based on the informants associations with the brand name. Some had big expectations, as they perceived YOG to be an edition of the OG, while others did not have any expectations at all.

I didn't have any expectations because I didn't know what the YOG was at the time. There were shared opinions about the YOG in my editorial office, so I decided to travel to Innsbruck with an open mind (J).

The journalist had mixed feelings about traveling to the IYOG, mostly because he did not have any knowledge about the event. According to Parent et al., (2013), 800 media accreditations were registered, but less than that showed up. This indicates that due to the lack of awareness among the media, the expectations towards the YOG were so low that many did not see the value of covering the event. The journalist in this study travelled to Innsbruck out of pure curiosity, and not with the purpose of covering the Norwegian athletes' performances.

We wanted to determine whether the YOG was an Olympic flop or if it had any value. Many of my colleagues tried to ridicule the event, but I decided that their attitudes would not color my experience, although I do not (at all) care about sport (...). I was surprised of how serious and big the YOG actually were (J).

As described in chapter 4.1.2 it was not easy to track Norwegian journalists with experience from the YOG. The one journalist that had actually been at the event did not care about sport. The purpose of the trip was rather to determine if the YOG was a flop or not. A reason for this trip may be the lack of awareness about the YOG, as well as the negative publicity the event has had in the Norwegian media. According to A-text retriever, headings such as “Games that resemble Olympic grease” (Dæli, 2011, September 9) and “500 million for the YOG” (Strøm, 2011, December 8) were prominent during the fall of 2011. This may be the reason why the local newspaper wanted to further investigate the brand. On the opposite side, there were also several positive headings, such as “Youth Olympics: Reasonable financial support for Norwegian sports” (Eriksen, 2011, October 6). This was one of a numerous newspapers that argued that the YOG would benefit Norwegian youth sport. The local newspaper that financed the travel must have been very curious about the YOG, since they decided to send work force to Innsbruck for the sole purpose of determining whether the YOG was a flop or not. In a positive way, this does indicate that the editorial office had some awareness about the YOG ahead of Innsbruck in 2012. This may give a reason to believe that more newspapers will be curious for the upcoming YOGs.

It is evident that it is often the negative publicity that receives the most attention in the media. In this case, it seemed as if the journalist was more interested by the negative stories about the YOG, and sought to determine whether the negative stories were in fact true or not. Parent et al., (2013) also noticed the lack of engagement by the journalists in their research, and found that the parents personally sent news and pictures from Innsbruck to the journalists in Norway and Canada.

The journalist did however tell at a later point that: *“I was surprised by how many journalists that used the press centre. I went by there one day after the competitions were over, and there was a lot of activity going on (...)”* (J). The journalist did not mention from which nation the majority of the journalists were from, but it is important

to emphasize that there were more journalists and media coverage than what appears to be presented in retrospect. It is possible to predict that these journalists that now have more knowledge about the event will publish more about the YOG in the future.

The NOC representatives' had experience from Singapore and Innsbruck, in addition to EYOF, and they put them up against each other when discussing their expectations towards each of the events.

I expected the Innsbruck (2012) to be more low-key, more in-line with our perception of the YOG concept. Singapore (2010) used a lot of money whilst Innsbruck had a strict budget. I believe this benefitted them (Innsbruck) (...) you become more creative when you are in lack of money (R2).

The other NOC representative meant that the Singapore raised the bar high when it came to quality and safety, but she also compared the YOG to the similar EYOF. *"I expected the YOG concept to be bigger and more professional than EYOF. EYOF is not the same when it comes to security, scanning of luggage, accreditation, and you name it..."* (R1). The YOG exceeded their expectations regarding quality and proper planning. The NOC representatives did however state that there was a big difference between the two events. Singapore was much larger in terms of participating nations, sports, and volunteers, compared with Innsbruck. Although the Singapore delivered an event of high quality, Innsbruck was perceived to have a better fit with the NOC representatives' perception of the concept.

The parents also compared the YOG with the EYOF, and said that they expected the YOG to be *"closer to the Olympics than what was experienced at the EYOF"* (P1). The parents and the NOC representatives perceived EYOF to be more a more "down-scaled" event, and their expectations towards the YOG was higher mostly because the IOC was more engaged and involved with this event.

Many of the stakeholders listed perception of quality, security, and a festive atmosphere as common adjectives when describing their expectations towards the YOG. They expected the YOG to have the same professional personnel and safety measures as seen at the OG, and they were curious on what the CEP was. The athlete looked forward to experience the YOG in Innsbruck: *"I expected a big celebration, I was finally going to*

experience my first Olympics, so expected everyone to be dressed in their Olympic clothing and that the whole city would be covered with the YOG logo” (A). The athlete expected the YOG to be like the Olympics and he was excited to experience the Olympic atmosphere. These expectations are in line with the YOG’s vision “to share and celebrate the cultures of the world in a festive atmosphere” (IOC, 2012 p.1).

One of the coaches had a more laidback approach when it came to expectations; he knew that he was going to Innsbruck for 14 days and that his athletes would compete in two of them. Anything beyond this would only surprise him.

I must say that my expectations did not meet what was delivered to us in Innsbruck. The event was larger and much more extensive than what I had imagined. It seemed like a full scale Olympics reduced to fit the amount of people attending the event, sort of a Mini-Olympics style (C1).

Many of the informants expected the YOG to be a “mini-Olympics” or a copy of the OG, only for the youth. For example, the athlete said that he did not expect the YOG to be stiff and conservative like the OG, but rather “*more like a copy in a good way*” (A). This way of referring to the YOG was also mentioned by another coach: “*I expected it to be a copy of the EYOF only that they introduce the athletes to the CEP*” (C2). Those interviewed with experience from the EYOF said that they expected more than what they had seen there - they expected it to be more like the Olympics. It is therefore certain to say that the OG (and EYOF) formed the basis for the stakeholder expectations. These are interesting findings since, Jacques Rogge, explicitly stated that “*the Youth Olympic Games should not be seen as mini-Olympic Games*” (Rogge, 2010, p.33).

It has previously been mentioned in this thesis that the YOG has had a difficulty with positioning the brand in the market. The IOC has at this point, not managed to communicate what this brand really is. The awareness about the YOG is low, and consequently it is natural to let the associations with the OG become the most applicable point of reference. Based on the response from the informants, it is possible to state that there exists some confusion as to what the YOG brand is and how it is different from the Olympic brand. The informants had expectations but they were

uncertain of *what* to expect, since they did not have any previous experience with the brand.

Krieger (2013) support this finding regarding the YOG being perceived as mini edition of the OG. Krieger (2013) stated that since the YOG sports programme was almost identical to the London 2012, it automatically gave an indication to believe that the YOG is no different than the OG. With an identical sport programme (although there are some new approaches), the similar brand name, and the identical brand promises and values, the quote by Rogge (2010) does not support the findings in this research nor by the research conducted by Krieger (2013).

In summary, one can say that the informants' expectations towards the YOG were high, compared to the level of awareness they had about the brand. The YOG does however not seem to have managed to successfully communicate what this brand really is, as their intention was not to provide for a brand delivery that would be perceived as the "mini-Olympics" (Rogge, 2010). The response from the stakeholders indicated that there are some level of confusion regarding the difference between the YOG and the OG brand. As the YOG is an extension of the Olympic brand it will require much more extensive promotional efforts in order to clarify this confusion. The extension has not been properly positioned at this stage, which has caused the stakeholders' questioning the strength of the new brand. Towards the upcoming YOGs the YOGOCs and IOC will benefit from identifying what the stakeholders really expect in order to achieve increased accountability and transparency.

5.4.2. Brand Delivery

Brand delivery holds the important role of delivering the expected brand experience. According to Hoye and Cuskelly (2007), this phase can result in increased value if the YOGOCs manage to deliver in accordance with the stakeholders' expectations. The previous chapter indicated that many of the stakeholders did not have any specific expectations with the YOG. This constructed a more holistic view on the situation, as it must have been difficult for the YOGOCs to fulfill unpredictable expectations. In other words, so far has all the YOGOCs have had to plan for their brand delivery based on what they predicted the stakeholders would expect from them.

Although the informants only had experience from attending one or two YOG (or EYOF), their expectations reflected much of their perception and interpretation of the Olympic brand. As stated by Aaker (1991), brand delivery is to deliver the expected brand experience with reliability, which is a critical factor in the value creation process (Helm & Jones, 2010). During the SYOG, the NOC representatives reported that the event was “over the top”, “there were many volunteers, probably too many”, “armed security guards within the YOV”, and “very extravagant” (R1 & R2). These quotes illustrate that Singapore in some ways failed to deliver what was expected from them, as these descriptions does not match IOCs description of the YOG as an event that aims “to raise awareness among young people of sport and the practice of sport” (IOC, 2012. p.1).

