

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### Consumer Response to Transgression in Sport: A Grounded Theory Study

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# **Consumer Response to Transgression in Sport: A Grounded Theory Study**

By

**Russell Cowley**

February 2018



***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy***



## Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Russell Cowley

Project Title:

Consumer Perceptions and Behavioural Intentions to Transgression in Sport

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

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# Abstract

Although transgression in sport is not a new phenomenon, it is currently attracting a significant amount of attention. With a wide number of maleficent forms, transgression in sport has the potential to inflict serious consequences upon multiple stakeholders in sport. In terms of the scope of this research, this study focuses on the impact that transgression has on one of the aforementioned key stakeholders- the sport consumer. Unfortunately, our understanding of how transgression impacts upon sport consumers is thus far limited, with a majority of studies attempting some insights via quantitative methods. Hence, this study contributes to filling the gap in our knowledge.

Given the dearth of work about the responses of sport consumers to transgression in sport, this study employs a grounded theory exploration of sport consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport. This study provides a grounded theory of "*Behavioural Zone of Tolerance*", in turn conceptualizing and presenting a Consumer Response to Transgression (CRT) model. The results here identify that sport consumers perceptions and behaviours are driven by a highly dynamic interaction of internal factors - *Fanographic* and *Proximal* - and their interaction with external *contextual* factors, which gives rise to a process of cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, four behavioural typologies emerged from the data - Dislocator, Rationaliser, Neutralists and Erratic Ethical.

The theory is developed using procedures advocated by Straussian & Corbin, and is based on a total sample of n=42. The data collection was performed via triangulation of two phases: Five (n=34) focus groups constituted the first phase, followed by semi-structured interviews (n=8). During the focus groups, observational data was also collected to capture critical behaviours of the participants to assist focus group transcripts. All data points were coded using open, axial and selective techniques that allowed the theory to emerge.

The emerged theory offers contributions to sport consumer behaviour, cognitive dissonance, social identity and identity theory, by explaining the key characteristics that drive consumer response processes when transgression occurs. Furthermore, the conceptual framework developed offers a point of reference to investigate consumer behaviour in the wider sport business and management context. Practical recommendations are also provided based on this theory elucidating behavioural typologies that can assist sport organisations reaction strategies when, and if, transgression emerges.

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## List of Abbreviations

FGP = Focus Group Participant  
FGF = Focus Group Facilitator  
FC = Facilitator (interviews)  
GT = Grounded Theory  
IP = Interview Participant  
PT = Player Transgression  
ST = Sporting Transgression  
SCB = Sport Consumer Behaviour

# CHAPTER ONE – Introduction

## 1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, highlighting some existing research carried out on the relevant topics of consumer behaviour and sport consumers. Given that this research adopts Strauss & Corbin's (1992) approach to grounded theory (in-depth review see 2.3.1), there is a brief 'initial review of the wider literature', which is presented in the background section of this chapter. The latter part of this chapter will present the aims of this research and the scope, along with the main research question. To conclude this chapter, the timing of the literature (in accordance with grounded theory adopted) will be given in detail, finishing with the structure of this thesis.

## 1.2 Background Literature to the Study

### 1.2.1 Transgression and the Sport Industry

On a global scale, the implications of sports corruption on key stakeholders, is becoming a critical focal point. Given the sport industry's global reach, its intricate ties with political and private interests, added with the enormous economic value, it seems that this volatile equation often leads to various forms of transgression in sport landing on the wrong side of the equals sign. The level of investment in sports teams, events, and organisations over recent decades is astronomical. Kearney (2014) reported that the global sport industry is worth between \$480 - \$620 billion dollars. Sport offers a platform to businesses with great potential to enhance image, reputation, build relationships and build strong brand equity. This has led to enormous amounts of pressure on athletes and sport organisations to achieve success, which opens the door to transgression in order to achieve that success. Take an athlete for example, the use of PED's will likely bring more success, which in turn leads to higher competition earnings, popularity increases from sports fans, which in turn leads to endorsement earnings. Highlighting one of the most infamous cases as

such is Lance Armstrong. An investigation of Armstrong, which concluded in 2012, held him accountable for leading the most sophisticated doping programme that the sport of cycling had seen at the time.

In any industry outside of sport, organisations strive to become the market leader, ultimately forcing competitors to liquidity, and control full ownership (monopoly) of a market. Sport in general works very different to other industries in that sport teams or athletes require their competitors (other teams or athletes) to produce the core product, the competition itself. Academics, such as; Quirk & Fort (1997); and Chadwick (2009), posit that the preservation of uncertainty of outcome in sport is absolutely imperative. Further to this, Beech and Chadwick (2013) identified that, a league that proved to be very unbalanced and predictable, the championship would become more of a procession than a contest. McLaren's (2008: 15) research on the impact of corruption on the fair play of sport highlighted that transgression *"robs sport of its essential feature of uncertainty of the outcome and accelerates its spin into the forum of entertainment, and thus it's no longer sport"*. McLaren further posited that, a problem for the sport industry, once the integrity of sport is compromised is very difficult to retrieve.

What appears to be more freightening however, Maennig (2008) claimed that known cases of corruption are only the tip of the iceberg. The advancement of technology and access to media outlets has accelerated the knowledge of corrupt cases globally; cases that perhaps would not have been well publicised some 30 or more years ago. Gorse and Chadwick (2012) produced a report, for the Remote Gambling Association, to illustrate the prevalence of corruption in sport on a global level, from 2000-2010. Cases used in the report were made up of match fixing (betting and non-betting related), misuse of inside information (betting purposes) and doping. Astonishingly, approximately 95% of the cases were doping related. Doping policies set forth by governing bodies have certainly contributed to the high number of cases in that respect; but other forms of corruption, especially match fixing and any manipulation of results (spot-fixing), have been very hard to police in sport. The Asian betting structures and the rise of the Internet have facilitated the increase in

match and spot fixing throughout Europe (McLaren, 2008). Additionally, Forrest et al (2008: 158) identified that *“increases in Liquidity, globalization, falls in transaction costs, the emergence of the betting exchanges, increased availability of in-play wagering and the growth of proposition bets”*; these together have been conducive in the growing number of sport transgression cases. Darren Small (2013), director of integrity at betting and sport radar, indicated the value of both legal and illegal markets, are at a value of between \$700bn and \$1tn.

The extensive research in the sport marketing literature over the last 20 years, has seen academics focus on the various factors of sport consumption; such as psychological commitment (Mahony et al. 2000), motivations (Funk, Beaton, & Alexandris, 2012; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004) and fan attitude (Funk, Haugtvedt, & Howard, 2000). However, the literature on the impact of transgression on sport consumption is an underdeveloped area of research (Prior, 2014) and lacks consistency (Lee, Kwak, & Moore, 2015). With that being said, this study aims to address the central research question: **What are consumer perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport?**

In respect to the “response” element of central research for this study, the majority of recent academic attention has been towards the understanding of consumer response to food scandals (Custance et al., 2012; Bánáti, 2011; Wansink, 2004; Frewer et al., 2011; Verbeke, 2001), and political scandals (Ulbig & Miller, 2012) & (Fischle, 2000). Bánáti (2011), for example, indicated that a response from the German public to the BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) crisis saw a 40% drop in beef consumption. Similarly, the response from consumers from the Belgian dioxin crisis in 1999, which was a poison found in animal feed, led to a drop of 69% in poultry consumption and 93% in Pork consumption. In relation to these events mentioned, it is important to note that the work of Wansink (2004) highlighted that a crisis situation can be distorted and portrayed worse by similar concurrent events and the media. The Belgian dioxin crisis is an example of this as it occurred in the wake of a previous dioxin crisis in Germany.

Roberto (2006) researched the response of consumers when the scandal involved a high profile celebrity. The research focus was on the case of fraudulent activity by Martha Stewart (writer and television personality), which led to her indictment by the government, illustrated the negative response from consumers. The Martha Stewart Living television audience dropped by 50% after her trial and the “Martha Stewart Living Omni media” company reported a net loss of \$6.4 million, a figure one year previous that reported a \$20 million net profit (Roberto et al, 2006). Louie & Obermiller (2002) also researched how consumers respond to sport organisations endorsers when corrupt acts occur. Their work indicated that consumers react more unfavorably when a high profile person is perceived as responsible to the corrupt act. Parallel to this, consumer perceptions of the organisation that is associated with the high profile person are more negative when the high profile person is to blame. This empirical research suggests that it is important for sports organisations to utilise and nurture the fan relationship should scandal acts occur.

### 1.2.2 Conceptualising Transgression in Sport

Conceptualising transgressions in sport has proven to be somewhat problematic. Recent work by academics commonly use different terms to discuss the very same phenomena; the term “Corruption” by Maennig (2005; 2008); Gorse & Chadwick (2012) & Gorse (2014), “Scandal” by Connor and Mazanov (2010), Storm and Wagner (2011) & Prior (2013), and “Transgression” by (Sassenberg & Morgan, 2010; Sassenberg, 2015; Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008; Lee, 2015). The work of Wilson et al (2008) on “player transgression” adopts the definition of Fournier and Brasel (2004: 100) “*transgression refers to a violation of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation*”. Further to this, Maennig (2005) separates corruption into two categories; “Competition Corruption” and “Management Corruption”. For a review of definitions in the literature over the last 15 years, see table 1 below. Literature that has focused on the topic with no definition was not included in the table.

**Table 1 - Definitions on Transgression in Sport within literature (2005 onwards)**

Author(s)	Journal Title	Definition of Term(s)
Hughes and Shank, (2005)	Defining scandal in sports: media and corporate sponsor perspectives	“Scandal” - A violation of a set of assumptions that stakeholders hold with reference to the expected behaviors of sports entities, including players, coaches and team support staff, individuals with association to a sporting club, or with the sports code as a whole
Maennig, M. (2008)	Corruption in international sports and how it may be combated	<p>“Management Corruption” – behavior by officials who consciously perform their allocated tasks in a manner at variance with the objectives and moral values of the relevant club, association, competitive sports in general and/or society at large</p> <p>“Competition Corruption” – behavior by sporting officials who consciously perform their allocated tasks in a manner at variance with the objectives and moral values of the relevant club, association, competitive sports in general and/or society at large.</p>
Wilson, Stavros and Westberg (2008)	Player transgressions and the management of the sport sponsor relationship	“Player Transgression” – a violation of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation; with the ability to disrupt organizational operations and damage reputation.
Sassenberg, M. A, & Morgan, J., M. (2010)	Scandals, sports and sponsors: what impact do sport celebrity transgressions have on consumer’s perceptions	“Transgression” - A validation of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation
Storm, R.K & Wagner, U. (2011)	The Anatomy of Sports Sandal: Outset, Development and Effect	“Scandal” – refers to actions or events involving certain kinds of transgression which become known to others and are sufficiently serious to elicit a public response (Thompson, 2000)
Prior, D. (2013)	The Impact of Scandal on Sport Consumption: a conceptual framework for future research	“Sports scandals” - amount to a violation of a set of assumptions that stakeholders hold with reference to the expected behaviors of sports entities, including players, coaches and team support staff, individuals with associations to a sporting club, or with the sports code as a whole (Eber, 2011; Hughes and Shank, 2005; Van Yperen et al., 2011)



Lee, C., Bang, H. & Lee, D. (2013)	Regaining Fans' Trust After Negative Incidents: Fit between Responses and Nature of Incidents	"Scandal & Transgression" An individual's negative on- or off-field behaviour, which can lead to a form of crisis not only for that individual but also for the team and sponsors. (Adopted Wilson et al (2008) definition. see above in this table)
Gorse, S (2014)	Corruption in International Sport: Implications for Sponsorship Management	"Corruption in sport" - involves any illegal, immoral or unethical activity that attempts to deliberately distort the outcome of a sporting contest, or an element within that contest, for the personal material gain of one or more parties involved.
Sassenberg, A. (2015)	Effects of Sport Celebrity Transgressions: An Exploratory Study	"Transgression refers to the abuse of the implicit or explicit rules guiding relationship performance and evaluation" (Adopted from Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, (2004)

Wilson et al (2008) studied how transgression by athletes, on and off the field, brings negative repercussions for sponsors who are associated with the athletes and the teams of which they play for. Results from the study indicated that sponsor response very much depended on the nature and extent of the incident, along with the type of industry the sponsor (business) operates in. Gorse (2014) further extends the research of sponsor response to transgression in sport through the introduction of the Sponsor Response to Sporting Transgression (SRST) model. The model proposes that 8 major factors all influence and determine the response from sponsors, the factors are; Severity, Sport, Level, inter-organisation relationship, media, cost, sanction and brand image. Additionally, Gorse posited that transgression acts causes no real consensus of opinion between stakeholders.

Transgression in the Oxford English dictionary (2011) reads, *"an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence"*. Additionally, given the use of "scandal", in the conceptualisation of both "sporting transgression" and "player transgression" (below), the Oxford English Dictionary (2011) translates "scandal" as *"an action or event regarded as morally or legally wrong causing public outrage"*. Drawing from existing literature (Gorse 2014) and the definition of transgression presented above, the author rephrases the following definitions of transgression in sport that represent the focus of this research.

### **SPORTING TRANSGRESSION:**

“Scandal where by athlete(s) behave immorally or illegally, on the field of play, which has a direct impact on a sporting contest”

### **PLAYER TRANSGRESSION:**

“Scandal where by athlete(s) behave immorally or illegally, off the field of play, leading to a direct impact on stakeholders for which the athlete(s) is/are associated too.

With the many maleficent forms of transgression in sport, the scope of this study is to identify consumers’ perceptions and behaviours in their response to Player Transgression and Sporting Transgression, as defined above. The prime focus of these two types of transgression are when athletes are involved. Cases of transgression that fall outside of these definitions are not within the scope of this study.

### **1.2.3 Consumer Behaviour Theory**

According to Bray (2008), there are many different theoretical approaches applied to the study of consumer behavior; Economic man (see for example Persky, 1995), psychodynamic (Freud, 1997), behaviorist (see for example Pavlov, 1927), cognitive (see for example Howard & Sheth, 1969; Engel et al, (1968), and humanistic (see for example Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990). In reference to the “economic man”, this line of enquiry is no longer applied to consumer behaviour due to a lack of realistic accountability in justifying human decision making (Simon 1997); for example, decision making is often irrational and opposite to self-interest, which opposes to the models understanding. In reference to the “psychodynamic” (see for example Freud 1939) theory approach, a key tenet includes biological drives as opposed to environmental stimuli. With that being said, the latter three will be introduced with their applicability more in line with scope of this research.

The Behaviorist approach posits that behavior is attributed to factors that are external to an individual. The most commonly known influence to this approach is Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), with classical conditioning such as “Pavlov’s Dog’s. This study by Pavlov involved pairing an object with noise proving that behavior can be learned by external events. This methodological approach certainly dominated research in the early 1900’s. More recent times have recognized that whilst behavioral approaches still contribute to understanding behaviour, it only provides a portion of the possible full explanation (Stewart 1994).

