

The **image** of a league

- a study of brand image

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the concept of brand image in the context of the best tournament of professional football in Denmark - Alka Superliga. Kotler (2001) states that brand image can be defined as: "*The set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds regarding an object*" (p. 273), and this view have led to an examination of the image of the Alka Superliga. However, during our research in the theoretical framework of a brand image, we learned that the statement by Kotler (2001) needed to be unfolded further to incorporate a two-sided aspect of the concept. We argue that one side of the notion is to reveal the desired image of the brand through Divisionsforeningen' set of beliefs, ideas and impressions expressed in their positioning and the associations they want to connect with the brand. Simultaneously, we discover the brand from the perspective of the perceived set of beliefs, ideas and impression reflected in the associations held by the consumers.

This emphasize that the definition of the brand image of Alka Superliga is to be interpreted from a perspective related to the Divisionsforeningen and a perspective related to the consumers. In order for define the brand image of Alka Superliga we divide the thesis in two parts: One part focusing on the perspective of Divisionsforeningen conceptualized as *Desired Brand Image* and another focusing on the perspective of consumers conceptualized as *Perceived Brand Image*. Dividing the thesis in terms of the desired and the perceived brand image implied that the empiricism of the thesis should treat both perspectives emphasizing that different qualitative and quantitative empirical collection techniques is applied. Through our study of the brand image of Alka Superliga we acknowledge that Divisionsforeningen and the consumers differ in terms of their brand image emphasizing that in order to understand the brand image of Alka Superliga we have to consider the brand image from different perspectives. However, as a final remark our research led to the appreciation of that the concept of brand image cannot be conceptualized into two distinct beliefs as the image of the brand is a cognitive and context related construction in the mind of the individuals emphasizing that the interpretation of brand image is unique. Thus, it is impossible to derive one complete truth about a brand's image.

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Pre-match

This thesis is the product based upon our learnings during our time at Copenhagen Business School and especially our learnings during the process of the master thesis. Within the last five months, we have researched the literature of already known areas and reviewed new ones, in order to expand our knowledge on the subject. This thesis is an artefact where we explicitly have tried to combine our prior understanding with our newly obtained knowledge, to present a new insight for the marketing concept of *brand image* in a delineated perspective of the best football tournament in Denmark – Alka Superliga. The purpose of this thesis has not been to demean the theoretical foundation of the concept on brand image, but rather to understand, challenge and reflect upon the concept in the context of Alka Superliga. We hope that you will enjoy reading our thesis and hope that our contribution to the field will make you reflect upon the notion of brand image in the context of Alka Superliga.

Jeppe Juhl Anthonsen and Nikolaj Mogensen

Entering the pitch

The world of football has long been recognized as a sector of great economic-, social- and management significance, and for its commercialised impact expanding its influence every year. Economic numbers estimate that the European football market is to generate an expected revenue of €25 billion in 2016/17, and figures for the financial performance of the English Premier League shows that the clubs' commercial revenue was €4.4 billion (Deloitte, 2016). Furthermore, the Arsenal FC, has an £30 million-a-year kit-deal with Puma (The Brand Finance Group, 2016), Manchester United experiences an average of 75.206 attendances at the Old Trafford (Harmundal, 2014), while Cristiano Ronaldo has a global fan-base of +101 million followers on Instagram (Instagram, n.d.). The world of football is massive and so are the various fields of study. We have personally been fans of football for many years and are daily stimulated by numerous brand-related activities from different sides. During our youth, we have not paid much attention to the mechanism behind these brand-related activities, but felt the unconscious triggers that have affected our perceptions and beliefs. Today, we know that the world of football has moved itself from its core benefit of the match to enter the world of marketing. Now, we have a better understanding of the mechanism in branding, and studied its effect across different markets to gain knowledge about the interrelated influence. With the definition of brand image by Kotler (2001): *"The set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds regarding an object"* (p. 273) we are to study its significance in a modern context of Danish football and Alka Superliga.

Problem Definition

According to Malik, Naeem and Munawar (2012) the power of the brand can be defined as a function of the "components" surrounding the brand and equalling the desired image that companies have in relation to their brand. Similarly, power of the brand is defined in its perceived image that consumers hold for these components (Malik et al., 2012). The power of the brand is to turn the product into a brand with these components shaped by the notion of brand image as more than the sum of its parts. The definition by Kotler (2001) and the interpretation by Malik et al. (2012) make us wonder how different aspects of branding (desired image and perceived image) influence

the overall brand image of Alka Superliga. Are the aspects individually contributing to the formation of the brand image or is the brand image a correlation between different aspects of branding?

Research question

The thesis is based on the foundation of understanding the brand image of Alka Superliga emphasizing that the research question is as follows:

How are we to investigate the brand image of Alka Superliga, and explain its significance for consumers?

Recognizing questions

In order to answer the research questions, additional recognizing questions about desired image and perceived image needs to be asked and answered, which is leading to the formulation of the following recognizing questions:

- What image does Divisionsforeningen aim to identify the Alka Superliga brand with?
- What image of Alka Superliga does consumers have, reflected in their associations for the brand?

Delimitation

Throughout the thesis different delimitations have been made as delimitations limits the scope and define the boundaries of the research (Simon, 2013).

The first delimitation of the thesis is the primary focus of the thesis will be from a Danish point of view. The reason for this delimitation is that the brand of Alka Superliga is considered to be primarily relevant in Denmark and for Danish consumers. Thus, the focus in a Danish context is to exclude an external perspectives from other countries and to emphasize its importance in the Danish market.

Consumers cognitively create a perceived image of the brand on the premise of these components (Malik, et al., 2012). The statements emphasize that multiple components in the literature of branding are forming the brand image. However, due to limitations, the thesis will primarily focus on creating an understanding of the desired brand image of Alka Superliga on the premise of brand positioning and the perceived image of consumers on the premise of brand associations in terms of Alka Superliga. The argumentation for the choice of these components is that the “components” individually enlighten interesting aspects of branding and that the components individually as well as collectively contribute to the formation of brand image.

In terms of the perceived image by consumers the delimitations are made on the premise of culture. The cultural perspective in terms of brand management is implying that the consumption of consumers, relates to their cultural context (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). The application of culture in the thesis can be advantageous in order for generating a further understanding of how the perceived image of consumers in relation to Alka Superliga is created. However, the complexity in terms of a research based on culture is deemed as being too high emphasizing that this field will not be further elaborated.

Another delimitation in terms of understanding the perceived image of consumers is the delimitation regarding neuromarketing. According to Fortunato, Giraldi and Oliveira (2014) neuromarketing is to provide the tools for unveiling cognitive properties in the minds of consumers and make the behavioral patterns of consumers predictable. This can be useful in terms of understanding the perceived image of consumers from a more cognitive perspective. However, similar to the field of culture is the complexity of neuromarketing in contrast to the purpose of the thesis deemed too high emphasizing that field is not included.

The final delimitation is a restricting to focus on brand communities. According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) a brand community is created when a group of consumers shares a homogenous commitment and emotional attachment to a specific product or brand. One can argue that football in general have created one global cohesive brand community across borders, as consumers all over the world are emotionally attached to the sport. But also because of the multiple communities related to different clubs, that exist both national and international. These brand communities are

also present in Denmark. A further understanding of the brand community foundation could be beneficial for the research of the perceived and the desired brand image, and in relation to Alka Superliga note the influence from Danish club fanbases.

Methodology, method and empiricism

The starting point of the research, is the approach of problematization theorized by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011). According to Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) the fundamental assumptions in a research can be challenged in different ways. One of the ways to challenge these assumptions is the *in-house assumption* which is described as: “assumptions that exist within a particular school of thought in the sense that they are shared and accepted as unproblematic by its advocates” (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011, p. 254).

Based on the premise of the research question and recognizing questions formulated above, it is fair to argue that problematization will use the in-house assumption as the thesis challenge and reflect upon the existing understanding of brand image in the context of Alka Superliga and potentially generate new interesting perspectives. Methodologically we endeavour our result being based on as many “sources” as possible exemplified with the application of interviews, surveys, theories etc. in order to strengthen the validity and to compensate for our own subjectivity described in the section of “Philosophy of Science”. Additionally, the application of multiple “sources” help us in terms of answering the problem statement defined in the research question.

Methods

The research question and the recognizing questions emphasize that the design of the thesis is designed as a recurrent circle. Illustratively the design look as follows:

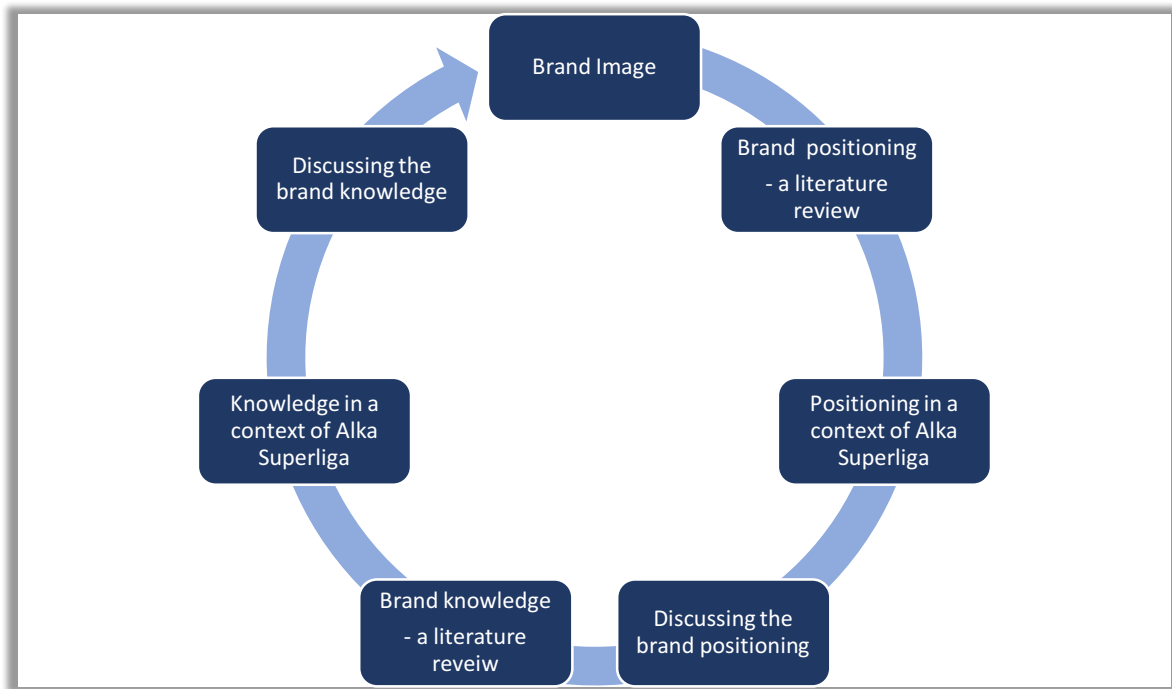


Figure 1: Method of design

The first part of the research is a literature review of brand image to understand the theoretical foundation of it and to generate knowledge applicable in the context of Alka Superliga. The literature overview of the theoretical foundation of brand image implied by the statement of Kotler (2001) that the understanding of brand image is two-fold, emphasizing that brand image is to be interpreted from different perspectives. One perspective of Divisionsforeningen' set of beliefs, ideas and impressions expressed in their positioning and the associations they want to link with the brand conceptualized as desired image, and another perspective of consumers' set of beliefs, ideas and impressions reflected in the associations held by the consumer conceptualized as perceived image. The division imply that the second part of the research is split in order to understand brand image from both perspectives emphasizing that the perspectives will be individually described theoretically, analyzed on the premise of Alka Superliga and discussed in order to identify correlations, misfits and other interesting factors. The second part of the recurrent circle lead to the

final part where we combine our obtained knowledge from the research of the desired image and perceived image in order to investigate the brand image of Alka Superliga and explain its significance for consumers.

Empiricism

The thesis will be based on different empirical studies emphasizing that the empiricism was triangulated as the thesis was approached from different angles. The first angle of empiricism applied in the thesis is the angle of existing literature. By examining existing literature within the fields of brand image, brand positioning and brand associations a baseline was created for the further study. The existing literature helped in terms of generating a basic understanding of the data analysed and evaluated. Additionally, an understanding of the existing literature within the fields was important for the potential generation of new knowledge, as new knowledge emphasized that the theory is challenged and reflected upon.

The second angle in terms of empiricism is the angle of qualitative interviews. To examine the stated research problem in the introduction of the thesis, the practice of qualitative interviews was conducted in coherence with the theory on qualitative research by Andersen (2008), King and Horrocks (2010), Justesen and Mik-Meyer (2010), and Bampton and Cowton (2002). For the thesis, we interviewed Jesper Duelund Jensen who is Head of Marketing for Divisionsforeningen in Denmark and Claus Bretton-Meyer who is the CEO of the Danish Football Association (DBU). The interview with Jesper Duelund Jensen was designed in coherence with the guidance of King and Horrocks (2010) emphasizing that the physical settings chosen for the interview was quiet and private to create the best atmosphere. Jesper Duelund Jensen was recruited by email, and received the questions in advance in order for being prepared for the interview. Based on the theory from King and Horrocks (2010), the interview was recorded with an instrument suitable for an interview and solely based on mutual content with Jesper Duelund Jensen. The interview was conducted as a semi-structured interview emphasizing that a list of questions was prepared in advance, and that the questions was used as a guideline if Jesper Duelund Jensen deviated from the intended research. These guideline questions were supported by additional questions during the interviews. By conducting the interviews as semi-structured interviews, room was made for that the Jesper Duelund Jensen freely could answer the questions within the area of study (Andersen, 2008).

In terms of the interview with Claus Bretton-Meyer, he did not have the time to participate in a face-to-face interview emphasizing that the interview with him was conducted as an e-mail interview. Like Jesper Duelund Jensen, Claus Bretton-Meyer was recruited by email and during the recruitment process of Claus Bretton-Meyer we mutually agreed a time frame for the e-mail interview. The advantages of the e-mail interview as methodology was that Claus Bretton-Meyer could answer the questions whenever he wanted only limited by the agreed time frame. Additionally, the e-mail interview as a methodology made room for Claus Bretton-Meyer to spend time thinking about the questions and the answers emphasizing the interview became more comprehensive (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). The argumentation for applying the qualitative interviews as a method in the thesis was based on that the qualitative interview was a profound methodology to examine a particular area of study and where the interviewees (if chosen properly) could describe the environment around the area qualitatively (Justesen & Mik-Meyer, 2010). In terms of the empiricism of the thesis it is fair to argue that Jesper Duelund Jensen and Claus Bretton-Meyer have the prerequisites for qualitatively describe the branding and especially the desired branding of Alka Superliga due to their positions as Head of Marketing for Divisionsforeningen and as CEO of the Danish Football Association.

The third angle in terms of empiricism is the angle of surveys. The qualitative interviews conducted were focusing on Alka Superliga from the perspective of Divisionsforeningen and DBU emphasizing that a methodology focusing on the perspective from consumers was needed. Based on this need, a survey was conducted in coherence with the approach of Andersen and Hansen (2009). The application of the survey in terms of the data collection methodology implied that the thesis in addition to the qualitative methodology of the qualitative interviews used a quantitative methodology in order to generate measurable data and to create an understanding of the perceived image of Alka Superliga. The data from the survey enabled the possibility of generalizations due to the number of respondents of the survey. The survey was distributed online, due to the convenience and the easy accessibility for the respondents and us as researchers. Additionally, the distribution of the survey did have different advantages as the cost and time consumption was relatively low with a high degree of geographical coverage (Andersen & Hansen, 2009).

The fourth and final angle is netnography. According to Kozinets (2010) netnography is the empirical study of computer-mediated social interactions. In this thesis, the methodology of netnography was applied to the extent that the social media websites of Facebook and Instagram was observed and analysed to investigate the potential online interaction between Alka Superliga and the consumers, and thereby identify additional parts forming the brand image. The application of netnography implied that it was possible to observe the interaction between Alka Superliga and the consumers without interruptions emphasizing that the observed field was in its natural setting as the observed was not aware of the observation (Kozinets, 2010).

Philosophy of Science

In this section, we will reasonably explain the scientific perspective of the thesis in order to create a relation with the knowledge obtained. The starting point will be a distinction of ontology and epistemology followed by an explanation of the methodology applied in the thesis. Rendering with the definition of Langergaard, Barlebo and Sørensen (2011), ontology is the study on the nature of being. In relation to the thesis is the ontology the assumptions we as researchers examines and evaluates the world with. The ontology of the thesis is deemed as being social constructivism emphasizing that the thesis is founded on the assumption that the world and the communication in the world is a social construction (Langergaard, et al., 2011). In terms of the thesis, the ontology of social constructivism clarify that actions always will be contextual and the premise of that social interaction(s) is required for those actions to exist. This notion emphasizes that the knowledge we as researchers obtain during the research might differentiate from other researchers doing the same research as the knowledge obtained depends on the social context where knowledge is generated. Epistemology is the study of scientific knowledge and is dealing with the cognitive thinking of humans including the limitation in terms of human knowledge and cognition (Langergaard et al., 2011). In terms of the thesis does the paradigm of epistemology involve a hermeneutic approach implying that the creation of knowledge is a circular process. In this process, the understanding of the researcher(s) is partly explicit and implicit lead to a recognition of that truth is mutable (Langergaard et al., 2011). The circular process is explained by the creation of knowledge as we, as researchers, continuously change our pre-understanding and our understanding of the problem area. This notion is primarily based on the premise that our knowledge and understanding in terms of the field of research is constantly changing during the

research and the fact that we, as researchers, continuously generate new knowledge. In methodological literature, it is known as; “The dual competence of the reflexive practitioner” (Barlebo, 2006). However even though we constantly generate new knowledge during the research process, we still have a preconception in terms of the area of research that cannot be completely dispensed and a preconception fundamental for the overall understanding of the field of research. Based on the social constructivism and the hermeneutic approach it can be argued that there will be a difference in terms of how individuals interpret and understand the field of research emphasizing our focus on limiting the influence of our preconception to limit the subjectivity of the thesis. Additionally, we will continuously reflect upon our application of specific methodological techniques and our own interpretations in order to further reduce the subjectivity of the thesis. However, even though we focus on increasing the objectivity of the thesis one could argue that the paradigms in terms of ontology and epistemology emphasize that the result obtained in the thesis potentially would not be the same for other researches. Based on this it can be argued that the knowledge generated as a function of the thesis not can be deemed as conclusive but rather as alternative perspective as the understanding of the world by individuals not is the actual reality but a reality created cognitively in the minds of the individuals as a social construction.

Brand Image

To define the brand image of Alka Superliga, we need to determine the conceptual framework derived from literature, for which the idea of brand image is understood. Since the introduction of brand image in 1955 by Gardner and Levy, the terminology has been researched, decomposed and changed numerous times (Malik et al., 2012). Some of the most interesting researches about brand image is the researches by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993) and Kotler (2001). These authors operationalized and conceptualized the terminology of brand image to be organized by the association network memory model (John, Loken, Kim & Monga, 2006), organizing the brand's image to isolate its distinctiveness and determine its offered value for the consumer. Hence, the brand image becomes consumer-based by the associations and attributes formed in each individual mind. According to Kotler (2001), this consciously examination of linkages and nodes in the mind of the consumers regarding the formation of a brand image toward a given brand can be defined as;

“The set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds regarding an object” (p. 273)

Zhang (2015) review brand image as “consumer's general perception and feeling about a brand” (p.58), while Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) stress how brand image is: “the understanding consumers derive from the total set of brand-related activities engaged by the firm” (p. 135). Brand image has various definitions throughout the literature and has conceptualized it into multiple dimensions rendering different perspectives of its definition (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Malik et al., 2012; Lee, James & Kim, 2014; Zhang, 2015). Lee et al. (2014) argues, the concept of brand image has been widely defined by researchers why they propose a reviewed description of the phrase to “the sum of a customer's perception about a brand generated by the interaction of the cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes in a customer's mind” (p. 1).

Desired and Perceived Brand Image

According to Malik et al. (2012) is the terminology of brand image perceived differently by consumers and companies. Consumers interpret or views the brand and consciously creates an image of the brand in their mind known as perceived brand image. Companies on the other hand want to position their brand so the brand matches the perceived image of the consumers. Hence, they produce a desired brand image to match this presumed brand image of the consumer. This is known as desired brand image (Malik, et al., 2012). Keller (1993; 2013) states that brand image includes the associations that a brand holds for a consumer and Malik et al. (2012) disputes that the positioning strategy chosen by the firm is an important aspect of creating a brand image, as the desired target audience for one's product is to receive a focused brand message with the aim of placing the product in those customer's minds. Thereby, the components surrounding the product are all to "ensure the desired positioning" (Malik et al., 2012, p. 13070) and "positions its brand in the right way and in a desired direction to influence what customers believe about a brand" (Lee et al., 2014, p. 3). With this knowledge, we can go into depth with the formulating the definition of brand image in terms of Alka Superliga from our perspective.

Alka Superliga

Before analysing and defining the overall brand image of Alka Superliga on the premise of the desired and perceived image a definition of the "nature" of Alka Superliga is needed.

The name, Alka Superliga, is based upon the current sponsor, why we in the following will refer to it as Superliga (with no sponsor), as the naming sponsor has changed several times during the 26 years of origin.

About

The Superliga is administrated by Divisionsforeningen, which is an association created by the clubs from the three best tiers in Denmark (Divisionsforeningen, 2017). The administration of the Superliga includes some of the following responsibilities: scheduling of matches, branding,

development, appointment of judges and general security (Interview 1, 2017). However, Divisionsforeningen is only in charge of the league nationally. Bretton-Meyer (Interview 2, 2017) explains how DBU oversees the communication with the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). This communication includes that DBU refer to FIFA and UEFA about the football played in Denmark for the football to be played according to International standards (Interview 2, 2017). Based on the above, the administrative structure of the Superliga is to be outlined as (figure 2.1).



Figure 2: Superliga

History and league structure

Superliga as we know it today was founded back in 1991 as the best football clubs in Denmark wanted a more sharpened league consisting of only the best clubs. The creation of a top league emphasized that the professional clubs were capable of implementing their own ideas and ambitions into the league, which helped the smaller clubs - known as amateur clubs - to focus on width and local engagement as the amateur clubs played in lower leagues with a lower degree of competitiveness (Divisionsforeningen, n.d.).

Since the foundation of the Superliga, the league has had some different league structures. From the season of 1991/1992 to the season of 1994/1995 the league was divided in two parts. The first part of the season was played during the autumn and consisted of 10 different clubs who played each other home and away making it 18 matches in total for each club. The second part of the

season was played during the spring and consisted of the 8 best ranked clubs from the first part of the season (autumn) who was promoted to the *playoffs*. In the playoffs, the 8 teams played each other again home and away making it 14 matches in total for each club. The best ranked club after the playoffs was declared the winner.

Before the season of 1995/1996 the league structure of Superliga was changed to a league structure where the league was played as one part during both autumn and spring. This new structure emphasized that Superliga was expanded with two additional members making the league consisting of 12 clubs. The 12 clubs played each other home and away and again home or away depending on the results from last season making it 33 matches in total for each club during the season. The winner of the league was the best ranked club after 33 matches ((DBU, n.d.)

In the season of 2016/2017 the structure of the league was changed once again and is the structure of the league today. Similar to the league structure from the season 1991/1992 to 1994/1995 is the league now again divided in two parts. One part played during the autumn and one part played during the spring. In the first part of the season 14 different clubs play each other home and away making it 26 matches in total for each club. The second part of the season is divided in two leagues. One league called the “Championship Playoffs” consist of the 6 best ranked clubs from the first part of the season. The 6 clubs play each other home and away making it 10 matches in total for each club. The best ranked club after the 10 matches in the “Championship Playoffs” is declared the winner of the league. The other league is called the “Relegation Playoffs”. This league consists of the 8 lowest ranked clubs from the first part of the season and these 8 clubs are divided in two groups with four team in each group. During the group stage, the clubs play each other making it 6 matches in total for each of the clubs. The two lowest ranked clubs from each group after the 6 matches move on to the next stage called the “Relegation Knockout”. In the first phase of the “Relegation Knockout” is number 3 from group 1 facing number 4 from group 2 and vice versa. The winners of the first “Relegation Knockout” phase face each other in one match deciding who will stay in the Superliga (winner of the match) and who will face number 3 from 1. division (second tier in Denmark) in a match determining who will play in the Superliga and who will play in the 1. division next season. The losers of the first phase of the “Relegation Knockout” face each other in a match determining who will relegate directly (loser of the match) and who will face number 2 from 1.

division in a match determining who will play in the Superliga and who will play in the 1. division next season (Superliga, n.d.)

According to Divisionsforeningen (2016) is the new structure of the league emphasizing the league becoming more exciting for the consumers and the level of football in Alka Superliga become significantly better. Furthermore, the purpose of the structure is to strengthen the competitiveness of the Danish clubs in an international context as the structure implied that more equal matches will be played (Superliga, n.d.).