As the YOG was determined to require less organizational effort from the host cities to bring the event back to its core values, Singapore ended up with exceeding its initial budget, and going way beyond what was expected from them. “(..) I remember the first thing Jacques Rogge said when we met for a meeting (during the SYOG) ‘forget the opening ceremony yesterday, this is not how it is supposed to be’” (R2). Apparently the opening ceremony was extravagant and not in-line with the YOG concept. Interestingly enough, the IOC have a close dialogue with the upcoming YOGOCs and should have predicted long before, that the initial summer YOG did not fit with the brand concept. The reason for this extravagant event may be because the chairman of the SYOG, Mr. Ng Ser Miang, was a member of the IOC, and wanted to prove that he could do a good job in staging the event, as he two years later campaigned for being the next IOC president (Degun, 2013).

The NOC representatives interpreted the concept of the YOG to be a downscale version of the OG, and were overwhelmed by the level of quality shown at Singapore. In Singapore, this was maybe a way of showing that they has a strict responsibility for maintaining proper safety measures for the participants, and that they included the public in the festivities by allowing them to become volunteers. This is certainly not a weakness, but it did not fit the stakeholders’ expectations and consequently the brand delivery was not successful at this point. When asked about Innsbruck 2012, their attitude more positive. This may be because the IYOGOC managed to deliver a youth sport event with more resemblance with Norwegian traditions, and thereby the brand

delivery was much more in-line with their expectations. The NOC representatives were very positive towards the IYOG venues, the good quality of the YOY, and that Innsbruck managed to create an “Olympic atmosphere”.

Innsbruck did not have the same budget or political incentives as Singapore. This gives a reason to wonder whether it is unfair that the two YOG’s had such a different starting point. When comparing the number of NOCs represented and the number of medal events, the winter YOG is only 31% the size of the summer YOG. This result indicates that there is probably more prestige in staging a successful summer edition of the YOG, since there are more people involved with the event. As the summer YOG is of a larger scale it is understandable that the budget is higher, but it is however arguable if this reason is good enough to defend the excessive spending by the SYOGOC, and their personal interpretation of the concept.

In Innsbruck, we had coaches that had experience from the EYOF and said that the YOG was something completely different (...). Especially regarding the transportation, accreditation, security (...) everything was just at a much higher standard (R1).

The common feature with the SYOG and IYOG was that they maintained a high standard and level of quality in their brand delivery. *“They promised the Olympic Games for the youth, and that is what I got. It was a great opening ceremony and the YOY was spectacular (...) I will definitely say that Innsbruck delivered beyond my expectations”* (A). The athlete was more than happy with his experience with the YOG, which is a very positive outcome since the YOG is supposed to be an event for, by, and with the youth. The YOG was not the athlete’s first international competition, but it was the first time he competed at a multisport event. He emphasized that it was the CEP that made the main difference, and said that he felt special, as it only was the athletes that were allowed into the YOY and the CEP venues.

Although the athlete was happy with the delivery, one of the staff members from IYOGOC did not have the same opinion.

I believe that from an outside perspective the YOG was fantastic, but from the inside it was not like that at all (...) I guess I had imagined a more professional staff, but at the same time the YOG is for the youth by the youth, so (...) I have mixed feelings about this delivery (S1).

Because the staff member experienced the YOG from an “inside-out” perspective, her perception of the event was colored by her personal experience with the IYOGOC. She was part of delivering the brand promise, but was uncertain to what extent they had managed to do so. It is a unique initiative that the YOG organizations consist of young people, but at the same time their lack of experience may cause unexpected and unforeseen challenges. On the other side, the IOC is the brand owner and one should therefore expect that the brand owners would be more prominent at this critical point of stage.

One of the coaches had an “outside-in” perspective, and did not know much about the event before attending it. *“I would say that I am happy with brand delivery, mostly because I did not know what to expect. I mean it was not like they had any defined promises that should be met” (C1).* It was attention grabbing to hear the coach say that he did not see the YOG as having made any promises. This is because the Olympic values are the YOG’s brand promise to the consumers and stakeholders to deliver a specific set of benefits, features, services, or experiences on a consistent basis (Séguin et al., 2013). These promises are made to the consumers and stakeholders to inform them of what they should expect in order to become satisfied with the brand delivery. So when the coach stated that there were not any promises made, what does the brand communicate to their stakeholders? If the stakeholders of the YOG do not know what the values are, how can the brand manage to build expectations? Further on, how can the stakeholders determine their satisfaction with the deliverance of the brand promise, when they do not know which promises the brand seeks to fulfill?

These questions are in line with the fact that it seems like the IOC itself does not really know how to position the brand. It appears to be an overall confusion of how the brand concept fits, as the aim with the brand differs from context to context. At one stage it is said that the YOG is initiated to combat childhood obesity and the sedentary lifestyle of the youth (Judge et al., 2009; Judge et al., 2011; Séguin et al., 2013; Wong, 2011),

whilst at another stage the level of sport excellence or universal representation is promoted (IOC 2011a; 2012; 2013a; 2013b). This indicates that the IOC at this stage do not know what to do with the YOG, and this gives the impression that they have decided to let the brand develop as they go and improve from one YOG to the next.

I do not remember what the values of the YOG are. But I remember there was a strong solidarity across the nations, and it was a lot of focus on the social part of doing sport (...) so if I was to guess what the values are, I would say responsibility and friendship (C1).

The coach managed to guess one of the core values without knowing it. This can point out that the YOG did manage to create a safe and social atmosphere, which encouraged athletes and coaches to create friendships across nations, without having the core values forced on them.

One of the staff members of the IYOGOC stated that the values of the YOG were visible to a limited extent (S1). Some of the values were more noticeable among the volunteers. They were working many hours for no salary, and for them friendship and respect were the most prominent values. The presence of sport excellence was however difficult to notice.

Excellence is a value that is difficult to see a fit with the YOG brand. As far as I have understood excellence, it is supposed to illustrate the balance between a bright mind and the physical body, and that value was not very outstanding compared with friendship and respect (S1).

Friendship and respect are two of the core values that were found to be the most noticeable during the YOG. This was also supported by one of the NOC representatives. She said that the Olympic values were prominent during the CEP programme, and she listed friendship, self-expression, and education (R1). This is in line with the IOC's vision to promote the CEP as an education programme where the athletes are introduced to the Olympic values and Olympism (IOC, 2012). One of the coaches said that the CEP encouraged the athletes to reflect upon their own values, although it was the sporting competitions that was their main focus.

I cannot remember ever being exposed to the written values of the YOG. But I remember the athletes being more self-conscious after attending a class at the CEP. They were given lessons in taking a responsibility about drugs and the importance of completing their education (...). But, when thinking about this in retrospect I must say that it was difficult to pay attention to the Olympic values during the competitions. We competed to win, and when the busses were late, or when a blizzard postponed the event and we had to sit in a cold cafeteria, the Olympic values were far off from my mind (C1).

The YOG is founded on the Olympic values and is said to be closer to them compared with the OG. It is arguable whether the findings by Hanstad et al., (2013) saying that the YOG was found to be closer to the Olympic values, correspond with this research. This is because the majority of the informants in this study were not able to recall what the values were. Many of them did however reflect upon friendship and respect as common features seen at the YOG venue. They also agreed that these values were a prominent part of the YOG. This indicates that the YOG managed to communicate their brand promise through the delivery of the brand experience, without prompting the values on the stakeholders. This is a good achievement and one can, on the basis of this argument, state that the YOG managed to deliver the brand promise of friendship and respect. The weakness is that this delivery is not unique for the YOG. Friendship and respect are common values for most international (amateur) sport competitions, and from this perspective it is not an overwhelming achievement that the YOG managed to communicate this to the stakeholders. Consequently, the brand must look for other ways to deliver a unique experience that differentiates them from the competition.

Sport excellence, which is the latter core value, did not seem to have a fit with the YOG brand. One of the reasons why this value was not mentioned by any of the stakeholders might stem from the sport competitions. Many of the informants stated that it was not a competition of high level, and that excellence was not a prominent value seen either in the sport arena or the CEP. The IOC promised a “*sporting event of the highest level for young people*” (IOC, 2012, p. 1), but many of the informants did not agree upon this. They considered the sport competitions to be of a lower standard compared with other

youth sport competitions. This finding is an important issue as there is a disconnection with what the brand wants to be, and how it is perceived in reality. If the YOG do not manage to deliver their promises, the consumers and stakeholders will lose interest and the brand will not become favourable and unique.