The Cognitive approach, in more recent times, has identified fundamental factors such as; thinking, emotion, motivation, memory, perception and learning (Sternberg, 1996). This approach has the ability to explain complex behaviors; therefore most contemporary researchers acknowledge that individuals conduct information processing in response to stimuli. As Bray (2008) points out, this information processing is carried out by an individual “whose past experience will influence not only the processing of such information but even what information is sought and received”(p. 7). Additionally, a number of academics (see for example – Bozinoff, 1982; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007; Solomon et al, 2006) have questioned the cognitive approach assuming that consumer decision making is rational, discerning and logical. Further to this Natarajan & Bagozzi (1999) have highlighted that cognitive approaches appear to neglect the role of emotions on decision making.

Within the cognitive focus, there are four common models adopted, also known as the “grand models” (Bray 2008). Two are analytical models; “The Theory of Buyer Behavior” and the “Consumer Decision Model”; both models identifying influential factors and relationships in consumer behaviour. Conversely, two of the most widely cited prescriptive models are “Theory of Planned Behaviour” (Figure 1) and “Theory of Reasoned Action”. These prescriptive models are frameworks as a point of reference, organising how consumer behaviour is structured (Moital 2006).

In respect to the; theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975), theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) and attitude behavior theory (Triandis 1980), all

models merge to articulate that behavioral intention is arguably the most important predictor of a persons actual behavior. From a psychological point of view, a persons intention to perform a behavior is the construct of a persons motivation to perform a given behavior (Sheeran 2002). Additionally, both theories also hold that a persons intention to perform a behavior is predicted largely by attitudes and subjective norms. Attitude being – an individuals own evaluation, positive or negative, of a given behavior; Subjective Norms being – perceived pressure from others, such as family and close friends, on the outcome of performing or not performing a given behavior; Perceived Behavioral Control – posits the control an individual contains to perform a behavior.

TPB was introduced to extend the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The addition in TPB from the previous TRA model is “Perceived Behavior Control”, which can be measured through specially designed questionnaires. Actual behavior is difficult to measure accurately therefore, perceived behavioral control serves as a proxy measure. Problems identified by Hale & Householder (2002) on the theory of planned behaviour are its ability to illustrate the influence of emotions. This may be somewhat problematic in the study of sport consumers as Kwak (2011) highlights that emotion is an essential component in understanding consumer behaviour.

**Figure 1 – Theory of Planned Behaviour**

Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen)

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(Ajzen 2006)

The TPB and TRA models have been used by many academics from a variety of disciplines to extend the theory in light of some drawbacks. For example; Perugini & Bagozzi (2001) on desires and anticipated emotions; Cunningham & Kwon (2003) on intentions to attend sport events; Chambers, Benibo, & Spencer (2011) on reactions to the 2008 economic crises. The list is of course extensive, but its application to multiple industries is both extensive and impactful.

The humanistic approach has been adopted in more recent times by academics to expand the understanding of consumer behavior. An often-cited limitation to the cognitive approach is its generic process (Stewart 1994), whereas the humanistic approach targets concepts introspective to each individual consumer. Further to this, Natarajan & Bagozzi (1999) comment that the cognitive approach neglects the role of emotions based on the cognitive assumption that individuals make rational

choices. Additionally, there is much debate about the humanistic approach due to its lack of objectivity (Sammons 2015), especially from researchers on the objectivist side of psychological method approaches. Stewart (1994) points out that the humanistic approach explores concepts rather than a generic process.

### 1.3 The Problem

The current literature that focuses on the impact of transgression on consumer behaviour has seen a majority of academics approach the topic through quantitative means. For example, Fink et al. (2009) investigated off-field behaviour and its impact on fan reactions using experimental approach; the attitude of consumers towards doping in cycling (Solberg 2010); economic approach, using a difference-in-difference method, to identify the impact of the Calciopoli scandal on attendance in the Serie-A league (Buraimo et al. 2012). Others have approached it via consumer behaviour literature; for example, Prior et al. (2013) developed a conceptual framework on the impact of scandal on sports consumption; Storm & Wagner (2011) highlighting the effects of scandal by drawing on sociological research; & Sassenberg (2008) drew from sport sponsorship and celebrity transgression literatures to understand consumers' attitudes towards sport celebrities and their sponsors. In a recent publication, leading authors Funk, Lock, Karg, & Pritchard (2016), in the sport consumer behaviour arena (SCB), highlight that there is much need for further SCB research to account for in-depth investigation into the influence of situational and environmental factors on behaviour at individual and group level. They further highlight that SCB research needs greater attention across methodological issues and encourage *"deeper study design with richer forms of data that can support more rigorous testing of constructs, relationships and ideas"* (Funk et al 2016: 114). In further support of Funk, Prior (2013) also indicates that the investigation into consumer response to transgression, through qualitative means, is an understudied area.

Recent qualitative research on the topic of this study was carried out by Sassenberg (2015), via focus groups, to identify the attitudes of consumers on the brand image

of the sponsors and athletes when sport celebrities are involved in transgression. The work of Sassenberg, as she proclaimed, was limited to a data set of only four focus groups, therefore positing further empirical research should be carried out on the area via qualitative means. Additionally, their study lacked in-depth insight to the underlying reasons that form the attitude or attitudinal behaviour. In light of this, adopting a quantitative approach was deemed inappropriate on the premise that quantitative approaches investigate relationships between variables, therefore little room for in-depth understanding of the “how” and “why” questions. In order to gain insight into consumers’ perceptions and behaviours in response to transgression in sport, Strauss & Corbin’s (1990) grounded theory approach was chosen as the most suitable research design (for an in depth review see 2.3 onwards). Strauss & Corbin (2015: 5) offers key explanations and reasons for qualitative enquiry, supporting the choice of this study adopting a grounded theory approach:

- *To Explore the inner experiences of participants*
- *To explore how meanings are formed and transformed*
- *To explore areas not yet thoroughly researched*
- *To discover relevant variables that later can be tested through quantitative forms of research*
- *Take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of phenomena*

Given the above, to address the gap in the literature, the focus is two-fold. Firstly, investigating a topic in an understudied area; secondly, addressing the topic via an exploratory investigation through qualitative (grounded theory) means. Grounded theory is an appropriate choice of qualitative methodology as it was originally created to study behaviour (Lynch and Egan 2013). Additionally, Goulding (2001) has highlighted that the field of consumer behaviour has seen increased attention in grounded theory methods due to the importance placed on theory development.

From a practical standpoint, the importance of understanding consumer response to transgression in sport is a major area of concern for management in the sport industry. Such implications posited are reduced consumption, such as ticket sales & merchandise (Prior 2013), or discontinued support of athletes (Lee et al. 2015) altogether. Others have claimed the importance of understanding consumer response to transgression can assist organisations communication (post-transgression) to minimise fallout; for example Lee, Bang, & Lee (2013) highlighted that communicating with fans after a negative incident is critical in negating further damage and also mending damage on consumer trust. Their study focused on consumer trust and two common response strategies, denial and apology. Furthermore, Coombs (2007) posited that ineffective crisis response could have serious ramifications. A growing number of maleficent cases, and forms of transgression, coupled with the heterogeneous nature of sport fans, highlight the need for management to better understand how sport consumers respond – thus positively impacting the decisions made by sport managers to reduce the negative impacts of transgression on their consumers.

## 1.4 Aim of the Research

Qualitative researchers, adopting a grounded theory approach, often produce a core central research question of an exploratory nature, with the aim to generate hypothesis rather than test hypothesis (Strauss & Corbin 2015). As indicated earlier in the chapter, the central research question of this study is - ***What are consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport?***

### 1.4.1 Aim

To develop a substantive grounded theory that explains the factors driving consumer perceptions and behaviours, in their response to transgressions that occur in sport.

In light of the above, there were a small series of objectives to help guide the main aim of the study from the onset.



### 1.4.2 Objectives

The initial objectives at the commencement of the study were as follows:

1. An initial, and brief, review of background literature on transgression in sport, consumer behaviour and consumer perceptions to stimulate theoretical sensitivity and question development for objective three.
2. Identify and conceptualise 'Sporting Transgression' (on-field) and 'Player Transgression' (off-field), presenting the operational definitions of transgression in sport that define the scope of this study.
3. Run a series of exploratory focus groups to gain insight on consumer perceptions and behaviours of Sporting and Player Transgression.

Consistent with the grounded theory approach of Strauss & Corbin (1990), (see chapter 2.3 onward), two further objectives (four and five below) developed upon completing the three objectives shown above.

4. Undertake semi-structured interviews for further exploration of concepts, identified in objective three, working in accordance with theoretical sampling techniques.
5. Critically review and situate this study within technical literature based on the key themes that emerged from objectives three and four.

## 1.5 Turning to the Literature

The timing on the literature review in grounded theory studies is a highly contentious one (for in-depth review see chapter 2.4). In the earliest days of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978) it was argued that the literature should not be reviewed until analysis is completed. The belief was that reviewing the literature early would contaminate the mind of the researcher and force concepts in analysis rather than the concepts emerging from the data. More recently, contrasting arguments by Strauss & Corbin (2008); Charmaz (2008) and McGhee (2005) have argued that an "exploratory" review of the literature is useful to

gain a brief knowledge base and identify where there may be gaps in the literature, as highlighted in 1.2 & 1.3.

Given the aforementioned, a preliminary review was undertaken at the commencement of this study, which has been presented in the background (1.2) section shown earlier in this chapter. At the commencement of this study, the researcher was unaware that grounded theory would be the method of choice, and additionally, reviewing early literature provided the rationale for the researcher to employ grounded theory methods.

With this study employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory methods, the proposed procedure is to "return to the literature after the research has been completed. It is used to validate findings and to show how your theory supports, adds to, or amends other theories dealing with the same phenomena... It's better to do a thorough search once the theory is formulated" (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 371) This is also supported by Stern (2007) whom explains that a literature, which follows a developed grounded theory, is essential for both honesty and the demonstration of academic contributions within a field.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

**Chapter 2** describes the research methods employed. This includes the theoretical lens underpinning the study and the argument in the literature surrounding the various grounded theory approaches. Following this, a breakdown of phase one and two will be presented, both consisting of participant and logistical information. Detailed methodological procedures will be described before concluding the chapter with the studies limitations.

**Chapter 3** illustrates the data analysis and synthesis process. The first section of the chapter presents the finalised substantive theory – "Behavioural Zone of Tolerance" as a graphical representation via the "Consumer Response to Transgression (CRT)

model (figure 11). The second part will identify the major categories developed from the data, their properties and dimensions, which make up the three major categories of the CRT model. The third part provides the paradigm application to data highlighting the conditions, action-interaction and consequences, giving explanatory power to category development and the key process driving consumer response through the psychological process of cognitive dissonance – also present in the CRT model. This chapter concludes with the presentation of the Behavioral Typology Matrix (figure 18), made up of four behavioural response types – Dislocator, Rationaliser, Neutralist, and Erratic Ethical.

**Chapter 4** discusses and places the developed theory and its key concepts within the existing literature on consumer behaviour theory. This chapter will identify where the emergent theory extends, validates or refines knowledge within consumer behaviour theory in context of sport consumers.

**Chapter 5** will conclude the thesis by providing a synopsis of the study, highlighting the contributions to consumer behaviour in the sport context. Recommendations will then be presented for practical contributions, and further research agendas via the key concepts identified in this study. Finally, concluding comments will be made on this studies limitations.

## 1.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the topic of transgression in sport and also a brief overview into consumer behaviour theory. The problem identified in this chapter underpins the rationale for the study scope and grounded theory as the chosen methodology. The structure of this thesis has been outlined, with the adopted grounded theory approach in mind. The following chapter will depict a rigorous insight into the grounded theory methodology, explaining the suitability, application and methodological procedures employed in this study.

# CHAPTER TWO - Methodology

## 2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will initially illustrate the philosophical focus of this research study, followed by an explanation of the many schools of contemporary grounded theories and the debates that surround the methodological approach; which then leads to a detailed description of the grounded theory methodological procedures adopted in this study. Strauss & Corbin (2008) have indicated that there are many valid reasons to doing qualitative research, importantly to this paper, the most valid reason is to understand the nature of the research problem; ***what are consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport?*** As previously noted in chapter 1.3, there is a paucity of research into the response of consumers, within the sport industry, when transgression in sport occurs. As a result, this current study is designed with a 3-phase process (figure 2) to explore this gap through qualitative methods, adopting a grounded theory approach.

In the initial stages of this research, it was apparent that there was a vast majority of argument in the use of grounded theory, due to misinterpretation of methodological considerations; for example, contested definitions, unexamined epistemological assumptions and methodological claims (Charmaz and Bryant 2011). In light of this, a detailed search was undertaken into grounded theory research (see 2.3), eventually leading the author to adopt the Strauss and Corbin (1990) approach of grounded theory procedures.

## 2.2 Research Philosophy

As Gibbs (2002) illustrates, the methodological design of any research can be distinguished by its underlying philosophy. Further to this, Holden & Lynch (2004) have posited that it is of paramount importance that any researcher is aware of the philosophical direction, or as Rowlands (2005) explains, the researchers theoretical lense. Made up of two particular related elements – ontology and epistemology, it is this theoretical lens that will have a direct impact on the methodological path taken on how and what to research.

According to Mills et al. (2006), recent researchers have molded the grounded theory methodology to work in conjunction with their ontological and epistemological positions. This research worked consistently with the roots of Strauss & Corbin's (1990) approach to grounded theory through relativism (**ontology**), where reality of data is interpreted. As a relativist, the position that the author takes, from an ontological perspective, is that phenomena exists in the sense that it is perceived (Schwandt 1998), and that there may well be multiple realities that exist. What is important to note, contemporary thoughts from Strauss & Corbin (2015: 26), agree with the constructivist approach to grounded theory by others (see for example - Charmaz 2006; Clarke 2005), that *"concepts and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experiences and lives, both to the researcher and themselves"*.

The inductive approach, which is adopted by this research study, is consistent with the Interpretivist (**epistemological**) theoretical perspective. Interpretivism explains that the *"experience of the world is subjective and best understood in terms of individuals subjective meanings rather than the researchers objective definitions"* (Rowlands, 2005: 83). Drawing from the inductive approach, one of the key strategies adopted by grounded theorists is the use of inductive data to construct analytical categories to further develop theory. Given the aforementioned, the

methodological design employed in this study reflects the Interpretivist approach and a number of important philosophical and epistemological considerations.

Table 2 below illustrates the polarised distinction between two main approaches; with the approach of this study located on the right of the table.

***Table 2- Difference between Deductive & Inductive methods***

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(Source: Gorse 2014)

Within the research method literature of the social sciences, many researchers (see for example - Holden & Lynch, 2004; Kothari, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) have contested the value and contribution that different approaches bring. From the mid 1900's up into the 1980's, consumer research adopted traditional positivist paradigms, which are of course deductive in nature (Goulding 2005). In contrast,

inductive approaches are now a common adoption in social science research, however, as Goulding (2005) indicates, this transition has been marked with reaction from the likes of Hunt (1991) and Hirschman (1993), whom at the time, claimed that positivist, quantitative methods were most dominant in testing consumer behaviour. There are further contrasting positions taken by researchers for either of the two approaches in table 2 (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Quantitative researchers claim that those producing qualitative research ignore representative sampling, and qualitative researchers claim that quantitative methods yield shallow or misleading information.