Desired image

Alka Superliga is to position their desired brand image so the brand matches the perceived image of their customers, the strategy of positioning the brand aims to locate the brand in a distinctive part of consumers' mind. Therefore, we will in the following consider the positioning strategy conducted by Divisionsforeningen to indicate a representative design for the desired image. We are to examine the target market and consumers within to understand the position, and we do so in coherence with our method for the structural design. At first, the literature review is to provide a conceptualized insight to the view on positioning and simplify the framework to which the formation of the desired brand image of Alka Superliga is to be researched upon.

Market theory

Before describing the theoretical foundation of brand positioning a theoretic clarification in terms of the market will be defined. As Kotler and Armstrong (2012) states, the first step in a marketing process is to understand the marketplace the brand operates in and thereby the consumers of that market. On the premise of this, the definition of the market will be based on the theory of Abell (1980), who defines a market on the premise of three dimensions:

- Served Customer Groups → Who are the customers?
- Served Customer Functions → What are the needs and wants of the customers?
- Technologies Utilized → How are the needs and wants to be satisfied?

(Abell, 1980)

Defining the market is important in terms of evaluating the positioning of the brand as the brand should consider their markets as customer satisfying processes where the brand should deliver customer perceived value (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen, 2012). In addition to the market definition by Abell (1980), the forces in the market needs to be comprehended to generate further knowledge of the market place and the consumers in the market. According to Porter (1979), the following five forces are forming a market: *Entrants, Suppliers, Competitors, Buyers and Substitutes*. An analysis of the forces helps determining the fundamental strengths and weakness of a brand in a given industry, clarifying the areas where strategic change might lead to a higher payoff and animates the current positioning of the brand in relief to the competition in the market (Porter, 1979). Additionally, the previously described forces clarify the long-run attractiveness of the market, as the forces combined lead to an overall evaluation of the long-run attractiveness of the market (Kotler, et al., 2012).

Theoretical foundation of Brand Positioning

As the theoretical foundation in terms of the market have been conducted, the theoretical foundation in terms of the brand positioning can be described.

The starting point for the theoretical framework will be the STP model - **S**egmentation, **T**argeting and **P**ositioning - as the model identifies the links between the overall market (defined in the market definition and Porter's Five Forces) and how a brand chooses to position in a market (Kotler & Keller, 2006). The STP model will be used as a theoretical base in order to analyse the brand positioning of Alka Superliga and thereby the desired image as the model will contribute to an understanding of how Alka Superliga have prioritized propositions, developed and delivered relevant and personal marketing messages in terms of their target audiences founded in the segmentation (Hanlon, 2016).

Segmentation

The STP model emphasize that the first part of the model is *segmentation*, why a theoretical foundation of segmentation is created. In marketing and brand management a segment is defined as a “market” segment consistent of a cluster of consumers who share similar needs and wants and who differentiates from other consumers in the market (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin and Regnér, 2014). Market segmentation is of great importance for companies and brands as they cannot connect with every consumer in large, diverse and broad markets. By applying market segmentation as a strategic process, marketers are capable of identifying the market segments that the brand can serve efficiently and effectively (Kotler et al., 2012).

In branding and marketing literature there is distinctive ways to segment a market. Some researchers define market segments by characteristics like: geography, demography and psychography, while other researchers define market segments by behavioural considerations. In this thesis, we will focus on defining market segment by the geography, demography and psychography as these characteristics are the best way to define market segments descriptively (Kotler et. al., 2012).

Dividing the market into different geographical units: nations, regions, cities etc., is known as geographic segmentation (Kotler et. al., 2012). The advantages of geographic segmentation is that the approach helps marketers identify cultural and socio-economic differences within a given geographical unit. The approach has some limitations as it assumes the consumers within a geographic unit have similar needs and wants, making them homogeneous. Additionally, the approach focuses on what is known about the consumers in terms of their geographical presence, but does not focus on the cognitive aspects of consumers. The limitations of the approach, imply that the approach cannot be applied as the only segmentation base, and that it should be used in conjunction with additional segmentations bases (Fripp, 2015).

In order to make the market segmentation more specific the segmentation base of demographic is applied. In demographic segmentation, the market is divided into groups on the premise of basic variables: age, family life cycle, gender, occupation, education, religion, social class, etc. (Kotler et. al., 2012). The advantages of demographic segmentation are that the approach is easy to apply as

statistics and basic variables defining the demographic segmentation are easily and cheaply collected. However, like the geographic approach of segmentation the demographic approach is limited, as it also assumes that consumers within a demographic group are homogenous. Furthermore, the approach focuses the basic knowledge of the consumers, but not the cognitive aspect of consumers implying the approach should be used in conjunction with a segmentation base that provides a better insight to the cognitive thinking of consumers (Fripp, 2015).

In order to include the cognitive properties of consumers in the market the psychographic segmentation approach is applied. This approach implies that the consumers in the market are divided into different groups on the premise of their personal and psychological traits. Each of these groups have their own psychological profile, which is determined by the AIO factors: Activities, interests and opinions (Kotler et. al., 2012). Similar to the geographic and demographic segmentation approaches, the psychographic segmentation approach has certain advantages and limitations. One of the main advantages of the psychographic segmentation approach is that it provides important insights in terms of understanding the cognitive properties of consumers in the market improving the degree of specification in term of the segmentation process. The primary limitation of the psychographic segmentation approach is that it requires detailed information and data about the consumers in the market, which cannot be easily accessed (Fripp, 2015).

Targeting

Once the potential market segments opportunities have been identified by the brand, it should be decided how many and which segments the brand should target. The decision of which segments to target is a process of evaluation where the brand looks at three factors: overall attractiveness of the segments, the valuable resources/capabilities of the brand and the objective of the brand (Kotler et al., 2012).

According to Iannuzzi (2014), a market segment is considered attractive when the segment is as following:

- Measurable → The characteristics, the size and the purchasing power of the segment can be measured

- Substantial → The segment should be profitable, large and worth pursuing for the brand/company
- Accessible → The segment should be easy to serve and reach
- Differentiable → The segment should be homogeneous internally, but heterogeneous externally in order to reduce overlapping
- Actionable → The segment can be effectively served and attracted by marketing programs.

(Iannuzzi, 2014)

Another important factor that needs to be considered when deciding which segments to target is the factor concerning the resources and the capabilities of the brand. Similar to the factor of the objectives of the brand, the factor of resources and capabilities is considered relevant, as resources and capabilities likewise should be compatible with the attractive segments and the objectives of the brand (Kotler et al., 2012). The valuable resources and capabilities of a given brand can be identified in different ways. In this thesis, the resources and capabilities are determined by the V.R.I.O framework:

- Value → Is the brand valuable to consumers
- Rarity → Can the resources and capabilities only be acquired a limited number of competitors
- Inimitability → Is it costly for competitors to imitate, substitute or obtain the resources and capabilities)
- Organizational support → Is the brand organized to capture the value from the resources and capabilities

(Barney, 1995)

The framework is a profound tool to understand the sources of competitive advantage a given brand might have as a function of their resources and capabilities (Barney, 1995).

The final factor relevant for brands when evaluating and deciding which segments to target is related to the objectives of the brand. This factor is considered relevant in the evaluation process,

as the objectives of a brand should be compatible with an attractive segment and the capabilities and resources available to make the targeting effective. If the factors of the overall attractiveness and the objectives are not compatible, the targeting might be wrong and lead to invaluable positioning of the brand (Kotler et al., 2012). Different brands have different objectives. However, in a theoretical term, the objectives of a brand can be determined by the S.M.A.R.T criteria:

- Specific → Specific area of improvement
- Measurable → Indication of progress
- Agreed upon → Who is in charge?
- Realistic → Can the objective realistically be achieved?
- Time-related → When can the objective be achieved?

(Doran, 1981)

The framework is used as a guiding system for determining objectives for a brand (Doran, 1981). The objectives of the brand can be determined by other frameworks, but the advantages of the S.M.A.R.T framework is that objectives are easily monitored, making it easier to identify potential missing targets and the framework makes organizational change and adaption easier (Walters, 2012).

Positioning

When a brand has identified their target audiences, it should decide how it should be positioned. According to Bauer and Hammerschmidt (2005), the purpose of positioning is to design the brands image and market offering to occupy a place in the mind of the target audiences in order to maximize the potential benefit of the brand. This is done by a successful creation of customer-focused value propositions in the mind of consumers convincing the targeted consumer that he should purchase the brand (Kotler et al., 2012). The literature review describes the theoretical foundation of the framework regarding the market definition and the forces forming the market. These theoretical frameworks are relevant in terms of the positioning of brands as the theory of positioning imply that a comparison between the “players” in the market is relevant. The comparison contributes in terms of identifying the Point of Parity (PoP), Point of Differences (PoD)

and Differences by product (DbP) as these factors are essential for the determination of the positioning for the brand (Kotler et al., 2012).

Points of Parity

PoP are benefits and associations that not are unique to a single brand but may be shared by many different brands in the industry (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The common associations and benefits shared by multiple competitors can be described in three different forms:

- Category points of parity → Essential benefits and associations of legitimate and credible brands within a given product category
- Correlational points of parity → Potential negative associations as a function of the positive associations of a brand
- Competitive points of parity → Associations created in order to overcome weaknesses of a given brand in the light of PoDs created by competitors in the industry

(Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Points of difference

PoD is used to describe the benefits and attributes about a brand that consumers positively evaluate, believe they to same extent cannot find a competing brand and a brand that the consumer strongly associate (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In general, strong brands have multiple PoDs and potential PoDs can be determined by three different criteria:

- Desirability → The brands associations are personal and unique for consumers
- Differentiability → The brand associations are superior and distinctive to competitors
- Deliverability → The brand should have the resources and the commitment to maintain and create associations in the minds of consumers

(Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Difference by Product

Successful product differentiation often leads to competitive advantage, which competing brands cannot copy or match (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Pepall, Richards and Norman (2008) there are three different types of product differentiation:

- Simple → Variety of characteristics like quality, price, benefit, etc.
- Horizontal → Single characteristic but not focusing on quality
- Vertical → Single characteristic based on quality

(Pepall et al., 2008)

The desired image of Alka Superliga

The second part of the section is an analysis of Alka Superliga based on the premise of the theory described in the literature review above to conceptualize the brand positioning of Alka Superliga and thereby from our point of view the desired image. The data for the analysis of the desired image of Alka Superliga is generated through empirical studies including interviews and surveys. The purpose of the analysis and evaluation of Alka Superliga is that the part should contribute with an understanding of how the theories are applied in the practical reality and how each of the components contribute to the collateral brand Positioning of Alka Superliga.

Defining the market for Alka Superliga

Before conducting the study of Divisionsforeningen efforts to segment, target and position the brand of Alka Superliga within the market, the market is to be defined. According to Bretton-Meyer, Alka Superliga is primarily relevant for consumer in Denmark, as Alka Superliga is a Danish league embracing the values and moral obligations of Denmark (Interview 2, 2017). Based on this perception, the baseline for the market definition will be the Danish market for professional football.

According to Christensen (2014), the served customer groups of professional football in Denmark are hard to define as all classes of the society, independent of age, have a great or low-key interest in professional football. The undefinable served customer group emphasize that potentially every citizen in Denmark can be considered as being a part of the served customer group implying that the potential served customer group for professional football in Denmark equals 5.756.170 individuals (Statistikbanken, 2017). However, an assumption has been made in order to reduce the primary served customer groups for professional football in Denmark. The assumption is based on the notion that the primary served customer groups are the ones who actively plays football themselves both on an elite level and an amateur level. The table in figure 3.1 shows the number of active members playing football in Denmark, in 2016.

Medlemstal 2016:						
	Børn 0-12 år	Unge 13-18 år	Unge 19-24 år	Voksne 25-59 år	Senior 60+	Total
Drenge/mænd	107.779	59.407	33.035	63.267	5.998	269.486
Piger/damer	26.763	18.993	6.928	9.250	273	62.207
						331.693

Figure 3.1: Active members 2016

Based on this table and the assumptions, is it argued that the primary served customer group for professional football in Denmark are considered to be the 331.693 men and women who were actively playing football in Denmark anno 2016.

According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) professional football in Denmark has become a mean of family friendly entertainment. Additionally, Christensen (2014) stats that professional football in Denmark creates excitement, feelings and relationships between people emphasizing that professional football can be argued to serve a consumer function in terms of emotional satisfaction and social interaction among individuals.

The served consumer groups of the professional football in Denmark is served by two distinctive utilized technologies. The first utilized technology is the technology of tv-broadcasting. According

to the Annual Report from Divisionsforeningen (2016), the Danish Market in terms of professional football having three premium products: Alka Superliga, the English Premier League and Champions League. The matches of the English Premier League and Champions League are played abroad emphasizing that in order to serve the customer groups the matches need to be broadcasted on tv. By broadcasting the matches on tv, the served customer groups presumably have their want for family friendly entertainment covered by watching the match and have their need for social interaction covered by presumably watching the matches with friends or family. Furthermore, the matches from the Danish Alka Superliga are broadcasted on tv as well. The second utilized technology used for satisfying the needs and wants of the served customer groups are the Danish football stadiums. At the Danish football stadiums, the served customer groups can spectate the match from Alka Superliga in real life, emphasizing that the served customer groups presumably are being entertained. Additionally, the stadiums are often filled with multiple consumers emphasizing that social interaction is happening.

Exploring external forces

Stated in the literature review, Porter's Five Forces is a model that is used to understand the market the brand is a part of and determine the state of competition in the market. The analysis of the market of professional football in Denmark will lead to the understanding of the long-run attractiveness of the market and identify the potential threats the forces separately might contain.

According to the Annual Report from Divisionsforeningen (2016), the Danish market for professional football have three premium products: Alka Superliga, the English Premier League and the Champions League. Matches from the three leagues are broadcasted on a weekly basis and often simultaneously on the tv-channels available for the consumers on the Danish market for professional football.

	DANMARK: Superliga - Mesterskabet - Play-Offs ★			
	13:00		FC Midtjylland	- SønderjyskE
	16:00		Lyngby	- Brøndby
	18:00		FC København	- FC Nordsjælland
	DANMARK: 1. Division ★			
	13:45		AB	- Næstved
	13:45		FC Helsingør	- FC Roskilde
	13:45		Nykøbing FC	- Hobro IK
	13:45		Skive	- Fremad Amager
	13:45		Vejle	- HB Køge
	13:45		Vendsyssel FF	- FC Fredericia
	ENGLAND: Premier League ★			
	14:30		Sunderland	- Manchester Utd
	17:00		Everton	- Leicester

Figure 3.2: Matches on the 9th of April 2017

The screen print in figure 3.2 illustrates how the matches in Alka Superliga and the English Premier League are played simultaneously. The overlap of the matches emphasize that the consumers have to choose between watching Alka Superliga and the English Premier League. The identification of Premier League and Champions League as the main competitors on the Danish market for football is supported by Storm (2015) who states that the clubs in the English Premier League, the Champions League and La Liga (the Spanish league) are dominating in all parts of Europe. The domination of these leagues emphasize that they have the best facilities and the largest budgets making them capable of signing the best players in the world (Storm, 2015). The analysis of the English Premier League as one of the primary competitors in the industry is additionally supported by the survey conducted for this thesis as the survey indicates that 91.2 pct. of respondents perceive the English Premier League as being a league with better quality (Survey, 2017; 3.3).

Within the last few years, a new dominant player in international football have evolved in China. According to the Chinese president Xi Jinping, the Chinese league should within a relatively small timeframe become an international factor of power in terms of football (Norup, 2016). With governmental support and support from local Chinese businesses, the clubs in the Chinese league have been able to accumulate budgets matching and even in some instances surpass the budgets of the best clubs in Europe. The budgets have made the Chinese clubs attractive for some of the

best players in the world (Norup, 2016). The following table (figure 3.3) is a list of the best-paid football players in the world based on their weekly salary in the world anno 2017.



10.	Neymar, FC Barcelona,	2,4 millioner kroner
8.	Graziano Pelle, Shandon Luneng,	2,5 millioner kroner
8.	Paul Pogba, Manchester United,	2,5 millioner kroner
6.	Hulk, Shanghai SIPG,	2,8 millioner kroner
6.	Axel Witsel, Tianjin Quanjian,	2,8 millioner kroner
5.	Gareth Bale, Real Madrid,	3 millioner kroner
3.	Lionel Messi, FC Barcelona,	3,15 millioner kroner
3.	Cristiano Ronaldo, Real Madrid,	3,15 millioner kroner
2.	Oscar, Shanghai SIPG,	3,5 millioner kroner
1.	Carlos Tevez,	5,4 millioner kroner om ugen

Figure 3.3: Liste: Du store kineser! Verdens bedst betalte fodboldspillere

The list indicates that number two (Oscar), six (Axel Witsel) and eight (Graziano Pelle) of the best-paid players on a weekly basis plays in the Chinese league supporting the notion that the clubs in the league have some of the biggest budgets in international football. Moreover, the Chinese league have already expanded their broadcasting of the matches from the league resulting in a five-year tv-deal worth 8.3 billion DKK, making the deal more valuable than the tv-deal for the Italian League (Norup, 2016). The matches from the Chinese league are not broadcasted in Denmark yet, making the league an entrant threat and not a competitor. However, assuming this evolution of the Chinese league will continue in the following years, the Chinese league might become one of the main competitors in the Danish market for football within the next few years.

The technologies utilized for professional football in Denmark are tv and the Danish football stadiums. Therefore, it is fair to argue that utilizing technologies equal the supply of the market. The supply from the Danish tv-channels and the stadiums differentiate in terms of different factors emphasizing that the analysis of suppliers is divided into two sections. One section analysing the supply from the Danish tv-channels and another section analysing the supply from the stadiums.

The Danish tv-channels supply the industry of professional football in Denmark with a broadcasting of matches from leagues all over Europe emphasizing that the consumers of the market are capable of watching the matches on tv. Figure 3.4 displays an outlook of matches being broadcasted in Danish television on a typical Saturday in April.

Lørdag den 15. april			
Kampstart	Kanal	Kamp	Turnering
15:30		Dortmund – Eintracht Frankfurt	 Bundesliga
16:00		Crystal Palace – Leicester	 Premier League
16:15		Sporting Gijon – Real Madrid	 La Liga
18:00		Esbjerg fB – AC Horsens	 Superligaen Pulje 1
18:30		Bayer Leverkusen – Bayern München	 Bundesliga
18:30		Atletico Madrid – Osasuna	 La Liga
20:30		Orlando City – L.A. Galaxy	 Major League Soccer
20:45		Napoli – Udinese	 Serie A
23:00		Chicago Fire – New England Rev.	 Major League Soccer

Figure 3.4: Broadcasted football matches on Danish television

The screen print above indicates that Danish tv-channels are broadcasting nine different matches on April 15, 2017. Additionally, the screen image indicates that the Danish tv-channels broadcast from a range of different leagues including the American Major League and the Italian league (Serie A). An interesting notion to make is that many of the listed matches from the screen image above are only available for consumers through the tv-channels as they are played abroad making the tv-channel as supplier have a high degree of power in the market for professional football in Denmark. The argumentation for this high degree of power is that without the tv-channels the Danish consumers would not be able view the matches played abroad and the matches from Alka Superliga on the couch making the only professional football present in Denmark being the matches played on the stadiums.

Unlike the Danish tv-channels the Danish stadiums are not providing matches to the consumers of the market from leagues all over Europe. The stadiums provide the consumers with real life experiences of professional football played by the Danish clubs. From the survey conducted, we learned that 65.74 pct. of 108 respondents preferred to watch football matches on stadiums. However, out of the total of 123 observations only 1.63 pct. have attended between 11-20 matches on the stadiums so far in the season 2016-2017 after 28 matches played (Survey, 2017; 2.1; 2.9). The numbers indicate that people actually prefer to go to stadiums when they want to see a football match, but the 1.63 pct. proves that people do not go there emphasizing that the power of stadiums as suppliers of professional football in Denmark can be deduced as relatively low. The low degree of power is based on consumers not going to the stadiums even though they prefer to and the fact that consumers still have the possibility to watch the matches from Alka Superliga and the European leagues on the tv-channels who are broadcasting the matches.

Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) states that professional football has become a mean of family friendly entertainment. This claim is supported by the survey conducted for the thesis. The survey shows that 37.35 pct. of the respondents characterize Alka Superliga as being a mean of entertainment and 41.38 pct. of the respondent perceive Alka Superliga as family friendly (Survey, 2017; 3.6; 3.7). As Alka Superliga is considered as mean of family friendly entertainment emphasize that other “forms” of entertainment can be argued as potential substitutes to professional football as these can deliver the same family friendly entertainment as professional football. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the following substitutes considered as biggest threat to the market for professional football in Denmark are the Zoos and botanical gardens in Denmark and tv-programs.

The Zoo and botanical gardens in Denmark are considered a relevant substitution threat to professional football in Denmark as these substitutes offer an alternative way for family and people to be entertained. In 2015, the Danish Zoos and botanical gardens had 4.898.103 visitors in total (Statistikbanken, 2017). The number of visitors in the Zoos and botanical gardens make this mean of entertainment interesting in contrast to the market of professional football in Denmark as these visitors potentially could have watched a match of professional football e.g. from Alka Superliga instead either on tv or at the Danish football stadiums. The Zoos and botanical gardens in Denmark

is considered as outdoor means of entertainment emphasizing that the treat as substitutes to professional football in Denmark is considered most relevant when the weather is good. Similar to the Zoos and botanical gardens in Denmark are tv-programs offering an alternative form of family friendly entertainment. In other to understand how different tv-programs might be a potential threat to professional football in Denmark in terms of substitution we have analysed some of the tv-program offerings on Danish tv. The following screen print (figure 3.5) presents some of the tv-programs transmitted on the biggest tv-channels in Denmark on a Monday evening in April.

MAN	TIR	ONS	TOR	FRE	LØR	SØN	MAN
10/04	11/04	12/04	13/04	14/04	15/04	16/04	17/04
<div>06 09 12 15 18 21 00 03</div>							
15:30		16:00		16:30		17:00	
DR 1		r-monster		Cirkusrevyen 2016 16:30		Flashback 17:30	
TV2		Go' aften Danmark 17:25		Go' aften Danmark 18:25		TV AVISEN med 18:30	
3		Luksusfælden 16:00		Med kniven for struben 17:00		MasterChef 2017 - Danmarks største madt 18:00	
5		Milo på Mars 16:10		Big Bang Theory 18:00		Big Bang Theory 18:30	
3+		Fodbold: Brøndby IF-FC København 16:00					
TV2/3+		Netflix		Kongen af Queens 17:00		Kongen af Queens 17:30	
DR 3		Fatboy, Run		Byen set indefra: Jordskælv i Los A... 17:15		Klovn 17:55	
4		Ex'ernes kamp 16:00		Greys hvide verden 17:00		Martin uden X 18:00	
TV2/SPORT		Cykling: Tour of the Alps - 1. etape 16:20		Basketligaen: Svendborg Rabbits-Bakk 18:05		The Tonight Sho 18:30	
6		Perception 16:00		Two and a half M... 17:00		Human Target 17:55	

Figure 3.5: tv-tid.dk

The yellow marked program in the screen image is a match between Danish clubs Brøndby IF and FC København in the Alka Superliga being broadcasted by the tv-channel 3+ (Viasat). Nevertheless, in terms of family friendly entertainment the screen image is indicating that other tv-channels offer alternatives to the match from Alka Superliga simultaneously with the match being played. The two red-circled programs are broadcasting tv-programs is considered as family friendly entertainment. DR1 is broadcasting Cirkusrevyen 2016 (a comic family friendly revue) and Kanal5 is broadcasting 'Milo på Mars' (a Disney animated movie). The broadcasting of different family friendly entertainment programs simultaneously indicates that viewers can substitute between the programs emphasizing that different tv-programs are considered as potential threats for substitution. An important notion to make is that the example presented above only include a

limited number of tv-channels (10 in total) available for the Danish viewers. In 2015 60.7 pct. of the Danish households had access to +21 channels emphasizing that even more family friendly entertainment tv-programs might have been broadcasted simultaneously with the match from Alka Superliga (Kultur-Ministeriet, 2017).

Argued in the market definition section, an assumption has been made in order to define the served customer group for professional football in Denmark. The assumption was based on that the primary served customer group in terms of professional football in Denmark were the men and women who plays football themselves anno 2016 making the total number of the served customer group 331.693. The assumption from the market definition is used again in order to define the buyers of the market of professional football in Denmark. However, an extra factor of analysis in terms of the buyers have been added in order to analyse and evaluate the bargaining power of the buyers. Based on the analysis of primary competitors and the potential substitutes for Alka Superliga from the previous sections it is fair to argue that the buyers have a high degree of bargain power based on the alternatives available like for example the Zoo or a match from the English Premier League. A further and more substantial analysis of the buyers in the market follows in the sections of segmentation, targeting and positioning.

How are the forces forming the market?

As previously stated, the framework of Porter's Five Forces is used to understand the long-run attractiveness of the market for professional football in Denmark and to identify the potential threats each of the forces separately contains. The determination of the long-run attractiveness of the market is a combination of these different forces.

The primary competitors in the market (the English Premier League and the Champions League) are big threats to Alka Superliga. The partial conclusion of the competitors being big threats to Alka Superliga is based on the competitors playing matches simultaneously with the matches played in Alka Superliga emphasizing that the consumers likely have to choose which match they want to watch. Additionally, this is supported by the survey as 91.2 pct. of the respondents perceive the English Premier League as being a more quality based football league than Alka Superliga (Survey, 2017; 3.3).