Many of the informants emphasized that they did not rate the YOG to be the most important competition to attend. One of the NOC representatives' said: "*Some of the competitions were almost comical. The ski jumpers for example, they were 20 athletes, that's nothing. The quality of competitions at the YOG was not high compared to the qualifying competitions*" (R1).

The athlete supported this statement and added that there is not a big interest for the YOG.

Don't get me wrong, I loved being there, but I played for like seven spectators, and the media didn't even bother to report it back to my hometown (...).The limited time we had to prepare for this brought down the level of the competitions significantly (A).

This finding corresponds with research conducted by Krieger (2013) and Kristiansen (2012), which found that the athletes did not perceive the YOG as being their main sport competition of the year. On the basis of these findings, it is apparent that sport excellence is not the most prominent factor during the event period, and the delivery of this promise was not successful. This also reflects the lack of media attention and spectator appearance, since the sport competition with a high level of sport excellence is usually packaged as entertainment, and this does not seem to be the case with the YOG. Without excellence the brand loses its feature of delivering spectacular performance, which is seen as one of the most prominent reasons why the Olympics has high brand equity.

The aim of delivering a promise of sport excellence is difficult to achieve, since the IOC seeks to attain universal representation. This finding was supported by one of the NOC representatives. He stated that since the YOG follows the Olympic standard, the IOC would emphasize on engaging more nations to participate rather than raising the standards of the competitions. "*I believe that it is an additional value to see a ski*

jumper from Ghana and an African cross-country skier participate at the YOG, it illustrates that the Olympic values unite the world” (R2). One can argue that this is an additional value, but in this case it might overrun the value of excellence completely.

Although the sight of seeing the first African winning a medal in the winter YOG is a unique moment, it does not hide the truth that the majority of the informants did not recall the three Olympic values. These values represent the brand’s promise to the consumers, and without prominent promises it will be difficult to create expectations. According to the value co-creation system, there are no sign of co-creation when the various components do not match.

There is no doubt that the YOGOCs have had a challenging task in delivering the brand without knowing the stakeholders expectations. Although the concept can rest upon many of the similar features of the OG, they have to deliver a unique experience to the consumers in order to obtain brand satisfaction and loyalty (Helm & Jones, 2010). In addition, the brand must be differentiated in a way that makes the stakeholders understand that the YOG is not the same as the OG. This chapter revealed that there is a disconnection between what the brand wants to be and how it is perceived in reality. The IOC does not seem to really know how they want the brand to be, and it seems like they have chosen to let the brand develop as they go.

The delivery of the two YOG editions was very diverse. Singapore was seen as being “over the top”, while Innsbruck had a more low key delivery that was more consistent with the stakeholders perception of the brand. Both events managed to deliver an Olympic atmosphere, but the value of sport excellence was not noticeable. As a result, the two events did not manage to deliver an entertainment value, which may be the reason for the absence of media, sponsors, and spectators.

As Innsbruck and Singapore were more or less “test subjects” for the brand, it is in some ways understandable that the brand has not achieved much awareness yet. To become a strong brand in the already established market, the expectations of the stakeholders must be identified to achieve increased transparency and accountability from the stakeholders. The brand deliverance was successful in some ways, as the athlete was happy with the delivery. But it was also mentioned that since there was no promises made in advance, the brand promise was not achieved. The IOC through the

YOG was more focused on universal representation, and consequently it is arguable of this value should be replaced with sport excellence to achieve a successful delivery that harmonize with the brand promise.

5.4.3. Brand Satisfaction

According to Helm and Jones (2010), the value-generating resources are aligned to meet the consumers and stakeholders' value seeking processes within the system of stakeholder satisfaction and loyalty. This is a result of a successful achievement of brand promise, delivery, and expectations (Helm & Jones, 2010). But in order for the YOGOCs' to achieve revenue, return on investment, and brand equity, the stakeholders must be satisfied with the brand delivery before they can see themselves as loyal to the brand (Helm & Jones, 2010). This stage is a critical component for the YOG brand, as their success is dependent on stakeholder satisfaction (Parent & Deephouse, 2007).

If the stakeholders included in this study are satisfied with the service that was provided for them, it may have higher chances to reach brand loyalty (Kwak, McDaniel & Kim, 2012; Séguin et al., 2013). The satisfaction regarding the delivery in Singapore and Innsbruck was fluctuating, and when the informants were asked about this subject, various answers were given. One of the parents said that he did not see the quality of the sport competitions as being good enough compared to his expectations:

We do it just as well here in Norway (...) there were some big mistakes that happened, which we rarely see in Norway (...) I was not impressed by the technical solutions, but my overall satisfaction with the experience was good (...) in my opinion it was much like the Olympics (P2).

The parent (P2) refers to a mistake that happened during the women's biathlon competition where some of the athletes did not get their blinks changed from the prone to the standing shooting. This incident was mentioned by both the parents interviewed, and they were not satisfied with how the organizers handled the situation. *"We couldn't do much with the situation as the damage was already done (...) It was solved in a sort of unprofessional way afterwards (...)"* (P1). The organizers handled the situation by reducing the overall time for those athletes that were harmed by the incident. The parents were not satisfied with this solution, because the athletes used unnecessary

energy on the penalty laps. This incident illustrates that it is not just the “Olympic atmosphere” that will determine whether the various stakeholders are satisfied, it is rather the overall satisfaction with the delivery from the entire YOGOC departments.

Another limitation to the overall satisfaction with the delivery was the low awareness among the NOCs prior to the IYOG. One of the side effects of this was that many of the sport federations did not know what to prepare the athletes for, and the mixed teams were put together too late.

It is not normal to play mixed teams with girls and boys, and as a result our team performance was low and that was very disappointing (A).

Krieger (2013), Kristiansen (2012), and Schnitzer et al., (2014) also highlighted the lack of time to prepare as an issue in their research. According to Kristiansen (2012) this was a stressor for the athletes because it reduced their hope of achieving good results. The limited time for preparation is mainly a weakness in the communication from the YOGOCs to the NOCs and so on, but the problem was that the athletes were those who had to suffer. From the athletes perspective the YOG is supposed to be one of the biggest achievements of their young sporting careers, and it is not positive when their response was that they felt uncomfortable since they did not feel prepared enough. The issue is that many of the competitions are not part of regular sport development and competition format. Although the intention behind the innovative approach to sport is good, the athletes have not been prepared to do the sport based on this competition format. As a consequence, the athletes are not performing sport excellence, and they are disappointed with their team performance (A). This also indicates that performance matter, and that the athletes are not at the YOG for the sole purpose of having fun.

Krieger (2013) also specified that the YOG was not an event that was prioritized by the athletes in his study, but emphasized that this might change for the future athletes competing at the YOG. It is possible to believe that when the level of awareness about the YOG increases, the upcoming athletes will have more knowledge about the concept and coaches will be more prepared to help them at an earlier stage of the preparation period.

Neither the incident at the biathlon competition nor the limited time to prepare for the sport competitions was mentioned by any of the coaches. They stated that they were satisfied with the YOG, and said that their expectations regarding the Olympic venues were met. *“I am satisfied with the overall quality of the event, especially the sport venues”* (C2). Another coach was satisfied with the brand delivery at Innsbruck, mostly because he did not know what to expect. *“(…) if I were to measure my expectations (…) and when I saw how big the IYOG actually was, I must say that I was very satisfied with the event* (C1).

The NOC representatives also expressed this positive attitude, and stated that the level of quality and security were the most prominent factors for their satisfaction.

I am very satisfied with my experience of the YOG (…) I was especially impressed by Innsbruck since they had some economic challenges, but they managed to deliver a very good product (…) I give all credit to Innsbruck for that (R2).

Issues such as the organizers mistake at the Biathlon venue, economic restrictions, and limited time for the NOCs and athletes to prepare, were the main findings on this subject. These concerns affected the overall satisfaction with the brand, and demonstrate that the stakeholders have various needs and rate their level of satisfaction based on topics that concern them. In spite of this, it was also possible to measure a positive attitude from many of the stakeholders. Both events managed to mark their cities with the YOG, and many of the stakeholders stated that although there were some issues that should be improved, at the end this was truly a good and memorable experience for the athletes. It is evident that Singapore and Innsbruck had their share of challenges as they were the first to host the summer and winter YOG, especially when it comes to the integration of sport, culture, and education. Even though the brand satisfaction was positive to some extent from the stakeholders’ point of view, the upcoming YOGOCs must aim for a more holistic delivery of the brand concept. All aspects of the delivery must be of a high quality to attain and maintain brand satisfaction.