The methodological process adopted in this research, as explained above through an inductive method, aims to build theory from data through the employment of the grounded theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 12) have pointed out that *“grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action”*. In addition to this, Glaser & Strauss (1967: 47) propose that grounded theory methodologies are *“based on coding what we do naturally, that is comparing incidents in our lives to see patterns in everyday life”*.

Although the birth of grounded theory saw the method applied to sociology (Glaser & Strauss 1967), its application and strength of theoretical contribution, has been growing across other disciplines, such as health care (e.g. Dick & Frazier 2006), psychology (e.g. Morrow & Smith 1995), organisational change (e.g. Rodon & Pastor 2007), and most importantly to this research, marketing and consumer behaviour (see for example - Donovan et al. 2002; Gillani 2014; Gorse 2014; Goulding 1998, 1999, 2005; Venter et al. 2011). Furthermore, the grounded theory procedure enables researchers to gain new insights into old problems as well as explore new areas in need of investigation. This underpins the focus of this research, as explained in the previous chapter (see page 7), to explore an understudied area and enhance theory on sport consumer behaviour.

## 2.3 Research Design: Grounded Theory Overview

Although several variations of the grounded theory exist (Charmaz and Bryant 2011), each of the approaches include the same set of methodological strategies. The emergence of the grounded theory by Glaser & Strauss (1967) has produced much criticism of the methods since its birth in 1967 (Charmaz & Bryant 2011). Both Glaser and Strauss in fact, have taken grounded theory in contrasting directions since the early 1990's. In light of the complexity that surrounds the grounded theory methodology, extensive reading was undertaken to gauge a better understanding of some of the differences in grounded theory approaches, justifying to the suitability of grounded theory choice for this particular research, as explained in the introduction of this study (see page 8-9).

### 2.3.1 Schools of Grounded Theory

The emergence of grounded theory came as a result of Glaser & Strauss's (1967) research on dying in hospitals (Charmaz 2000; Strauss & Corbin (1990). This original grounded theory paradigm is known as "classic grounded theory". Preceding the development of classic grounded theory, Glaser came from a quantitative background and Strauss a qualitative background. Although it has not been documented by Glaser or Strauss, some argue (for example - Gillani 2014; Hallberg 2006) that it is their philosophical differences that eventually saw them part and take grounded theory in contrasting directions. Glaser (2002) appears much more of an objectivist view, which aligns with the positivistic paradigm; and Strauss being aligned in the Interpretivist. In contemporary times, grounded theory has three main strands – classic grounded theory of both Glaser & Strauss's (1967) initial contribution, with further extensions being made (due to Strauss and Glaser separating) by Glaser (1992; 1999; 2011), grounded theory by Strauss & his eventual co-author Corbin (1990, 1998), and the more recent development of constructivist grounded theory by Charmaz (2006).

Prior to a summary of the three strands, the differences are presented below in table 3 below.



***Table 3 - Comparison of the three schools of Grounded Theory***

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(Source: Adapted from Gillani, 2014)

#### *2.3.1.1 Classic Grounded Theory*

Glaser has remained consistent with his interpretation of grounded theory since its inception in 1967. Glaser defined that grounded theory is a method of discovery, one that Charmaz (2006) contested due its reliance on empiricism and often, narrow analysis. Method approaches in classic grounded theory are a “rigorous methodology woven together by the constant comparison process” (Glaser, 2002: 23). Glaser further posited that those adopting the classic approach should ignore all existing literature and execute data collection with an open mind. According to Glaser, the world exists objectively and independent of our knowledge and belief. Glaser (2002) also believes that Strauss and Corbin’s approach is something based on empirical data, but it isn’t grounded theory. He (Glaser) also criticises the coding paradigm of Strauss & Corbin, claiming that it forces the researcher upon categories rather than letting categories emerge. Data analysis process is the core of grounded theory, and it is this topic that remains to be the crux of the Glaser-Strauss debate.

#### *2.3.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory*

The constructivist turn in grounded theory was born through Charmaz (1995; 2000; 2006), which is philosophically underpinned through, hence its name; constructivism. Much like Strauss & Corbin, its ontological roots are in relativism. Charmaz stresses that data is constructed through interaction between researcher and participant, with a view that the researcher plays a much bigger part in the development in theory than that of Glaser. She (Charmaz) claims that the researchers interpretive understanding, rather than just explanation, of how participants create their understanding of reality (Hallberg 2006). The Interpretivist or constructivist researcher contain the same beliefs in that to understand the world, one must interpret it (Schwandt 1998). The close philosophical positions of Charmaz – constructivist; Strauss and Corbin – Interpretivist, is what see’s the two grounded theorist’s much closer in their views of grounded theory enquiry than Glaser. Glaser (2002) criticises Charmaz’s constructivist approach arguing, *“that in grounded theory the researcher does not compose the study. Grounded theory is neither description, referring to Strauss and Corbin’s work, or a story making, alluding to Charmaz’s work (Hallberg 2006: 147)*

As Hallberg (2006) sums up, Glaser's definition of grounded theory is empirically grounded and subsequently can be researched further through qualitative or quantitative means for verification. Strauss on the other hand, along with his co-author Juliet Corbin from the 1990's onwards, argued this, claiming that the data already verifies theory generation through grounded theory, and can be applied in practice moving forward. Glaser's definition ultimately proposes that the sole use of qualitative methods through grounded theory is not substantial enough to generate theory.

This research thesis identifies and adopts the methods proposed by Strauss & Corbin (1990), not only due to the nature of their process generating substantial theory from grounded data, also because it incorporates that analysis is done through the interplay between the researcher and the data generated. The belief in this approach on social science is that researchers maintain rigor by becoming part of the process, and as Sandelowski (1995) claimed, an essential ingredient is the creativity of the researcher. There are criticisms of Strauss and Corbin's approach, with the main focus of critics is the axial coding process (Rich 2012). Charmaz (2006) claims that the axial coding phase is not something many grounded theorists use due to the rigidity of the framework. This often leads researchers to adopting Strauss and Corbin's axial coding with caution or in a non-strict fashion (see for example – Rich 2012; Burton 2011; Sengstock 2009).

## 2.4 Timing of the Literature Review

There are polemic views on grounded theory research, highlighting how and when existing literature should be used. Engaging in existing literature is common practice amongst building methodological strategies in research, however, originally Glaser & Strauss (1967), and more recently Nathaniel (2006), argued against this with the justification that initial literature review can "contaminate" and create a bias which in turn undermines the authenticity of grounded theory research. Strauss and Corbin

(1998: 49) have a very balanced view on the advantages and disadvantages of the initial review of literature: *“familiarity with relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data, just as it can block creativity”*. With that said, this study takes the stance of McGhee et al. (2007), and in more recent published studies of Strauss & Corbin (2008; 2015) and Charmaz (2008), who claim that researchers should “briefly” acknowledge previous literature. To reiterate the quote in chapter one, Strauss and Corbin (2015: 371) comment:

“It’s better to do a thorough search once the theory is formulated”

In an effort to not contaminate the data, an initial brief search of background literature (see chapter 1.2), was carried out. According to McGhee (2007), a brief review has a six-fold benefit; firstly – the rationale for the study can be justified; secondly – confirm that the area under study has not been carried out previously; thirdly – guide the researcher on how similar phenomena, has been studied to date; fourthly – avoidance of methodological and conceptual difficulties whilst becoming aware of unhelpful preconceptions; fifthly – enhance both clarity and thinking on theory development; lastly - lack of knowledge about relevant literature at the early stage can lead to criticism.

Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1990), advocate their belief on the brief review of literature early in the study will:

- Stimulate theoretical sensitivity
- Provide secondary sources of data
- Stimulates questioning
- Direct theoretical sampling
- Provide supplementary validity

## 2.5 Maintaining Sensitivity

Strauss and Corbin (2015) have highlighted the importance of maintaining sensitivity, therefore, a short section on this important topic is presented. Data

collection and analysis generally call for objectivity, however, this traditionally cannot be applied to qualitative research. Therefore, Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit that qualitative researchers aim for sensitivity instead. Being aware of the researcher's background and the part that it plays in the production of grounded theory research. In the initial stages of producing a grounded theory study, it's important for the researcher to understand that their biases are present throughout the research process (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Creswell (2007) further posits that researchers bring their experiences and personal values, therefore suggesting that researchers make their values explicit. Furthermore, Strauss & Corbin (1998) have highlighted the constant interplay between the researcher and the research act (analysis), with the researcher playing an integral role in all aspects of the analysis process. With that in mind, and in effort to maintain a respective level of objectivity, the author felt it necessary to explicate assumptions and perceptions held on entry into the research undertaken here.

The researcher has been professionally active in the sports industry, as an athlete, for thirteen years at the time of study commencement. Further to this, the researcher also lectured on sport business topics at the undergraduate level in the UK for almost five years, also prior to the start of this research. This commonality of experience within the sport industry, and more importantly an understanding of sport consumers, can play a positive role throughout the analytical process. With that said, it is absolutely critical that objectivity is maintained to produce accurate interpretation of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin further stress the importance in giving voice to the participants, which should be illustrated throughout the analysis process. Keeping a reflexive journal throughout (see 2.9.4) and the creation of multiple memo's (see 2.9.1), has proved pivotal in providing analytical interpretation to the best of the researchers ability. Further objectivity was sought through research supervisors and a number of sessions with a qualitative consultant.

## 2.6 Data Collection

### 2.6.1 Three-Phase Triangulation Approach

A three-phase process (figure 2, following page), through a multi-faceted ideographic approach, was adopted as the method procedure in order to construct a complete and rigorous theory development of; consumer perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport. At the time of conducting the focus groups (for in-depth review see 2.7), the next phase (2) of data collection (for in-depth review see 2.8) was not yet determined. In mass effort to ensure that all necessary information was collected and analysed, phase 2, semi-structured interviews, were produced with an infinite outlook until theoretical saturation was achieved. Additionally important to this research and credibility, a triangulation approach was adopted for which Threlfall (1999) proposed that focus group research is most successful when used in a triangulation method of data collection; and additionally, best suited when adopted to assess attitude and cognition topics. Due to the aspect of social reality and its disparate nature, Bryman (2012) has proposed the technique of “triangulation” in order to increase the credibility and internal validity of qualitative research. Put simply, triangulation for the purpose of this research is the use of more than one method or source of data in the investigation of social phenomena. Focus group enquiry, when applied to shed light on the previously unexplored, is crucial when targeting high standards of credible research. Due to the fact that there are many possible accounts that surround social reality, credibility is a focal point that others will focus on as to determine its acceptability (Bryman 2012). For more on credibility, see 2.10.2 of this chapter.

### ***Figure 2 - Methodological Approach***

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#### **2.6.2 Sampling Procedures**

Owing to the Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach to theoretical sampling, the process followed in this research is via 3 stages; open sampling, relational and variational sampling, and discriminate sampling. It is these three stages of

theoretical sampling, that correspond in accordance with their approach to coding (Breckenridge & Jones 2009); namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. A detailed description of the coding procedures will be presented later in this chapter (see 2.9.5). Theoretical sampling is one of the many forms of purposive sampling (Bryman 2012); purposive sampling, simply put, is the sampling of participants in a strategic way that the participants are relevant to the research questions presented. It is, however, important to note that Bryant & Charmaz (2007: 223) suggest that “all theoretical sampling is purposeful, but not all purposeful sampling is theoretical”. Additionally, theoretical sampling doesn’t necessarily begin at the onset of a study (Strauss & Corbin 2015), where a researcher will select a sample purposefully. Theoretical sampling will then take place once data analysis occurs and concepts begin to emerge. Much like this, the process of this research moved towards theoretical sampling in the later stages of the focus groups and the commencement of the semi-structured interviews. Breckenridge and Jones further posit that theoretical sampling is guided by the emerging theory and its purpose inevitably guides where to sample next. Sampling theoretically leads to theory generation in the data, not the procedure. With this being said, the initial phase of data collection was chosen using the focus group approach given their exploratory nature (see 2.7). The first two focus group results guided the researcher to explore concepts across a wider demographic of sport fans, therefore justifying the choice of sport fans from a professional sports team for focus groups three and four. Further data was collected based on this principle to sample based on the developing theory.

Important and imperative procedures, identified by Strauss and Corbin (2015), begin during the first element of data collection. This process involves knowing the logic behind analysis. Given that grounded theory produces large amounts of data, the researcher must delineate data into concepts. Concepts describe large amounts of data that share similar characteristics and are the researcher’s interpretation of their meaning. As the three-tier approach to coding proceeds, the development of concepts becomes abstracted, gaining greater power, to ultimately detail theory through core categorisation (figure 3).



### ***Figure 3 - Grounded Theory Construction of Concepts***

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Source: Strauss and Corbin (2015)

## **2.7 Phase 1 - Focus Groups**

Early documented cases of focus group research in the late 1970's indicates that marketing was the only discipline that produced such research with frequency (Fern 2001). The last 40 years has seen the emergence of focus group research, not only in the marketing discipline, but across many, such as health and social sciences (Hennink 2007). Focus group research on consumer perceptions, over the last 10 years, has been widely documented; for example in the food industry (Soares et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2012; Kher et al. 2013) and the pharmaceutical/medical industry (Simmons et al. 2011; White et al. 2012; Knox et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2013). In

pursuing the respondent's knowledge, perceptions and personal experiences of social phenomena, focus groups offer extensive flexibility that perhaps would not be obtainable through other qualitative means. This technique allows the researcher to understand "why" participants feel the way they do (Bryman 2012) within a group setting. Focus groups therefore create debates on topics across participants that would not be possible in, for example, one to one interviews. With that said, this study employed focus groups for phase 1 of this research; to gain insight into sport consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to sporting and player transgression.

The characteristics of focus group research on the assessment of cognition topics are found to be best suited (Threlfall 1999). Further to this, Threlfall (1999) and Khan et al. (1991), propose that the use of focus group research is most successful when carried out through the triangulation method of data collection, as explained earlier in this chapter (see 2.6.1) . The benefit to the use of focus groups is the ability for researchers to adjust and tailor the methodological factors to fit with the research task at hand (Fern 2001).

Focus groups are used in research in several different ways. The application of focus groups, for the purpose of this research being exploratory, is to generate theoretical constructs. Through the process of aggregation (Fern 2001), the transcripts will be strategically analysed and structured into theoretical constructs for phase 2 of this research. Given the lack of knowledge on consumer response to transgression in sport (see chapter 1.3) and the objective of grounding the study around the practical reality of sport consumer's perceptions, and their life experiences, five exploratory focus groups were carried out. The choice of five focus groups is supported by Krueger (1994); Morgan (1997); & Fern (2001), all positing that anywhere from three to six different focus groups is sufficient in reaching theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin 1998). With that being said, it was initially planned to run four focus groups with the option to run a fifth if required. The concept of theoretical saturation implores that sampling theoretically is continually carried out until the data becomes saturated.