The threat from potential entrants (in this case the Chinese League) is partial concluded to be relatively high based on that the Chinese League have been interesting on an international level in a few years emphasizing that it can be assumed that the Chinese League potentially become a competitor in the market within the next few years. This assumption is supported by the statement of the Chinese President Xi Jinping saying that the Chinese League should become an international power factor in terms of football within a relatively small timeframe. Additionally, multiple football stars like Oscar and Axel Witsel are by now a part of the Chinese League, due to the budgets of the clubs in the league.

From the analysis of the supply from the tv-channels it is fair to argue that tv have a high degree in terms of bargaining power, emphasizing that the supplier is considered as a big threat to the market. This partial conclusion is primarily based on that from a consumer's' point of view is it only possible to watch the matches from the foreign leagues on the tv and without tv, the matches from Alka Superliga are only available on the Danish stadiums. The other supplier of the market is the Danish stadiums. Based on the analysis in terms of the stadiums as supplier it can be argued that the stadiums only make up a relative low threat. This notion is primarily based on the survey conducted for the thesis indicating that even though 67 pct. of the consumers in the market prefer watching the matches at the stadiums, only 1.7 pct. of the consumers have attended a stadium between 11-20 times after 28 matches played in the Alka Superliga. This is further supported by the fact that the supply from tv (which was partial concluded as being a big threat) oppose the supply from stadiums as the consumers can watch the matches from the tv instead of the stadiums.

The threat from the substitutes of Zoo, botanical gardens and tv-programs are partial concluded to be relatively high, based on the fact that professional football has become a mean of family friendly entertainment as stated by Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017). Both the Zoo, botanical gardens and tv-programs are assumed to be a mean of family friendly entertainment emphasizing that they are potential substitutes for professional football in Denmark. Additionally, the partial conclusion is that the Zoo and botanical gardens are a threat to the industry indicated by the number of visitors in the Zoo and botanical gardens anno 2015 as these visitors potentially could have substituted their

visit with a match from e.g. Alka Superliga on tv or at the stadium. The partial conclusion is that the tv-programs are a threat to the market, which is supported by the screen image from the analysis of the tv-programs as a substitute. The screen image indicates the variety of family friendly entertainment that consumers have available on the tv emphasizing that the consumers easily can substitute a match of professional football with another tv-program.

Based on the partial conclusions of competitors, suppliers and substitutes in the market it is fair to argue that the buyers in the market have a high degree of bargaining power emphasizing that the buyers are considered as a big threat. The partial conclusion in terms of the buyers being a big threat is primarily based on the fact that the buyers easily can switch between the competitors in the market with relatively low costs, due to the supply of professional football from tv. Moreover, the big threat from the substitutes of the Zoo, botanical gardens and tv-programs enforcing the threat in terms of the buyers, as the substitutes “supply” the buyers with additional options in terms of means of entertainment the buyers can choose from with relatively low costs of switching.

On the premise of the forces analysed it can be concluded that the long-run attractiveness of the market is relatively low. This conclusion is primarily based on the threat from the competitors (the English Premier League and the Champions League), who is considered as high emphasizing that it is hard for other professional football leagues to maintain a position in the market. Additionally, the threat in terms of the entrance of the Chinese League affecting the long-run attractiveness, as it is assumed that the Chinese League will become a competitor in the market within a timeframe of five to ten years.

The big threats of the competitors and the potential entrant of the Chinese League affecting the long-run attractiveness negatively is supported by the supply from tv, as tv is a mean for watching the matches from the foreign leagues. Furthermore, the potential substitutes affecting the long-run attractiveness of the market as the substitutes are considered as means of entertainment. This threat from substitutes is supported by the threat from the buyers as the buyers easily can switch between the different means of entertainment with relatively low costs in terms of switching emphasizing that the long-run attractiveness is further reduced.

Investigating STP

The analysis of Alka Superliga on the premise of the STP model will lead to an understanding of how Divisionsforeningen have segmented, targeted and positioned the brand of Alka Superliga in the market of professional football in Denmark and additionally lead to an understanding of how the desired brand Image of Alka Superliga is formed by these.

What do we know about the consumers in the market?

The following section is an analysis of how Alka Superliga have segmented the Danish market for professional football in terms of creating segments fitting the brand of Alka Superliga.

According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the geographic segmentation done by Divisionsforeningen is divided in two. The reason for this division of the geographic segmentation is that the Divisionsforeningen do one geographical segmentation and the Danish clubs in Alka Superliga does another. As the Divisionsforeningen is an association created by clubs of the best three tiers in Denmark, and these clubs are spread throughout Denmark it can be argued that the geographic segmentation done by Divisionsforeningen is a national level based on the geographic segmentation emphasizing that Denmark is considered as one geographic segment in terms of Divisionsforeningen. The other part of the geographic segmentation by Divisionsforeningen is related to clubs who created Divisionsforeningen. Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) states that the clubs are having a regional approach to the geographic segmentation, e.g. AAB (Aalborg Boldklub) is geographically segmenting north of Jutland where the city of Aalborg is located and OB (Odense Boldklub) is geographically segmenting Funen where the city of Odense is placed. Therefore, it can be argued that the geographic segmentation done by Divisionsforeningen and the Danish clubs illustratively is to be understand as shown in figure 4.1:

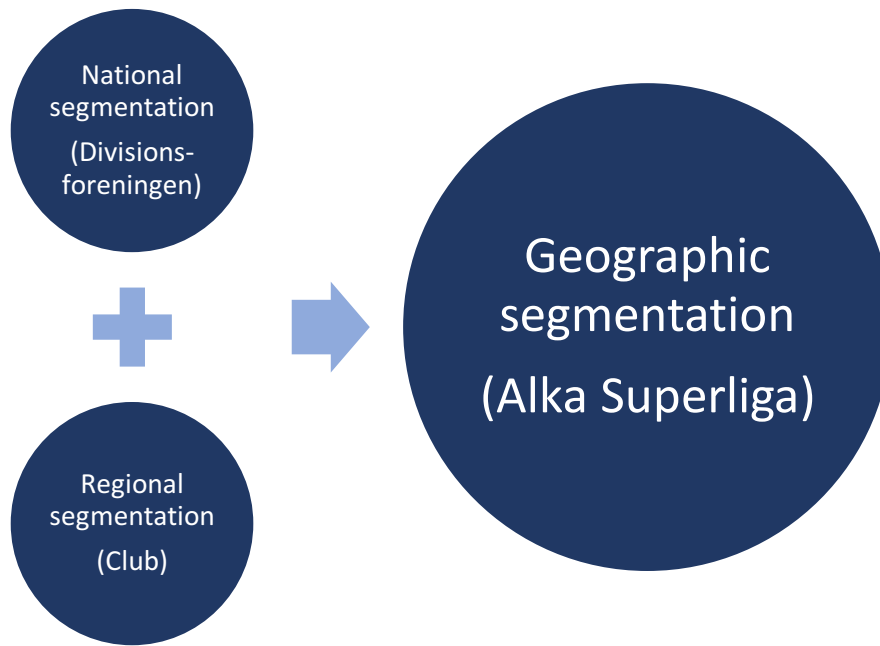


Figure 4.1: Geographic segmentation

According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the demographic segmentation by Divisionsforeningen is made in a way that primarily focus on age and gender. Previously, it was assumed that the served customer group for professional football in Denmark were the ones who actively plays football themselves. This assumption is used again in order to demonstrate how Divisionsforeningen segmented the market for professional football in Denmark demographically. From the table of active members (figure 3.1) we know the number of active members playing football in Denmark anno 2016 divided in terms of age and gender. Based on this table it is assumed that demographic segmentation done by Divisionsforeningen are to be exemplified with figure 4.2:

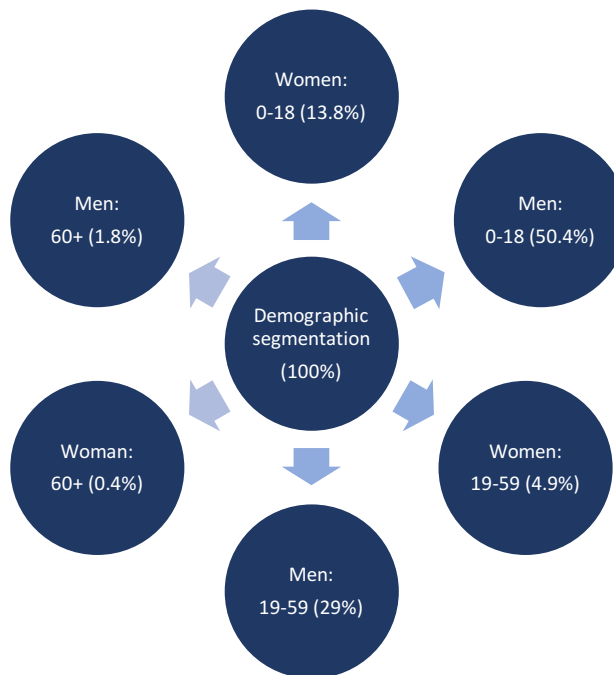


Figure 4.2: Demographic segmentation

The illustration from above indicates the percentage distribution of the demographic segmentation. An interesting notion is the percentage of distribution that the demographic segments of men between the age of 0 and 59 combined accounts for 79 pct. of the total number of active members playing football in Denmark emphasizing that these segments clearly are the biggest segments in terms of the demographic segmentation.

The psychographic segmentation is the final segmentation base for the overall segmentation made by Divisionsforeningen. Stated in the psychographic segmentation, it is determined by: Activities, Interest and Opinions. By analysing these factors, different psychological profiles will be identified.

Based on the demographic segmentation analysed above, it can be argued that consumers in the Danish market for professional football is active due to their status as active football players. However, the level of activity is assumed to differ according to level of football the members are playing. Active football players who play in the best semi pro/amateur tiers both on senior and junior level are assumed to practice 5-6 times a week (including a match) categorizing them as the highly active segment. The members who plays in lower level tiers both on senior and junior level are assumed to practice 3-4 times a week (including a match) categorizing them as the medium

active segment. The members who are not practicing 3-6 times a week but 0-2 times a week (including a match) is categorized as the low active segments. Additionally, the low active segment including youngsters aged between 0-10 and elderly people aged 60+ is assumed not to coincide with an activity level of high or medium. Based on the activity level the following three activity segments are (figure 4.3):

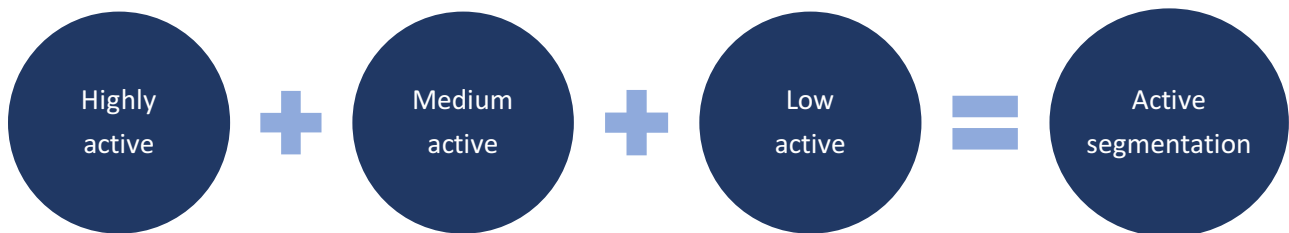


Figure 4.4: Active segmentation

Another factor that is determining the psychographic segmentation for Divisionsforeningen in relation to the Danish market for professional football is the factor of interest. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the Danish consumers differ in terms of interest as some consumers are categorized as *hardcore* consumers and some consumers are categorized as *soft*. The division of consumers in terms of hardcore and soft is assumed to be the baseline in terms of the segmentation based on interest. The hardcore consumers are characterized as a segment that typically favours one club and who often watch the matches at the stadiums with their fellow hardcore friends. They have a high interest in who is winning the match and they will help their team to victory by cheering and by being supportive. The hardcore segment has a high-medium interest in football and would rather watch a football match than going to e.g. a birthday party (Interview 1, 2017). Unlike the hardcore consumers, the soft consumers are characterized as a segment that typically favours the league and not a particular club. They have a medium-low interest in football and prefer to watch the matches on the tv together with their family and soft friends. The soft consumers have a lower interest in terms of who is winning the match compared to the hardcore consumers and they prefer watching matches with competitive well-played football. For soft consumers, football is secondary compared to other specific interests and the segment would have no problem with skipping a

football match for e.g. a birthday party (Interview 1, 2017). Based on the interest level of the consumers in the market the following two interest segments are (figure 4.5):



Figure 4.5: Interest segmentation

The final factor determining the psychographic segmentation for Divisionsforeningen in relation to the Danish market for professional football is the factor of opinion. The segmentation of opinion is assumed to be based on whether the segments have an opinion about the professional football in Denmark or not emphasizing that the segmentation is divided in two: one segment with an opinion about the professional football being played in Denmark and one without. In correlation with the segmentation in terms of interest it is assumed that the segment hardcore have opinions about the professional football being played in Denmark due to their level of interest. The soft segment on the other hand is assumed to contain consumers who to some degree have or does not have an opinion based on their level of interest emphasizing that this segment is being characterized as having a medium-low interest in the professional football. Based on whether or not the consumers have an opinion the following segments are (figure 4.6):



Figure 4.6: Opinion segmentation

On the premise of the analysed activity, interest and opinions, it can be argued that Divisionsforeningen have target the following segments with each of the AIO factors (figure 4.4; 4.5; 4.6) in terms of their psychographic segmentation. Toward creating potential psychographic segments, the AIO factors are combined differently in order to create differentiated outcomes. The following table (figure 4.7) shows that when the AIO factors analysed above is combined, Alka Superliga have formed nine different psychographic segments:

Psychographic segments

- High activity level and 'hardcore' with an opinion
- High activity level and 'soft' with an opinion
- High activity level and 'soft' without an opinion

- Medium activity level and 'hardcore' with an opinion
- Medium activity level and 'soft' with an opinion
- Medium activity level and 'soft' without an opinion

- Low activity level and 'hardcore' with an opinion
- Low activity level and 'soft' with an opinion
- Low activity level and 'soft' without an opinion

Figure 4.7: Psychographic segmentation

Based on the various segmentation bases it can be concluded that Divisionsforeningen has segmented the market for professional football in Denmark, and thereby created a range of different segments, which the brand of Alka Superliga potentially could target. However, an interesting notion is that Divisionsforeningen did not segment the Danish market for professional football geographically as the various clubs in Alka Superliga conducted the geographic segmentation regionally according to their geographical location in Denmark. The geographical segmentation approach emphasized that the geographical area of Denmark was considered as one segment from the point of view of Divisionsforeningen forming the partial conclusion that the overall segmentation is not geographically based. A more specific approach in terms of segmentation is used during the demographic segmentation, where the segmentation base of demographic is segmented on the premises of age and gender emphasizing the formation of different segments. Similar to the more specific approach from the demographic segmentation was

this specificity applied during the segmentation in terms of the psychographic. The segmentation in terms of psychographic was on the premises of the activities, interests and opinions. The psychographic segmentation based on these factors led to the formation of additional segments. Based on the above it is deemed fair to conclude that segmentation done by Divisionsforeningen in terms of the Danish market for professional football primarily is based on the demographic and psychographic segmentation bases.

Who to target?

The segmentation analysed above is conducted in order to indicate the processes that Divisionsforeningen have been through when they defined their primary target group for Alka Superliga. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the primary target group of Alka Superliga is men in the age of 18 to 40 across all of Denmark, who have some degree of activity level and who have a great interest in football. The defined primary target group of Duelund Jensen is coherent with the analysed segmentation processes arguing for the validity of the analytical segmentation conducted. As Divisionsforeningen already has defined the primary target group for Alka Superliga, the targeting section will analyse the predefined target group. The analysis will be separated in three sections in coherence with the theory regarding targeting. Subsequently, the analysed sections will partly be concluded.

Is the target group attractive?

Based on the effective segmentation criteria from Iannuzzi (2014), the primary target group of Alka Superliga (defined by Duelund Jensen) will be analysed in order to determine whether or not the target group is an attractive segment to target for Divisionsforeningen and Alka Superliga.

From the demographic segmentation of Divisionsforeningen, the size of the target group is analysed emphasizing that the segments are measured. Additionally, the AIO factors of the target group is defined in the psychographic segmentation, emphasizing that the characteristics about the target group is measured. Based on the measurement from the demographic and psychographic segmentation it is fair to argue that the primary target group of Alka Superliga is measurable, making the target group attractive in terms of measurability.

Equivalent to the measurement of the target group from the demographic segmentation, it can be argued that the primary target group is substantial in terms of size as men in the age of 18 to 40 account for 29 pct. of the men and women who plays football in Denmark anno 2016 (figure 3.1). The size of the target group emphasize that the segments is worth pursuing for Divisionsforeningen and the brand of Alka Superliga, why it can be argued that the target group is attractive in terms of substantiality.

Based on the analysis of Porter's Five Forces in terms of supplying the buyers (including the target group) with professional football in Denmark it is analysed that the buyers access the matches from Alka Superliga either on tv or at the stadiums. Therefore, it can be argued that the target group is easily accessible, as the consumers easily can access tv and stadiums without applicable limitations. However, the threats from substitutes and the competitors potentially limit the accessibility of the target group due to the fact that the target group have the bargain power, emphasizing that the consumers individually decide whether or not they want to be accessible. The lack of control in terms of accessibility for Divisionsforeningen limits the attractiveness of the target group.

In terms of differentiability, it is fair to argue that the target group of Alka Superliga is homogeneous due to interest in professional football defining them as a hardcore segment with an opinion about football, which was analysed in the psychographic segmentation. Additionally, the target group is heterogeneous compared to the other segments of the psychographic segmentation. This notion is based on the other segments that are characterized as soft segments who only have a little or non-interest in football and thereby only few or no-opinions about football. The heterogeneity of the target group compared to the other segments from the psychographic segmentation makes the target group attractive in terms of differentiability.

Similar to the analysis of the target group in terms of accessibility, it can be argued that it is easily served as the consumers have a general interest in watching football, which they can do on their tv and at the stadiums. However, the consumers are considered hard to serve due to the competition from e.g. the English Premier League who serves a similar product emphasizing that the consumers in the target group individually can decide by whom they want to be served emphasized by the

bargaining power of the consumers analysed in the section of Porter's Five Forces. On the premise of that, it can be argued that Divisionsforeningen and Alka Superliga cannot easily control the factor of action in terms of the target group emphasizing that the attractiveness of the target group is considered limited.

Based on the different criteria it is partial concluded that the target group is relatively attractive target group for Divisionsforeningen and the brand Alka Superliga. This partial conclusion is based on the target group being measurable as the size and psychographic characteristics about the target group could be measured. The target group is substantial as the size of the target group account for 29 pct. of the men and women playing football in Denmark anno 2016 and finally the target group is differentiable as the target group is considered heterogeneous compared to the other segments from the segmentation analysis. The measurability, substantiality and differentiability influences the attractiveness of the target group positively. However, the target group is not considered easily accessible due the bargaining power of the consumers' emphasizing that the consumers freely decide whether they want to be accessible or not. Additionally, the actions are in terms of the target group analysed as being limited based on the supply from tv and the competition emphasizing that the target group individually decide by whom they want to be "satisfied" making Divisionsforeningen limited in terms of controlling the actions of the target group. The limitations in terms of accessibility and action affect the overall attractiveness negatively.

The capability of Danishness

The V.R.I.O framework is applied in order to analyse the valuable resources and capabilities for Alka Superliga. According to Bretton-Meyer (Interview 2, 2017), one of the valuable capabilities of Alka Superliga is the Danishness that embraces and characterizes the league. In terms of being understood as a capability is the Danishness rendering Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) an expression of that: Alka Superliga reflects the Danishness by the way the professional football is being played by the clubs in Alka Superliga, the number of Danish players on the teams and the way Danish values and moral obligations are expressed through the football. Based on this it is fair to argue that Danishness potentially is one of the valuable capabilities of Alka Superliga, emphasizing that this capability will be analysed with the V.R.I.O framework.

From the survey conducted, multiple respondents replied that the fact that Alka Superliga is a Danish league makes them interested in the football being played in Alka Superliga, emphasizing that the capability are valuable to them (Survey, 2017; 3.5). Additionally, multiple respondents replied that the clubs in Alka Superliga have many Danish players on their teams emphasizing that the consumers are feeling a closer connection with the league. However, an interesting notion to make from the survey is that many of the respondents' states that they are fans of particular Danish clubs e.g. due to their affiliation with city the clubs are from or the players who plays for the clubs (especially Brøndby IF and FC København are mentioned multiple times). The fact that consumers are fans of a particular club in the Alka Superliga is supported by Duelund Jensen who states that one of the mantras of Alka Superliga is: "Your club, Our league" (Interview 1, 2017).

Based on the valuation of Danishness in terms of Alka Superliga from the above, it can be argued that the Danishness embracing Alka Superliga is rare because the capability of Danishness is related to Denmark and the Danish League in football (Alka Superliga). Additionally, the affiliation and passion, which the fans had about the local clubs and the fact that clubs, consumers and Alka Superliga collectively create the Danishness, reinforce the valuation of Danishness. This emphasized that the capability become rarer as it is assumed that the consumers on the Danish market for professional football will not feel the same affiliation with foreign clubs.

The fact that many players from Alka Superliga is Danish enforcing the Danishness as a capability because many consumers consider it valuable for Alka Superliga (Survey, 2017; 3.5). For foreign clubs and leagues, it is possible to imitate this by signing Danish players and thereby adding some degree of Danishness into the leagues. An example of this is the Danish footballer Christian Eriksen who plays for Tottenham Hotspurs in the English Premier League. Since 2013 where Christian Eriksen signed with Tottenham, the number of Danish fans who supports Tottenham have increased over the years, arguing for the effect of Danishness (Rona, 2015). However, the Danish players playing for the different clubs both in Denmark and foreign is a limited part of the total capability of Danishness. Another factor that needs to be analysed in order to state the degree of inimitability of the capability is the factor of affiliation the consumers have with the clubs from Alka Superliga. Stated previously, the affiliation primarily based on consumers feeling affiliated with the local clubs from the local city. The consumers on the Danish market for professional football is presumed not

to have the same degree of affiliation with clubs from other leagues due to geographical location of the foreign clubs. The clubs from the foreign leagues could possibly reach this degree of local affiliation if they moved the clubs from e.g. Manchester (England) to Vejle (Denmark). However, this is deemed as unrealistic, emphasizing that the affiliation with local clubs is inimitable and thereby enforcing the inimitability of the capability.

Based on the above it can be argued that Danishness is imitable for foreign clubs by signing Danish players, but it is unrealistic for other leagues and clubs to imitate the Danishness completely, due to affiliation the consumers have with the Danish clubs.

This organizational structure emphasizes that Divisionsforeningen and the clubs collectively form the brand of Alka Superliga, as Alka Superliga is managed by Divisionsforeningen, which is founded by the clubs from the best 3 tiers in Denmark. The co-operation between Divisionsforeningen and the clubs is likewise expressed in the terms of supporting the capability of Danishness. This is exemplified by the Danish clubs creating local activities to make the consumers affiliated with the clubs enforcing the Danishness and by the fact that Divisionsforeningen created national marketing campaigns embracing the mantra of “Your club, Our league” (Interview 1, 2017). Additionally, Divisionsforeningen and DBU have created a working group, which job is to find solutions for how the Danish clubs become better in terms of integrating young Danish talents in the squads instead of foreign players (Ernst & Funder, 2017). The creation of a working group indicates that Divisionsforeningen and DBU collectively supports the capability of Danishness even further, why it is fair to argue that the capability of Danishness have organizational support from both the Danish clubs, Divisionsforeningen and DBU.

From the analysis of Danishness in terms of value, it can be concluded that the value factor has a positive impact on the overall competitive advantage of Danishness. This notion is primarily based on the close connection consumers feel with Alka Superliga and the Danish clubs in the league. Additionally, the notion is supported by the mantra “Your club, Our league” emphasizing that the value in terms of Danishness is collectively created between Alka Superliga, the consumers and the Danish clubs. Another relevant factor in terms of concluding the degree of competitive advantage that the Danishness has, is the factor of rarity. Based on the analysis regarding the factor of rarity it is concluded that it has a positive impact on the overall competitive advantage of Danishness. The

conclusion based on Danishness is related to Denmark and thereby the Alka Superliga (due to the status as the best league in Denmark). Additionally, the collective creation of Danishness is rare emphasizing an additional positive impact on the overall competitive advantage. In relation to the analysis of the factor inimitability in terms of the Danishness, it is concluded that the factor conflicts in terms of the contribution of competitive advantage to the capability Danishness. This conflict is based on that the factor both contributes positively and negatively to the overall competitive advantage of Danishness. The negative contribution from the factor of inimitability is based on it being possible for clubs and leagues in foreign countries to imitate the Danishness by signing Danish players and thereby neglecting the inimitability of Danishness. The positive impact in terms of the factor inimitability is based on the affiliation the consumers have with the Danish clubs. The same affiliation is assumed being unrealistic for the foreign clubs due to their geographical location, emphasizing that the Danishness is inimitable affecting the overall competitive advantage of Danishness positively. From the analysis of the final factor in the V.R.I.O framework (Organizational Support), it is partially concluded that the factor of Organizational Support contributes positively to the overall competitive advantage of Danishness. The conclusion is based on the Danish clubs creating activities that affiliates the consumers with the clubs and Divisionsforeningen creates national campaigns focusing on the mantra “Your club, Our league”. This emphasize that Danish clubs and Divisionsforeningen collectively supports the capability of Danishness. Furthermore, it is the creation of a working group focusing on the implementation of young Danish talents in the league by Divisionsforeningen and DBU an indication of Organizational Support.