5.4.4. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is the last component in the value co-creation system, and addresses the stakeholders’ loyalty towards the brand. In order for a brand to reach brand equity, all

intangible assets such as brand awareness, associations, loyalty, and perceived quality must be present (Aaker, 1991). The model on brand equity is illustrated in *Figure 3.1* (p. 26), and is the return the firm will achieve if they manage to create a successful brand value co-creation cycle with the stakeholders. Brand loyalty is often the core of brand equity, and is the measure of attachment the stakeholders has to a brand (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). It has already been argued in this thesis that the Olympic brand attains high brand equity, but is this the case for the YOG brand?

In many ways the YOG is not different from other youth sport events. At other international competitions the athletes will be able to create friendship across nations and gain a positive experience too. The values of friendship and respect will probably be present, and sport excellence is likely to be of a higher standard. The performance aspect is perceived as being weaker due to universal representation, and because some of the sport competitions are not a part of regular competition format. What differentiates the brand from the competition is the inclusion of the CEP and its link to the Olympic brand. Accordingly, the positive outcome will most likely be to rise a new generation of loyal Olympic fans and athletes. The negative outcome is that the YOG brand is at this point of time, not valuable enough to contribute to the overall strength of the Olympic brand.

Based on the various occasions mentioned by the stakeholders, it is difficult to conclude to what extent the YOG brand delivered its brand promise. The YOG did manage to deliver a unique atmosphere and some of its core values (friendship and respect), and this may be interpreted that the brand managed to deliver some parts of the brand promise. But this is arguable, as the stakeholders did not really have specific expectations regarding these promises. It has become prominent in this research that it is unclear what the brand promise really is. The final issue is to what extent the stakeholders are loyal to the YOG brand. As there has not been conducted any previous research on this matter regarding the YOG, this research had to rely on the stakeholders answers to map their perception of brand loyalty.

I am loyal to the YOG, at least to a limited extent (...) although the junior championships in the specific sports will still be rated higher. But it is within the Olympic movement and that is positive, and there is also something with the athletes' being called "YOG winners" and "participants" (...) it has strength because the Olympics have a strong position in Norway (R1).

The Olympics has a strong position in Norway, mostly because it is a rare event based on a quadrennial model. It is a multisport event that reaches all generations, but the YOG has so far not managed to achieve a similar position in the market. Overall, many of the stakeholders indicated that they would continue to follow the development of the YOG, which may lead to future loyalty. This is a valid argument, as the stakeholders are already loyal to the brand as long as they participate in the YOG. The event is for the youth, and as long as the event has young athletes attending, the parents will come too. The NOCs represent their nation and the coaches are there for their athletes, and in some ways they are all forced to be involved with it. This means that as long as athletes compete at the YOG, many of the additional stakeholders will have to come too. This type of professional loyalty is not comparable to the way Aaker (1991) intended to describe brand loyalty.

One of the main issues that became apparent at this point was that several of the stakeholders had not fully understood what the YOG really is. *"It was a mix of everything"* (C2). Another of the staff members said that *"I believe in the concept, and I believe it will become a great success in the future. But as of today the YOG has a long way to go when it comes to achieving the purpose of the concept"* (S1).

It has been challenging to get a comprehensive overview of the YOG concept. This is mostly because many of the IOC's objectives are described in various forms and purposes, around different websites and academic journals. According to one of the informants working with the YOG, this was a big issue. If it was not enough that they (IYOG staff) did not know what the stakeholders expected, the IYOGOC did not know what the IOC expected from them.

I was on a seminar about the CEP where some IOC representatives spoke widely about how the youth of today had to be taken away from the digital screens. And so... Months later I was told that all the CEP activities had to be digital in order to reach the youth... So... I mean... It does not seem like even the IOC really knows what this is (S2).

The stakeholders' perception of the IOC became a recurrent subject during the interviews. Many of the informants were critical to the IOC, and the researcher got the impression that this criticism might have been transferred to their perception of the YOG brand. The implementation and promotion of the CEP was particularly prominent. The intention with the CEP is to introduce the athletes to the Olympic values and Olympism in an innovative way (IOC, 2013c), but the participants at the CEP had mixed feelings about this. Several informants stated that their impression of the CEP did not correspond with what the IOC promoted, whereas others were more satisfied with the CEP.

The IOC says that the YOG is 50% sport and 50% CEP, and they love to say this out loud and to present this shiny picture of the YOG, but in reality the CEP is neither mandatory nor easy accessible. Therefore the CEP is far from being 50 % (S1).

One of the staff informants (S1) said that she perceived the IOC as an organization that wanted more than what they could provide for. According to the IOC factsheet (2012) it was stated that *"the CEP has proven to be a huge success to date"* (p. 2) and this was not something the staff member (S1) agreed on. She said that during the IYOG, approximately 30% of the participating nations attended the CEP, and that the coaches and athletes were more concerned with the competitions. In the factsheet published by the IOC, and on the official webpage of the YOG, organized by the IOC (olympic.org, 2013), it is apparent that the YOG and the CEP is promoted as a unique feature of the brand.

I think the YOG is missing something important with the CEP, because it is not mandatory to attend it. Let's say that there are about 70% of the participating nations that never attends the CEP, they focus on the competitions, and at the end only 30% went to the CEP. What success is that? (S1).

It is not surprising that the IOC seeks to promote the CEP as a unique feature of the YOG; it is after all one of the main features that differentiates this brand from the competition. It is however difficult to determine whether the CEP should be mandatory or not, mostly because it can be perceived as if the IOC (through the YOGOCs) forces the athletes to attend it, and consequently negative associations will arise. *“If an athlete is forced to be at ‘be the chef session’ he will probably be standing in a corner frying minced meat with a grumpy attitude, and then the whole point of the CEP is gone”*(S1).

Research conducted by Krieger (2013) and Nordhagen (2013), supports this finding, and emphasizes that the IOC's statements are not corresponding with the stakeholders' perception of the CEP. According to Krieger (2013) the athletes' involved in his study did not perceive the content of the CEP as entirely positive. This was mostly because they perceived the CEP activities as not being suitable for their age (Krieger, 2013). This was also found in this research, as both of the NOC representatives pointed out that the CEP in 2010 was *“a bit childish”* (R1). They did however emphasize that Innsbruck managed to create a CEP that was more in-line with the athletes' age and interests.

For the athlete included in this study, the IYOG was his first experience with a multisport event. Although the level of quality was high at many stages, the athlete emphasized that the competition venues did not live up to his expectations. *“I mean, we played for like seven spectators”* (A). The Athlete had imagined full seats and a cheering crowd, and consequently an empty arena did not fit his expectations. Krieger (2013) and Parent et al., (2013) also mentioned that there was lack of spectators at the event venues. It is a weakness that the YOG do not attract more spectators and fans, and this contributes into decreasing the overall satisfaction of the brand delivery.

I have been to many tournaments that have higher level of quality than the YOG. I mean, they could have done so much more at the curling venues... But when it comes to loyalty I must say that I know very many athletes from other countries, and we are, despite the low quality of the competitions, very loyal towards the YOG. We always praise the YOG when speaking to others about it, and we support each other too... I believe we were visible, and I hope we can continue raising awareness about the YOG to our young athletes up until Lillehammer

2016. I believe the YOG inspires the athletes of tomorrow, and I contribute into creating awareness about this (A).

Despite the empty venues the athlete ended the interview by stating this. The YOG managed to deliver a unique experience even though some expectations were not met. The athlete along with his newfound friends speaks positively about the event in retrospect and will continue staying loyal to the brand.

The informants were all over satisfied with the brand delivery, but this was mostly because they did not know what to expect. When discussing this issue in retrospect, many of the informants said that they did not fully understand the YOG concept. One of the coaches said that he did not know what the YOG was, and had various opinions about it. But he did state that: *“I am loyal. At least to a greater extent than if I had not been part of it. So my experience YOG has affected me in that respect”* (C1). This type of loyalty is tied to the fact that the coach had to attend the YOG because of his job, and not because of his personal relationship with the brand. Does this mean that the coach will stay loyal as long as the YOG exists, or will this loyalty go beyond his profession? As an argument to this question, the coach did say that it had affected him, and because of his new gained experience with the brand, the coach can become loyal to the brand in the future. His quote is also a good example that a successful brand delivery can change the mind of the consumer and achieve brand loyalty.