Theoretical saturation is said to be achieved (Strauss & Corbin 1998) when “(a) no new relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated”. The author makes note that theoretical saturation was becoming apparent, in reference to the “contextual factors” (see chapter 3.5.3), on completion of the 4th focus group.

Theoretical saturation in phase one however, was not the intention of the focus group phase. What is more important to this research, from the exploratory focus groups, is to sharpen notions that come to light as progression of each focus group continues (Fern 2001). Simply explained, early focus groups can cause researchers to follow different lines of enquiry; this provides opportunity in conducting further focus groups to explore constructs that develop from previous groups.

Phase 2 of this research (see 2.8) through semi-structured interviews, was carried out until theoretical saturation was achieved.

### 2.7.1 Conducting the Focus Groups

Paramount to the production of any research, it is important to understand and organise the logistics in order to enhance rigor. Planning, recruiting, moderating and analysing are they key areas to identify and calculate before beginning the focus group process (Morgan 1998). The total amount of exploratory focus groups carried out for this research was five. Fern (2001: 93) explains that there are key factors in producing legitimate research through the focus group approach - “creating, collecting, identifying, discovering, explaining, and generating thoughts, feelings and behaviours”. It is these factors that ultimately frame the whole focus group process.

The setting of the focus groups according to Fern (2001) should be accessible and acceptable to the respondents and meet the nature of the project, if necessary. Given the nature of this research was to identify consumer perceptions, it did not pose a problem in choosing Coventry University as the location. Accessibility and acceptability were also factors in choosing Coventry University as the site for all

focus groups. Using Coventry University was both practical and beneficial to the participants, facilitator and the author. A classroom was booked for each of the focus groups and set out in an oval shape to ensure a good atmosphere, equality and informality (Litoselliti 2003). Refreshments were provided in each of the groups to again, create a comfortable atmosphere.

### 2.7.2 Participants

Bryman (2015: 508) posits, *“Anyone for whom the topic is relevant can logically be an appropriate participant”*. This clarification of Bryman fits the notion of what is known as “purposive sampling”; where by participants are relevant to the question posed. Further to this, researchers, such as Patton (1990) and Palys (2008), have identified some prominent types of purposive sampling. The purposive approach adopted by this research as previously indicated earlier in the chapter, is theoretical sampling. The target for this research was “sport consumers”, which the author met by approaching ideal candidates through specific channels. For the purpose of this research a “sport consumer” was classified as an individual that follows/consumes sport(s), team(s), and athlete(s); whether it is through live audience, TV audience, paper articles and through social media platforms. This criteria was consistent with studies by Sassenberg (2015) & Solberg (2010).

Borrowed from previous research, Fern (2001) offers some very useful insight into the importance of group composition, as it is this that will affect compatibility, cohesiveness and the group process. Cohesion, for example, can prove to be somewhat problematic in focus group research due to the nature of respondent’s social identity. The motivation of participants can lead to increased productivity, whilst contrastingly, motivation can also lead to participants aiming to maintain relationships with other participants, and thus this can lead to misguided responses (Fern 2001). From a compatibility perspective, it is only necessary for this project to have obtained “sports consumers” to make up the population. Whilst not imperative, a mix of male and females was sought after in order to make up a representative sample. Finally, looking at group composition as a whole, Fern (2001)

indicates that within-group heterogeneity is undesirable in the research of theory applications. Gibbs (1997) does, however, indicate that there needs to be some balance across participants, a group that is too homogenous in its composition can result in lack of diverse opinions and experiences. The author makes note that focus group five used participants from a male sport team and therefore focus group five was purely made up of males. Table 4 below, shows the participant information and demographics of each of the focus group participants. In terms of males and females, the percentage of males and females is 68% and 32% respectively.

**Table 4 – Focus Group Participant Information Log**

<b>Focus Group 1</b>					
Participant No.	Gender	Birth Year	Occupancy	Marital Status	Ethnicity
FGP1	M	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP2	M	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP3	F	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP4	F	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP5	M	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP6	NO SHOW				
FGP7	M	1995	Student	Single	White Estonian
FGP8	M	1996	Student	Single	Latin
FGP9	NO SHOW				
<b>Focus Group 2</b>					
Participant No.	Gender	Birth Year	Occupancy	Marital Status	Ethnicity
FGP10	NO SHOW				
FGP11	F	1994	Employed/Student	Single	White Polish
FGP12	F	1994	Employed/Student	Single	White British
FGP13	M	1995	Student	Single	White British
FGP14	M	1996	Employed/Student	Single	White British
<b>Focus Group 3</b>					
Participant No.	Gender	Birth Year	Occupancy	Marital Status	Ethnicity
FGP15	M	1991	Student	Single	Indian
FGP16	F	1983	Student	Single	White British
FGP17	F	1985	Employed	Single	White British
FGP18	M	1959	Employed	Single	White British
FGP19	M	1980	Employed	Married	White British
FGP20	M	1947	Self Employed	Married	Canadian

FGP21	M	1977	Self Employed	Cohabiting	White British
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#### Focus Group 4

Participant No.	Gender	Birth Year	Occupancy	Marital Status	Ethnicity
FGP22	M	1978	Employed	Single	White British
FGP23	M	1965	Employed	Married	White British
FGP24	M	1980	Employed	Married	White British
FGP25	M	1973	Self Employed	Single	White British
FGP26	F	1960	Employed	Married	White British
FGP27	M	1959	Employed	Married	White British
FGP28	F	1979	Employed	Single	White British
FGP29	F	1994	Employed	Single	White British
FGP30	F	1992	Employed	Single	White British
FGP31	F	1992	Employed	Single	White British

#### Focus Group 5

Participant No.	Gender	Birth Year	Occupancy	Marital Status	Ethnicity
FGP32	M	1988	Employed	Single	White Canadian
FGP33	M	1985	Employed	Single	White Canadian
FGP34	M	1986	Employed	Single	White Canadian
FGP35	M	1989	Employed	Single	Canadian/Italian
FGP36	M	1983	Employed	Single	White Canadian
FGP37	M	1987	Employed	Single	White Canadian

Focus groups one and two were made up of first year students at Coventry University studying for a Sport Management undergraduate degree. The purpose of targeting a sport related degree was to gain participation from students who were sport fans. The students were presented, during a lecture, on the focus group details, purpose, times and location. Focus group one initially had 9 students sign up for participation. On the day of the focus group, two participants did not show up which saw participation from seven (N=7) students. The second focus group had a total of five signups for the focus group, unfortunately there was also one “no show” on the day, and thus there were a total of four (N=4) students. The researcher makes note that there were no preconceived ideas that demographic information will be pertinent to the emerging theory. Demographic information was collected, although

it is only considered merely as another variable awaiting a verdict to its relevance throughout the analysis process (Breckenridge & Jones 2009).

Focus groups three and four were targeted through a professional sports team in Coventry. Using social media platforms and the professional sport team's website, the focus groups were advertised to the potential participants for these focus groups. Candidates that were interested to participate were directed to an online professional platform – sign up genius ([signupgenius.com](http://signupgenius.com)). This platform firstly provided the focus group details and the type of participant relevant and required for the study. Additionally, this platform allowed the author to run all the logistical factors, such as location details, parking, time slots and contact details, leading up to the focus groups. Once participants signed up to a given time slot, they were contacted by me via email to ensure their suitability and that it was confirmed that they could attend the focus group. Participants also had the option to contact me via sign up genius with any questions or queries, allowing for good communication leading up to and after the focus groups were conducted. The third focus group had a total of seven (N=7) participants sign up. The fourth focus group had a total of ten sign ups and ten (N=10) were in attendance on the focus group.

The final, and fifth, focus group was carried out using athletes from a professional sports team. The players, as sport consumers themselves, created a good level of diversity, in terms of stakeholders of sport consumption, across the five focus groups conducted. As previously discussed regarding group composition, in this section, the purpose of all 5 focus group participants was to gain a wide range of age, gender and various life experiences. Heterogeneity of participants was ultimately achieved through group differences and recruitment proved to be straightforward. After the team practice, the players were given a short presentation on the logistical details for the focus group and what is required should they wish to participate. Players that wished to participate signed up after the presentation giving contact details. Players were later sent participant information, confirmation of dates, times and location of the focus group. Six players signed up for the focus group and six (N=6) participants were present on the day.

### 2.7.3 Moderator & Questions

The decision to have someone, other than the researcher, moderate and run the focus groups was twofold; firstly, so the researcher could observe (see 2.7.4) the focus groups. Strauss & Corbin (2015) posit that observations are important parts of understanding true reality, i.e. sometimes people say one thing but do another. They (Strauss & Corbin) also articulate that observations aren't always easy to comprehend across the interaction of participants, if the moderator is occupied; secondly, a lack of experience of the researcher running focus groups can have implications on the data. It's been highlighted (for example - Threlfall 1999: 104) that *"researchers tend to enter focus group enquiry with a hidden agenda and outcome bias"*. Threlfall also indicates that inexperienced moderators of focus group enquiry can struggle, which subsequently can negatively impact data collection and analysis. With that being said, the researcher wanted to keep in line with maintaining sensitivity as highlighted earlier in the chapter (see chapter 2.5)

The selection of a moderator for focus groups is no easy task, with researchers (Litoselliti 2003; Fern 2001) claiming that the moderator should be professionally competent and that their role is absolutely critical. According to Fern (2001), moderators for exploratory research should be "sensitive, creative and confident in their ability". Litoselliti (2003) supports the aforementioned by Fern, but further posits that moderators should be good listeners, flexible, improvisers and good communicators. In light of understanding the selection process for exploratory focus group research, the author chose Dr. Samantha Gorse to run the five focus groups carried out in phase 1. Dr. Gorse completed her PhD on corruption in sport, to understand the implication that corruption has on sponsorship management, through a grounded theory approach. This highlights that Dr. Gorse has extensive knowledge in the field of transgression in sport, something that is not essential (Fern, 2001), but certainly enhances exploratory focus group research. With the fact that this research is discussing transgressions in sport, it was very important that the moderator had a good, if not, excellent level of understanding around transgression



in sport. Different transgression cases, both contemporary and past, are notably going to be discussed by participants in the focus groups. This highlights the importance for the moderator to have knowledge of these cases, to facilitate and probe discussions, meeting the objectives of phase 1 in this research. Additionally, the moderator (Dr. Gorse) chosen in this research is familiar with grounded theory approaches and has good experience with applying grounded theory in the focus group setting.

The nature of the focus groups were carried out through a semi-structured basis in that participants would be asked a set number of questions (appendix A), but were allowed freedom in how they responded to those questions. As Bryman (2012) indicates, it is crucial that questions allow the participants to express their views of the social world whilst allowing a good degree of flexibility. This flexibility allows the moderator to elicit participant's responses that would perhaps not unfold in a structured nature. The moderator is a key player in setting the environment, not only by the questions asked, but also uncovering shared ideas across the group as a whole. Fern (2001) believes it's important for the moderator to be much like the participants themselves, particularly when the purpose is theory development. Dr. Gorse took a participant stance, probed various responses and put forward some transgression cases in order to create participant reactions. For the benefit of these focus groups, Dr. Gorse was able to switch between a non-directive and directive approach. Litoselliti (2003) indicates that non-directive approaches are more appropriate to generate new ideas, whilst directive approaches are beneficial to explore problems. Given the exploratory nature of the focus groups, Dr. Gorse was able to synergise both approaches by improvising in each focus group throughout. The set questions (appendix A) were the directive approach whilst the probing within the questions saw a degree of freedom given through a non-directive approach.

#### 2.7.4 Observation

It is commonly known (Bryman 2012; Sarantakos 2005) that observation falls under various categories depending on the nature of the research taking place. According to Sarantakos (2005), the four main categories fall under participant / non-participant, and structured / unstructured. In order to increase validity, and the intention of eliminating bias across the focus groups, the researcher did not take the role of moderating the focus groups. The role of the researcher in phase 1 was to take a non-participant (in focus group discussion) approach. The role of the researcher was to be present during focus groups and capture any observational notes (data) that would assist the focus groups once transcribed. The term “non-participant” in this research entailed that the participants are aware of the identity of the researcher and the researcher’s role. At the same time, the researcher’s sole purpose within the focus groups was to observe, and therefore this denotes non-participation. It is important to note that the observation data is collected to support the main data of the focus group transcripts. The data collection methods employed were “continuous observation” (Sarantakos 2005) through each focus group. Recordings were made to indicate visual behaviours that were not obtainable through the main method of data collection, i.e. the voice recordings. Notes such as, emotional expressions, speed of response and reactions (for example see Appendix B) of the participants to particular stimuli and questions, were of main concern.

#### 2.7.5 Ethics

Upon selection of all participants for the 5 focus groups, a “participant information” document (appendix C) and a “participant consent form” (appendix D) were completed before the focus groups took place. These forms met the required ethical criteria set forth by the author’s institution of Coventry University. Additionally, health and safety criteria was also set by the authors institution, which lead to a health and safety assessment to take place before the focus groups were carried out.

### 2.7.6 Limitations of Focus Groups

It has been indicated in this chapter that focus group method, for the purpose of phase 1, are the most advantageous to this research. It is, however, important to infer the disadvantages of focus group research. Whilst some of the major limitations, indicated by Litoselliti (2003), were addressed through careful planning, some of the main generic limitations have been posited by many academics (Krueger 1994; Morgan 1998; Fern 2001):

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Source: Litoselliti (2003: 27)

Limitations also fall on a more practical side in the production of focus groups. It cannot be assumed that all participants who sign up will actually attend on the day. Some academics, such as Khan et al. (1991), indicate that the ideal number of participants falls between 8-12. Khan does also indicate that it is common for groups to consist of 4-6. Due to no-shows, the first focus group produced in this research ran with 4 participants. Fern (1987) produced research on participant numbers and posited that ideas generated did not work in parallel as focus group participants doubled from 4-8.

Given the exploratory nature of the focus groups, and sampling being purposive at the onset of phase one (Strauss & Corbin 2015), it is important to note the homogenous nature across phase one participants. Although Bryman (2015: 508) posits that “anyone from whom the topic is relevant can logically be a participant”,

the homogenous nature of the focus groups does highlight a limitation within this study. The author advises that this study should be replicated and applied to a wider range of cultures in a variety of international contexts.

## 2.8 Phase 2 - Semi-structured Interviews

The findings from phase 1 have provided insight into the understanding of sport consumers and their response to the forms of transgression within the scope of this study; Sporting and Player Transgression. In particular, phase 1 provided good depth into the perceptions of consumers and the contextual factors of the various forms of transgression. Additionally, and crucially important, phase 1 provided some insight to responses from the participants on what is important to them (Proximal Factors) as individuals, when transgression occurred, and furthermore, the relationship that these proximal factors play between the type of transgression and the behavioural intentions as a response to the transgression.