The capability of Danishness is concluded to be conflicting in terms of determining whether the capability deduce a competitive advantage or not. This conflict is based on that the factor of inimitability influence the overall competitive advantage of Danishness negatively while other factors like Value, Rarity and Organizational Support have a positive impact.

Scandinavian Premium

According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the main objective of Alka Superliga is to become the premium brand in Scandinavian football (Denmark, Norway and Sweden). The objective of becoming the premium brand in Scandinavia is not only on a sporting level emphasized by the Danish clubs such as FC København, Brøndby IF and FC Midtjylland should be superior compared to e.g. Rosenborg BK or Molde FK from Norway and Malmö FF or AIK Fotboll from Sweden but also on

a marketing level emphasized by that Alka Superliga should become Scandinavian premium in terms of branding and digital marketing (Interview 1, 2017). The objective of Alka Superliga in terms of becoming Scandinavian Premium will be analysed based on the S.M.A.R.T criteria.

The objective of Alka Superliga in terms of specificity is argued to be considered based on Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017). Duelund Jensen points out the objective of becoming Scandinavian Premium not only is on a sporting level but also on a marketing level. This emphasize that Divisionsforeningen is specific in terms pointing out the specific areas that needs to be improved for Alka Superliga in order to become Scandinavian Premium.

The main objective of Alka Superliga (Scandinavian Premium) have two supporting objectives emphasized by the sporting level and the marketing level. In order to analyse the main objective in term of measurability, the supporting objectives needs to be analysed at first. The first supporting objective of the main objective is the objective of becoming superior in terms of the sporting level compared to Norway and Sweden. The measurement of this objective is based on the actual UEFA ranking found in figure 5.1.









17		Romania	6.800	6.875	5.125	2.250	3.300	24.350
18		Denmark	3.300	3.800	2.900	5.500	8.500	24.000
19		Belarus	4.500	1.750	5.500	5.125	3.000	19.875
20		Poland	2.500	3.125	4.750	5.500	3.875	19.750
21		Sweden	5.125	3.200	3.900	4.750	2.750	19.725
22		Israel	3.250	5.750	1.375	2.250	6.750	19.375
23		Scotland	4.300	3.250	4.000	3.000	4.375	18.925
24		Cyprus	4.000	2.750	3.300	3.000	5.500	18.550
25		Norway	4.900	2.600	2.200	7.250	1.375	18.325

Figure 5.1: UEFA national ranking

The illustration above shows Denmark and Alka Superliga being placed as number 18, Sweden and Allsvenskan as 21, and Norway and Eliteserien as 25. The ranking indicates that Denmark is better placed than the Sweden and Norway emphasizing that a well-founded assumption about Alka Superliga being superior on a sporting level compared to Sweden and Norway can be conducted. The other supporting objective of the main objective is the objective of being best in terms of

branding and digital marketing compared to Sweden and Norway. Compared to the supporting objective in terms of the sporting level is the supporting objective in terms of the branding and digital marketing harder to measure as no rankings, points etc. indicates how Alka Superliga is performing compared to the leagues in Sweden and Norway. Based on the measurability of the supporting objectives it can be argued that main objective of Alka Superliga in terms of becoming Scandinavian Premium only is partly measurable due to the lack of measurability in terms of the supporting objective of branding and digital marketing.

The organizational structure of Divisionsforeningen emphasizes that the Danish clubs and Divisionsforeningen collectively form the brand of Alka Superliga. In terms of whether or not the objective is agreed upon, it can be argued that the organizational structure in terms of the brand Alka Superliga emphasizes that the objective is collectively agreed upon. Additionally, the objective is supported by DBU, as Bretton-Meyer (Interview 2, 2017) states that DBU has an interest in terms of making the brand of Alka Superliga competitive and strong highlighting the fact that DBU agree upon the main objective as well.

The structure of the Alka Superliga was changed in the season of 2016-2017. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the change of the league structure is emphasizing that Alka Superliga at the moment is in a transition phase. This claim is supported by Bretton-Meyer (Interview 2, 2017) who states that Alka Superliga currently is in some kind of “test” phase, making it hard to say whether the new structure has been successful or not. Based on the statements from Duelund Jensen and Bretton-Meyer it is fair to argue that the objective in terms of becoming Scandinavian Premium only can be achieved when the “test” phase is over and Divisionsforeningen, DBU and the Danish football clubs collectively have evaluated the new league structure, emphasizing that objective is not considered realistic at the moment.

The fact that Alka Superliga is currently in a transition/“test” phase makes it unrealistic to become Scandinavian Premium during this phase as the focus during the phase is assumed to primarily concern the new structure. Therefore, it can be argued that the objective might be achieved when the transition phase is over, making the period for the achievement of the objective +2 years.

However, Duelund Jensen did not specifically point out when Alka Superliga should become Scandinavian Premium, emphasizing that the objective at that moment did not have any timeframe and thereby cannot be considered as time-related.

Based on the analysis of the criteria *specific* it is partially concluded that the objective is specific, based on the interview with Duelund Jensen. By being specific, the validity of the objective is strengthened. The *measurability* of the objective was more ambiguous as the measurement of the sporting level compared to Sweden and Norway was easily measured by the UEFA ranking, but the measurement of the branding and digital marketing was hard to measure due to the lack of rankings, points scales etc. Based on the conflicting measurements in terms of the objective it is concluded that the validity of the objective was weakened due to the missing measurement of branding and digital marketing. On the premise of the analysis and evaluation of the criteria *agreed upon* it can be concluded that the objective is agreed upon based on the formal organizational structure of Divisionsforeningen and the interviews with Duelund Jensen and Bretton-Meyer. The collective agreement emphasizes that the validity of the objective is further strengthened. In terms of the realism of the objective, it is concluded that the objective is not a realistic objective at the moment. This conclusion is primarily based on the fact that Alka Superliga currently is in a “test” phase. According to Duelund and Bretton-Meyer, emphasizing the objective of becoming Scandinavian Premium is not realistic due to a primary focus on the test. A consequence of the objective is not considered realistic as the overall validity of the objective is weakened. From the analysis of the criteria time-related, it is concluded that the objective is not time related emphasizing that the validity of the objective is further weakened. The conclusion is primarily based on Duelund Jensen, who did not especially point out when Alka Superliga should become Scandinavian Premium making the objective missing a timeframe and thereby the objective cannot be considered as time-related. In terms of each of the criteria of the S.M.A.R.T framework it is fair to conclude that the validity of the overall objective of Alka Superliga (Scandinavian Premium) is conflicting as some criteria strengthens the validity of the objective while others weakens it.

Where to be positioned?

Stated in the theoretical part of the thesis is brand positioning about deciding how the brand should be positioned in the mind of the primary target group. The analysis in terms of the brand positioning will be based on the positioning of Alka Superliga.

In the Porter's Five Forces analysis it was deduced that the primary competitors for Alka Superliga in terms of professional football in Denmark is the English Premier League and the Champions League. From the survey conducted for this thesis multiple respondents stated that the excitement, well-played football and good stadium experiences characterized the three leagues (Survey, 2017; 3.5) emphasizing that the leagues have some of the same benefits and associations in terms of serving the consumers. This notion is supported by Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) who states that competition in terms of football as a basic product is tough, due to the lack of direct product differentiation. Based on the survey and the interview with Duelund Jensen it can be argued that Alka Superliga, the English Premier League and the Champions League have categorical PoP emphasized by the leagues covering the same essential benefits and share multiple associations. Additionally, this notion imply that Divisionsforeningen does not really have a brand positioning on the premise of PoP.

Based on the analysis and evaluation of the PoP between Alka Superliga, the English Premier League and the Champions League it can be argued that the leagues have multiple identical benefits and associations. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), Divisionsforeningen is equally aware of these similarities emphasizing that the brand positioning of Alka Superliga includes some PoDs in order to differentiate the brand from the English Premier League and the Champions League. According to Bretton-Meyer (Interview 2, 2017), the new league structure of Alka Superliga is one of the PoDs for Alka Superliga compared to the other competing leagues as the English Premier League and the Champions League have other league structures. The new structure of Alka Superliga should potentially make the league more interesting for the consumers, as the final stage of the league will have more reciprocal matches with the best clubs from Alka Superliga (Interview 2, 2017). It is fair to argue that this PoD can be characterized as a differentiable PoD as the new league structure is distinctive compared to the league structure of the English Premier League and

the Champions League. The screen print from the Facebook of Superliga.dk (figure 5.2) is an illustrative example of how the PoD in terms of the league structure is branded and thereby contribute to the formation of the brand positioning of Alka Superliga.



Figure 5.2: Superliga.dk Facebook post

The post seen above is from Facebook and is an indication of how the PoD is branded on the Social Media of Facebook arguing for the PoD as contributor to the brand positioning of Alka Superliga. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), another PoD that distinguish Alka Superliga from the other leagues is the fact that no matches in the Alka Superliga are played simultaneously, emphasizing that it is possible for the consumers to watch all the matches live (Interview 1, 2017). The following figures (5.3; 5.4; 5.5) indicates the PoD affirmed by Duelund Jensen.

31. Runde			
Dato	Tid	Kampe	Resultat
28.04.2017	18:00	OB – AC Horsens	
28.04.2017	20:15	Randers FC – Esbjerg fB	
29.04.2017	16:00	FC Midtjylland – FC Nordsjælland	
30.04.2017	13:00	Viborg – AaB	
30.04.2017	16:00	FC København – Lyngby	
30.04.2017	18:00	Brøndby IF – SønderjyskE	
01.05.2017	19:00	Silkeborg – AGF	

Figure 5.3: Round 31 of the Alka Superliga

35. Runde			
Dato	Tid	Kampe	Resultat
29.04.2017	16:00	Stoke – West Ham	
29.04.2017	16:00	Sunderland – Bournemouth	
29.04.2017	16:00	West Bromwich – Leicester	
29.04.2017	16:00	Southampton – Hull	
29.04.2017	18:30	Crystal Palace – Burnley	
30.04.2017	13:00	Manchester United – Swansea	
30.04.2017	15:05	Middlesbrough – Manchester City	
30.04.2017	15:05	Everton – Chelsea	
30.04.2017	17:30	Tottenham – Arsenal	
01.05.2017	21:00	Watford – Liverpool	

Figure 5.4: Round 35 of the English Premier League

Kvartfinale			
Dato	Tid	Kampe	Resultat
11.04.2017	20:45	Juventus – Barcelona	3 – 0
12.04.2017	18:45	Dortmund – Monaco	2 – 3
12.04.2017	20:45	Atletico Madrid – Leicester	1 – 0
12.04.2017	20:45	Bayern München – Real Madrid	1 – 2
18.04.2017	20:45	Leicester – Atletico Madrid	1 – 1
18.04.2017	20:45	Real Madrid – Bayern München	4 – 2
19.04.2017	20:45	Barcelona – Juventus	0 – 0
19.04.2017	20:50	Monaco – Dortmund	3 – 1

Figure 5.5: Quarter finals in the Champions League

The figures above indicate that it is only possible to watch all the matches live from Alka Superliga on different times emphasizing that some consumers potentially can watch all the matches if wanted. The PoD in terms of the possibility of watching all the matches is argued as being a desirable PoD in terms of the brand positioning of Alka Superliga as it is considered as a unique possibility for the consumers. However, an interesting notion is that even though Duelund Jensen points out that this is considered a PoD, the survey conducted indicates that 74.17 pct. of the respondents does not know that Alka Superliga is the only league where the matches are played at different times (Survey, 2017; 2.4)

The final factor considered relevant regarding the analysis of the brand positioning of Alka Superliga is the factor of DbP. Stated by Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) the professional football is lacking regarding product differentiation as the leagues share the same benefits and associations. However, the capability Danishness creates is a competitive advantage for Alka Superliga compared to the other leagues. Based on this, it is fair to argue that the brand of Alka Superliga differentiates itself from the competitors on the premise of the capability Danishness. The formation of a brand positioning on the premise of the capability Danishness is in the visual presented in figure 5.6.



Figure 5.6: Dit Hold. Vores Liga

The image indicates that Divisionsforeningen apply the mantra of “Your club. Our league” (Dit hold. Vores liga) in their brand positioning. The mantra is stated as being one of the value “generators” in terms of the capability Danishness arguing for the application of the capability Danishness in terms of the brand positioning of Alka Superliga. It can be argued that Danishness is used as a horizontal differentiation based on that the capability focusing on improving the affiliation with the league and clubs, and that the capability of Danishness is created in collective context between Alka Superliga, the Danish clubs and the consumers. This emphasize that the brand positioning in terms of the capability Danishness is focusing on mental characteristics of the products and not the quality.

Based upon the analysis in terms of the brand positioning of Alka Superliga it is fair to conclude that Divisionsforeningen have a desired image for the brand. The analysis conducted indicates that Divisionsforeningen is primarily desiring the image of Alka Superliga primarily on the premises of PoD and DbP emphasizing that different action of branding is applied. In terms of the PoD, the different actions of branding highlighted by the fact that Divisionsforeningen is desiring a brand image on the premises of the new league structure of Alka Superliga and the fact that no matches in the league are played simultaneously. However, the survey conducted indicates that 74.2 pct. of the respondents did not know this (Survey, 2017; 2.4), emphasizing that the desired brand image in terms of the fact that no matches are played simultaneously can be questioned. This will be discussed further in the following. Additionally, the brand positioning is based on DbP emphasized by the capability of Danishness, even though Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) argues that product differentiation is lacking in terms of professional football. Similar to the brand positioning in terms of the PoD “no matches are played simultaneously” the DbP will further be discussed below.

Understanding positioning?

Based upon the literature review regarding the theoretical framework of the market, forces in the market, segmentation, targeting, the brand position and the empirical findings in terms of Divisionsforeningen and Alka Superliga a discussion is conducted. The structure of the discussion is formed as an identification of misfits between the theory formulated in theoretical framework and the empirical findings in terms of Divisionsforeningen and Alka Superliga (practical reality).

In theory, the market can be defined by the premises of: served customer groups, served customer functions and technologies utilized. However, in reality it is not easy to define the market that Alka Superliga is a part of. The difficulties in terms of defining the market for Alka Superliga is primarily based on a belief that the served customer groups in the market are not being specific defined, as the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the consumers differ according to Christensen (2014). Therefore, it is fair to discuss the validity of the marketing definition framework by Abell (1980) as the empirical finding imply that the premise in terms of the served customer groups was not suitable for the definition regarding the market that Alka Superliga is a part of implying that there is a misfit between theory and practical reality.

A similar misfit is identified in terms of theoretical and practical reality of Porter's Five Forces. According to Porter (1979), the five forces from the framework is weighted as being equally important and thereby affecting the long-run attractiveness of the market to same degree. However, this presumption does not fit the practical reality as it can be argued that the factors are not equally weighted in terms of the analysed forces of the market that Alka Superliga is a part of. The argumentation is based on that competition in the market (the English Premier League and the Champions League) and the potential entrant of the Chinese League in the market is having a higher impact in terms of long-run attractiveness of the market compared to e.g. the factor of supply from stadiums which according to the survey the respondents only partial use (Survey, 2017; 2.1). Additionally, the framework presuming from a theoretical point of view is that suppliers and consumers are considered as "enemies" and that the brand preferably should have more power than the suppliers and consumers (Recklies, 2015). Similar to the presumption in terms of the equally weighting of the forces, does to presumption in terms of the suppliers and consumers being "enemies" misfit with the practical reality. This misfit is based on suppliers and consumers being considered as big threats in terms of the market is the suppliers, consumers and market mutual depending on each other neglecting the presumption of that the forces should be considered as "enemies". The mutual depending between the forces and the market is based on the supply from tv and stadiums combined with professional football collectively supply the buyers that creates the market by watching football. The difference is illustrated in figure 6.1.

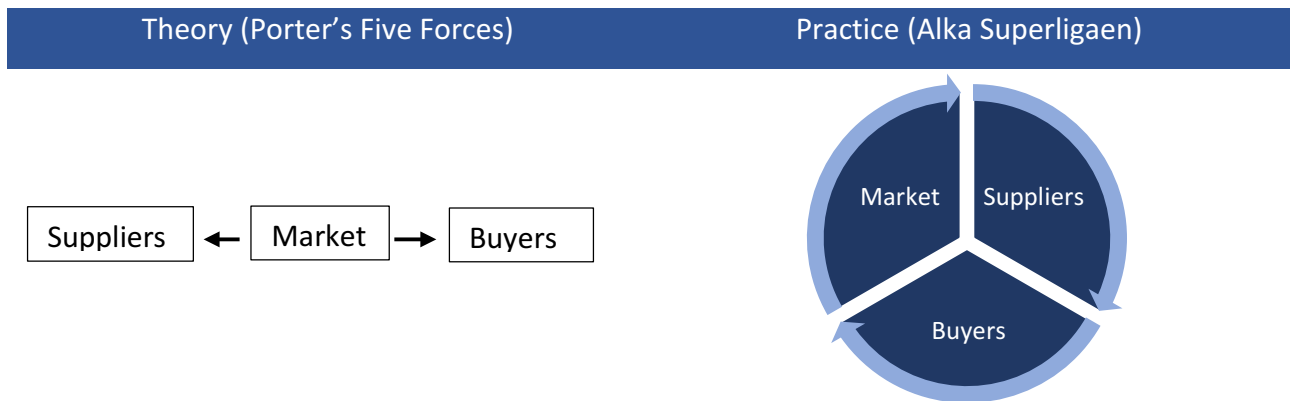


Figure 6.1: Illustration of theory vs. practice

Based upon the figure, it can be discussed whether the Porter's Five Forces framework is applicable or not in modern branding due to the differences between the theory and the practical reality. One could argue that when applying the framework in the future, the framework should be modified in order to clarify to weight of the different forces and to potentially understand the mutual connections between the forces in the framework.

Another misfit identified when comparing the theoretical foundations with the practical reality is a misfit regarding segmentation. According to Kotler et al. (2012), a segment is defined as a "market" segment consistent of a cluster of consumers who share similar needs and wants and who differentiates from other consumers in the market. This theoretical statement emphasizes that the needs and wants of the various consumers in the segments potentially easily can be identified. However, in reality the segmentation process does not clearly identify the needs and wants of the consumers of Alka Superliga. The missing identification of the needs and wants in terms of the consumers from the segmentation process is due to segmentation bases applied. Kotler et al. (2012) states that the best way to define market segments is on the segmentation bases of geography, demography and psychography as these bases define the segments descriptively emphasizing that these bases was applied for the segmentation process in terms of Alka Superliga. However, the bases did not help in terms of defining the needs and wants of the segments. Hence, it is fair to argue that Kotler et al. (2012) contradict themselves leading to a discussion concerning the segmentation bases suggested. One could argue that an additional base should be included in the segmentation process to generate a better understanding in terms of the needs and wants of the

consumers. This additional base could eventually include Maslow's hierarchy of needs (illustrated below) in order to understand some of the needs and wants the segments potentially might have as the hierarchy is useful in terms of identifying these (Maslow, 1943).

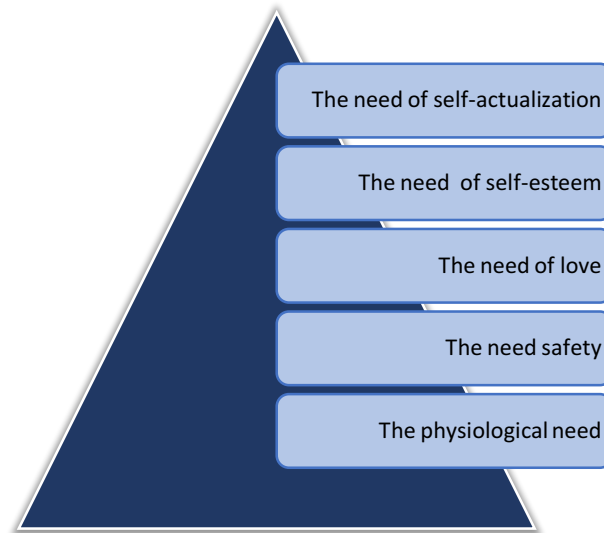


Figure 6.2: Marslow's hierarchy of needs

Similar to the market definition, Porter's Five Forces and the segmentation do the targeting have some misfits regarding the relation between theory and the practical reality. One of these misfits is the evaluation of the attractiveness of the segments. According to Iannuzzi (2014), a segment is attractive when the segments are measurable, substantial, accessible, differentiable and actionable. The theoretical framework is primarily focusing on the consumer perspective and it does not take into considerations the external factors that potentially affect the consumers. From the analysis of the practical reality of targeting, we have learned that the forces analysed in Porter's Five Forces potentially could influence the criteria forming the attractiveness of the segment. This potential external impact is not included in the theoretical framework in terms of the evaluation of the attractiveness of the segment emphasizing that there is a misfit between the theory and the practical reality. Based on this, it is fair to discuss a potential re-evaluation of the theoretical framework of Iannuzzi (2014) as one could argue that external factors like e.g. the forces of competitors and suppliers should be included in the framework in order to create a more valid argumentation.

An additional relevant discussion in terms of misfits is the misfit between theory and practical reality in relation to the determination of resources and capabilities. According to Barney (1995), the theoretical framework of V.R.I.O is a valid framework for identifying and understanding the resources/capabilities that potentially leads to a competitive advantage. Through our application of the V.R.I.O framework in terms of the analysis of Alka Superliga, we learned that the basic principles of the framework is valid in the practical reality. However, even though the principles of the V.R.I.O framework is valid in the practical reality we will argue that the framework to some degree need a re-evaluation. The argument for the reassessment of the V.R.I.O framework is based on Barney (1995), who in his paper states that the principle of value is determined by whether or not the brand is valuable to the consumers based on the internal resource/capability partial forming the competitive advantage. From our analysis of the capability Danishness in terms of Alka Superliga, we have learned that the Danish clubs, fans and Alka Superliga collectively creates the value of the capability Danishness. This emphasize that the value creation in terms of the capability of Danishness is not based internally but is a capability formed by an internal (Alka Superliga) and an external (consumers) correlation. The notion of a mutual creation of value is supported by Brown (2014) who argues that co-creation between brands and consumers emphasize that brands become more relevant and consumers becomes more attached with the brand equalling a from our point of view a higher value.

The theoretical determination of an objective and the determination of an objective in the practical reality in terms of Alka Superliga is likewise a relevant discussion in terms of targeting. According to Doran (1981), an objective can be determined by the S.M.A.R.T criteria. By applying the theoretical framework in the objective determination process, it is argued theoretically that the determined objective is easier to measure (Walters, 2012). However, from the analysis in terms of the Scandinavian Premium objective of Alka Superliga we have learned that different parts of the objective are not easily monitored emphasized by e.g. the difficulties in terms of the criteria measurability. Because of the difficulties in terms of the criteria measurability, it is fair to argue that there is a misfit between theoretical framework and the practical reality leading to a discussion of the application of the S.M.A.R.T criteria. One could argue that the theoretical framework of Doran (1981) might need a re-consideration emphasizing that the theoretical framework should contain

“tools” that helps the marketer measuring the objective. Doing so, the misfit between theory and practical reality potentially could be reduced emphasizing that the validity in terms of applying the S.M.A.R.T criteria in the practical reality is strengthened. Moreover, we have learned from our analysis that the validity of the objective (Scandinavian Premium) of Alka Superliga was considered conflicting as the objective did not meet the criteria realistic and time-related. An interesting discussion in terms of the not coherent criteria and the objective is that it can be argued that the contextual misfit is not related to a misfit between theory and practical reality but a misfit founded in the practical reality. The argumentation for this conversely discussion of the misfit founded in the practical reality is based on that the objective was not considered realistic and time-related due to a misfit between the objective and the desired brand image of Alka Superliga. The misfit between the objective and the desired brand image is primarily based on the argumentation of that the objective of becoming Scandinavian Premium is unrealistic because Alka Superliga currently is in a test phase emphasizing that the present focus for the desired brand image of Alka Superliga is on the test phase and not the objective.

An additional misfit founded in the practical reality of Alka Superliga relevant for a discussion is the potential misfit between the predefined target group and the objective. According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), the primary target group for Alka Superliga is men in the age of 18 to 40 from all over Denmark who have some degree of activity level and who have a great interest in football. This predefined target group emphasize that the primary focus of Alka Superliga in terms of market is the Danish market. However, the objective of Alka Superliga is to become Scandinavian Premium implying that Alka Superliga in terms of the objective is besides Denmark focusing on Sweden and Norway. The focus areas of target group and the objective are illustrated in figure 6.3.