The athlete was very clear in his statements and said that his experience with the YOG was unlike any other. In other international competitions, he and his team never talk to the competitors until the competitions are over. *“It was a different atmosphere, I just talked to everyone, and it was such a great social atmosphere”* (A). In addition, the athlete mentioned the YOG DNA as something that was inside him, and that he and his new YOG friends contributed into speaking positively about the event to their friends and family.

Lillehammer will host the next edition of the winter YOG in 2016, and this was also mention as a reason for continuing their loyalty to the YOG. *“Yes, I will say I am loyal. Now it is maybe special since it will be in Norway next time. This means that in a way we have a responsibility towards the event (...)”* (R2). This type of loyalty is similar to what was discussed in the case of the coach. This type of loyalty is not tied to the

personal engagement with the brand, but rather a loyalty that is tied to a professional aspect. Since this research is conducted in a Norwegian context, it is possible to believe that many of the stakeholders will stay loyal to the brand at least through 2016. Consequently this is not a loyalty the IOC can rely on for future staging of the YOG.

The journalist asked what there was to be loyal to: *“(...) I do not think the YOG has the same status because the athletes’ are too young, subsequently the media will not prioritize resources for sending journalists there... But I will of course pay attention when Lillehammer is hosting it”* (J).

The YOG is an opportunity for the youth to experience an international multisport event. It seeks to enhance the athletes’ knowledge about international cultures, the Olympic values, and ethics, while they are competing in innovative approaches to their original sport. In order to achieve brand loyalty the IOC must decide what the YOG is and how it should be perceived as a concept. The YOG is the OG’s little brother, and to avoid the stakeholders perceiving this as a copy, actions must be made if the brand is to succeed in delivering a true and unique experience. The YOG obtains a limited loyalty that is tied to professional relationships, rather than personal. The athlete was the only one to state from a personal aspect that he would stay loyal to the brand in the future. The journalist did not understand what there was to be loyal to, whilst the additional stakeholders would stay true to the brand because of Lillehammer 2016.

5.5. Are stakeholders co-creating the YOG brand?

According to Jones (2005) the performance of the relationship between the YOG and the stakeholders contributes to brand value. This relationship has two aspects: (i) Brand value is created through a series of stakeholder relationships, and this value must be assessed based on each stakeholder relationship. (ii) In order to determine the value creation one must assess whether the stakeholders have a mutual dialogical relationship (Jones, 2005).

In this chapter, each stakeholder groups is assessed according to the framework presented by Helm and Jones (2010). The stakeholder groups will be discussed in this order: the mission staff, NOC representatives, the athlete, coaches, parents, journalist (media), and the funding sources (sponsors). Experiential marketing is included at the

latter part of this chapter, where the aim is to understand to what extent the YOG managed to create a unique experience for the stakeholders.

The mission staff group consisted of three persons with experience from Innsbruck 2012 and Lillehammer 2016. As two of them worked for the IYOGOC, their opinions and reflections were much more informative when assessing their expectations with brand satisfaction and loyalty. They indicated that they expected the YOG to be a challenge since Innsbruck was the first city ever to stage the winter YOG. Lack of traditions, framework, and routines confirmed their expectations of a challenging process. Both did however express that their expectations were mostly undefined, because they did not know much about the concept before they started working with it.

On the brand delivery stage there was a difference between those who had experience from the IYOG compared to the one representing the LYOG. One of the IYOG staff said that she was disappointed with the IOC's interpretation of the CEP, and the CEP in general. She called for more guidelines to make the CEP live up to the promise of being 50% of the YOG. The other informant from Innsbruck was more concerned about the future of the YOG, as it was difficult to attain sponsorship revenues. He further stated that the economic insecurity was an issue for the brand delivery, although he was satisfied with what they managed to deliver. The latter informant from the LYOG expected the YOG to be an event for, by, and with the youth, and was positive towards the brand delivery.

Regarding the brand satisfaction the staff was overall positive even though one of the informants said "*it was quite a mess backstage during the event period*" (S1). When asked about brand loyalty all of them specified that they did speak positive about the brand to their peers and colleagues, and said that they would stay true to the YOG brand in the future. Based on this summary it is safe to say that the mission staffs co-creates brand value, which contribute to the YOG brand attaining ROI and brand equity while the stakeholders receive brand fulfillment.

The NOC representatives were the most experienced stakeholders involved in this study. With experience from the EYOF, the SYOG, and IYOG they were able to compare the YOG with other youth sport events, thereby providing this study with more in-depth knowledge. The informants had different expectations to the summer and

winter YOG. Prior to Singapore 2010 the awareness about the brand was very low, and all the information they could retrieve was based on the information given by the IOC. They did however expect the YOG to be of good quality and that security measures would be taken.

As discussed in the chapter on brand expectations, the informants were clear that Singapore did not match all of their expectations. The promise of an event that was going to be for the youth in a fun and festive atmosphere was blown by the informants seeing armed security guards in the YOY, extravagant budget spending, and what is to be understood as a misconception of the YOG brand. The expectation towards Innsbruck was that this event would be more down to earth, even though the level of quality would be the same. It is safe to say that the IYOG managed to accomplish a successful brand delivery that fitted the stakeholders' expectations, while the SYOG did not the same extent succeed in the brand delivery process.

The NOC representatives were not completely positive regarding the brand delivery. The two YOG events were very different in how they interpreted the brand, and they (NOC representatives) emphasized that the upcoming YOG should focus more on delivering a brand that correspond with the brand promise. The brand satisfaction mirrors the two YOGOCs different interpretation of the YOG brand, and it is possible to assume that Innsbruck was more closely in line with how Norwegian sport events are conducted. Although they were overwhelmed by the delivery from the SYOG, the overall brand satisfaction was positive. Regarding loyalty, the Norwegian NOC employs the NOC representatives, and their perception of loyalty is tied to their professional relationship with the brand. They did see the value of attending the YOG with their athletes, and said that they would continue being loyal and prioritize this event for their athletes.

For the athlete included in this study, the IYOG was the first big youth sport event he attended. He expected an Olympic atmosphere for the youth, and was happy to have gained international friendships and become a member of the YOG DNA. He was satisfied with experiencing a social venue, but emphasized that the lack of time to prepare was an issue. It is a probability that the athlete would have been more satisfied if there were more spectators at the venue, and if he had been given more time to

prepare for the new sport program. He did however emphasize that he would continue being loyal and co-create value on behalf of him, his new YOG friends, and his sport.

The coaches' were sceptical towards the YOG, mostly since it is a new and unknown event and because it has provided the sport organizations with certain challenges (e.g. selection process, economy). They did not know much about the event before the YOG took place in Innsbruck 2012, but stated that they were overblown with what was delivered to them. One of the coaches told that the YOG had been life changing for two of his athletes.

The boy and the girl from Norway are today the best freeskiers' in the world. It may be a coincident, but I believe this might have affected them. They attended some cultural stuff where they could talk to former Olympians. There was a luge athlete and a hockey lady that emphasized how important it was to continue their education while doing their sport (...) today; both of my athletes are still juggling between school and education... It is absolutely a possibility that this may have affected their perspective; I mean.. They could have ended their education if they wanted to (C1).

The coaches' expectations were met at all levels and, they were satisfied with what was delivered to them in Innsbruck. They contribute with speaking positively about the event in retrospect, and consider themselves as loyal to the brand, at least from a professional point of view. This means that they will encourage their athletes to aim for the YOG in Lillehammer 2016.

The parents attended to the YOG solely on the behalf of their children. They wanted to support them as they were young and in an unknown country. One of the parents had spoken with some friends (parents too) that had been to SYOG, but she said that she did not use them as a point of reference when establishing her expectations. Both parents had experience from EYOF, and expected the YOG to be an upscale version of this and a low-key version of the OG. They felt that their expectations were met regarding the similar traditions of the OG (e.g. opening and closing ceremony), and the unique atmosphere at the event venues. But they were disappointed with some mistakes that were made by the organizers. This affected their overall satisfaction with the brand,

since they expected the YOG be of the same quality as the Olympics. They did however state that they would continue supporting the YOG, although one of the parents did not have more children that could aim for the event in Lillehammer 2016. The parents are co-creating the brand because they perceived this event as a good learning venue for their children. But in order for their loyalty to sustain, the level of quality regarding the competitions must be increased in the upcoming Games.