Whilst the findings of phase 1 (see chapter 3.3) provided imperative steps towards the understanding of consumer response to transgression in sport, a continued investigation was required. As explained earlier in this chapter, theoretical sampling guides where to search next (Strauss & Corbin 2015). The main focus of attention in phase 2 was to theoretically sample the concepts elicited from phase 1, with greater focus on the individual consumer characteristics that developed as major categories in this study – “Fanographic Factors” & “Proximal Factors” (see chapter 3.5 for in-depth review) and the role these concepts play in the sport consumer response to transgression in sport.

Analysis is a continual process from the moment data is first collected (first focus group) until saturation is reached (last interview of this research). This sampling procedure also denotes that there is an identified population, which for the purpose of this research are sport consumers, and the setting (when transgression occurs),

the rest is open (Strauss & Corbin 2015). Combining focus group research with individual interviews has been used synergistically for the purpose of confirmation or data completeness (Adami 2005; Halcomb & Andrew 2005). Further to this, Lambert & Loiselle (2008) point out the process of interviews gain more insight into exploring personal experiences, whereas focus group research explores beliefs and opinions about a given phenomenon. This process is fitting with the steps taken in the approach adopted throughout the methods of this research. It was originally anticipated that approximately twelve interviews would see the saturation of the categories that came to fruition from the focus groups. As the production and analysis of interviews progressed, constant comparison of the interview data with the focus group data, proved to be highly beneficial to theoretical sampling, and ultimately theoretical saturation. The researcher was able to return to previous data (from the focus groups) based new insights from the interview participants. The nature of the interview process was more focussed on some of the participant experiences, and in returning back to the focus group data, the researcher picked up on data that was previously overlooked based on its supporting strength to earn its way into the theory. Therefore, for the purpose of the interview phase, eight interviews were carried out over a period of 11 months until theoretical saturation was achieved. More detail on the interview sample will be discussed in the next section (2.8.1), and the sample characteristics in table 6.

At the onset of the interviews, questions (see appendix E) were set in order to sample the concepts that required further investigation. As Strauss and Corbin (2015) indicate, semi-structured interviews are preferred in some cases because they offer a level of consistency against unstructured interviews. They do however; allow room for improvisation in an interview to explore relevant and interesting topics that come to light. Further to this, questions can alter somewhat throughout the data collection process in accordance with theoretical saturation. That is, questions are guided by the concepts and aiming for theoretical saturation. In this study, questions were altered in cases where participants highlighted particular experiences. Therefore, it made pragmatic sense to explore concepts related to their

experiences. This continual process assisted the saturation across the concepts as interviews progressed via theoretical sampling, as shown in figure 4.

***Figure 4 - Theoretical Sampling Process***

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Source: Strauss & Corbin (2015)

### **2.8.1 Participants**

Whilst participant recruitment through the Internet, and social media, is still considered in its infancy (Bartell 2015), its adoption through research recruitment is receiving more attention in recent times (Bartell 2015; Hamilton 2006; Khatri et al. 2015; Ramo & Prochaska 2012; Ryan 2013; Wilson et al. 2012).

Hamilton (2006) for example, indicates the advantages as:

- Reach distinct populations
- Geographic diversity
- Specificity outreach to well-defined populations

Furthermore, Hamilton indicates that Internet sampling principles and problems are no different from other traditional methods of participant recruitment. The sampling plan must be driven by the research question and must adequately reflect the phenomenon.

Finzel (2013) highlighted that the “Qualitative Research Consultants Association Field Committee” explored social media recruitment and indicated the advantages and disadvantages. Certainly, the main advantage was that researchers could identify and handpick participants relevant to the study. In reference to pre-screening, Finzel further indicated that it is highly beneficial for multiple reasons; cost, time and accommodation of the participants requests. . The disadvantages indicated were down to trust (from the respondent) and quality control. Essentially, quality control is a factor present in traditional forms of participant recruitment. Bartell (2015) supports this by claiming that the Internet, and social media in particular, are now widely recognised as a legitimate way to conduct research.

Given the propositions made in recent research, the adoption of recruitment in phase 2 of this study used online social media, via twitter, to reach out to prospective participants for this study. In line with Finzel, the purpose of social media recruitment was for screening purposes only (see appendix F). Participants went through the online screening process, which was designed to terminate any respondents who did not meet the criteria required. Two important requirements were that individuals were at the very least moderate sports fans; secondly, that individuals who were willing to participate, were fully competent with Skype or Facetime for the interview. Other questions were for the purpose of gaining some demographic information, although this was not imperative to participant sampling. The total number of male responses was 22 (81%) and the total number of female was 5 (19%), which can be seen in table 6 below. Whilst there is no specific target for gender purposes, the researcher aimed to interview a sample that was similar to phase 1.

**Table 5 - Interview Sample Characteristics**

<b>Participant No.</b>	<b>Male/ Female</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Sports Consumed</b>	<b>Interview date</b>
IP1	M	Academic/Lecturer	40-65	Cricket, Rugby, Ice Hockey, football	29/06/16
IP2	M	Academic/Lecturer	18-39	Football, rugby, cricket most others	13/07/16
IP3	F	Academic	40-65	Football and most others	20/10/16
IP4	F	Student	40-65	X-sports, Baseball, Football	01/11/16
IP5	M	Data Analyst	18-39	Football, Tennis, Athletics	08/11/16
IP6	M	Marketing and Sponsorship	18-39	Football, cricket, rugby, tennis, athletics, motor racing, boxing, golf, basketball	09/12/16
IP7	M	TV Producer	40-65	Football, Tennis, Cricket, Golf	13/03/17
IP8	F	Student	18-39	Rugby, Cricket, Athletics, Formula	18/05/17

### 2.8.2 The Interview Process

In recent times, the use of VoIP (Video over Internet Protocol) applications are becoming one of the most popular forms of data collection methods in qualitative research (Bertrand & Bourdeau 2010; Deakin & Wakefield 2014; Morgan et al. 2016; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom 2014). Skype and Facetime are popular platforms amongst the many forms of VoIP, and in reference to Skype, this is the platform adopted in this research to carry out the interviews. Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom (2014) produced research on new emerging technologies in qualitative research proposing that the use of Skype is appropriate without decreasing the quality of the



research. Whilst traditionally, face to face interviews have received the “gold standard” criteria in regards to its validity and rigour (McCoyd and Kerson 2006), Holt (2010) contested this, by producing research identifying the potential benefits of telephone research. It is therefore commonly known that the benefit of interviews over online platforms bring the visual element into the telephone interview, something that is lost through the traditionalist telephone method. More recently then, Deakin & Wakefield (2014) reflected on PhD researchers adopting the platform Skype. Their propositions, along with Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom’s (2014) research, indicate the following advantages of Skype interviews:

1. Low cost
2. Time benefits – setting up VoIP calls and no travel
3. Availability and flexibility in interview scheduling
4. Practicality: those who possess Skype require no training
5. Acceptability: participants are conversant over VoIP technology

Some of the disadvantages put forward were; quality of the audio and video, which has the potential to slow the interview process down, technical problems i.e. microphone problems, and participant aversion to technology.

### **2.8.3 Ethics**

Potential participants for the study were directed to an online screening process (see appendix F), through Bristol Online Survey’s, in accordance with Coventry Universities ethical procedures. Additionally, participants that passed the screening process were sent a participant consent form (see appendix G), which was also in accordance with ethical procedures of Coventry University. Given that the interviews were carried out via Skype or Facetime, health and safety requirements were very minimal.

### **2.8.4 Limitations**

Interview approaches do have their limitations. To overcome the task of logistical problems and incurring travel costs, the interviews were carried out via Skype or

Facetime. There were technical problems encountered with IP6, therefore the interview took place without the use of video support. Given that the interviewee had cancelled twice, there was little choice to reschedule for time constraints of other interview dates approaching and deadlines. Further problems can be encountered with interviewees feeling uncomfortable in interviews and therefore providing little contribution in their answers. The purpose of the initial questions were two fold; firstly, it was imperative to understand each consumer as a sport fan (Fanographic factors – see chapter 3.5); secondly, these opening questions built initial trust via conversations about sports, athletes they like etc. This then enhanced the remainder of the interview as it progressed. The one issue that Strauss and Corbin make known of interview limitations is periods of silence. For novice researchers, interviews can often be a daunting task, and force interviewee's to deviate or not complete their full answers. The researcher of this study took into account allowing for stopgaps between response and questions, to allow the interviewee to fully articulate thoughts where possible.

## 2.9 Analysis and Reporting

The first two stages of coding, open and axial, were carried out as a continual process during the collection and production of all five focus groups. Axial coding continued in the second phase of research, where data was collected with particular focus on saturating the “Fanographic” and “Proximal” Factors (see chapter 3.5).

NVIVO software, a computer programme designed to analyse and produce qualitative data analysis (QDA), was used throughout. NVIVO is particularly useful where deep levels of analysis are required. The benefit of NVIVO allows users to examine, classify, arrange data; examine relationships in the data; link analysis with literature; produce models, diagrams and memos. Before the use of NVIVO in this project, the researcher attended NVIVO introduction training, along with an NVIVO online training programme. Further training was carried out through one-on-one training with an NVIVO consultant professional. Whilst moving along in the coding

procedures, there was some difficulty in the full understanding of NVIVO and its processes. As much as training assisted in some aspects of using NVIVO for data analysis, the author felt much closer to the data as the coding procedures became more detailed in the later stages. This led to the use of a more manual approach once the interview stage began in the axial and selective coding stages.

To ensure accuracy, the researcher carried out the task of transcribing the focus group discussions, which was beneficial in further assisting data analysis, allowing the researcher to be fully immersed in the data. Each transcription and analysis led the process of open and axial.

### **2.9.1 Memo Writing**

Memoing is known as a central element of grounded theory (Dunne 2011) and provides the researcher with records of analytic thinking during the analysis process from start to finish. As Strauss & Corbin (2015) simply indicate, memoing preserves dialogue and gives indication of how concepts might relate to each other.

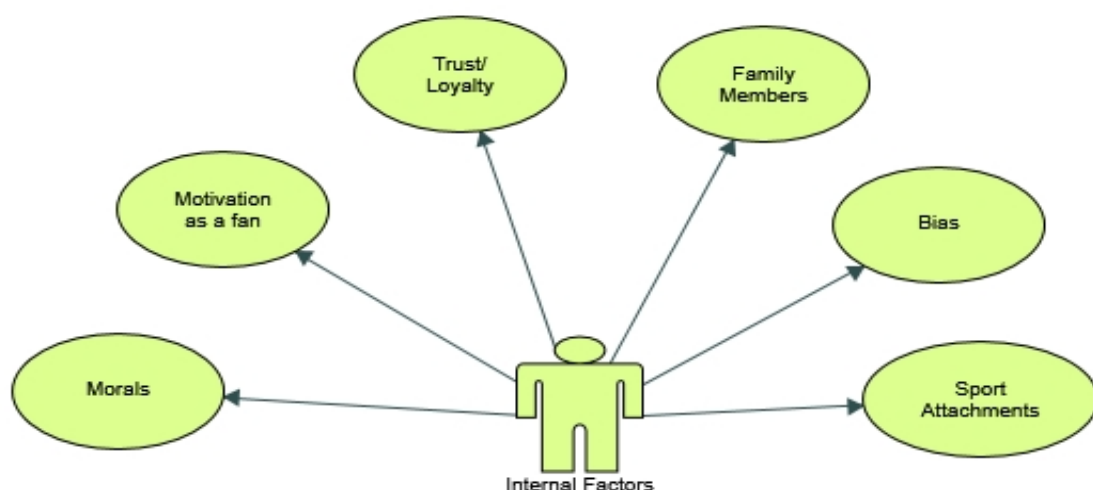
Furthermore, the use of memos provides an audit trail for the researcher to go back and forth in the analysis in order to keep the analysis moving forward, thus enhancing rigour. The major grounded theorists (Charmaz 2014; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 2015) have stressed that memo writing is absolutely imperative to theory development in grounded theory in raising the description of data to a theoretical level. Its use will elaborate on emerging categories, identify their properties and dimensions and identify the gaps between categories.

The writing of memos for this research began after the first focus group and continued until analysis was complete. Initial memos were created immediately after each focus group as a reflection of some of the key observations that occurred. For example, some responses from participants showed different levels of emotion and speed to which they answered and responded to questions, or comments made by other participants. By capturing this during the focus group, or immediately after, these key pieces of data were logged and assisted in the analysis. As the research began to take more shape, memos became more focused and rich in content. One of

the benefits in particular from the memos, was returning to previously collected data in order to saturate the emerging theory. In particular reference to the interview phase of data collection, the emergence of new information prompted the search back on previous data, which proved useful to pick up on particular microscopic information that may have been overlooked in the first phase. Further memoing was used in the analysis of the focus groups relating to coding and emergent categories. With specific mention to the use of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach adopted in this research, the use of memos is pivotal in supporting analysis through Strauss and Corbin's analytical tool; known as the paradigm. The paradigm assisted this research in the axial coding and the coding around categories, this will be discussed later in the chapter (see 2.9.96). Throughout the analysis chapter, the memos produced in this research will be illustrated, where applicable. I will make note that not every single memo will be presented, given that the total number of memo's alone were over one hundred.

Additionally to the creation of memos, diagraming assisted some of the early stages of coding. Figure 5 below, for example, portrays an early diagram of some emerging internal factors that played an important role on the response of consumers to transgression in sport. Diagrams provide conceptual visualisations of data and enable a greater level of abstraction (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

**Figure 5 - Early Diagram of Internal Factors**



### 2.9.2 Theoretical Notes

Theoretical notes are not a requirement through the Strauss and Corbin (1992) approach; however, the researcher carried out theoretical notes in order to assist the conceptualisation of the data. Given the extent and depth of the data, not to mention the multitude of factors that became evident in consumer response to transgression, the theoretical notes were extremely supportive in the later coding stages. If there was a pattern in the data that led to the development of a concept, this concept was recorded and created in the “theoretical notes”. Any future date that this concept was evident in new data, this was logged in the theoretical notes. “Theoretical Note 1” – (below) illustrates an example of the concept “patriotism”, which came to light in the focus groups. At any point that this concept was evident, a date and entry would be created and the location of where, why and how it was said would be documented. The theoretical notes also assisted the understanding of the relationships across the concepts. The total word count for the theoretical notes alone, made throughout the entire analytical process, stood at 5,644. The theoretical notes, along with the extensive amount of memoing and methodological notes, assisted the explanatory power in the development of this studies emerged theory.

#### ***Theoretical Notes 1***

**\*\*Note:** partial example from source

##### **Theoretical Notes**

##### **Concept: Patriotic**

There were discussions in the first FG indicating that a national hero has a big impact on the nation. Concept here is patriotism and this appears to fall perhaps under the current category “fan identity”.

Participant 7 in FG1 talks about Estonia and the Olympic athlete from 2002, national hero.