Figure 6.3: Focus areas of target group and objective

Based on this it is fair to discuss the lack of correlation between the predefined target group and the objective as one part is focusing on a single market and the other part is focusing on multiple markets. According to Kotler et al. (2012), the lack of correlation between the target group and the objective is equal an incompatibility that eventually might lead to an invaluable positioning of the brand and thereby an invaluable desire in terms of the brand image. On that premise, it can be argued that the target group and the objective should have a better correlation arguing for a potential change in terms of the overall objective of Alka Superliga fitting the current focus of Alka Superliga (the test phase) and the target market (Denmark).

Similar to the misfit found in the practical reality in terms of the predefined target group and the objective a misfit in the brand positioning of Alka Superliga is relevant to discuss. According to Duelund Jensen (interview 1, 2017), one of the PoD's for Alka Superliga is that not any of the matches in Alka Superliga is played simultaneously emphasizing that the consumers can watch all the matches. However, the survey conducted indicated that 74.17 pct. of the respondents did not know this (Survey, 2017; 2.4) and additionally did we not find any branding actions indicating the brand positioning in terms of this PoD. Therefore, it is fair to discuss the validity of the PoD as the survey indicates that it is unknown to the consumers. One could argue that if Divisionsforeningen wants to use this PoD, several different branding actions need to be conducted in order to make the consumers aware of the PoD and potentially create a valuable association and thereby a potential correlation between desired and perceived image.

Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) argue that it is difficult to product differentiate professional football (Interview 1, 2017). However, our analysis of the DbP implied that Divisionsforeningen actually differentiated from their competitors on the product due to their positioning on the premise of the capability Danishness and its mental characteristics emphasized by the mantra "Your club, Our league". The interesting discussion in terms of the above is that the statement of Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) and the positioning in terms of Danishness is conflicting, emphasizing that the positioning of Divisionsforeningen can be considered as being not unidirectional.

Perceived Image

The brand image that consumers hold, is considered to be a reflected through the associations held in memory. The knowledge that consumers have for a brand is conceptualised through the notions of brand awareness and brand image. As we are to determine the nodes and linkage of associations in memory, we consider it relevant to review how consumers retrieve these associations from memory. Therefore, the literature review is to provide a theorised insight to the concept of brand knowledge and the impact of brand awareness, for us to understand the role of brand image in relation to consumer perceived associations.

Theoretical foundation of brand knowledge

The desired effect from marketing activities related to the brand is to differentiate its distinctive characteristics, attributes and associations from those of one's competitors (Kotler, 1991). The concept of consumer brand knowledge is to be understood as a summation of the brand awareness and the brand image in a cognitive representation of the brand (Keller, 1993; 2003). Thereby, each component of the brands identity and therefor the brand itself, is to individually construct brand equity, the added value endowed to the product (Kotler et al, 2012), in the memory of the consumer through a cognitive process of evaluating existing and new knowledge (Kotler, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2013; Heding et. al, 2008). Hence, brand knowledge exists in the individually distinctive mind of consumers and serves as decisive parameter for purchasing decisions (Keller, 2013), as this knowledge is a mental representation of the brand-related information to which customers keep in memory (Keller, 2013). Brand knowledge is described within the conceptualized sum of the dimensions of brand image and brand awareness, to develop a positive response, the brand associations (Kotler, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2013).

Brand Awareness

The terminology of brand awareness is linked to the functions of brand identification in the mind of individuals and is considered as an important measure of brand equity and brand strength including brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction (Keller, 1993). By having a high brand awareness combined with positive associations a given brand might have a higher added value for consumers (Riezebos,

Kist & Koostra, 2003). This higher added value for consumers as a product of higher brand awareness additionally lead to different competitive advantages for the marketers (Aaker, 1996). According to Aaker (1996), consumers differ in the way they consciously and unconsciously memorize a brand, emphasizing that brand awareness are created and measured differently in the mind of individuals. These differences have led to the formation of concepts that creates brand awareness: brand recognition, brand recall and top of the mind brand (Aaker, 1996).

Brand Recognition

The concept of brand recognition assign the ability of consumers to cognitively differentiate between brands because of different assets like: logo, name, packaging etc. (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). This emphasis that the consumer previously has been exposed to the brand visually or sonically as this will aid in the brand recognition process (Aaker, 1996).

Brand Recall

Brand recall assign the ability of consumers to elicit a brand from the memory when the consumer is prompted by a product. The cues for brand recall are typically purchase/usage situations and needs/wants (Aaker, 1996). The number of brands a consumer can recall based on clues is around three or five brands and this process is affected by various factors like loyalty, situation and usage (Reilly and Parkinson, 1985).

Top of the mind brand

When consumers are in a purchase/usage situation they will usually choose one of the top three to five brands in their mind-set. This is called top of the mind awareness (Solomon, Marshall and Stuart, 2016). The top of the mind brand is the brand that first comes into mind of the three to five brands from the top of the mind awareness (Aaker, 1996). According to Manternach (2011), a top of mind brand is the favourite purchase/usage option in a given product category and the concept is considered relevant when consumers make impulsive purchasing/usage decisions and have to choose between various brands.

Association Network Memory Model

A widely-approved conceptualisation of brand associations involves the framework of the association network memory model (ANNM), that defines the linkages and nodes formed in the

minds of consumers towards a given brand and the model contributes in terms of the formation of brand image (Kotler, 2001; Keller, 2013; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). However, before the linkages and nodes formed in the minds of the consumers can be defined they need to be identified. Several authors have contributed techniques to identify the linkages and nodes from the ANMM. One of the techniques for this identification, is the technique by Zaltman (1997), who argues the best way to identify the formation in the mind of the consumers is through the concepts of the Zaltman's Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). ZMET makes use of qualitative research techniques to identify key brand associations (nodes). When the brand associations are identified, respondents are interviewed in-depth to identify the links between the brand associations (Zaltman, 1997). Another technique used for the identification of nodes and linkages are "analytical mapping" by Henderson, Iacobucci and Calder (1998). Like the ZMET, the analytical mapping technique does also make use of qualitative research techniques in order to identify brand associations, but the linkages between the brand associations are derived from the structure of these associations through network algorithms (Henderson et al., 1998). However, both techniques have barriers in terms of the accessibility of the techniques and standardization, making them hard to use (Schnittka, Sattler & Zenker, 2012). On the basis of this, a third technique has been developed. The third technique is called Brand Concept Maps (BCM) and is considered a more standardized and accessible technique than ZMET and analytical mapping (John et al., 2006). The BCM technique is divided in three stages. The first stage is the elicitation stage where brands associations from the respondents are identified. In the second stage the respondents map the elicited associations identified in the first stage in order to indicate how the associations are linked to each other and how the associations are linked with the brand. In the third stage, the researchers combine the different brand associations and linkages formed in stage one and two to create a consensus brand map of how the respondents perceive the brand (John et al., 2006).

Mapping associations from memory

A distinguished attribute?

According to Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), Alka Superliga differentiate itself from all other competing football leagues across Europe, as the only league where spectators can see every match. This is previously analysed being a part of the desired brand image of Divisionsforeningen in terms of Alka Superliga. An administrative decision to start every match at different times and never overlap each other during the round of play, from Friday evening till Monday evening, enables the spectator to view every match in television. More on, it allows fans going to stadiums to watch other matches, before or after their stadium visit, on a Match day. Such attribute enables fans or spectators to track not just one single club but spread their interest across the whole league, reinforcing the overall interest in the Alka Superliga brand. Hence, consumers who in a purchase situation, here a specific time during the round they are motivated to watch a football match, do not have to choose from different products within the brand, but the one available. Such feature allows spectators who perhaps are not vacant to watch a match during one specific time of the day, to still experience the Alka Superliga brand through other matches.

In the survey, people were asked if they were aware of this unique product feature and only 25.8 pct. answered that they knew this (Survey, 2017; 2.4). Supplementary, participants were asked whether this meant something for them as fans and therefore was considered an important attribute (Survey, 2017; 2.5). Here the reply was that while 25.4 pct. believed it to have significance, 67.6 pct. of the participants considered it to neither nor or no influence have for them. To put this into a context, the figure 7.1 shows the allocation of answers for what motivates the participant to watch a match on television.

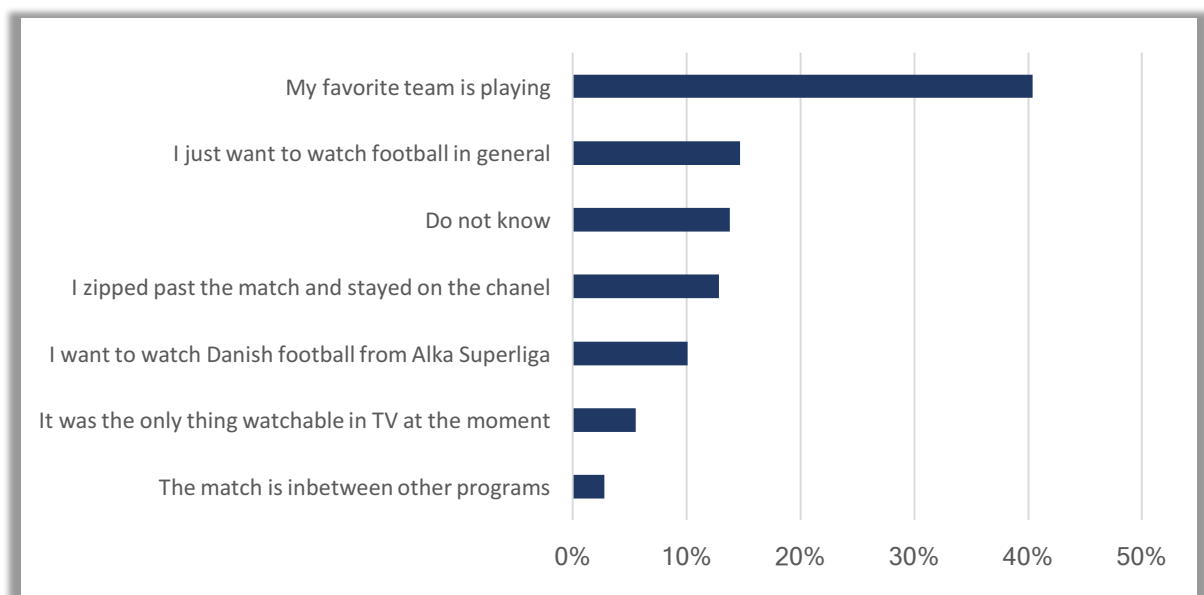


Figure 7.1: Motivation

The distribution of answers is widespread as people's motivation is different, but as 40.4 pct. indicates that their stimulus is that their favourite team is playing, they are potential indifferent to the PoD that Alka Superliga provides. The noticeable thing here is, that 18.3 pct. replied that they either watch the match because they stumbled upon this type of entertainment or because it was the best alternative to other entertainment services. Thus, by having a product that spreads across multiple times of transmission, interaction with consumers who may or may not actively have chosen to watch football come across the product. As we must assume, that 65.2 pct. of the participant selected an active search within the product category and deliberately chose to be in this purchase situation, it is disputable that almost every fifth, if we add the 2.8 pct. who watch in between other programs, are persuaded or convinced because of the products scattered transmission time.

Experiencing the brand

Based on the survey, participants were asked to choose ‘which of the following characteristics do you think describe Alka Superliga, and ‘which seven of the following values defines Alka Superliga best’, we have identified the respective top five presented in figure 7.2.

<u>Characteristics</u>		<u>Value</u>	
Low attendance	60,92%	Fans	61,45%
The Superliga is easy accessible	45,98%	Community	46,99%
Family friendly	41,38%	Accessible	40,96%
Dull play	41,38%	Entertainment	37,35%
The league is predetermined	39,08%	Fair Play	32,53%

Figure 7.2: Characteristics & Values

The two top five displays that only one of the predefined characteristic and value obtained an approval from more than half the total answers. 60.9 pct. of the asked people could identify ‘low attendance’ as a characteristic they believe describes the league, and 61.5 pct. defined ‘fans’ as a value which they could associate to the Alka Superliga brand. More on, it is significant that the features of the league being perceived as easy accessible and that participants defines a value of the league in its accessibility, consequently creating an equally shared association related to the league. The fact that both these identical attributes receives an almost equal percentage score, emphasises that this feature is both important and something that customers are aware off. Vital for the associations regarding the Alka Superliga brand, is that three out of the top five characteristics possess a negative notion. If we then identify those predetermined characteristics, which creates a negative association to the league and that Divisionsforeningen and the represented clubs wish the distance themselves from, we get the following extraction from the survey results (figure 7.3).

<u>Characteristics</u>		<u>Position</u>
Low attendance	60,92%	1
Dull play	41,38%	4
The league is predetermined	39,08%	5
Bad fields	33,33%	7
Matches without significance	24,14%	11
Lots of 0-0 matches	21,84%	12
A lot of commotion outside the stadium	21,84%	13
Dull and regulated personalities	19,54%	14
Bad defensive play	14,94%	17
Negative stories about fans	14,94%	18

Table 7.3: Negative denoted characteristics

Out of the total of 26 possible fixed characteristics, none of the bottom third holds a harmful association to the brand but is allocated with four features in the top third and six in the middle part. There was a total of ten different negative association to choose from and a fair statistical distribution would provide a spread of three association in every third. Therefore, it is arguably to establish that the negative association attaches to the league holds a high importance to the overall association connected to the brand of Alka Superliga and thereby the perceived image. The negative associations are spread over different aspects of the brand and should provide an overall representation of the whole product being offered. Some are related to the specific football product being presented on the field, some represents the league and its complete relevance as a competition and then there are characteristics that are associated to the product outside the stadiums and in the media.

The positive associations are just as important as the negative one to understand how consumers perceive the brand. The importance lies in those positive association, which contradicts the negative as it provides an alternative interpretation of the brand. For example, the association that ‘fans add passion’ (33.33 pct.) and the league provides ‘good experiences and stories’ (25.29 pct.) is a clear contrast to the idea of ‘a lot of commotion outside the stadium’ (21.84 pct.) and ‘negative stories

about fans' (14.94 pct.). Thus, we can argue that the positive associations are to fight their negative oppositions and consequently, a fortification of these association in the communicative activity could potentially diminish the negative ones. Likewise, the values, which consumers preferred as indicators of Alka Superliga, might function with the same purpose. The survey presented values that were either similar or divergent to other values. Hence, this investigates both the likeability and perception of attributes and associations related to the brand. But the notion of these selected values is only coherent through the context in which they are chosen. Some words might represent the same denotation for some participant, while it symbolises different meanings for other (Survey, 2017; 3.7). For instance, the words *passion* (28.92 pct.), *desire* (19.28 pct.) and *love* (13.25 pct.) might represents a similar notion of an affectionate emotion towards a thing, if we look at it in this semantic frame. But the words *passion* (28.92 pct.), *will* (24.10 pct.) and *intensity* (9.64 pct.) may be in a context of hard work and thereby, the word passion is with different meaning due to the semantic context.

The first thought

Memory has a strong influence on consumer, both to facilitate recognition or reinforce recall. A vital part of capturing the human mind is to link association and attributes to the brand, or the other way around (Keller, 1993). Hence, each stimulus from these associations are to motivate or certify purchase. By asking participants about their first three associations (Survey, 2017; 3.5), when introduced to the brand Alka Superliga, we examine how their brand recognition functions and their cognitive associations for the brand.

A prior experience

Brand recognition is examined by categorising associations as the participant's associations as their memory of previous exposures. If we consider these answers in relation to this notion, it is noticeable to look at the diversity in thoughts. The green highlighting in figure 7.4 represent answers, which were exceedingly represented while the yellow ones are associations that have been mentioned multiple times. First, beer and sausages were extremely mentioned as a perceived image people had when thinking about Alka Superliga. At first this did seem a bit off, as it holds no clear relation to sport and football, but the notion behind tells a lot about the experience as a product. It

represents that the perceived image of Alka Superliga is to be identified with more than just a distributor of football matches. Beers are often a symbol for a contrast to working life, going out, or having a relaxed time. As these things create a positive attitude for the surrounding environment and here through, the image of the brand. Further, it reinforces the image of a place of relaxation in one's spare time and serve as an alternative to other services for going out. As the movie theater holds an association to popcorn or Tivoli with its candy floss, the Alka Superliga is to create an image that contains more than just one specified service. The association of beer and sausage being identified as a perceived image to belong with the brand image Alka Superliga is besides vital to reinforce memory of in other contexts. As both beer and sausages are not limited to the stadiums but also available in other purchasing situation, it supports brand recall as people hopefully are to think of Alka Superliga as well.

Further, the associations related to Brøndby IF and FC København, are both regarding individual thoughts or in relation to derby, rivalry and dominance, as it serves as an extension of the brand. Alka Superliga represents the whole tournament and every competing club within it, but it is also nourished through these clubs. The success, media attention and fan base around the clubs are because of the Alka Superliga and vice versa. It is undisputable to use the cliché that the league exists only because of the clubs and the clubs exist only because of the league. If participants experience the Alka Superliga brand through their connection to a favourite club, the brand of Alka Superliga is a device to gain access for the genuine reason of purchase.

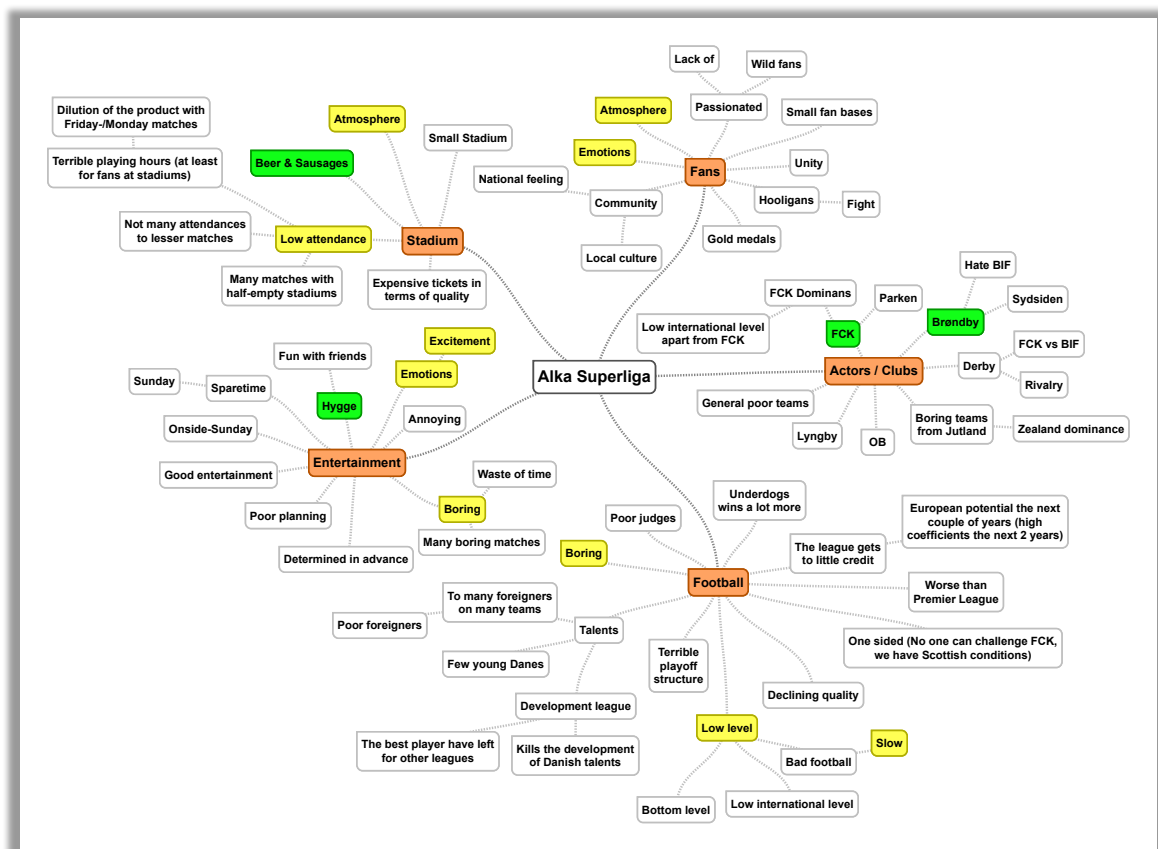


Figure 7.4: Map of the “first three associations”

The replies of Alka Superliga being associated with ‘hygge’ (fun) and fun with friends exemplifies what the brand is perceived to offer besides football. Such associations support and justifies the notion from Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017) about football being a mean of entertainment. In contrast, some people have noted that they perceive the Alka Superliga to be boring and a waste of time. Further, the participants have indicated that the league is representative of low level football and as a reflection, perceive the brand as a distributor of low quality. This is considered as a very harmful association for the brand Alka Superliga, as it not only creates a negative attitude towards to brand but disputes its position as the top tier league in Denmark.

How are associations creating value?

Divisionsforeningen expressed that in addition to the positioning of Alka Superliga, represented in the interview with Duelund Jensen (Interview 1, 2017), a desired image should be formed through the function of preferred associations, that ought to relate to the brand, as; *pride, passion, desire, closeness*. Additionally, it was presented that the Divisionsforeningen desired an association upon the objective of *Scandinavian Premium*. The value of such associations is to be recognised and accepted by consumers through consistent marketing activities and anchored to brand elements.

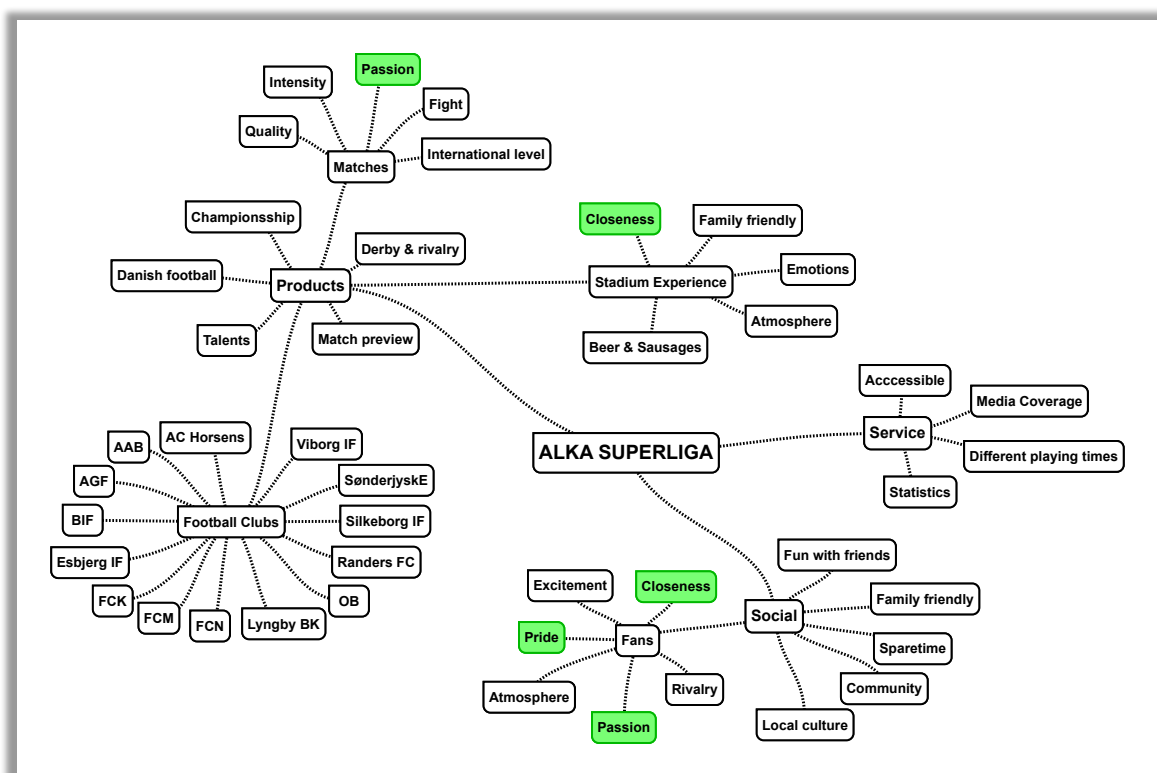


Figure 7.5: BCM – Alka Superliga

Figure 7.5 is a Brand Concept Map of the Alka Superliga brand and outlines how the associations and attributes intervenes. The Alka Superliga consist of some elements that creates the offered product and which consumers can experience. This is first of all the products within the brand, the social involvement and a service of delivering the product. The products are to characterize the core benefit of the brand and the association to be linked hereby. The league consists foremost of a number of football clubs across the country. These clubs hold their own individual brand, but Alka

Superliga provides a platform to experience these brands in action. For fans and spectators, the clubs serve a vital motivation for interaction with the league. Then there are the matches as a product to experience. Of course, the participating football club is to compete against each other, but the match itself as a product is only offered through the organisation of the league that Alka Superliga delivers. Therefore, each match is to be considered into two contexts. First, as a frame for playing football, where consumers are to expect quality, intensity and passion from the competing actors. Second, a match has its role in the overall tournament and provides a legitimization for the structure of the league. Each match serves a vital role for what Alka Superliga offer – the possibility to be Danish Champions. Then there is the experience from stadiums, where consumers are to interact themselves or spectator the atmosphere from others. The stadium facilitates a platform for consumer exposure to the brand up close, while it benefits the experience from television transmission. Then there is the social interaction that Alka Superliga contain. The product offered, is not just a question of being a spectator but just as much a participant. Alka Superliga enables for fans, friends, spectators and individuals to partake with one another and the league in general. Consumers are to relate with the excitement and pride shared by participating consumers who are alike or opposite one self. Thereby, the social interaction is not only a question the experience of the products within the Alka Superliga brand, but the interaction with the network of other consumers, both physically and mentally. Finally, the brand Alka Superliga is to be associated with its level of services. How the product and brand is distributed is highly relevant for where consumers are to be exposed. The services are to be accessible for consumers for them to be reminded of the quality of the brand. Media coverage is relevant for consumers who are either not interested nor able to receive the stadium experience. Further, it enhances exposure whenever a match is not available and prolongs the involvement with the brand.