The journalist represented the media stakeholder group, and did not have any specific expectations before leaving for Innsbruck. He was open to the fact that he went for the only purpose of determining his opinion about this new Olympic phenomenon, and his attitude was rather negative. He went to the YOG as an observer and did not do much research ahead, which is similar to the other stakeholders interviewed. Since he did not have any expectations ahead, he had a difficulty determining his level of satisfaction. He did however say that it was surprising to see how happy and satisfied the athletes were.

As there were very few Norwegian journalists at Innsbruck, the journalist included in this study is one of few (journalists from Norway) with lived experience from the YOG. He emphasized that the athletes were too young to achieve any attention by the media, and that he did not see the YOG as an event that would get much more publicity in the future. On the basis of this response, the media stakeholder group is not loyal to the brand. This means that there is a probability that the media will continue being absent from the YOG venues.

The results from the media stakeholder group are similar to the sponsors' level of interest towards the YOG. The sponsors and the media represent a triangle along with the athletes. If an athlete receives good results, the media will write about him/her, and this publicity is interesting for the sponsors to invest in. But in this case, there are no world-class athletes and no sport excellence, and this may be a decisive factor for the media's absence. Consequently, to what extent should we expect the sponsors to be willing to invest in this? As this research did not succeed in contacting any previous sponsors of the YOG, this question remains unanswered. However, this lack of engagement by the sponsors do tell us that they are not interested in gaining more

information about the YOG, and that they do not consider the brand to provide enough unique benefits through co-creation of value.

When discussing value co-creation and the overall satisfaction with the YOG brand, the theory on experiential marketing is applicable. The theory is described in chapter 3.3 p.32, and is included because the firm can strengthen its connection with the stakeholders by using experiential marketing. The Olympic Games use experiential marketing as a tool to generate emotions, but there is not enough evidence to ascertain that this also apply for the YOG. The YOGOC should strive to ensure that all of their stakeholders enjoy a unique and memorable Olympic experience. Through collaboration with the various stakeholder groups, the YOGOC would have to assess their needs and wants to provide for an Olympic experiential value, which generates emotions, socio-cultural and/or symbolic benefits (Ferrand et al., 2012). The focus should be on the specific value creating system, within which different economic actors' such as business partners, suppliers, customers and allies work together to co-create value (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009).

The spectators at the YOG produce socio-emotional benefits based on their presence and collective involvement at the event (Ferrand et al., 2012). The interaction between the event and the spectators may lead to co-creation of experience. Based on the level of satisfaction described by the stakeholders, the YOG has in some ways managed to deliver an experience. They managed to deliver some benefits that are social (the athlete got new friends), aesthetic (high level of quality), and hedonistic (joy and pleasure). It is not mentioned by any of the stakeholders whether YOG managed to create benefits that were affective (generating emotions), but one can assume that this was present as it is a big accomplishment for the athletes to participate at the YOG. The problem with experiential marketing is that it is targeted at the spectators, which were more or less absent from the YOG venues. So when discussing the actual delivery, it is arguable to what extent one can say that the YOG managed to achieve a co-creation of experience. The YOG must focus even more on including the stakeholders in this process to achieve co-creation, and hopefully, the stakeholders will spread the word of having a positive experience with the brand, which can attract more spectators in the future.

5.6. Does the YOG attain brand equity?

The majority of the stakeholders are loyal to the brand from a professional standpoint, but stated that they would continue supporting the brand. A reason for this may be that the next winter YOG will be hosted in Norway. This indicates that multiple stakeholders included in this study, are co-creating the value of the YOG brand from a professional aspect. The benefit of achieving this is ROI and brand equity for the firm, whereas the stakeholders gain a high level of satisfaction. These benefits are however limited. The loyalty is linked to the stakeholders' professional involvement with the brand, and not from a personal standpoint.

The informants were asked which of the four attributes they felt had the best and least fit with their perception of the YOG brand. "Brand Associations" and "perceived quality" was the main answers when asked about the best fit. Associations were mentioned as they associated the YOG with the positive aspects of the OG and the Olympic atmosphere, which is a unique feature of the Olympic brand. Perceived quality was mentioned because of the quality of the event organizers, the security measures, timing, and the Olympic venues where the events took place.

On the opposite side, the majority of the stakeholders listed "brand awareness" as the biggest weakness of the brand. This answer is in line with previous findings on the subject (Krieger, 2013; Kristiansen, 2012; Parent et al., 2013; Hanstad et al., 2013). The finding also indicates that the YOG brand does not attain brand equity, because of the absence of brand awareness and brand loyalty. This was also found in the research conducted by Judge et al., (2011), which stated that the YOG must increase promotion and marketing effort because of its lack of awareness.

It is a weakness that the YOG brand has not yet managed to properly set the concept. In addition, the fact that the brand lacks awareness is considered a big weakness for the brand. The stakeholders' loyalty towards the brand is limited, and neither the sponsors nor the media is co-creating value. The YOG does not attain brand equity at this stage, and it is uncertain whether the brand will attain high brand equity in the future.

5.7. Has the extension of the Olympic brand been a success?

The YOG is a relatively new Olympic phenomenon, and has so far had a challenge with positioning the brand in the marketplace. The full “Youth Olympic Games” brand name is long and tricky to pronounce internationally. But since the YOG is a part of the Olympic family, the brand name can be considered strong and favorable since the brand name contains both “Olympic” and “Games”. The brand mark is the Olympic rings with the YOG DNA logo placed in a speech bubble. The logo is youthful and colorful, reflecting the image of the product. The weakness lies in the fact that there is a low awareness of what the DNA stands for. The YOG DNA logo is trademarked, a signal that gives the consumers a confirmation that this is a true product by the IOC.

The YOG is still in its initial stage of the product life cycle, meaning that it is too early to determine whether the extension of the Olympic brand has been successful or not. According to general marketing theory, products that are a duplicate of an original brand can skip the introduction stage and enter the product life cycle at a later stage (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2009). One might believe that this would be beneficial for the YOG brand as well, but this is not the case. Even though the YOG is a property of the IOC and has many similarities with the OG, the event is positioned to target a different market segment, namely the youth. This means that the product cannot skip a stage, because the brand is not a duplicate. However, in order to reach the youth, the IOC and the various YOGOCs must provide for extensive promotions to create awareness in the mind of the young consumers. The YOG is an extension of the Olympic brand, which requires significant investment from the organization in order for it to become a success. Based on this, it is important to state that the YOG is not a replacement of the OG; it is an event that comes in addition to the OG and Paralympics.

Apostolopoulou (2002) listed perceived fit with the parent brand, the relative strength of the parent brand, and promotional effort and surroundings for positioning, as key factors in a successful brand extension (BE). Based on the theory presented in this research, it is possible to state that YOG has a good fit with the parent brand. This is because it is founded on the same values, symbols, and traditions as the OG. Séguin et al., (2013) confirms this assumption and further states that the similar values contribute into positioning the extension with the core brand.

The Olympic brand has strong brand equity, and because of this achievement it is considered a strong brand in the market. In theory this value should be transferred to the line extension, and through promotional efforts and surroundings for positioning the new brand would be established in the mind of the consumers (Apostolopoulou, 2002). Although the YOG attains some of the intangible assets that are identified in the Olympic brand (i.e. perceived quality and associations), the line extension has not become independent at this stage. Consequently, it is reliant on the strength and economic power from its parent brand. A reason for this is perhaps that the YOG is lacking the promotional efforts to establish a strong brand. In addition, the IOC has not been clear in defining what the YOG is and what it really stands for. This has resulted in conflicting messages that have made the YOG brand difficult to understand. According to Séguin et al., (2013), the challenge is to clearly communicate the unique features of the YOG brand that contribute to the overall Olympic brand.

There is a minimal risk of cannibalization in this case, but the YOG is a downward extension of the Olympic brand, which can dilute the strength of the parent brand. To prevent this dilution, Boisvert (2012) argues that a new consumer group must be targeted, without having the risk of neglecting the already existing consumers (Séguin et al., 2013; Boisvert, 2012). The lack of awareness about the YOG brand stipulates that the current customer base has not been well informed about this extension, and the risk of negligence is present. In addition, inconsistent information about the extension can also reduce the strength of the parent brand. In this research it became evident that the IOC is still trying to establish the YOG concept, and objectives for the YOG are not incorporated to the extent one should expect at this stage. This supports the finding in this research, which emphasize that it is too early to determine the success of this extension.