Participant 5 in FG1 talks about Jessica Ennis being a really big impact on the nation. This is likely due to her image across the nation as British

MN – I make note here that there is a relationship with impact. This is of course a negative impact.

1/12/16

Further comparative analysis has brought my attention this concept. FG2, participant talks about how “Jamaica holds themselves proud” on the success they have in athletics, of course this is the sprint disciplines. Not sure whether to add this in the same concept or even amalgamate them together as pride and patriotism. This can be also said for the talk about Jessica Ennis or even Mo Farah, they were the lead faces of GB in the 2012 Olympics and for them to be involved in a sporting transgression would tarnish a nations pride in the snap of a finger.

4/4/17

IP7 talks very much about Wales football and has a strong connection. They used to travel all over. They also indicated bias, in the event of a transgression case. They were very honest about it. Also, they were absolutely enraged by the case of handball between Scotland and their team Wales, that cost Wales’s progression. They mentioned this a few times and also went on to say that they thought Maradona handball was “hilarious”. The exact same thing as their team’s situation but of course their dislike (so to speak) for the English made them feel it was funny. This appeared two polar opposite responses due to their connection (appeared strong) to Wales.

### 2.9.3 Constant Comparative Analysis

Throughout the analytical process, again being consistent with Strauss and Corbin’s approach (1990), comparative analysis was employed throughout. The process was used to compare incident-to-incident, concept-to-incident, and concept-to-concept to identify where any differences or similarities occurred, which assisted the

formulation of the theory as analysis progressed. Throughout the analysis process from beginning to end, the researcher went back and forth through the data and audit trails of data analysis. This process, in particular, assisted the ability to look back on data to confirm the researcher's internal informal hypothesis. As the concepts become more refined, researchers compare concept to concept, which lead to the formation of higher level concepts accounting for data variation (Glaser et al. 2009).

#### 2.9.4 Reflexivity

It is a long journey for any qualitative researcher when taking on an extensive project. It is therefore important to realise, especially in the case of novice researchers that it's impossible to be immersed in the data and not be influenced by it (Strauss & Corbin 2015). The reflexive diary (figure 6) is more of a running commentary of the procedures that have been carried out, along with some personal thoughts and feelings. This was very useful in order to help gain some distance from the data where necessary. Whilst the reflexive diary wasn't always a daily occurrence, it was always used whenever the author produced an analytic session. If the author was working on the methodological chapter for example, entries were not made in the diary, unless it became necessary for analytical purposes.

***Figure 6 – Reflection Diary Example***

Reflection - Diary Entry
30/6/15
I have completed the online tutorial today for learning more about NVIVO. It has given me much needed support in order to organise my NVIVO portfolio, and ways to query my data. It is sometimes overwhelming, as I have not used NVIVO previously, there is certainly a lot to the capabilities of the software.

I have started running some simple "text search" and "word search" queries, which allow looking at contexts and frequent key words used by participants. I need to further look into my queries to support further analysis and understand their purpose in more depth.

I want to make note that the word "think" links up in the queries nicely to show comments that surround perceptions and possible behaviours.

I do want to further clean up the project as a whole in order to navigate easier as it just feels fragmented by all the data. This is something that I will discuss with my supervisors.

2/7/15

I produced some coding word frequency queries today, which need to be analysed further. At this stage I feel as if I am moving further on in the open coding phase. I will get some input from supervisors and the NVIVO specialist that I am in contact with.

I need to carry out some further analysis tomorrow on the word frequencies and let the results move me forward from there.

Today I also looked at possible ways of writing up my analysis within my project. I want to understand the best approaches in writing the analysis chapter at this early stage, therefore I can start putting some ideas together for when I commence upon this.

7/7/15

I spoke to an NVIVO specialist, which followed on from the online training course that I took part in last week. I found the course useful and I also found the online



meeting useful to gain some further possibilities with my analysis. Sylvania (NVIVO specialist) told me that it's useful to use the word tree as a display for my work. Especially in the open coding phase where there are many codes. Additionally, the process of - "see linked memo", is carried out by highlighting a passage of text and linking it to a memo.

23/7/15

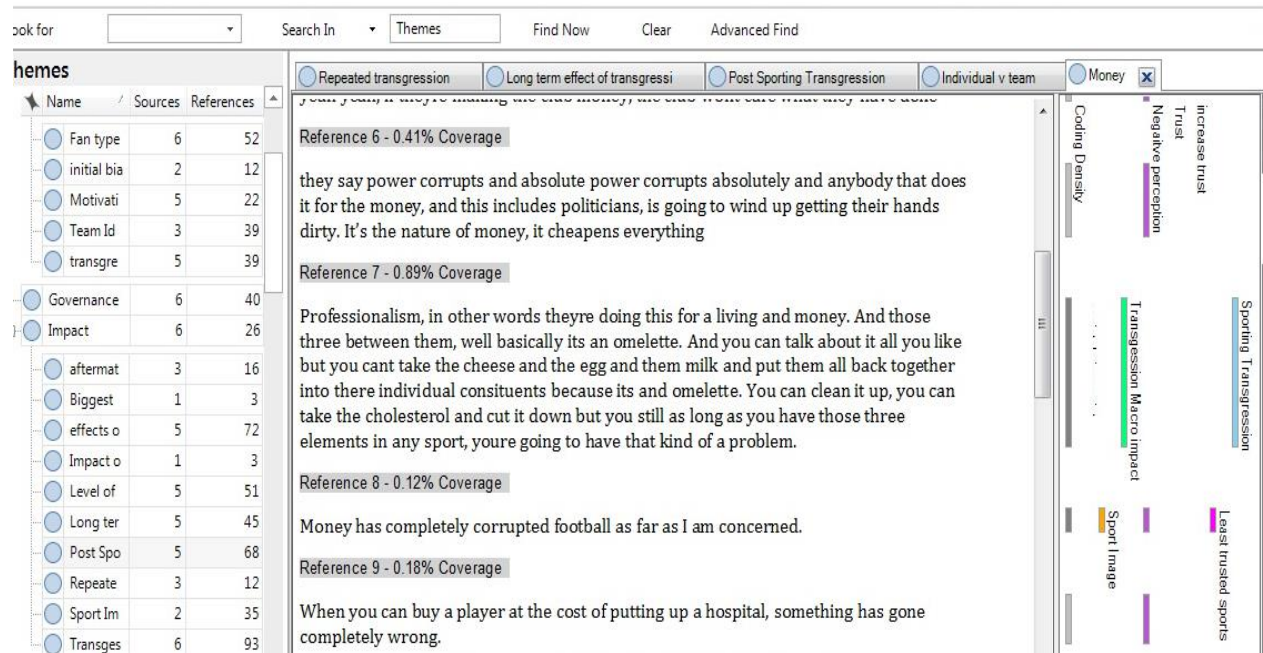
I have returned from a holiday away with my family. This is evident in the date gap that I have been absent from NVIVO. I have had a meeting with my superiors and decided to run two more focus groups. I am currently gaining participants to attend focus groups on the 11th August. From the coding of the first two focus groups, it seems apparent that I have need to sample concepts further.

### 2.9.5 Open Coding

During the open coding, line-by-line analysis of data is produced and conceptual labels are given to words, lines, and chunks of the interview transcripts. The open coding phase allows the researcher to break the data down into manageable analytic pieces (Strauss & Corbin 2015) and ultimately facilitate the delineating of, differentiating of, and constantly comparing the developing concepts. Researchers begin at this stage, but not limited to, asking questions and implementing analytical techniques to constantly ask questions of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit at the open coding stage, researchers should be asking questions through deductive thinking, "what", "where", "why", "how" and "when". Figure 7 illustrates line-by-line coding carried out on the concept "money". Using the coding stripes (coloured stripes on right of figure below), relationships began to emerge with concepts that linked up with the code "Money", therefore answers to the aforementioned questions "what", "why" etc. For example, comments in figure 7 indicates that "trust" (also open code) in certain sports has been negatively impacted due to the amount of money in a sport – reference 8, in the figure 7, relates to the code "least

trusted sports” (shown in the coding stripes). Therefore there is a strong relationship here between money and trust.

**Figure 7- Open Coding Example**



Using NVIVO, the name given to these labels is called “nodes”. Initial open coding, with the focus group data, led to 101 initial nodes (see appendix H). Upon coding of focus groups three and four, microanalysis led to the identification of node structures. These are the basics of sorting concepts that present characteristics as a property of a higher level node (concepts) and show varying dimensional levels. These are presented in table format in the next chapter (see 3.5 onwards).

At the initial stages of open coding, the process was generally descriptive, along with some creating of nodes being actual words (in vivo code) said by participants. For example, an in vivo code created across the focus groups, which can be seen in appendix H, is “role models”. These questions are also applied as a continuous task and also applied in the axial coding phase. Memoing is critical to the deductive thinking and answering of these questions, as explained in 2.9.1. “Role models” was referenced across all the focus groups multiple times and was seen as a category of

the contextual factor “athlete” (see 3.5.3.1). It was important for this to be coded in vivo as it signaled a particular perception of athletes from the participants.

Another strategy at the open coding phase was to assign similar words or chunks of text to different and various codes (nodes in NVIVO). Answering these questions assisted comparative analysis. The following “reflection memo” (Reflexive memo 1 – chapter 2) below, is a representation of a continual strategy carried out by the researcher upon completion of all data collection sessions in phase one and phase two. The memo was written upon completion of focus groups one and two, which illustrates some of the deductive thinking and questioning of the researcher. This process was consistent throughout all the data collection and analysis stages. As Mills et al. (2006) points out, the writing of these reflection memo’s all contribute to raising the description to an abstract level, being cognisant of the context that participants portray in the stories they tell.

### ***Chapter 2 - Memo 1 Reflection after FG1&2***

#### **Reflection Memo**

##### **Focus Groups 1 & 2**

Before I begin the open coding process, the focus groups seemed to run quite smoothly. Given that I am observing, and not asking the questions, I was able to see more clearly the non-verbal actions. In some of the responses, there was an extreme level of emotion or even psychological stress on the participants. This was evident when a form of transgression was talked about when it was the sport, team or athlete that participants seemed most attached to. This has made me think how important perhaps certain attachments are in sport, or as a sports fan. Taking for example, the response from participant in the second focus group:

FC – “If Northampton were implicated in drug taking scandal?” [aimed at FGP14 who is a big rugby fan of Northampton]

FGP14 – “I’d go mad!!! [Very fast emotional response]

FC – “Would you really?”

FGP14 – “yeah I would be so angry with them, they're the ones doing the wrong thing definitely and I love them to bits so..... I’d ummmmm, unfortunately not able to remain as a season ticket holder because I’m from Leicester and it’s just too far. But yeah I would be so unhappy with them, half the players I respect and they're like my idols....”

As can be seen above, FGP14 seems to have a very strong emotional attachment to the players and the team. Now I have questions about what this means, do different participants express other types of attachments? Are there different levels of attachment that might be important? What impacts, if any, will they have on behaviours?

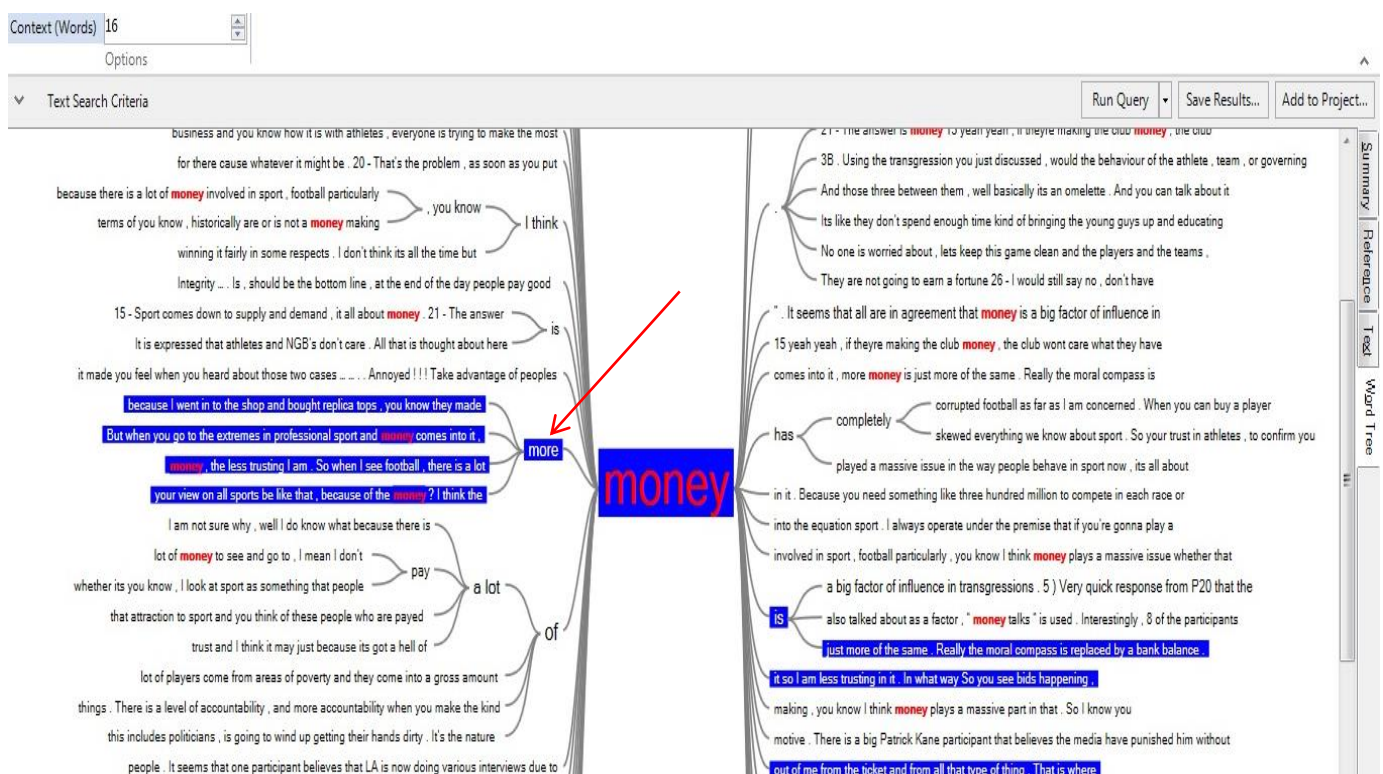
Furthermore, looking at the emotions expressed, what internal process is going on for FGP14, they are clearly distressed to a high level. What will be their procedure to reduce this emotional turmoil they are currently experiencing. Even though this is hypothetically presented to them, their reaction is almost as if the doping case actually took place.

Coding stripes were used across the open coding procedures, which assisted the early conceptual development. The coding stripes were used simultaneously to carry out constant comparison, where the researcher was aiming to understand how the emergent concepts link together to higher order categories.