Scandinavian Premium?

How respondents react to the image of Scandinavian Premium, is suggested to be a reflection extraction of their perception and attitude towards their interpretive denotation and perceived meaning of the image. The submitted answers (figure 7.6) indicate that 65 pct. of the respondents are able to identify and acknowledge this notion of the brands quality. This is emphasized by that 35 pct. of the respondents strongly agree with the notion of that Alka Superliga is Scandinavian Premium and 30 pct. partially agree.

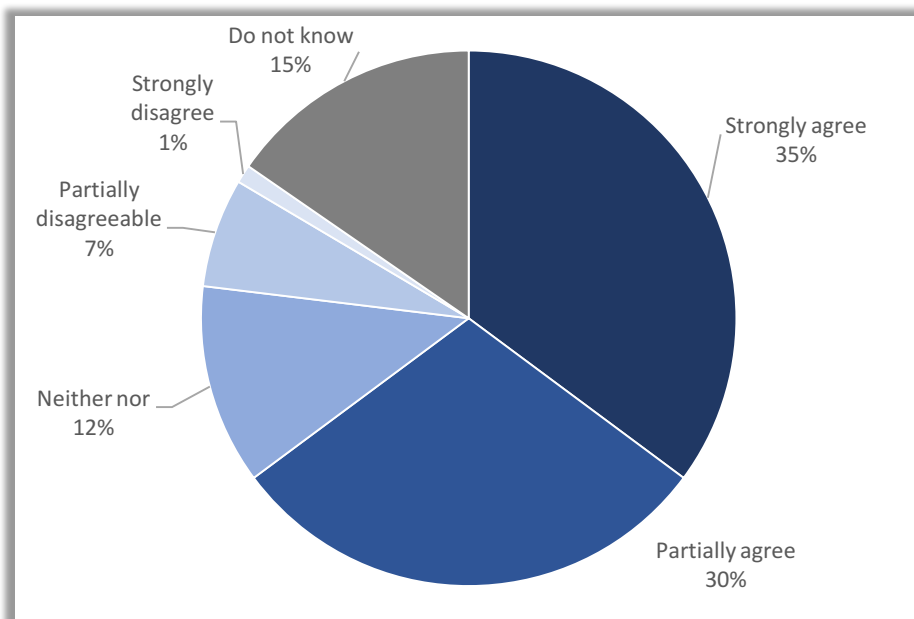


Figure 7.6: Alka Superliga as Scandinavian Premium

The association is supported by the reactions to which of the possible European leagues people evaluated to be better than the Danish Alka Superliga (Survey, 2017; 3.3). As few as 1.1 pct. indicated that the Swedish Allsvenskan is better in level while 2.2 pct. found that the Norwegian Tippeliga fits the description. In terms of quality with the level of the respective Scandinavian leagues, no one disputes the impression of Alka Superliga to be better than the other leagues of Scandinavia. As only 8.0 pct. of the asked either partially or strongly disagreed with the association *Scandinavian Premium* (figure xx) the desired image is to expect very little resistance or negative attitude towards this position. The participants who either replied that they did not know their attitude or marked it to be neither nor, makes up 27 pct. of the asked. These contributors are to be

considered into two segments, with one being people who simply do not care for this association or are indifferent for the evaluation of Alka Superliga. The other group however, is considered to represent people who simply are not able to review and value the perceived effect the interpretation before they are exposed to the genuine marketing activity. These people require to be persuaded by tangible assets before assessing the association.

Access or Quality

As we are to organise associations through the assumption that brand associations are to express every part of the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and so on that are to be linked with the brand, we are to accept that every reply in the survey express a linkage to the brand. The feature of providing every match to the consumer and so, allowing the consumer to experience the whole perception of the core benefit, is considered a distinguished attribute to the brand. The brands vision of delivering every match is a key feature that Divisionsforeningen aspire to associate with the brand. As the study showed, consumers were not in general aware of the unique characteristic and seemingly not a vital feature for their evaluation of the brand. However, we do not know if the answer represent that participants reply to whether they knew that Alka Superliga had this feature or if it indicates that they were aware of its distinctiveness. We then are to assume that the indication of its lesser importance for the fans suggest that they were either unaware or no perceived value for this benefit. More on, we assume that it implies that consumers have not experienced it, as this would denote a knowledge and association with the feature.

The outline of characteristics and values oppose this assumption, as the participants' answers indicates that 46 pct. in characteristics and 41 pct. with value (figure 7.2) agreed with its notion of being accessible. Does this then resolve that almost half the participants hold a perceived image of the argued feature? Of course not, as the misfit between these two statements lies in a cognitive biased perception. In our survey, we are influenced as we are to already possess a knowledge regarding the feature and thus, expect a similar understanding matching the view in assessing the predetermined answers '*The Superliga is easy accessible*' and '*Accessible*'. Who are to say, that the asked participants hold a similar thought of what is to be understood from these questions. Is the concept of accessible exclusively linked to the notion that consumers can experience every part of the brand? Availability is related to the television exposure of the brand, both in direct broadcasts

of matches but also in relation to news, mentions and other references indirectly. However, availability also refer to the location of stadiums across the country and the possibility to access these matches in an easier manner than travelling to other leagues like the English Premier League. Similar, accessible could related to the approachability in the local society or in the sense of Danish communities and fan-clubs. The possible perception of what accessible might imply is almost endless and exclusive for the individual mind. Likewise, we must assume that the association is to represent a distinctive perception relative to the context and so, a person's descriptive thought about the league.

The analysis indicated that the image of Alka Superliga as Scandinavian Premium had sufficient support from the survey participants, but as values and characteristics involving the quality and technical level of matches oppose this belief. Hence, the assumption as of these conflicting views refer to the respective perspective of which the association is to be considered. Scandinavian Premium does perhaps not interfere with the image of Alka Superliga offering a perceived low quality, as it may suggest an even lower perceived quality of the competition Scandinavian leagues. Thereby, the Alka Superliga brand is to be considered based on the chosen position in the market, as this might shift the evaluation of the brand. As the brands competitive environment changes, so is the respective perceived position located in consumers' memory to change. But what does it imply to be Scandinavian Premium? We have established that from people's own free image of what a concept of Scandinavian Premium is to represent, they somehow concur with its denotation. But simultaneously we have identified a strong unfavourable attitude towards the quality and a convincing belief or experience that the league is known for its low attendance. And as we reflect upon that thought of attendance, we could link it with the issue of accessibility. If we are to agree that it is fair to assume that the brand holds an image of being accessible, with the knowledge of the league perceived low attendance, then we should be able to state that the sum of attendances is related to the perceived value of the brand. Conclusively the associations intervene with each other and their perceived effect or relevance is determined by the context in which they are related.

Theoretical foundation of brand identities

The concept of consumer brand knowledge is recognized as a cognitive exemplification of the brand for which the consumer has in memory and these personal stored information and perceptions is to create the brand image (Keller, 2013). Brand knowledge reflect the effect of brand awareness and brand image, and as image is to establish nodes of the brand in memory through these associations (Keller, 2003; 2013), brand awareness is to influence the formation of said nodes (Keller, 2003) and so provide the brand with an identity by attaching identifiable and differentiating brand elements to these association and enable recognition or recall (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2013). To understand how perceived brand image is shaped through these elements of the brand, we are to examine the effect of the name and logo for Alka Superliga and so, evaluate its potential effect on the perceived image of consumers. We assume that the respective elements associated to the brand are a deliberate choice made by Divisionsforeningen, and as literature argues that brand image consist as the sum of all brand-related marketing activities, we argue that these conscious choices are to express the desired image. As we do not know the entitled desired image expressed by the logo and the name from the perspective of Divisionsforeningen, we are then to consider it through the perceived mind and so, examine the effect of the image in the context of the associations held by the consumers.

Brand Elements

Brand elements are central components in the process of designing the brands identifiability and distinguishing it from competitive brands (Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Keller, 2013). The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Keller, 1993, p. 2; Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 140). The identity of the brand is transferred to the product as the linkage between those elements in relation to the product category and usages, thus becoming a dimension to brand awareness (Keller, 2013) and stimulate values and associations through the visible brand elements (Bridgewater, 2010). Hence, each element is intended to provide the brand with associations connected with the brand in consumer's memory (Aaker, 1991), and through this create a unique and sustainable brand identity and create a desired perception (Wheeler, 2003). For these associations to not only be

linked with the brand but also fortify these associations, a communicative effort is required to create experiences, exposures and linkages to other associations (Aaker, 1991) and create enhanced awareness and unique valuable associations connected to the brand (Keller, 2013). Kotler and Keller (2016) identifies six criteria to choose one's brand element by, as they function as building the brand (memorability, meaningfulness, and likability) or defending the brand (transferability, adaptability, and practicability).

Brand Name

"The ultimate awareness level is brand name dominance where, in a recall task, most customers can only provide the name of a single brand" (Aaker, 1996, p. 15)

Choosing the name for the brand is an important aspect in the branding process as it serves as identification for consumers and becomes the centre for which the brands history derives from (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) but more on because "a name is much more permanent than most other elements of a marketing program" (Aaker, 1991, p. 188). The name serves as an identification of the brand and is to be expressed either verbally or visually (Alessandri, 2009) as a promise for customers of the products fundamentally value, delivering information regarding its products category, certain attributes and benefits or through suggestive associations and positioning (Keller, Heckler and Houston, 1998). According to Hart and Murphy (1998) the name act upon three vital functions, as it allows consumers to identify the specific product or service and aid approval or dismissal. Second, it conveys messages, obvious or subconscious, to the consumer and so link association to the name. At last, the brand name has the purpose of providing the brand with a precise piece of legal protection and thereby a valuable asset (Hart & Murphy, 1998). Thus, the name and underlying associations related hereby helps creating the value of the brand image, conscious and unconsciously, and so creates a comfortable, familiar and secure choice of purchase (Aaker, 1991). A well-defined name is then to serve as an extension of the brands identities and desired associations anchored to it, and increase brand equity through brand name awareness (Aaker, 1996). Hence, the brand name is to be suggestive of the context of the brand, through the product category, attributes or customers, and convey this information (Keller et al. 1998). Keller et al. (1998) argues that "suggestive brand names will lead to greater recall of advertised benefit claims that are consistent in meaning than non suggestive brand names" (p. 49).

The criteria for choosing brand elements defined by Keller (2013) are to support the construction of the well-defined name, for communication and awareness to be built upon (Aaker, 1991). More on, as the name function as the product, organisation, or brands leading element of identification, Aaker (1991), Alessandri (2009) and Keller (2013) argues for a proper and effective name to be memorable and short to support awareness and recall. The name is to communicate something about the product and present benefits, while it remains easy to express in both pronunciation and writing. The characteristic of a brand name is to fit in a spectrum of categories, and therefore help describing the associations useful to the brand. Alessandri (2009) explicate how the name is to be created to fit into the categories of; its founder, its descriptive connotation, fabricated purpose, metaphorical emphasis, or by being an acronym, whereas Clifton and Simmons (2004) and Hart and Murphy (1998) suggest the use of a spectrum ranging from descriptive to abstract or freestanding names as a consideration for positioning. Aaker (1991) stress that “a powerful source of a name or slogan is a metaphor” (p. 189) while Keller (2013) says that “a descriptive brand name should make it easier to link the reinforced attribute or benefit” (p. 151). Furthermore, Aaker (1991) points to the issue of brand names to attain association that advocate the category for which the product is to compete in, to develop brand recognition or recall within that category.

Brand Logo

According to Aaker (1991), visual images are simpler to understand and memories than words and text. Thus “a symbol can communicate associations – even specific attributes” (Aaker, 1991; p. 198) to support or distinctive that of the brand name, and so indicates what the brand holds. Therefore, transforming the brand from the summation of the product (or service) to an intangible asset of the brand signified through the logo (Lury, 2004; p. 76) and illustrates origin, ownership, and associations (Keller, 2013). Keller (2013) implies that the name is visually strengthened with the logo and so clearly adaptable and understood beyond geographic and cultural limitations, and underpin Aaker’s statement that:

“A symbol and slogan can become important assets and need to be solidly linked to the name. When a name can stimulate, and support effective symbols and slogans, the task of linking them to the name is made easier”

(Aaker, 1991, p. 191)

The brand logo follows the criteria selecting of brand elements Keller (2013) and potentially express a unified design visual manifestation of the identity (Heding, et al., 2009).

Many logos fall between these two extremes. Some are literal representations of the brand name, enhancing brand meaning and awareness. Logos can be quite concrete or pictorial in nature. Certain physical elements of the product or company can become a symbol. Like names, abstract logos can be quite distinctive and thus recognizable. Nevertheless, because abstract logos may lack the inherent meaning present with a more concrete logo, one danger is that consumers may not understand what the logo is intended to represent without a significant marketing initiative to explain its meaning. Consumers can evaluate even fairly abstract logos differently depending on the shape (Keller, 2013). As visual imagery is to influence memory, the symbol can offer unity and cohesion to the identity of the brand and enhance recognition and recall (Aaker, 1996). Therefore, the symbol is to visually structure the brands distinctive identity and associations cohesively developed over time (Aaker, 1996), and be the key influence of differentiation (Aaker, 1991). Ultimately, we should agree on the notion of symbols as a great asset of awareness and a suggestive instrument for the visual organisation of association making it an important tool for the name to be linked with.

The Alka Superliga name?

The current name of the best football division in Danish football, Alka Superliga, has been the official title since the 1st of January 2015, when the Danish insurance company Alka Forsikring became the official naming- and lead sponsor (Alka Forsikring, 2014).

Since 1991, where Superliga was established as a new structure for the national tournament in Danish football (DBU, 2017), the use of name sponsorships has meant that the league has changed its name from; *Superliga* (1991-95), *Coca-Cola Ligaen* (1995-96), *Faxe Kondi Ligaen* (1996-2001), *SAS Ligaen* (2001-10), *Superliga* (2010-14) and Alka Superliga (2015-). Hence, the league has been sponsored by two soft drink brands, one international and one Danish, a Scandinavian airline company, and now a Danish insurance company. The naming rights of the league has been called a historical and unique deal by Divisionsforeningen, and is to aid initiatives to improve the number of spectators at the stadium (Divisionsforeningen, 2015).

The part of the name 'Superliga' does not just represent a stable component in the name for sponsors to anchor their brand on, but leads back to the overall structure of the league. As the newest organisation of the league, in 1991, was to sharpen the tournament with fewer clubs concentrated in the top of Danish football, the Danish Championship was to change its title for the structure from 1. Division to Superliga (DBU, 2017).

As of today, the Superliga part of the league name has been used directly in the name for twelve seasons, beginning with five years from 1991 and then with the recent seven years from the 2010-2011 season.

Breakdown of the name

What is the meaning and history of the name, and is there anything to say about the underlying associations? A breakdown of the singular components could potentially reveal how these contribute to the identity of the brand and investigate if distinctive criteria and suggestions for design are visible.

Liga

The part *liga* (league) has been present in every season of the new league structure and must be considered a consistent element of the name and so the identity. According to Keller, Heckler and Houston (1998), one regularly notable objective of branding is to decide on a fundamentally meaningful brand name, so that the name itself communicates important information about the product. Referring to a dictionary in Danish, the word *liga* is defined to express either a national sports tournament, a political association, or even an association of criminal persons (Den Danske Ordbog, n.d.). The part *liga* is then to signify that this product is a sports tournament with multiple teams or individuals competing each other, and so making it identifiable to the world of sport. However, the word itself does not communicate the precise sport spoken about. Thereby, the part is a meaningful component of the name for consumers to identify the product category of sport but lacks information about the specific sport in its simple separate usage. *Liga* derives a descriptive meaning to the name but miss associations to the products key characteristics. The short nature is to serve for better recall in memory, according to Aaker (1991), oppose to the use the fundamental description of a tournament. Substitutional, *division* or *serie* is used to give the same sense or meaning to the name, but the likability of *liga* and these alternatives has not been investigated and

deemed least relevant to the other parts in the full name. Hence, the part *liga* or league provides a consensual understanding of the content that the product provides, and creates a ground pillar for the brand name. More on, the part makes the league transferable not only across different sport in Denmark, but also across the world. Keller (2013) describes how the brand needs to be adaptable and flexible to easier being renewed. By maintaining *liga* as a fixated part, the brand name is more convenient to name changes of new sponsor, as consumers can identify the root of origin – a sports tournament – and thus, also reinforce memorability to the brand meaning when we study it as a new name.

Super

The meaning of *super* derives from Latin and could be translated as ‘above’ or ‘beyond’ and is an equivalent to the Ancient Greek word *hyper* (Dictionary.com, n.d.). In modern British language, the word *super* is described with the meaning; 1. Placed above or over, 2. Of greater size, extent, quality, etc., 3. Surpassing others; outstanding, 4. Beyond a standard or norm; exceeding or exceedingly, 5. Indicating that a chemical compound contains a specified element in a higher proportion than usual (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Henceforth, the notion is to indicate a league, which is greater than other leagues that one wishes to compare and differentiate the league with. *Super* provides a vital descriptive reference for the brand but also to the part *liga*, as it then is to express an attribute to its context.

In Denmark, the value of *super* is that the top competition for the Danish Championship in football and is superior to the respective leagues below (1. Division, 2. Division, etc.). In European context, under the confederation of UEFA, eight leagues contain the prefix *super* to their respective league name (UEFA, 2017). Other equivalents to the use of *super* to express an exceeding quality in the division and as an identification of the top tier, is the adjective *premier* (or *premiership*, *primera*) or the number *1* (or *First*). *Premier* holds the connotation of; 1. First in rank; chief; leading, or 2. First in time; earliest; oldest (Dictionary.com, no date), and 19 football associations under the UEFA have chosen this to describe their leading tier (UEFA, 2017). Alternatively, the number one indicates the start of something or the leading party. In many sports, the winner is often classified as the number one or the first. As of 2017, ten leagues hold either the 1 or first to their league name (UEFA, 2017).

The prefix *super* provides a recognisable meaning to the name and consumers evaluate the reference instantaneously. The part *super* attach itself to the denotation of *liga* and so, are not preferable to be left alone, while it loses its sense of significance. Though, it is adaptable in the sense that is as an adjective denotes its attribute to other words, making it convenient to any modification of the brand. As the understanding of *super* is widely spread across cultures and borders to express a higher level of value, its contribution to the name benefits its significance and therefore, we see the part integrated across multiple names in other leagues. Consequently, the brand equity of other leagues could eventually rub off on the Danish league, as it holds similar association with their names, which accordingly to Aaker (1991) could “be an advantage for a product to be confused with a prestige brand” (p. 194). This does not necessarily imply that the Danish league is a brand of discount, but any attitudes towards other leagues under the term *super* could on the contrary potentially be evaluated in this context, regardless if it is considering as a better or worse brand. Otherwise, this designation of the league being *super*, and with other leagues being represented as *premier* or *first*, the brand might be valued with the remaining product class. Since each of the adjectives assigned to the tournament is chosen to communicate a comparable feature of being the top tier, consumer’s different likability to each individual adjective defines their attraction to the brand name.

Superliga

“The Superliga name is back and is to ensure that the football-interested Denmark never doubts that this tournament is playing for Denmark’s biggest and most important championship” (Divisionsforeningen, 2011, p. 21). These words are taken from the written report after the season 2010-2011 where the league had changed its name back to Superliga and sums the meaning, which Divisionsforeningen desires to connect with their league. The importance to guarantee Danish football enthusiasts that the brand *Superliga* is to serve as an anchor to which other associations can be attached (Aaker, 1991) as “SUPERLIGA brand is the star” (Divisionsforeningen, 2011, p. 21). By expressing associations of being a beyond all the other leagues in Denmark and so, function as a vital tournament where the winner is crowned as most important, Divisionsforeningen and Superliga offer a reason-to-buy (Aaker, 1991) for its potential customers. Hence, it legitimizes its own role in the market by expressing its positioning through its name. The importance and in particular the satisfaction of removing the Superliga brand from its sponsors and stand alone, is summed in

the opening header in the written report: "On 17.7.2010 at 17.00, OB is running to the field against Esbjerg in the season's first Superliga match. The first real SUPERLIGA match since spring 1995" (Divisionsforeningen, 2011, p. 21). This emphasizes the effort of Divisionsforeningen to distance itself from previous naming sponsors and expose the league in its original and authentic nature defined by the name.

Alka Forsikring

Alka Forsikring is a Danish insurance agency and a fusion between Arbejdernes Livsforsikring (Workers Life Insurance) and Kooperativ Assurance (Cooperative Insurance). The name *Alka* is an amalgamation of the companies merged initials (Alka, 2017). Today the meaning behind the initials A, L, K and A are perhaps not well-known, but the brand Alka have had sufficiently of time to be settled and create awareness and knowledge among consumers. As a company Alka works by the values of spirit, simplicity and trust, and has a vision of providing quality and cheap prices to their customers (Alka, 2017).

Alka Forsikring has a deliberate marketing strategy for creating awareness among existing and potential new customers and so, they have chosen to be active in the Danish football league. In their annual report of 2014, the year they got involved in Superliga, Managing director Jens Bærentsen wrote: "A part of our offensive efforts is about raising awareness of Alka Forsikring (...) We already have a high level of knowledge, but to raise potential customers, knowledge of Alka Forsikring must be increased" (Alka, 2015, p. 5). Thus, it undoubtedly characterises Alka's own attention towards initiating activities to promote their brand as an important company decision. A part of these offensive efforts has been to acquire the naming sponsorship of the football league, as it provides an effectual platform for interaction with their customers (Alka, 2014). More on, the collaboration with Superliga is not only considered a technique to generate awareness but also to "support Alka's image as the popular insurance company in the eyes of the customers" (Alka, 2015, p. 6), hence it becomes a reinforcement of the association Alka desires to attach their brand and perhaps align it with their old identity of being the worker's insurance.

Becoming the Alka Superliga

Managing director at Divisionsforeningen Claus Thomsen, stated in an interview after the announcement of Alka as new naming sponsor that: "It has been very important for us to get the superliga name together with another sponsor, as we believe that the superliga brand can carry a sponsor in its name" (TV2, 2014) and in the written report from Divisionsforeningen the Chairman of the board, Thomas Christensen wrote:

"With the kick-off this spring we also welcomed the new main sponsor of the Superliga, the insurance company Alka. With a new logo and new graphics on tv, Alka has chosen to support the football in the country's best division, and this we are incredible about"

(Divisionsforeningen, 2015, p. 8)

This statement is not coherent with the previous layout of how Superliga should function as an independent brand and not rely on naming sponsorships. When Alka Superliga finished the sponsorship contract with Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) they did not say goodbye to the use of sponsors, but formed an agreement where four new main sponsors were to share the exposure and value of the sponsorship (Divisionsforeningen, 2011). And the date to which the brand of Alka Superliga detached its identity from that of a naming sponsor, is deemed of such significance for the league, that it has been considered vital to express: "On July 17, 2010, was the day where it was said thank you for this time to SAS as league sponsor, and hello to a new sponsorship concept here the SUPERLIGA brand is the star" (Divisionsforeningen, 2011, p. 21). In contradiction, the new sponsorship deal with Alka Forsikring was then welcomed in the written report for the season 2013-14, by Claus Thomsen:

"We are very pleased to introduce Alka as the new main sponsor of Superliga. But it's a lot more than a main sponsorship. The collaboration between Superliga and Alka is a partnership (...) I have no doubt that the conclusion of this agreement will move Superliga to a new level and that it will create value and joy for both"

(Divisionsforeningen, 2015, p. 18)

The value of the new agreement does, according to Claus Thomsen, not lie in its effort to communicate the league position as the highest Danish division or to strengthen the association connected to the brand Superliga, as identified in the written report of 2010-2011 (Divisionsforeningen, 2011). The impact of the sponsorship deal lies in the collaboration to which Alka and Superliga wish to create value for each other. Divisionsforeningen describes the sponsorship as a partnership and refer to Alka as a partner and not a sponsor (Bech, 2014). More on, Divisionsforeningen has underlined the weight of having one sponsor, opposed to the previous four, who could participate actively in the sponsorship program (Ritzau, 2014). Thus, the cognition of both parties contributing to the development of the league is present as both apparently participate equally in their partnership. Hence, the presence of Alka is not to be reflected upon as purely of commercial and economic description, which only benefits Alka by providing a channel for broadcasting, but more as a deliberate alliance to improve the brand of Superliga, which they now both are responsible of.