Although the YOG is a larger property compared to the EYOF, the YOG is a downward extension of the Olympic brand, which again can dilute the strength of the parent brand. To prevent this dilution, Boisvert (2012) argues that a new consumer group must be targeted, without having the risk of neglecting the already existing consumers (Boisvert, 2012; Séguin et al., 2013). The lack of awareness about the YOG brand stipulates that

the current customer base has not been well informed about this extension, and the risk of negligence is present. In addition, inconsistent information about the extension can also reduce the strength of the parent brand. In this research it became evident that the IOC is still trying to establish the YOG concept, and the visions, needs, and goals of the YOG are not incorporated to the extent one should expect at this stage. This supports the finding in this research, which emphasize that it is too early to determine the success of this extension.

While there is a perceived fit between the YOG and the parent brand, a downward extension of the brand can tarnish the overall perception of the brand (Séguin et al., 2013). The informants in this study did not see the YOG as being of a lesser quality than the OG; in fact they rated perceived quality of having the best fit with their perception of brand equity. This is a positive finding and is supported by previous research on the subject, which states that a reduction of core brand equity may actually be worth it if the new market segment embraces the extended product (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995; Séguin et al., 2013;).

The majority of the stakeholders do to some extent embrace the YOG, but since the media and sponsors are not a part of this group it is possible to believe that this value is not strong enough to sustain the YOG in the future. Media and sponsors have not been promoting the event to the same extent as the OG, which again have resulted in a lower entertainment value (Hanstad, et al., 2013). This is not beneficial for the YOG, but the decision from the IOC to use the Internet and social media to showcase the YOG to the youth (target audience) may actually prove to be successful in time. According to Séguin et al., (2013) this can allow the YOG brand to nurture without diluting the parent brand. The use of social media and Internet to broadcast a major sport event is still perceived as an innovative approach in traditional sport, and is much in line with the YOG concept. This might be the key factor for success, and is supported by Séguin et al., (2012)'s assumption that this is what differentiate the YOG from the OG and other mega sport events.

6. Summary and Conclusion

After studying the YOG for almost a year, it has become clear that the YOG brand is a complex phenomenon. The purpose of the study was to find out if the stakeholders of the YOG co-create the brand, in a Norwegian context. Theory on brand equity and brand extension was also included to investigate to what extent the YOG is perceived as a strong brand. In comparison to its parent brand, Google scholar indicated that the research level was low on the YOG. In addition, there was a significant decrease in retrieving information about the YOG after 2010. The graph was expected to raise both in 2012 and in the beginning of 2014, but at this point of time it seems like the world is not interested in learning more about the YOG. It appears that the brand is torn between what the IOC wishes the brand to be, how it is interpreted by the YOGOCs, what the stakeholders expect the YOG to be, and how the IOC and the YOGOCs communicate the brand to the consumers and stakeholders.

This research revealed that there was an extensive gap between Innsbruck and Singapore, regarding their interpretation of the brand. Although the YOG was determined to require less organizational effort from the host cities to bring the event back to its core values, Singapore ended up with exceeding its initial budget, and going way beyond what was expected from them. Singapore had a political incentive for staging a successful event, while Innsbruck was challenged with attaining sponsorship revenues and national awareness. As the IOC has a close communication with the upcoming organizing committees, it is natural to wonder how the two events turned out so different when the IOC has to confirm all the decisions that are made.

The upcoming summer YOG in Nanjing 2014 is basing their concept upon their experience with the SYOG, whilst Lillehammer 2016 is basing their project on what they experienced in Innsbruck. These two events have little resemblance, and there seems to be a misconception of what the YOG really is and how it is going to be staged. As the NOC representative was told to *“forget about what you saw, this is not how it is supposed to be”* (R2), Nanjing 2014 follows the footsteps of Singapore. Consequently one can expect the YOG to have two editions, the extravagant, and the basic one. As all the YOGOCs receive more or less the same tools to stage the event, there is obviously room for personal interpretation of the brand. This is a crucial issue for the IOC, since

extravagant versions of the OGs has already lead consumers into questioning the integrity and strength of the Olympic brand. On the basis of these findings, it is evident that the IOC is uncertain of many aspects about the YOG brand.

Many stakeholders involved with this research felt that the IOC bragged about delivering a brand that did not reflect reality. The YOG was voted in favour by the IOC members, despite the lack of enthusiasm shown by some of the IFs and NOCs (Séguin et al., 2013). The result of this action was that it was neither the marketing department nor the stakeholders that established the YOG; it was a top-down decision that did not take into account how the YOG would manage to co-create value. This was a bold decision by the IOC, as this scepticism came from some of their key stakeholders. One should therefore expect that the IOC knew what they were doing. This research suggests that there may be a misconception of what the IOC wishes YOG to be and how the stakeholders perceive it.

All the informants included in this study had experience with the YOG, but the unique feature with this research was that each stakeholder described the event from their perspective. One should expect a lot of different perceptions when discussing a debated subject like the YOG, but this was not prominent for this case. At the end of each interview the author asked if they contributed into speaking positively about the event in retrospect, and the feedback was overall positive. Although their experience with the brand varied, they all felt obliged to stay positive to YOG at least until Lillehammer 2016.

The majority of the stakeholders expected a high professional and high quality event, but of a lesser extent than the OG. These expectations were based on their associations with the Olympic brand, but they do not correspond with Mr. Rogge's vision that the YOG should not be seen as a "mini-Olympics". The YOG brand is an extension of the Olympic brand, and if the associations with the OG should not be made, the IOC has to properly communicate what the stakeholders should expect. This research has found that there is a weakness in the marketing and communication efforts regarding expectations and associations.

The YOG did not manage to provide for a sport event of the highest level for the youth, and the value of sport excellence was absent at the sport venues. This is the most

prominent value of the OG, and the stakeholders had expected a higher quality regarding this matter. The IOC did not manage to deliver their brand promise, as the majority of the informants rated other sport events as being more important regarding prestige and sport quality.

There is a lot that needs to be improved in order for the YOG to attain brand equity. Much of this lies in the challenge of delivering what is promised to the consumers and stakeholders. The CEP was promised to be 50% of the event, but the informants emphasized that only a minority of the athletes attended it. The CEP must be designed to fit the athletes age and level of interest. In addition, the CEP must be communicated properly to the NOCs and their coaches, so that they can allow their athletes to attend it. The athletes should also be given a sufficient amount of time to prepare ahead of the next YOG, so that they feel confident with those sports that deviate from the regular competition program.

Friendship and respect were two of the three values of the brand promises that were the most prominent during the IYOG. The stakeholders did not recall these on their own, but managed to describe them based on their experience with the brand. The interesting case here is how we can expect the stakeholders to co-create value, when they cannot remember or recognize the values of the YOG and the Olympic brand. The values are the brand promise to the consumers, and if the consumers do not feel that the brand has promised anything, it becomes difficult to establish expectations. A brand without expectations from the consumers and stakeholders faces a challenge in satisfying them and delivering a successful brand experience.

Multiple stakeholders are co-creating value, and one should therefore expect that this would pay off, but this is not the case for the YOG. The stakeholders that actually do co-create value does not have a big an impact on the market. It is the sponsors that contribute with cash and value in kind, while it is the media that distribute the brand and create awareness. A mega-event without these stakeholders has a challenge in reaching a bigger audience. It is also an economic challenge for the YOGOC, especially when their aim is to deliver a unique experience without having a budget to do so. The sponsors were not included in this study, although they initially were the main stakeholders of investment. This tells us that they do not see the value in the YOG

brand, and thereby they are not willing to invest. To reach a bigger audience to raise awareness, there must be stakeholders of a bigger impact. The YOG is missing these stakeholders to raise awareness, and consequently this leads this research into concluding that sponsors and the media do zero value co-creation.

The assessment of the Olympic brand extension states that the YOG is still in its first stage of the product lifecycle. Based on the findings in this research, the YOG brand has a strong likability to become a successful brand in the future, if they manage to stay true to their brand promise. At this stage, the YOG brand does not attain brand equity and is dependent on the Olympic brand to gain awareness and strength in the market. If the YOG is to be a successful brand, the IOC must be devoted to do to this extension properly. More extensive marketing and promotional efforts must be conducted to inform the stakeholders and consumers of what this really is. The IOC must set their objectives and implement them to the IFs, NOCs, so they again can properly inform their coaches and athletes about what to expect, and why they should prioritize this event in the sporting calendar. The YOG faces strong competition from already established youth sport events. In order to attain engaged stakeholders, the brand must manage to deliver a brand that exceeds the stakeholders' expectations to achieve satisfaction. It is only then one can expect loyalty to arise.