Word search queries proved to be absolutely instrumental in understanding the context of situations, words and concepts. For example, one of the most common terms talked about in the early stages of the focus groups, was “money”. A concept was created in vivo terms for this and of course it led to the researcher producing a text query to understand the concept in depth, which can be seen in figure 8 below. The identification of words that precede, or come after, the term “money”, give the situation context. This also assisted the axial coding phase (see 2.9.6) to find relationships across the data. In figure 8, the highlighted text was a result of the researcher clicking on the word “more” (the red arrow indicates the location of “more” in figure 8), which then led to all the passages of comments, where participants talked about “more”, “money” and “morality” (all open codes). For example, one of the highlighted passages brought the attention to how one participant perceived what more money in sport meant to them:

FGP20 “.... When you go to the extremes in professional sport and money comes into it, it’s just more of the same. Really the moral compass is replaced by a bank balance”

**Figure 8 - Word Search Query for Context**





consumer “trust” in those respective sports. As analysis progressed, “Trust” became a key property of the eventually developed category “Proximal Factors”. Details of this category will be presented in the next chapter of this project (see chapter 3.5).

### 2.9.6 Axial Coding

As explained above through the open coding process, axial coding was carried out through a dynamic process. The transition from open to axial coding was the continued application of queries via the NVIVO application. Figures 8 and 9 presented above, on the concepts “money” and “Trust”, led to understanding of relationships across many concepts in the data assisting the axial coding process. With reference to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) approach, axial coding recommends applying the analytical strategies of their Paradigm to ascertain the following, and enhance the axial coding process:

*Conditions – Answer questions about why, when, and how. They refer to the perceived reasons that persons give for why things happen. They also cue analysts that persons are about to explain the reason for their behaviour using words in field notes, such as; because, since, due to and when.*

*Actions-Interactions – the responses that persons make to events or problematic situations that occur in their lives. People give meaning to events, have feelings about them, and only then do they respond through action interaction.*

*Consequences – often before taking action, a person takes into account the possible outcomes. Based on those possibilities, a person makes a choice on which action-interaction to take.*

(Strauss & Corbin 1992: 158)

The axial coding procedures have received criticism from other major grounded theorists (see for example: Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1992) that the axial coding procedures can restrict the construction of analytical codes and force the data.

Given the aforementioned, the axial coding procedures were carried out with caution, however, they were very important in understanding how concepts were grouped into categories. Additionally, given the complex heterogeneous nature of sports fans, it would have been difficult to ascertain the relationships, action/interactions and consequences without applying axial procedures.

Two steps were used to carry out the axial coding process; firstly, during data analysis of phase one, NVIVO searches were carried out for key words participants used to identify the “conditions”, “action/inter-action” and “consequences”. Scott (2004) recommends using key words to assist the axial coding approach in search for the answers to the key questions “what”, “when”, “where”, “why”, “how”, and with what “consequences”. The “when”, “where” and “why” identify the conditions, the “how” identifies the actions and interactions of participants when transgression occurs, and ultimately, the “consequences” simply indicate the result of participants action/interactions. Strauss and Corbin’s (1992) paradigm was applied to the key data collected in phase 2, which will be discussed and presented in the next chapter using examples of participant interviews (see chapter 3.6).

### 2.9.7 Selective Coding

Selective coding involves the identification of the “core” category, which represents the major theme of the research, relating to the key subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore, the core category is a concept that is broad and abstract enough that it is a representation of all the participants in a study. Strauss and Corbin (1987) produced a list of criteria to assist the researcher in determining the qualification of a core category, which is presented in detail below:

1. *It must be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used as the overarching explanatory concept tying all the other categories together.*
2. *It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all, or almost all, cases there are indicators that point to that concept.*
3. *It must be logical and consistent with the data. There should be no forcing*



4. *It should be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used to do further research leading to the development of general theory*
5. *It should grow in depth and explanatory power as each of the other categories is related to it through statements of relationships*

(Strauss & Corbin 2015: 189)

To establish the theory, high-level comparative analysis was carried out as recommended by Strauss and Corbin. This is where the theory was related back to cases, trimming the theory to a coherent level, and checking for variation across emerged categories. During phase two of data collection and analysis, constant reviewing of the many memos, diagrams, reflexive and methodological notes, were pivotal in ensuring consistency, validating the emerging theory and filling in poorly developed categories. In the case of this study, the core category was evident across all data sets, from focus groups, observations in the focus groups interviews and reflections. The evaluation and validation criteria proposed by Strauss & Corbin (2015) are presented in the next section (2.10).

## 2.10 Evaluation Criteria of Grounded Theory

The different approaches to grounded theory have their own criteria to evaluate the quality of a grounded theory study (see last parameter table 4). For this study, and the application of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach to grounded theory, the criteria discussed here will be through: validity and reliability, credibility and truthfulness, rigor, and scientific and creative.

### 2.10.1 Validity and Reliability

In a review of the literature on validity, Strauss and Corbin (2015) posit the work of (Hammersley 1987: 67) as a the rationale to claim that work is valid "*if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorise*". The justification of validity, as put forward by Strauss and Corbin, is based on a review of literature that surrounds what "validity" is. From the beginning

of this research, the author was guided by Silverman's (2009) views throughout this research by:

1. *Engaging in the “refuting principle” by refuting assumptions against the data as the researcher proceeds through research.*
2. *Using the “constant comparative method” by comparing one case against another*
3. *Doing “comprehensive data treatment” by incorporating all cases into the analysis*
4. *“searching for deviant cases” by including and discussing cases that don’t fit the pattern*

(Silverman 2009: 209-226)

The above four posits were followed throughout this research as explained throughout this chapter. Chapter three, analysis, also incorporates to the reader the inclusion of multiple cases across the data, refuting assumptions through extensive memo’s and constantly comparing incidents across all phases of the data collection process.

### 2.10.2 Credibility & Truthfulness

There are procedures that were also followed through the duration of this research to ensure credibility and truthfulness across the data. Adopting the recommendations of procedures posited by Creswell (2007) the author firstly, adopted a triangulation approach to enhance the credible aspect of two lines of enquiry. As described earlier in this chapter, theoretical sampling directs the second phase of data collection based on the internal factors of a sport consumer and the need for further investigation and refinement; secondly, in the initial stages of coding and data collection, used peer review and assistance. A consultant was also used by the researcher to better understand coding in NVIVO, which of course was used predominantly in the earlier stages of coding; thirdly, clarifying researcher bias through constant memo writing and reflexive writing over the course of the project

until the theory emerged and was finalised; fourthly, rich thick description of concepts and categories, also through the extensive use of memoing and diagrams where applicable.

### 2.10.3 Rigor

As with the previous two sub sections, there is a set of criteria posited by Chiovitti & Piran (2003: 331-340) to achieve rigor, which this study followed to achieve this to the best of the authors ability.

Firstly, “letting the participants guide the process” - this was achieved by having early stages of coding peer reviewed for guidance, also the use of coding around participants words “in vivo” allowed the participants to give voice to the data.

Secondly, “checking theoretical construction is against participant meaning of the phenomenon” – this was where individual concepts emerged in the data. The author took a distance view to interpret the words and meanings by which participants were responding to transgression and why they responded in the ways that they did.

Thirdly, “articulating the researchers view and insights about the phenomenon explored and specifying criteria” – this was achieved through the memoing and reflections produced on all the data set independently. Reflection of focus groups and interviews once they occurred was imperative to theory enhancement.

Fourthly, “delineating the scope of the research” – as indicated in the introduction, the scope of the research is to explore consumer response to transgression when athletes are involved. The study aligned with comments of Bryman (2012) that a participant could be anyone who is relevant to the research question. Furthermore, this study approached the literature at the onset with a very brief over to limit the influence of preconceived concepts.

Finally, “describing how the literature fits with the emerged categories of the developed theory in this study” (see chapter 4).

#### 2.10.4 Scientific and Creative

In agreement with Strauss and Corbin (2015), the literature best suited to evaluate the scientific and creative aspect of grounded theory (Charmaz 2014: 337) through four stages:

Credibility – this fits with the notions explained above in 2.10.2. Additional to above is the systematic comparisons between observations and between categories; this was done through following procedures as guided by Strauss and Corbin, which have been presented throughout this chapter.

Originality – This pertains to the research making contributions to both practice and knowledge. In respect to knowledge, contributions need to challenge, extend or refine current concepts. This research presents these contributions in chapters four and five.

Resonance – this pertains to meeting the perspective of the studied experience, and the case of this study, does it resonate with participants in a larger picture. The benefit of resonance in this study is the articulation of real experiences that many participants brought into analysis. Many of the participants told their real experiences which captured actual behaviour rather than behavioural intentions. This allowed deeper insights into their worlds, which is a key tenet of “resonance” as posited by Charmaz.

### 2.11 Chapter Conclusion

The primary purpose of this chapter has been to explicate the grounded theory methodology that is suitable in meeting the aim of this study to understand – consumers’ perceptions and behaviours in response to transgression in sport. The methods employed in the study are described in this chapter via Strauss & Corbin’s (1990) approach of grounded theory – whilst other alternatives of grounded theory (Classical – Glaser & Strauss 1967; Constructivist – Charmaz 2006) have been presented, justification is provided as to the adoption of Strauss & Corbin. Strauss and Corbin’s approach in particular, has a level of structure that assists the

inexperienced grounded theorist, taking into account the conditions that pertain to a phenomenon under investigation. The philosophical underpinning of this research is situated in the interpretive paradigm where the world is subjective in the participant's words of this study, rather than objective definitions.

The following chapter (three) explains the detailed results and findings, detailing the emerged theory of the "Behavioural Zone of Tolerance", which supported the development of the response typology matrix. Chapter four will then place the emerged theory within the extant literature.

# Chapter 3 – Data Analysis and Results

## 3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will present the findings of the analysed data from phase one and two. Phase three will be presented in the next chapter (Discussion) and how the emerged theory can be situated with relevant literature. The presentation of this chapter will demonstrate the emergent major categories, using supporting evidence to show strength and explanatory power of their properties and dimensions. The final part of the chapter will conclude with the process of “selective coding”, which led to the identified core category, “**Behavioural Zone of Tolerance**”. The finalised theory will be presented through a theoretical model, which came to be known as the “CRT Model” (Consumer Response to Transgression Model) – see 3.4 and figure 11.

Data analysis in phase one led to the four emergent major categories that will be presented and discussed:

- Contextual Factors (external)
- Proximal Factors (internal)
- Fanographic Factors (internal)
- Cognitive Dissonance (Process)

The internal and external factors above (Contextual, Proximal & Fanographic) represent the conditions that shape the perceptions of sport consumers, and also affect their behaviours. The other major category (Cognitive Dissonance) describes the “process” of the interaction of participants in their response to transgression in sport. The cognitive dissonance process will be discussed in the later part of this chapter (see 3.7).

### 3.2 Factors Affecting Behaviour

In the early stages of open coding, there were an apparent number of micro factors (internal), relevant to a given consumer, which influenced their response to transgression in sport. Only later in the coding process, through constant comparison, these micro factors were split into the two categories identified – “**Fanographic Factors**” and “**Proximal Factors**” (see 3.5).

The understanding of the relationship between the three major categories (internal and external factors) is very much a complex one, given the heterogeneous nature of sport consumers. Each of the three categories work in a simultaneous dynamic nature to represent the *conditional context*, collectively intersecting at given points dependent on the **Contextual Factors** [external], and how these relate to a particular individuals **Proximal Factors** [internal] and **Fanographic Factors** [internal].

Additionally, the conditional context was very much dependent on the combination of category properties, and which of these properties was present (or not).

As analysis progressed, it became evident that when a consumer experiences a transgression case, the “*process*” of **Cognitive Dissonance**” (Festinger 1957) occurs. When a consumer is experiencing this dissonance (internal psychological conflict), the strategy is to reduce this internal conflict through subconscious alterations in one or more of their attitudes, behaviours and/or beliefs. More on the process of cognitive dissonance will be discussed later in the chapter (see 3.7).

Referring back to the three major categories that emerged from the data (Contextual/Proximal/ Fanographic factors), their dynamics have the ability to change, and in various cases do, over the course of *time*. With that being said, the author was extremely vigilant in the application of Strauss and Corbin’s axial coding process, given the volatile nature of the conditions. The application of the paradigm tool (see 3.6) was used against the interview transcripts of participant’s words to highlight if the properties of the categories were present (or not).

For the purpose of presenting the results in a coherent manner, preliminary findings will firstly be presented from phase one to represent some important key findings. The purpose of this representation is to provide the initial stages of phase one data analysis progression, and to show how the key categories began to emerge. Following the preliminary results, the emergent theoretical model - **CRT** (Consumer Response to Transgression) will be presented (see 3.4), highlighting the core category (Behavioural Zone of Tolerance) and the major sub categories. A narrative description of the theory will be presented to shape the context, along with a detailed rich description of the properties and dimensions of the theoretical categories, giving specificity to actions (Strauss & Corbin 2015). With particular reference to the narrative description of the theory, it is the interview participants, and their experiences, that best elucidate how the major categories work simultaneously in response to a transgression. It will be these examples that will provide a deeper level of clarity in the emergent theory by applying the CRT model to interview participants in this study.

### 3.3 Preliminary Findings - Phase 1

In completing the first phase of data collection, a generalist memo (chapter 3 – memo 1) was created with some ideas as to what was particularly important within and across the emerging concepts and categories from analysis of the focus group phase of data collection. The purpose of this was to highlight some of the important areas of concern that the researcher would investigate further in the second phase of data collection (phase 2). It also created a very brief audit of the key findings to give guidance of where the research was heading at the time of completing the first phase of data analysis.



## **Reflexive Memo**

### **Key thoughts and identifications after analysis of focus group 4**

*Identification 1* – Individual factors (Proximal Factors) play an important part in the cognitive processing of both ST (Sporting Transgression) and PT (Player Transgression) cases. Key properties identified at this point of analysis are trust/loyalty, morality, emotions, social pressure and relational impact.

*Identification 2* – Consumers level of identification with a team, and furthermore, the point of attachment and motivation (as a sports fan), will have a strong influence on the response to both PT and ST cases. Highlighting the importance on Fanographic concepts

*Identification 3* – The two forms of PT and ST elicit different responses. Consumers indicate that ST is “worse as a sports fan” and PT is “worse for the athlete as an individual or person”. Both types of transgression indicate that, the composition of the transgression and other contextual factors (external conditions), are influential on consumer’s behaviours. Furthermore, the composition of a transgression has the ability to alter over time, and therefore alter perceptions and behavioural over time.