According to Alka's own clarification of their involvement, they incoherently explain the deal as one of profitable commercial character to which they benefit as a business and to support the brand of Alka (Alka, 2015). With the related press release to inform the media of the involvement, Alka wrote: "Alka supports Danish football and Superliga, it is the Danes - without comparison - most important championship. That is why we are proud to be naming sponsor, and at the same time it gives us an increased media awareness and familiarity" (Alka, 2014). Thereby, Alka acknowledge and encourage the notion of Superliga being the best tournament in Denmark, but also affirm their own interest in the attention connected to football and how this benefits their own brand awareness.

The current name *Alka Superliga* is to serve as an element for the identity of brand *Superliga* and generate awareness for this product. The underlying association attached to the Superliga brand is to be directed to a new name and an effort is to assure that consumers recognise it as a familiar and reliable brand. Aaker (1991) states that: "if the brand's name or symbol should change, some or all assets or liabilities could be affected and even lost" (p. 16), but as the new name is very alike the previous name 'Superliga', it is arguable that the change is of little significance for the brand image. The familiarity and recall of the old name together with the attention and communicative efforts that followed as Alka initiate their sponsorship arrangement, could potentially benefit the learning

of and response to the Alka Superliga name. Keller (2013) argues for potential negative association is to disappear as the primary efforts of communicative marketing is initiated. Consumers that are acquainted with the name and accept the entry of Alka, are likely to use the full name oppose to spectators who either do not accept Alka as a fair partner or simply have grown fond of the previous name, conscious or unconscious, as is diverge from the norm (Keller, 2013). Jacob Spangenberg, Deputy Director of Sales and Marketing in Alka, says to the composition of the two names that “The Superliga is a good brand in itself, so the task was instead to have the names work together” (Ritzau, 2014). The limitation, from Alka’s point of view, of changing the name is that people stick to what they recall or approve as identification of the brand. Therefore, the overall Superliga brand in relation to remembering and usage of the name, is not harmed by this name change as people already holds the name in their mind. However, one could argue as Alka is a new element of the brand, they enter a vital component of a brand identity that people already possess associations and feelings towards. Hence, people chose, conscious or unconscious, the name they find most appealing and connected to their perception of the brand. Therefore, name changing requires time before being settled in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1991), something which Jacob Spangenberg is already aware of as: “I believe that we are able to get people to say Alka Superliga. This is a long-term sponsorship of three and a half year with an option for further three more” (Ritzau, 2014). Furthermore, for Alka to benefits from the naming sponsorship they, according to expert in sports economic and –branding, Kenneth Cortsen, ought to attach their name and activities with the Superliga brand, similar to Barclays effort with the English Premier League, and thereby engage with the experience of the consumers (Reenberg, 2014). Consequently, Alka are aware of this subject of matter and states that; “Visibility and knowledge is important, but it should not stand alone. We also have a broader focus. A vital goal of the sponsorship is therefore that Alka creates value for football fans throughout the country and that we are accepted as a relevant team player” (Alka, 2016, p. 6). The relation between Alka and Superliga is to be of significance for the consumers if the relation between their names is to follow. Hence, the feelings that are connected to the name people prefer, is to remove itself from the commercial nature of the deal and show real enthusiasm for the league. Frederik Preisler, CEO at advertising agency Mensch, says that the challenges, which Alka is facing:

“It has all been commercialized and there is growing scepticism from consumers towards the sponsors. We know they do not, because they share our interest in sports. Therefore, it is crucial that the company's message fits with those you choose to sponsor. The message is instantly difficult to spot in this case, but let's see when they get started”

(Reenberg, 2014)

What to favour?

The replies from the survey strongly indicates that people are not favouring the name *Alka Superliga*. In fact, only 2.4 pct. of the partakers chose Alka Superliga is their favourite name as the 79.5 pct. who liked the Superliga name the most (Figure 8.1).

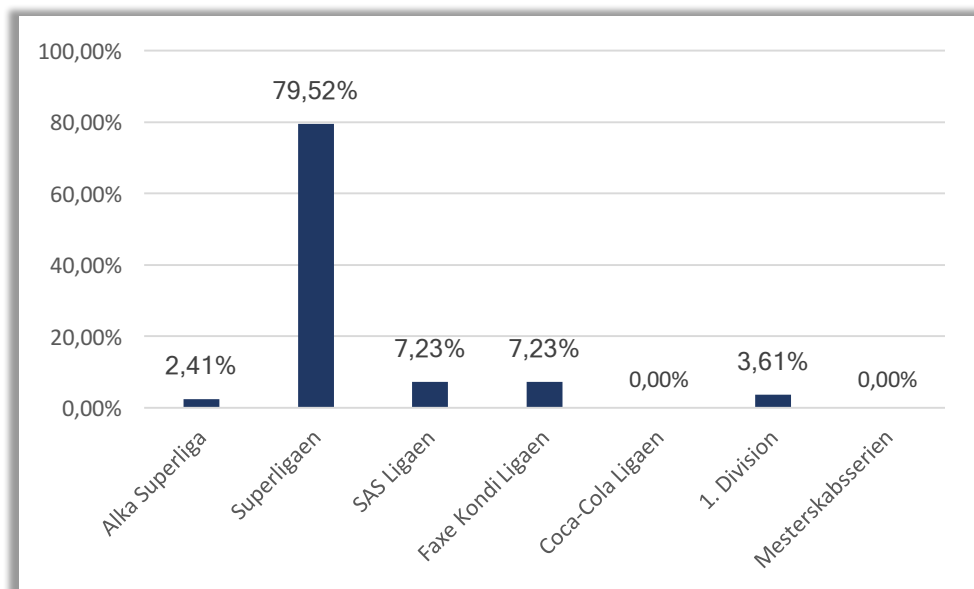


Figure 8.1: Which name for Denmark best football league do you like the most?

Most of the reaction from the survey to the name of the league “Alka Superliga” are focused directly on the use of Alka as part of the name. A great deal of the answers is focusing on the commercial nature of the name with emphasis on the economic aspects, which the name symbolises. Certain respondents are aware of the financial impact from having a sponsor and stress that they tolerant the name as long as Alka is paying. Others, on the other hand, are in the opposite belief and dislike the financial feature which the name represents. The following sections are all build upon the

answers to the survey question ‘What do you think of the name Alka Superliga?’ (Survey, 2017, 4.1) and presents some of these replies.

Answers like: *“Ok if Alka is paying”, “It is a sponsor name so that is fine”* and *“I have no opinion about it, as they are the ones who pays the most for name”* clearly indicates an acceptance of the name as they are able to see the beneficial value from the sponsorship. Here the value of the name, from a football fan perspective, holds a lesser value than what Alka offers with their financial control. And an answer like *“It is fine. Or at least as good as all the other sponsorship fuss”* acknowledge the terms of sponsorship agreements and compare the name with similar deals.

Answers like: *“Sad that the different companies, which have sponsored the league through the years, must have their names in the title. It works negatively on me that Alka needs to promote themselves so heavily for being the sponsor!”*, *“Sounds totally stupid! But sponsor names have unfortunately become a part of modern football”* and *“I don’t like that the name is for sale. Superliga is Superliga. No matter the naming sponsor. It was also a joke when we had to call it SAS-liga”* stress how some people unmistakably identify the commercial influence as negative and a clear misfit with their perception of the sports nature.

Then there are answers like *“four characters to long”* and *“Just delete Alka”* which does not specific criticize sponsorships but goes directly against the brand Alka. One even reviewed the name and Alka’s role in it, but had a possible solution to this: *“It’s a bit boring. Who the hell knows what/who Alka is? I don’t. Could they not have found a cooler name like Premier League or just Superliga, and then said, ‘welcome to the Superliga – presented (or sponsored) by Alka.’”*. A reply like this, question the brand awareness of Alka and its role in relation to football. More on, the person answering this question have a well-defined solution to the element of irritation, which others have touched upon. This solution distance the league from the sponsoring brand in its name but maintain to deliver coherent commercialised message while it acknowledges the financial value that Alka possess to the league. Then some directly questions what Alka is and why it is related to the football league. Such queries have two outcomes, as it either stimulates curiosity for Alka with those who do not recognise or know the brand before, or it allows a possible rejecting of the brand and its relation to the football league.

At last, there are those who may or may not like the current name, but have chosen to look beyond this and find a comfortable solution. Because the sponsoring company name is transient in the league name, they rely on the fixed part. Superliga is constant and independently of their partners, thus people tend to use this in their everyday speech.

Visualisation of the brand

The symbol

The symbol used in the Alka Superliga visual logo was introduced as a part of the “Superliga” brand after years of naming sponsorships and their respectively distinct visual identity. With the new logo, Divisionsforeningen intended to visually create a coherence to support sustainability across commercial activities (Divisionsforeningen, 2011) and “a new Superliga-logo becomes focal point for the product development of Danish professional club football” (Superligaen, 2017). The symbol holds no official description to its expression or look, but allows the viewer to interpret the symbolic themselves. The first framework of the logo (figure 9.1) is a simple black and white concept with two figures that are characteristic with its sharp edges and clean cut.



Figure 9.1: Superliga Logo (2010-2014)

It is arguable that the abstract nature of the symbol enables the interpreter to deliberately decide their own perception of the symbol. Keller (2013, p. 156) states, that dangers of abstract symbols is that: “consumers may not understand what the logo is intended to represent without a significant

marketing initiative to explain its meaning. Consumers can evaluate even fairly abstract logos differently depending on the shape". As humans are predisposed to identify certain forms and shapes as humanlike anthropomorphic forms (Lidwell & Holden, 2010), perhaps the shape is to resemble a football player performing a 'scissors kick' (figure 9.2B), a difficult physical move in football that requires high technical skill and therefore is a sensational moment for spectators and athletes. Or else, it could be signalling the letter S in super and therefore support that association. Perhaps it is even something third or even nothing at all. The Georgetown University Identity Standards Manual argues that: *"Symbols engage intelligence, imagination, emotion, in a way that no other learning does"* (Wheeler, 2003, p. 18), implying that maybe the customer mind is able to decode the meaning behind the symbol and even add attributes themselves. Furthermore, the remarkable and unique shape of the symbol is considered to benefit memorability and awareness for the brand, making it a vital element for brand identity.



Figure 9.2A: Symbol of Superliga (left)

Figure 9.2B: Soccer Player Silhouette Bicycle Kick, (right)

Historical development of the logo

The new logo in 2010 distinct itself from the previous ones as it does not rely on its sponsor to be represented and so, generates a pillar for the brand to attach its association to. The visual appearance of the league through its symbols and logos, has previously with Coca-Cola Ligaen (figure 9.3A) been about using the classic and well-known coke bottle and unite it the overall representation of the sport, the football. Furthermore, the logo had a clear connection to Coca-Cola's own marketing symbols as seen with figure 9.3B. Here we recognize that the visual aspects of the football are imaginable been added to an existing symbol and thus, create a coherent visual

representation of the brand. More on, we see that the red colour has been chosen to fit colour used by Coca-Cola. In the survey, only 1.2 pct. equivalent to one participant preferred this logo to be the one the person liked the most (Survey, 2017; 4.3). This is conceivably due to the fact this logo only endured one season, which additionally happens to be twenty-one years ago.



Figure 9.3A: Logo of Coca-Cola Ligaen (1995-1996) (left)

Figure 9.3B: Coca-Cola marketing (right)

The logo for the best tournament in Danish football, changed when Faxe Kondi as the new main sponsor was published. The logo has like the previous one for Coca-Cola a clear association to the original Faxe Kondi brand (figure 9.4A). Like with the previous logo, the football has been added to create a clear relationship between the new sponsor and the tournament. The colours used is the exact same as Faxe Kondi uses in the own individual brand logo (green, magenta, orange and blue) (figure 9.4B), and the name Faxe Kondi has a clear visual position in the centre of the logo. Contrary to the previous logo of Coca-Cola Ligaen, this logo has moved the part 'Ligaen' away from the centre of attention and down under the logo, where Coca-Cola and Ligaen shared the same visual presentation within the logo. Unlike the logo of Coca-Cola Ligaen, 9.64 pct. of the answers favoured this logo (Survey, 2017; 4.3). A claim for this could be the length of representation that the logo had for the league and the fact that it was not changed until 2001. Beyond, the Danish origin of Faxe Kondi could be a further circumstance to reflect upon for favourability among Danish consumers.



Figure 9.4A: Logo of Faxe Kondi Ligaen (1996-2001) (left)



Figure 9.4B: Faxe Kondi logo (right)

The logo for SAS Ligaen (figure 9.5A) is a direct substitute to the one of the visual elements the airline use itself. Here the part Scandinavian Airlines (figure 9.5B) have been changed to fit the league name, and the characteristic blue square with the letters SAS in it has been maintained. Despite the length of the sponsorship and its termination only seven years ago, the logo only managed to get one selection of favourability from the survey (Survey, 2017; 4.3), which argues against the impression from the view on Faxe Kondi. The one thing about the logo that sticks out from SAS own brand elements, it the orange colour of the name. The data found indicates no obvious reasoning for this use of such colour and it holds no clear correlation to either the SAS brand or the football league brand. At last, it is distinguishable that this logo, dissimilar from both Coca-Cola Ligaen and Faxe Kondi Ligaen, that there are no symbolic association to the sport of football. From this visual presentation of the brand, it is essential for customers to be aware and familiar with the league in advance to recall its linkage to football. This lack of connection to the product could be a decisive argumentation for why consumers reject this logo as their choice of preference.

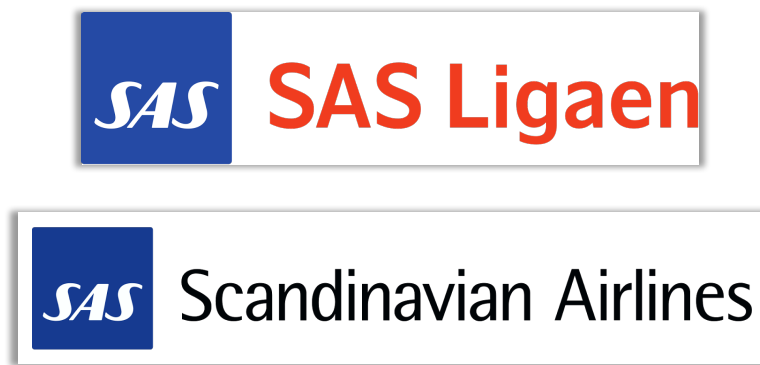


Figure 9.5A: SAS Ligaen logo (2001-2010) (top)

Figure 9.5B: Scandinavian Airlines Logo (bottom)

Helen Keyes, Managing Director Creative at Enterprise IG, states that “Logos act as flags for employees and supply chain partners to rally around. And in a merger or a takeover situation, the unveiling of the new logo can be used to represent a psychological break from the past” (Wheeler, 2003; p. 33). If we then accept that each logo is to be a separation from prior brand elements and sponsors and an individual representation of the ‘new’ brand, each logo has the potential to embrace new associations or hold on to former ones. Aaker (1991) argues that “If the brand’s name or symbol should change, some or all of the assets or liabilities could be affected and even lost, although some might be shifted to a new name and symbol” (p. 16). Hence, the logo or symbol represents a projecting of a clear gap between each sponsor and their commitment with the league.

Where to be visualised?

The Alka Superliga logo is to be an integrated part of the communication between sender and receiver and establish a coherent relation to the brand and its name. According to Aaker (1991):

“A symbol and slogan can become important assets and need to be solidly linked to the name. When a name can stimulate and support effective symbols and slogans, the task of linking them to the name is made easier” (p. 191)

Therefore, the name is to be consistently attached with the symbol in the mind of the customer to form a strong alliance. As the symbol was introduced before the new league name, the logo was a

recognised element to the identity of the brand and so, the name was to be affiliated with the logo. The logo was maintained as a representation of the brand and to align the upcoming awareness of the name change with a fixed element to serve for recognition and recall. The symbol is easy to adapt for different marketing purposes, as it does not function as incorporated as previous logos and therefore, is able to stand alone. Below are four different ways the symbol is integrated to different graphics (figure 9.6A-E).



Figure 9.6A: Alka Superliga logo on Instagram (top left)

Figure 9.6B: Alka Superliga logo on Facebook (top middle)

Figure 9.6C: Alka Superliga logo (top right)

Figure 9.6D: Alka Superliga logo (bottom left)

Figure 9.6E: Alka Superliga logo (bottom right)

By being able to use the symbol as a unique indicator for the brand and function independently, the possibilities of usage in promotion increase, as each of the graphic presentations shows a different arrangement. This varied appearance and visualisation of logo and name, suggest no distinct favourable valuation by the survey participants when exposed to six alternatives (Survey, 2017; 4.5). As both Alka and Superliga has operated as to separate names and brands, the symbols purpose is to be an aligned element that generates the connection and meaning between the words. It also protects the tournament brand of Superliga as is distinguish it from the specific external brand of Alka and the use of the term superliga. As other leagues also use the label as an indicator of their product, the symbol and logo is distinct the Alka Superliga from its competitors.

The logo is a permanent presented on the right sleeve of every player during official matches, to form a secure distinguishable identification of the tournament. As every competition has their own distinct logo, this logo becomes a certification for customer to verify the league and guarantee customers see that they purchase and spectate the Superliga brand. During the period from 2010 to 2014, the logo seen in figure 9.7A-C decorated each club kit. The clear cut between black and white, is argued to be of significant style from the competing clubs, as the league brand is to be objective and share no apparent association to a specific club.

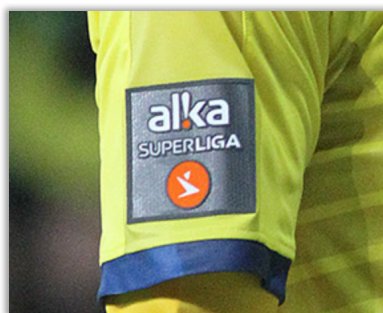


Figure 9.7A: Superliga official sleeve patch (2010-14) (left)

Figure 9.7B: Alka Superliga official sleeve patch (2015-16) (middle)

Figure 9.7C: Alka Superliga official sleeve patch (2016-17) (right)

Something familiar?

From the period 2014 up till 2017, the visual appearance of the logo and the name has changed. At first the logo and illustration of the name (figure 9.6C) had a clear graphical relation to Alka as sponsor with its orange colourisation. The football was brought back to highlight the connection to the sport, while the symbol introduced in 2010 was maintained. The graphic is similar to that of Alka (figure 9.8) and is, like with the previous sponsors, influenced by their individual marketing elements. The presentation of the name Alka is an exact copy of what Alka use, and the part superliga is modified to fit the presentation of Alka. The colour orange is transferred to the football, like seen with the Coca-Cola Ligaen logo, and is to create a strong association to the Alka brand.



Figure 9.8: Alka Forsikring – Gør det enkelt

The football is a central part of the graphic picture and links the Superliga logo with the sport and thereby Alka as well. This is the first time since its introduction in 2010 that the symbol and a football has been associated directly to each other in its communicative presentation. The symbol has by now been associated with the league due to its context. If the symbol had been displayed in alternative framework, perhaps as a brand for detergents, the perception of the symbols cognitive authentication could be changed, due to contextual biasing (Johnson, 2010). As consumers encounter approximately 65 pct. of the daily communication as nonverbal (Haig & Harper, 1997) the logo is the visual symbol to which consumers experience to brand, and therefore is a lead tool of identification (Alessandri, 2009). The power of a logo is in its ability to identify the brand, express certain associations or attributes and differentiate the brand from its competitors. The symbol itself does not represent a sharp defined association or attribute to which consumers attach a definite understanding or even express the product class to which the brand is to be affiliated with. The symbol is though able to be an identification to the Alka Superliga, as it is not comparable to other competitive leagues. The symbol or logo is to serve as a signal of familiarity and mark of trust for consumer to feel safe in the purchase situation and sort brands from each other (Wheeler, 2003) by instantly adding or subtracting perceived quality and association connected to the brand offered to them (Aaker, 1991). The survey showed a clear favourability for the Superliga logo during the period 2010-2014 with a 74.7 pct. in selection (Survey, 2017; 4.3), while the current logo only endured a choosing from 13.25 pct. of the survey participants. As the latest graphical presentation of the logo only have been present from the season 2016-2017, it falls short of awareness and an assured preference for the league. Aaker (1991) argues that:

“People will often buy a familiar because they are comfortable with the familiar. Or there may be an assumption that a brand that is familiar is probably reliable, in business to stay, and of reasonable quality. A recognized brand will thus often be selected over an unknown brand” (p. 19)

The brand, and thus its symbols, becomes an object to which information from the sender is communicated to its receivers (Lury, 2004). Therefore, the official sleeve badge to different the visual design of the name is to serve as a trademark for the expected quality to which consumers experiencing and an extended illustrative display of the brand.

Understanding associations?

So, does the name and logo follow the guidelines and criteria for brand element and through these measurements create strong brand awareness?

The name and logo of the brand is to exemplify a unique and distinctive meaning and to stand as an expression of the association related to the brand. The name *Alka Superliga* does clearly advocate for the overall product category of sport content due to the superliga fragment, as other leagues share the same label, but has a shortage of a clear identification to football. The descriptive nature of *liga* communicate general information about the product whereas *super* corresponds an attribute to the brand. The name struggles to be suggestive in the sense that it should evoke visual depiction. As super is more intangible than for instance gold or diamond to convey a specific association of quality, but is still enables consumers to deduce a semantic meaning of its attribute, the brand name is to facilitate related attributes to the brand (Keller, et al., 1998). These attributes are to be expressed as a distinctive characteristic of this brand and assist claims of benefit through coherent meaning, e.g. the suggestive brand name. Superliga implies an ambiguous benefit of quality above others (but who?), and lack a persuasive visual representation to evoke better recall for consumers. More on, the part superliga functions as a familiar and recognizable element that is to benefit consumers’ power to confirm previous experience, when the name was changed in 2015.

The symbol on the other hand, serves no purpose as indicator for the product class like seen with the logos of *Coca-Cola Ligaen* and *Faxe Kondi Ligaen* with their image of a football in the respective

logo. Likewise, the symbol for the brand and previous name Superliga, serves the same function and enables recall and recognition in memory of consumers. But as the name does not directly imply an imaginative symbol for representation, as the National Basketball Association insinuate a basketball icon, the symbol as a less descriptive freestanding element is to be recognized with the name through coherent and repeating marketing activities. The symbol is fixated with the name after the season 2010-2011 and equally functions as a sign of familiarity. Contradicting, Alka does not imply any meaning for this product category, as it independently does not imply anything other than four letters and is already associated to a different product category. Its unusual nature could nevertheless attract attention to the brand and aid recall for Superliga, as the superliga name does not distinct itself from competing products. Likewise, the abstract symbol also represents a uniqueness and are to trickery learning and so recall for the brand more than a word or phrase can, as Aaker (1991) disputes. This uniqueness and intangible of the symbol is also justified as consumers are not identify and prefer a different object. How do you even symbolize the meaning of super?

In a global and emerging world, it is essential for brands to be prepared for an update or to expand across markets and borders. The Superliga brand is various in the sense, that its elements does not represent the full identity. Superliga is independently able to be transferred across other sport segments, as it does not indicate only one type of sport. It is not unrealistic to imagine any other tournament being labelled as the super league. More on, the word superliga, with its pronunciation and denotation, is to extent across geographic borderlines without difficulties. The name, *Alka Superliga*, is primarily limited to the contract of the sponsorship and thus, only able to expand to other segments that Alka are willing to sponsor. This also involve that Alka' own market lies in Denmark, implying that a strategic move across the geographic borders would provide little importance in their daily operation. Additionally, the word Alka does not represent the same meaning outside of Denmark and could lead to that these consumers do not understand it and potentially dislikes it. The logo on the other hand represents much transferability because of its abstract appearance and no significant association to football. Beforehand, it was suggested that the symbol hypothetical resembled a scissor kick, but what would it look like in another situation. The association related to the self-supported figure is related to the context of which it is presented. In a perspective of handball, it could for certain customers resemble an athlete throwing a ball in mid-air? As the context change over time, so does the sponsors as we have seen. Therefore, a vital

factor is that the brand can adapt for such modifications. As seen with the introduction of Alka as sponsor, the two brands straightforward combined in visual representation. The overall brand, *Superliga*, is prepare for these alterations oppose to previous sponsorship programs. The name Superliga is rich enough to support itself, and not restricted of having a naming partner. Opposite, the brand also manages to be associated with a partner, if the extra new name is added to Superliga and do not replace it and so does not interfere with the original name. The prior problem with both league names and logos, was their uniqueness to the specific brand. Thereby, every moderation required a total update and repositioning from the previous associations. Foremost, the *super* part was removed from the three first sponsor names only distancing the Superliga brand from the name. Further, when Faxe Kondi Ligaen became SAS Ligaen the only left, was the phrase *Ligaen*. The identity was then changed and association lost. With the new initiative from Superliga, the symbol has the potential to fit every new arrangement, excluding that the sponsor requires a distinctive alignment to their own brand. This new framework (figure 9.9) to build the identity upon enables adaptability to not only sponsorship contracts but also different visual presentations. Just like the current graphical elements have developed through the years in colour and varied to fit different marketing positions.