Regarding Youth Olympic Games impact and its contribution to the strength of the Olympic brand, it is too early to say whether the brand is enhancing or weakening the overall strength and perception of the Olympic brand. The stakeholders and the firm are placed on each side of the value co-creation system (circle), where the stakeholders have set their aspirations, needs and expectations towards the YOG brand. The YOGOC on the other hand is supposed to establish their needs visions and goals to aim for a meaningful brand promise. This is probably what the YOG is lacking. The brand is not fully developed and has a limitation because their visions and goals are not properly set within the brand and the YOGOCs that are set up to deliver the brand promise to the consumers and stakeholders. Consequently, the YOG brand and YOGOCs will not achieve ROI and brand equity before this problem is solved. However, if the YOG manages to deliver the brand promise and stay true to its value and intended purpose one should expect the YOG brand to enhance the overall strength of the Olympic brand in the future.

6.1. Suggestions for further research on the YOG

This chapter presents some of the key points in this research that should be further investigated. At this stage, there has been conducted some research on the CEP. The majority has conducted qualitative research (Krieger; 2013; Kristiansen 2012; Nordhagen, 2013), whilst the latter conducted a quantitative research (Schnitzer et al., 2014). The results from the qualitative and quantitative research had different outcome, and it would therefore be interesting to see the results from other research papers to determine whether the CEP has been a success or not.

It was also elucidated in this research that Singapore 2010 was seen as much more extravagant compared to Innsbruck 2012. The findings in this research indicated that there was a difference between how the previous YOGOCs interpreted the brand concept, and it would be interesting to study whether this perception is common in other countries too. It is also a suggestion to conduct this research in the context of another country or as a quantitative research.

The initial purpose with this study was to understand the TOP sponsors' perception of the YOG brand, and the reason for their lack of engagement in the YOG brand. This research did not manage to include the sponsors, and there are still two questions that remain unanswered: What is the sponsors' perception of the YOG brand? And how can a brand reach their objectives when those with impact do zero value co-creation of the brand?

At this point it was too early to conclude to what extent the YOG is a successful extension of the Olympic brand. This issue is therefore a suggestion for further research at a later point of time. In addition, a suggestion for further research is to compare the YOG and EYOF. Is there a risk of cannibalization?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the framework by Helm and Jones (2010) needs more testing and it would be interesting to see if this model works in other research aspects about the YOG brand.

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8. Appendixes

Request for participation in research project

An examination of the Youth Olympic Games brand value co-creation process and outcome: A stakeholder perspective in a Norwegian Context

Background and purpose:

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the stakeholders perceive the YOG. This project is based on a master degree study at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. The study is not a part of cooperation with external institutions or stakeholders.

The interview informants are chosen based on their position in a company that is identified as a stakeholder of the YOG.

What does the study involve?

The data collection requires an active participation from the informants. A semi-structured interview will be conducted to collect the necessary information. The questions are based on the stakeholders' experiences and knowledge about the YOG, their perception of quality and if they co-create value. For the YOG administration, the questions are based on their perception of the stakeholder's involvement, how they create brand value and brand delivery.

The data will be audio recorded and some notes will be taken during the interview. The interviews will be conducted through Skype, phone call, or in-person. The participants will be given information about the topics of the interview in advance. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

What happens with the information about you?

It is only the researcher that has access to personal information about the informants. The recorded interviews will be transcribed verbatim after the interview has taken place, and the tape will be deleted. The transcribed interviews will be saved on the

researcher's personal computer, where it requires username and password to log in. The informants that are interviewed will never be referred to by name, and they will appear anonymous in the study. Written notes will be locked in a personal locker at the researcher's office, which also is locked at all times.

After the interview has been transcribed, the informants will have the opportunity to read it. If some information is perceived as identifying or wrong, this information will either be re-written or deleted.

The project is scheduled to end at May 30, 2014.

Transcribed interviews and personal information will be deleted after the research is completed.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the study, and you can withdraw from the research at all times without giving a reason for doing so. If you withdraw from the research, all information about you will be deleted.

If you wish to participate or have any questions about the research, please contact NN (student) or NN (Supervisor).

The study is reported to the Privacy Ombudsman for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Consent for participation in the study

Consent may be obtained in writing or orally.

The information will be sent by email and repeated orally before the interview starts. You can choose to send your written signature on this paper or to give your consent orally before the interview starts.

I have received information about the study, and I am willing to participate

(Signed by the project participant, date)



Berit Skirstad
Seksjon for kultur og samfunn
Norges idrettshøgskole
Postboks 4014 Ullevål stadion
0806 OSLO

Vår dato: 05.09.2013

Vår ref:35266 / 3 / LT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 29.08.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

35266	<i>How does the TOP sponsors perceive the new Olympic Phenomenon; The Youth Olympic Games</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Norges idrettshøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Berit Skirstad</i>
Student	<i>Åse Line Dysvik Eide</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.05.2014, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen


Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim


Lis Tenold

Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Åse Line Dysvik Eide, Huitfeldts gate 35 C, 0253 OSLO

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11 nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrr.svarva@svt.ntnu.no
TROMSØ: NSD SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@svuuit.no

General Interview guide: Stakeholders (English)

About the informant:

1. What is your background (Education, history)?
2. What is your role in the organization you work in?

General about YOG:

3. What experience(s) do you have from YOG?
 - a. Which event(s) have you attended?
4. Did you receive a lot of information about the YOG ahead of the event?
5. What experience do you have with EYOF (or other youth events)?
 - a. If any: what is the most obvious difference between the YOG and EYOF?
 - i. Based on: Quality, experience, awareness, and loyalty.
 - b. In none: Go to the next question.
6. Do you feel that there is something special about the YOG compared to other youth events?
 - a. In what way?
 - b. What is it that differentiates the YOG from the competition? OR what is it that the YOG has that don't differentiate them from the competition?
7. What were your expectations prior the YOG in Innsbruck?
 - a. Were your expectations met?
 - i. In what way? Or why not?

The YOG brand:

8. What do you think is the role of YOG?
 - a. And what do you think the event aims to offer?
 - b. Do you know what the values of the YOG are?
 - i. If yes: Were these made clear before, during and/or after the event?
 - ii. If no: If you could mention any – what would it be?
9. Do you find that the YOG has evolved in recent years?

- a. Should the YOG change their strategy for awareness to ensure success in the future?
 - b. Or should they continue in the same way as they have done?
10. What do you think is the strength of the YOG brand?
- a. Do you see any advantages with associating your organization with the event? I.e. through special marketing initiatives?
 - b. Do you see any advantages for the young athletes to compete at the YOG?
11. What do you think is the weakness with the YOG brand?
- a. Is there any challenges/weaknesses with association your organization with the event?
 - b. Are there any disadvantages for youth athletes to compete at the YOG?
12. Do you perceive yourself as loyal to the YOG brand? (I.e. you prioritize this event above others?)
13. Do you feel that the YOG delivered what they promised?

Value creation and value co-creation

14. Do you find that the YOG as an Olympic event has an intrinsic value?
- a. Or do you perceive the YOG as a copy of the OGs?
15. Does your organization perceive the relationship with the YOG as important?
- a. In what way?
 - b. Why not?
16. Based on brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality:
- a. Which of these attributes do you feel has the best fit with the YOG brand?
 - b. Which of these attributes fits with your experience of the event?
17. Do you contribute by speak positively about the event to people that have not experienced the YOG?
18. Do you recommend the event to young athletes?
- a. Or friends/colleagues?
19. What do you think is the reason as to why there is a low awareness about the YOG?

Brand extension:

20. Do you think there are too many Olympic events on the sport calendar?
 - a. Should there be more? Or less?
21. Do you perceive the YOG as an upward or downward extension of the YOG brand?
22. Does the YOG offer something different compared to other Olympic events?

Sponsors and the media:

23. Previous research has indicated that the TOP sponsors and sponsors in general have not activated their sponsorship benefits to the same degree as in larger sport event. Do you agree with this research?
24. What do you think is the reason for their lack of engagement?
25. Why do you think is the reason for the low interest by the media?
26. In 2016 the fourth edition of the YOG, and the second edition of the winter YOG will be held in Lillehammer, Norway. Do you think that the sponsors and the media will be more engaged here compared to the previous editions?
 - a. Why? Or why not?
27. Is there something more you would like to add?