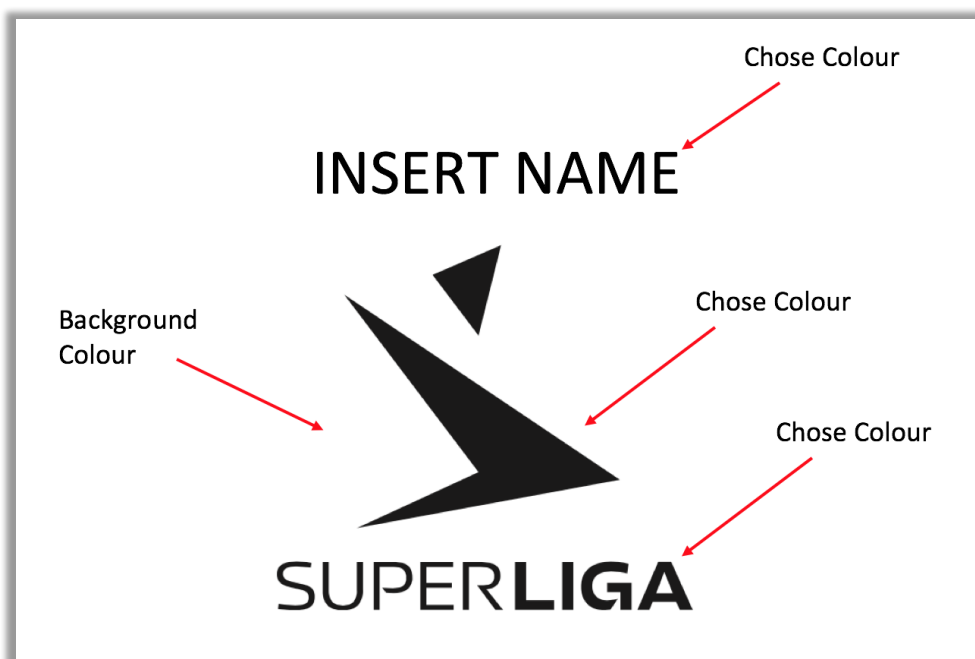


Figure 9.9: Superliga Logo Template – self-made reflection

Therefore, the effort is to stimulate brand awareness, both through recognition and recall, by gaining brand name identity and linking it to the product class (Aaker, 1991). Consumers are to consciously confirm that they know the product to one they have been exposed to beforehand and so, recognize its relation to both football and entertainment. Further, consumers are to retrieve Alka Superliga from memory as a genuine provider of quality when the category need exist. Hence, the name consists of an evident meaningful part (Superliga) and an unusual part (Alka) that stimulates both recognition and recall.

But the undisputable most critical feature of the brand element is in its likability. Is it likable for customers in a verbal or visual context, or does the underlying association provoke agreeable features or a positive feeling? The survey showed how some customers reacted to the commercialised nature of the sponsorship agreement and thus, had a negative association to the name. The future question lies in both why such attitude is present and then how it affects the brand. The presence of Alka, a corporate insurance company with no suggestive value or connection to football, might remind consumers of two undesirable thoughts. Initial, the brand Superliga is not as strong and unique that it is able to function unaccompanied. It might break the image of an independent league that challenge other leagues or entertainment alternatives, by basically offering an organised tournament consisting of clubs and matches. Second, this view aids the perception of everything is for sale. The commercialized image, which the corporate world represents, is contradicting with the purity and nature of sport in its basic shape. People might ask whether money is required to play football. Then there is the argument that consumers do not disagree with commercialisation, but evaluates that either disregard Alka as a brand or part of the name, or that they disagree with its relevance for football. The question for Superliga to ask is how their partners suits the knowledge of the existing brand and thereby, if it is relevant or required to establish a clear connection or embrace that the sponsorship holds an economical advantage. The survey showed that some participants were conscious about the economic aspect of the naming sponsorship but acknowledged the advantages. Perhaps they perceive the financial element as something that is to secure the development and quality of the league and function as a helping hand to fight of the competing environment. Thus, opposing the notion of this to be harmful for the nature of the sport and the Superliga brand.

At last, it is appropriate to reflect upon the likability in relation to the perceived quality being offered. The value of the name is to suggest a superior meaningful benefit, which consumers are to experience. But if this desired image of the brand is inconsistent with the perceived image that consumers holds, the name is a misguidance. If the name is believed to not represent the experience quality of the product, the name has backfired on the brand as being untruthful.

What do we know and what do we really know?

About positioning?

If we are to accept theory that are to conceptualise brand positioning, we are to understand it and agree on its principles or context. We have identified that literature suggest that markets are to be defined by the premises of is served customer groups, served customer functions and the utilized technology. Further, we agree upon the consideration of a market definition is to be relevant in terms of defining the desired brand image. As brand positioning is to be understood as a purpose for the brands image and thus, the outcome of positioning affects the brand in consumers' mind, we recognise the premises that market influence is a process of satisfying customers and hereby deliver a perceived customer value. Porter's five forces (1979) is to explain external factors influence on the market and a consideration to provide an insight on the long-term attractiveness of the market. Hence, the study of the forces is to uncover structures and opportunities and potentially reshape the positioning of one's desired brand image. More on, we understand the assessment of markets to be defined through clusters of consumers and the notion that the practice of segmentation is contributing to the understanding and evaluation of consumer, as a strategic process that are to identify markets for brands to deliver value. We undertake the practice of segmentation assessed by its characteristics of geography, demography and psychographic, but acknowledge that other literature suggests different approaches. Theory propose that the desired brand image asses the target segmentation and argues that the target market is be served by the brands value proposition. At last, we acknowledge the literatures premise of the desired brand image as being determined by the influence from Points of Parity, Points of Differences, and Difference by Product to attain a successful competitive advantage.

And what do we really know?

The literature is to be considered a guideline of principles to be used for a study and approach to interpret empiric information, and does not provide one true definitively answer. Thus, the tools provided by literature are to simplify and structure data and be based on the agreed principles to outline a reflective and interpretive image of reality.

Through our examination of the Alka Superliga, we found that the premise of market forces is short of practical foundation in the environment of professional football in Denmark, as the served customer groups are expanded across various segments. The core benefit of the brand is weak in its appearance as the feature that to enhance the value proposition, potentially suppress the core benefit and decrease the overall value proposition. The study showed that the trouble of identifying served customer groups derives on a predetermined idea of the core benefit, as this benefit limits the motivation for which the value proposition is to serve.

The concept of served customers is built upon the notion of served customer functions, and as these functions differ the idea of the core benefit loses its significance. The appropriate market definition for the brand depends on a consideration of what the brand is to offer and what value it holds in memory. Who are to say that Alka Superliga serves the purpose of interest in the sector of sport over entertainment as tool of amusement. Or is its context a mean for pastime, a social activity for which consumer are to rally around, or an approach for which individuals are to express certain beliefs or access communities that share a similar association. Each of these purposes increase the features surrounding the core benefit and subsequently modify the value proposition to suit the respective consumer.

Every method for segmentation offers a unique and insight of the market and so, the context for with the segment is derived influence the uncovered segment. Thus, the segmentation is a loose interpretation that fits the context in which the segmentation is based upon and the validity depends on the purpose for the segmentation to fulfil. So, to reflect on this view, the segment provides different explanatory outlooks of a reality that represents the cognitive truth of the individual and is to suit the desired context. If we are to reflect on the relations between the desired brand image, we are to reflect upon the desired brand image impact on the perceived image of consumers. We will argue that the perceived brand image is to shape the desired brand image for which the brand is to take in consumer minds.

About associations?

As we are to establish that a positive perception of brand image is ensured by favourable associations we acknowledge the influence of associations in memory of customers to facilitate a strong brand positioning as a consequence of the desired image. Thereby, we also accept the principles from consumer-based brand equity to approach the brand as an individual attitude residing in the mind of consumers, as we consent with the research from Keller (1993) on the dimensions of brand knowledge and the perception of brand image to be a representation of brand associations. Subsequently, we emphasize the premise of long-term success of a brand is affected by knowledge in memory, which is established through short-term marketing activities, and reason that association are to stimulate knowledge through consistent efforts. The practise of positioning through PoP, PoD and DbP as a competitive frame of reference, is an essential approach to which associations can be attached to the brand, and we understand that these associations are to support positioning and thus, the formation of the brand image. Consequently, we consider the connection between association and brand awareness, as we agree on literatures beliefs that awareness is created through memory, and as a reflection we consider this memory to suggest a perceived image. As brand knowledge resides in memory, brand awareness is determined to involve the process of identifying the brand under distinctive situations. We accept the notion of recognition as consumers' capability to confirm prior exposure linked in memory and ability to link the brand with its given product class. More on, we understand that consumer's attitude and memory of a brand is to provide recall and so, through these association being a consideration to fulfil a category need. As the literature is to discuss the importance of recognition and recall, we dispute its equal significance for a brand but approve the concept of top-of-mind awareness to denote a brand dominance in its position. We acknowledge the techniques and principles behind the ZMET framework and 'analytic mapping' to project association network memory models, and consent with the method of Brand Concept Mapping as to convey the nodes of association that are shaped in the mind of individuals. However, as to the practise of these techniques we derive an interpretive solution for assessing and mapping these association based on the concept and approach within the field.

And what do we really know?

By applying a theoretic foundation to the research, we endeavoured to structure a piece of the cognitive consumer mind to simplify the massive node of previous experiences, emotions, attitudes and images. As it have been established that the framework and principles are to support the study of the world around us, we also establish that it reflect a truth from one perspective. This approach does not argue for a right or wrong, a best practise method if you may, but render the world in a context. To recapitulate what we know, we have identified the following: Participants share the image Scandinavian Premium, despite that they do not know the descriptive meaning behind what this desired image implies. Participants agree on a belief or experience of the league as having low stadium attendance and some remark the playing the playing hours as negative evaluation. Participants disagree with the association related to the perceived quality of the core benefit to be positive, but seems to value the product much better than competing leagues. The motivation for spectating a match rally on a feature of connecting with a favourite team, so that the benefit is the possibility to follow specific football clubs. This is also linked with our knowledge of associations related to these clubs and our insight in the participants' stimulus for entering a purchase situation. Participants indicated that they were not aware of proposition of being able see spectate every match, and they showed little interest in this feature having a significance for them, perhaps as learned that participants motivated relied on a specific team. Participant concur that the league is easy accessible, but we lack a clear distinction for the concept of accessibility. If consumers believe the brand to be accessible but at the same time notice that attendance does not support this belief, are we to say that consumer actively chose not to engage in a purchase situation or does it indicate that other association have a greater impact for our participants?

If we are to reflect on the relations between perceived brand image and the overall brand image, we are to reflect upon consumer brand knowledges impact on this imagery. To do so, we understand the significance of these associations but we argue that despite an effort to node these thought, beliefs, emotions, experiences and so in a network of associations, we do not identify the context for which the associations are to be seen. We learned that people are able to identify and express their knowledge of a brand to others, but we argue that we do not learn from which desired images this was extracted. The mind and psychology is an individual dimension to which the world is subjective true.

About name and logo?

As Brand Elements is the mean for which a company targets to consolidate the desired brand image in the mind of the consumer, we are to understand that the Brand Elements is an anchor for which association are to be expressed. Theory uses a strong definition for brands and their intended effort to communicate an identifiable message that are to justify their distinguishing relevance. We understand the notion of identity to be a dimension of brand awareness and argue that the tangible assets of brand elements are to serve as linkage between attached association and the consumer mind. Hence, we note that these elements are to extend the belief of familiarity and knowledge of the brand and sustain a desired perception. Subsequently, it is argued by literature that this desired image is by literature argued to be represented as brand identity and to some extend brand knowledge.

We know the names significance as a permanent element of the brand and its contribution to awareness and familiarity. As identity of the brand is to benefit consumers as a known and secure choice of purchase, so are the name to extent this identity. Literature reasons various approaches for naming a brand and we acknowledge these beliefs and premises as they are to follow the defined criteria of brand identity and understand its influence for communicative awareness. Therefore, we also agree that each approach is to define a unique image through the name, as different associations are attached to the context of the name and so the position is derived through each distinctive decision. Similar, the logo act as a visual element of identification for the brand and contribute to the knowledge consumers hold of a brand, as it reinforces awareness through its graphic presentation. The logo is to facilitate association and attributes linked to the brand and stimulate consumers mind, conscious or unconscious, to maintain a promise of value and encourage positive brand image. As the logo and name or to complement each other, we argue that a coherent identity is shaped through its effort to organise these elements into a cohesive and meaningful context. Thus, we resolve that a shift within an element, making it the name or logo, have the possibility to shift the overall perceived image of a brand and therefore also shape the brand image. Brand identity is the extent of its elements through organised designs and cohesive meaning and thereby a vital proposition for brand image.

And what do we really know?

So, we now have identified that the name and logo follows the principles for brand identities and studied these criteria for an evaluation of the elements. We argue that from the perspective that we have chosen, the name is to indicate a higher degree of quality. The name implies the product category for which the brand is offered and thus, indicate the market for which the brand operates. Further, it serves as a fixed element for consumers to derive a sense of familiarity and so reinforce awareness, but as the name has changed over time, consumers are to attach their perception of the brand to their overall experience and lack a name to serve as anchor and source of associations. We have seen that the name does perhaps hint a notion of superiority or excellence, but are to argue, that word super is difficult to imagine. Thus, it struggles to be suggestive and provoke associations as other words are to insinuate visual presentation in mind and create semantic perspectives for the brand. A reflective thought is perhaps that the denotation of super has been diluted and hereby lost its significance to express desired association.

The symbol shows no descriptive visual meaning and suggested no uniformed truth. But this might just evoke the consumer mind and serve as a freestanding element for images to derive from. It suggests no product or indicates no attribute, but allows the viewer to form their own perception, thought, belief and emotions to the it. But does it imply that the name is wrong and the logo right? Of course not, as each serves a purpose in the context for which consumers value it. Who are to say that the name should suggest anything or that the symbol functions best as an abstract construction?

Investigating the brand image of Alka Superliga and explaining its significance for consumers

To start out, while the brand of Alka Superliga perhaps is easy to identify, the actual product is an intangible dimension that we and the consumers have a hard time to precisely define. The empirical data for the positioning of the league showed that while Divisionsforeningen targets a male audience in the age from 18 to 40 with an interest in football, they also want to place the brand as a family friendly source of entertainment. The research then indicated that this target segment is a very large section to serve and the broad characterisation lacks the cognitive behavioural aspect of consumers. More on, the notion of providing family friendly entertainment was supported by consumers perceived reflection of the brand. The study revealed that the brand showed no desired requirement to position itself through its Points of Parity. On the other hand, we can conclude that Alka Superliga anticipates positioning the brand in regard to their Points of Difference. Here the study signified that the new league structure and scattered time of play is considered to be a distinguishable beneficial feature for the league. However, the research on consumers perceived image of the brand, suggest that these features had a little significance for consumers' general perception of the brand as they lacked both the knowledge and their motivation indicated a preference for particular clubs over the league. This also correlates with our study of Divisionforeningen's desire to brand through Differentiation by Product, that revealed an aspiration to attach the mantra of 'Your club, Our league' to the brand, as we are to conclude that the importance of club associations was to overrule the subtext of the league. Further, the capability of Danishness, desired to be signified as a belief of pride and closeness, the research suggest that consumers only perceive this notation in some degree is a described value for the Alka Superliga. We derive a conclusion that these desired beliefs were not perceived as a leading valuation, due to an inconsistent effort from Divisionsforeningen to attach these associations to the brand. Additionally, the research showed the same type of inconsistency towards the logo and the name of Alka Superliga, as these have been changed multiple time during the lifetime of the league. While literature argues for a consistent determination to withhold the brand in memory of consumers, conceptualised through the brand knowledge, the change of name and logos complicates the

achievement to be a top of the mind brand. Our study indicated that consumers had an aversion to the representation of Alka in the name and preferred it to be removed from the visual presentation. Simultaneously, the research implied no favourite preference for the various graphic outlines for the name and logo, as we derive are caused by the inconsistent symbolisation of the brand. Additional, we conclude that consumers expressed a preference for the familiar and recognisable elements of Superliga and the symbol consistent within the brand, but are to consciously reflect upon its abstract nature. While the symbol is abstract and permits a free interpretation from consumers, it can be concluded that it suggest no descriptive meaning for the undefinable product that the brand is to present.

At last, we can deduce the conclusion of that the desired image to brand Alka Superliga as Scandinavian Premium is suggested to be perceived so by consumers, in terms of how they evaluate the quality of the leagues. However, it can be concluded that while the new the structure of Alka Superliga is to embed a better perceived perception of quality for the league, the current memory held by consumers suggests no associations related to this idea for the high level of quality, and we are to reflect that the image of Scandinavian Premium are reflecting the perceived image in the competitive frame of Scandinavia. Therefore, we derive that perceived image of Scandinavian Premium are not directly linked to the independent image of Alka Superliga, as the name and logo suggest no indication for this association.

As this thesis propose to investigate the brand image of Alka Superliga and explain its significance for consumers, we were to review the concept to understand the components shaping the image. The research on brand image lead us to a reflection, that we were to study the image from the perspective of Divisionsforeningen and use their consideration for positioning as a basis to understand how the desired image was to be represented.

More on, the research on brand image lead us to a reflective assumption, that we were to study the image from the perspective of consumer' and use their perceived image as an outlook to understand the brand. Likewise, we determined that to understand how this perceived image was derived, an assessment of tangible brand-related activities in the shape of its name and logo would provide an insight to the mechanism that are to generate associations.

As we do not know the anticipated effect that Divisionsforeningen has for the name and logo, and the underlying assumptions used to create these, we decided to study the perceived effect on consumers and consider the theoretical symbolization behind. By doing so, we manage to structure some of the many associations that makes up the perceived brand image reflected in consumers' memory and thereby provided one interpretive representation for the image of the brand.

Our study suggests that while the associations were many and each to reflect a perspective for which the individual deduces their image for the brand, the structuration of these association provided a simplification of these contexts. Furthermore, the revision of name and logo in coherence with the theoretic frame indicates that elements are used to suggest, advocate or generate associations as a tangible mean. We understand that elements are to be unfold into a perspective of what desired association they are to imply and what perceived associations consumers extract, but as we miss the underlying considerations and the perceived context for which consumer interpret the brand, a genuine insight to the mechanisms between the elements and associations have not been established. In the end, the study of the name and logo served as a simplification of the consumers' favourable or unfavourable perception but missed a perceptiveness for the psychological side of branding to clarify how this cognitive understanding of the image derived from.

We have learned that to consider the underlying perceptions and beliefs, one must map the context to acquire the perspective for which the associations are derived. This indicates that as the brand image is to be the summation of all the brand-related activities, these activities are to be consistent in expression and acknowledge the context for which the brand is to be experienced.

We now understand that to unfold the concept of brand image one is not so simplify this concept into two distinct beliefs of a desired or a perceived image, but disclose the notion as multiple perspectives to the same case. We realize that the image of a brand is individually dependent and reflects one sum of associations in the respective context. Thus, it is impossible to derive one complete truth about a brand's image.

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Appendix

Interview 2

Interview med Claus Bretton-Meyer (CEO for DBU)

Hvilken rolle spiller DBU i forhold til administrationen af Superligaen?

Svar: DBU har to medlemmer: Divisionsforeningen og Foreningen af lokalunioner (læs mere på www.dbu.dk). Overordnet så står DBU for udvikling og administration af licensreglerne på vegne af medlemmerne. Sanktionering af overtrædelser af licensreglerne og DBUs love sker i det selvstændige disciplinærsystem. Sammen med Divisionsforeningen ejer DBU tv-rettigighederne til Superligaen og fordeler indtægterne mellem sig. Den daglige administration, planlægning og udvikling, herunder branding, tilskuer tiltage med mere af Superligaen foregår i Divisionsforeningen.

Hvilket brand er Superligaen ifølge dig, og hvor kunne du godt tænke dig at Superligaen bevægede sig hen imod?

Svar: I forhold til den brede befolkning har vi en udfordring, idet dansk fodbold/DBU/Superligaen/klubber meget ofte blandet sammen og ikke nødvendigvis står helt skarpt.

Ud fra et DBU synspunkt så måler vi på DBU brandet, herunder en række under brands som eksempelvis: herre-A landsholdet, kvindelandsholdet, U-21, fodboldskolerne med mere gennem brug af BAV = *Brand Asset Valuator*, hvert andet år – med henblik på at have et fakta baseret grundlag for at udvikle på.

Divisionsforeningen har gennem en årrække arbejdet med en styrkelse af brandet på Superligaen (væk fra navnespons (SAS ligaen) og henimod et mere selvstændigt brand.

DBU er interesseret i at Superliga-brandet står så stærkt som overhovedet muligt, idet vi ønsker en generel maksimering af blandt andet værdien af tv-rettigighederne.

Hvordan vil du vurdere fremtidsudsigterne for Superligaen og dansk fodbold generelt taget konkurrencesituationen i international fodbold i betragtning? Udfordringer? Muligheder?

Svar: Konkurrencekraften for både Superligaen og landsholdene skal styrke væsentligt set i forhold til både UEFA og FIFA rankings, da vi gennem en årrække har oplevet et fald.

Udfordringer

- styrket talentudvikling i forhold til lande vi sammenligner os med
- stort udbud af international fodbold i dansk tv
- generelle ændringer i tv-forbruget
- ændret tilskuere (nedgang i tilskuere) og fans adfærd
- polarisering i mellem top og bud
- stærk stigning i den samlede omsætning for klubberne og fortsat et samlet 0 i indtjening (fra 1993 og frem)

Muligheder

- de vedtagne talentudviklingsplaner på tvært af både klubber og landshold – lang sigt
- behov for mere tværgående samarbejde mellem klubberne
- nye "tv"-platforme
- nye muligheder for integration af brugeroplevelser og CRM-markedsføring

Er en stærk dansk liga ensbetydende med et stærkt dansk A-landshold, eller skal de to produkter skilles ad?

Svar: I forhold til talentudviklingen – umiddelbart ja. Talentudviklingen sker i klubberne (både bredde- og eliteklubber) primært, talentudvikling i forhold til alle landshold bygger ovenpå.

Dette har ikke nødvendigvis noget at gøre med branding, men afhænger af en samlet talentudviklingsstrategi.

Det er flere adskilte brands og skal behandles således.

Hvad synes du, at der er vigtigst og hvorfor?

1. At A-landsholdet bliver styrket ved at danske talenter tager til udlandet og får deres fodboldopdragelse.
1. At danske talenter og spillere bliver i Superligaen så længe som muligt, for derved at få deres landsholdsdebut.

Svar: begge dele. Der skal ske en kombination.

Hvis du skulle fremhæve tre kerneværdier fra Superligaen, hvilke skulle disse så være og hvorfor?

Svar: spænding, passion, fællesskab

Du har tidligere revideret DBU's vision og lagt en strategiplan for fodbolden og skabt udtrykket "en del af noget større". Kunne du forestille dig at dansk divisionsfodbold blev en

del af dette udtryk, eller skal Superligaen skabe en unik identitet uafhængigt af A-landsholdet?

Svar: EDANS dækker i sin grundnatur alle elementer af dansk fodbold og dermed den nødvendige sammenhængskraft. Superligaen og herre-A er allerede i dag selvstændige brands og skal fortsat forblive dette, men den overordnede fortælling i form af EDANS udelukkes ikke deraf.

Taget i betragtning den økonomi og dækning som for eksempel den engelske Premier League har, mener du så, at Superligaen som produkt kan konkurrerer med de udenlandske ligaer?

Svar: Jeg er ikke sikker på, at jeg forstår spørgsmålet. For en fans og en seer så udelukker det ene ikke det andet. Jeg er fan af OB og Arsenal og følger således begge dele i de to forskellige ligaer.

Hvor ser du, at dansk fodbold skiller sig ud i forhold til andre ligaer?

Svar: Det er dansk ikke nødvendigvis særligt meget.

I engelsk fodbold har der længe været fortællinger om “Verdens bedste liga”, “hårdt fysisk spil” og “traditionsrige turneringer og klubber” - Kan du identificere lignende eller unikke fortællinger om dansk fodbold?

Svar: på et relativt spinkelt grundlag har klubberne leveret mange internationale stjerner.

Mener du, at der er en international interesse for den danske Superliga? Hvis ja, hvordan?

Svar: For fans – ikke meget, tv – noget mere, sponsorer - meget

Føler du, at der på nuværende tidspunkt er mulighed for at eksponere den danske liga international, eller er det vigtigt først at skabe et solidt nationalt fundament?

Svar: kan ikke se hvad formålet skulle være. Produktet er primært relevant i DK.

Hvad har det betyder for dansk topfodbold og selvforståelse, at man har måtte ændre strukturen i Superligaen?

Svar: Pas – det er vist for tidligt at sige noget om.

Hvordan betragter du forholdet mellem, at en ændring på den ene siden kan ses som et nederlag for dansk topfodbold og på den anden siden er mulighed for fornyet interesse og succes for fodbolden?

Svar: Som ovenfor.

Hvordan ser du, at den nye struktur kan være med til at skabe en øget interesse?

Svar: Slutspil bør kunne skabe en ydeligere interesse.

I forhold til, at man nu har ændret formatet og skabt et nyt produkt for Superligaen, hvornår og inde for hvilke parameter mener du, at man vil kunne sige, at det er en succes? Har du/DBU nogle målsætninger eller krav for at sige, at Superligaen er det produkt man ønsker?

Svar: Det kan jeg ikke svare på. Det skal Divisionsforeningen svare på

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