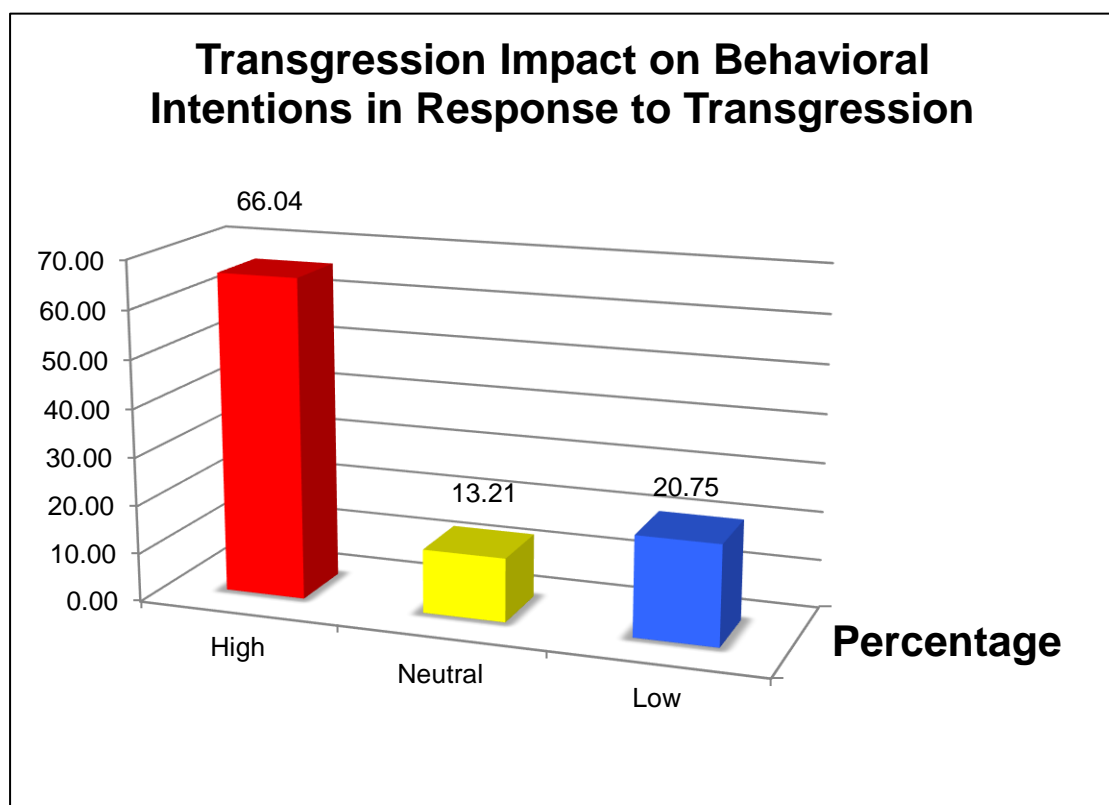
*Identification 4* – The media has a direct influence in the perceptions of consumers, which in turn can elicit bias perceptions, irrespective of the transgression being true or false. The media has a direct impact on the trust consumers have for sports and athletes, additionally in some cases, for sports that consumers do not generally follow.

*Identification 5* – The post transgression response of both the athlete and team/organisation involved in the transgression, is paramount to the impact this will have on the behavioral response of consumers.

*Identification 6* – The level and type of sport is associated with consumer perceptions and the types of transgression that occur. There is a link between consumer trust and the type/level of sport. I.e. elite athletes, such as those in athletics, are perceived to be at a higher risk of doping (ST) to gain success in sport. Those at lower levels of sport, and ultimately earn less, are perceived to engage more into match fixing for monetary purposes.

An important area of investigation for this research, and a key area of concern for sport organisations, is the impact of transgression in sport on the behaviours of sport consumers. During the focus groups, the impact of transgression on behaviours were coded into three categories; High, Neutral and Low. As seen in figure 10 below, the average of (66%) comments indicated that transgression would have a high (negative attitude) impact on their consumption of sport.

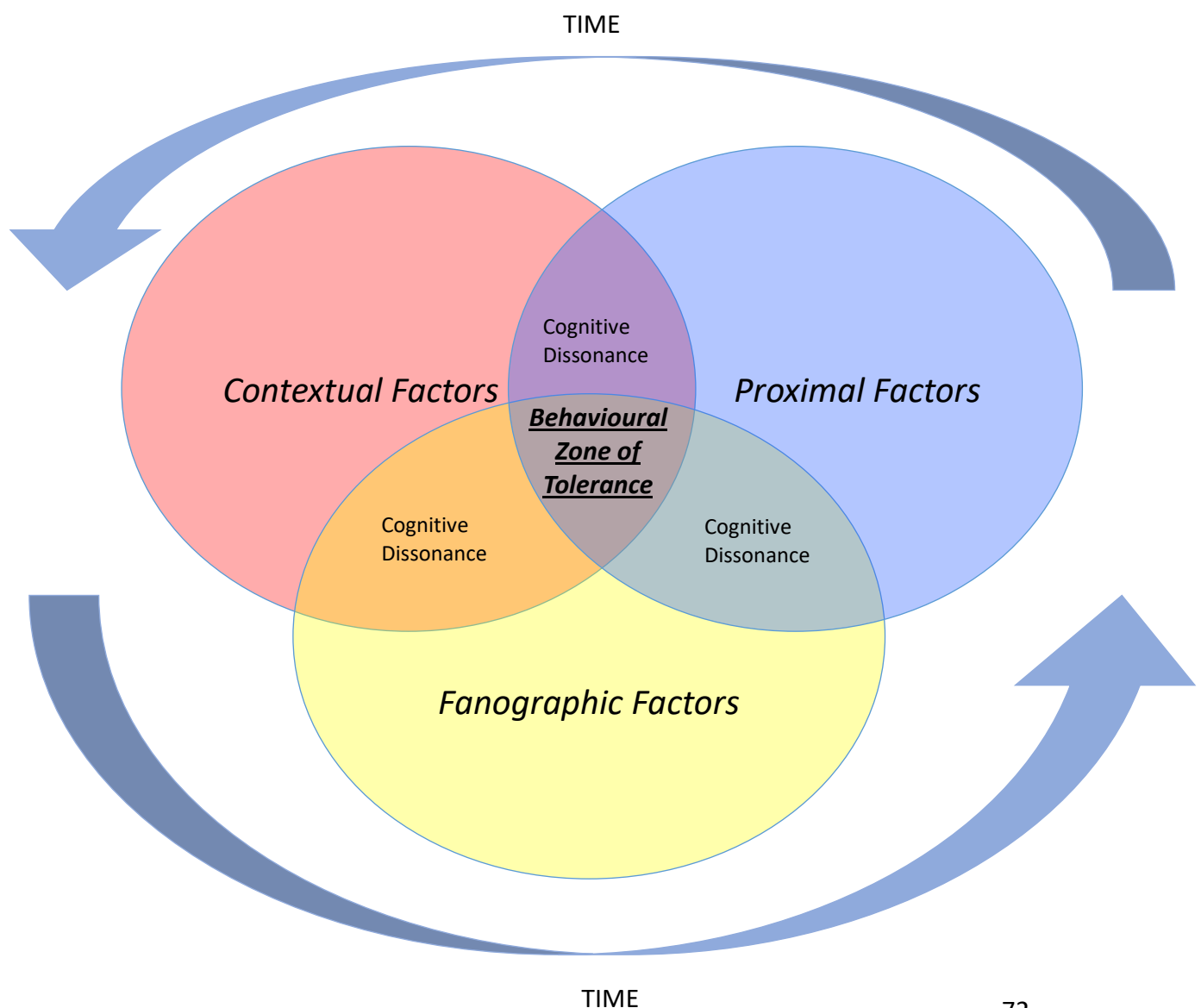
**Figure 10 - Transgression Impact on Behaviour**



### 3.4 CRT Model

Figure 11 below is the visual representation of this studies substantive grounded theory, with the core category at the heart of the model; Behavioural Zone of Tolerance. Providing the CRT model early in the chapter, the author believes will assist the understanding of the CRT model's categories (Fanographic, Proximal and Contextual) that give rise to the cognitive dissonance process. The remainder of the chapter (3.5 onwards) will explain the categories in detail, illustrating how each emerged, by breaking down the components of the model to make sense of the dynamic theory

**Figure 11- (CRT) Consumer Response to Transgression Model**



## 3.5 Major categories

### 3.5.1 Fanographic Factors

Fanographic factors emerged to form a major category from constant comparison of the early open codes of phase 2 - individual interviews. The Fanographic factors represent the “casual conditions” in that they are a primary set of “micro factors”, playing an important role in the perceptions and behavioural response of consumers when transgression occurs. The Fanographic factors illustrate the identity of an individual from the perspective of a sport consumer, or sport fan.

Table 6 below illustrates the properties and dimension of the developed axial category “**Fanographic Factors**”. The properties are particular characteristics that emerged and were very important factors in the cognitive and behavioural process of sport consumers responding to a particular transgression case.

**Table 6 - Properties and Dimensions of Fanographic**

Axial Category	Fanographic Factors		
Properties	Commitment	Motivational Interest	Attachment Point
(Dimensions)	(Hi – Low) -Money -Time -Loyalty	(Strong – Weak) -Nostalgia -Genuineness -Entertainment -Monetary -Winning	(Strong - Weak) -Sport -Team -Player(s) -Nation (Patriotic-Unpatriotic)
	↔	↔	↔

From the focus group analysis, the author wrote a memo (memo 2) before commencing the interviews. The purpose of this memo, at the time, was to stress

the importance of understanding what type of sport fan each participant was/are, in terms of relevance to the properties of **Fanographic Factors**. Further to this, and also recorded in the memo is how both the internal factors appear more important than demographic factors. In this study, demographic factors don't appear as relevant, as recorded in the memo below.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 2 - Fanographic Factors**

**Memo FF1 – 17/11/15**

#### **Category – Fanographic Factors**

I am not sure how the properties for this category fit together at this point in time with its properties and dimensions. This category does seem paramount as an internal factor that plays an important role in a consumer's response to transgression.

One concept that seems very strong as a property is "attachment". Participants that indicate what their attachments are (athlete, team, sport for example) show a lot of **emotional response (action/interaction)** if their "attachment" is linked and/or impacted somewhat by the transgression. The responses vary in terms of positive or negative (**attitude**), with some showing bias (action/interaction), others showing detachment/dislocation (consequence) from the athlete/team or the entire sport itself. FGP28 expressed how they felt it was "personal" when the transgressor was on their team. FGP28 really shows here how they associate with their team and it comes across at this point that FGP28 perhaps feels a threat to their identity.

*FGP28 – "I think, as a supporter, when they've done something wrong (transgression) you find it personal because it's with your team..."*

Another Participant (FGP30) that is a big fan of the Chicago Blackhawks (NHL team) and has a strong "attachment" to Patrick Kane of the Blackhawks, was commenting how they feel about the current situation of Patrick Kane being charged for alleged

rape (I note that at the time of the this focus group Patrick Kane was awaiting trial and was neither guilty or not guilty at this point).

*FGP30 – “...The Patrick Kane thing, he is a player of a team I support and there's the whole thing they play up with the Patrick Kane & Jonathan Toews thing so they are two players that are huge for us.... It's very hard, if it was a player from another team I don't like it's easy to go 'they're a terrible person', if it was someone from the Philadelphia Flyers who I don't like, I would be like they're a terrible person and should never play again or whatever. And then it's a player from a team you support, a player you respect, I have Patrick Kane posters and things, um then you kind of have to face the idea that you really don't know anybody....”*

The same participant went on to talk about transgression on (Sporting) and off (Player) the field of play, and its impact on their team's success. They claim to be much more affected “as a sports fan” if the on ice performance of their team was impacted negatively.

*FGP30 – “... if he had taken drugs up to the playoffs that would have been terrible as a sports fan but it would have been terrible. Whereas what he is doing now (possible rape charges) is terrible as a person. As a person I don't like what he has done or might have done. Whereas doing something affecting the sport as a sports fan I would have hated that”.*

The above comments of FGP30, where they separate Player and Sporting transgression, indicates how they are effected differently, this is supported by other participants in the focus groups. These evidenced a principal reason as to the separation of internal factors into two major categories (**Fanographic Factors** and **Proximal Factors**), as internal micro factors (conditions) that are pivotal in understanding a likely response.

The **Fanographic Factors** and **Proximal Factors** categories need further theoretical development, and interviews seem the most beneficial option, as it will allow me to really get into the deeper meaning for a sports fan. I want to understand more of the consequences of these major categories and some of the conditions under which give rise and/or alter these internal factors.

A further concept that also needs clarification in the **Fanographic Factors** category is the **commitment** of a consumer. At this point, there is evidence that the focus group participants have indicated that their levels of commitment are different. I feel that there is a correlation with the commitment level and response. Commitment at this point certainly highlights the amount of '**time**' that sport consumers give from their life to a particular sport. I am not sure what other factors are present at this point.

A further key note I make here is how the internal factors are more important than demographic factors. At this point, demographic factors don't show a lot of relevance. For example, taking male vs. female differences, there isn't much correlation; it all comes back to the internal factors that are most important in how sport consumer respond to transgression.

#### **3.5.1.1 Commitment**

Commitment emerged as a property of Fanographic factors due to the influence it pertained to the response of sport consumers to transgression in sport.

Commitment is made up of three main dimensions; "**Money**", "**Time**" and "**Loyalty**".

During the interviews it seemed apparent that those who have a high level of commitment, experienced more internal conflict (cognitive dissonance) and therefore this led to a negative behavioural response. The author makes note here that the dimension of "time" shouldn't be confused with the *process* of "**time**" as a reality in terms of its fit within the CRT model. The process of "time" shown in the CRT model, illustrates how all three major categories (internal and external) can alter over the course of time, due to changes in one or more conditions. More on the process of "time" will be presented later in this chapter (see 3.7.3).

## Time

The dimension of **Time** became apparent in the focus groups where participants were talking about not wanting to give their time (physically) to a team or sports organisation that has transgression occurring. The more time participants “commit” to their team/athletes, the more their psychological discomfort increased as a result. Time developed as a condition of the property commitment by participants feeling (emotion) it is important to them. FGP25 for example, indicated that they would respond to transgression by reducing consumption

*FGP25 – “They're (the team) not worth it and don't deserve my time”*

IP8 for example, highlighted how they used to watch the Tour De France quite often, and also attend them live. Due to the doping issues surrounding the sport, their trust level has been impacted and they commented that if they had more trust in the sport they would probably commit more time....

*IP8 – “I would probably follow it more or try and go and watch it more [If I trusted the sport more like I used to]....”*

In reference to the comments of IP8 above, there is a relationship with the “Proximal Factors” category and its property **Beliefs**, of which **Trust** is a dimension. IP8 has indicated that the doping cases that have emerged in cycling have resulted in an impact on their trust and ultimately their commitment to the sport of cycling has reduced. The result on a behavioural level here is negative, i.e. reduced consumption.

## Money

In looking at the dimension **Money**, the more money committed to watching/consuming sports, the stronger the internal conflict can become, much like “time” as previously described. One participant responded to a question about factors that are important to them in the event that transgression occurred...



*IP1 – “... as a paying customer, a lot of times, as a paying attendee to watch games I want to see fairness.... I do watch a lot on television, I pay my subscriptions, BT, I feel I want to see proper fairness”*

Looking further into the comments from IP1 above, there is a relationship between **Commitment** and **Motivational Interest**, the motive being “fairness” in sport, which falls within the dimension “**Genuineness**”, a dimension of **Motivational Interest** – which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The interview with IP3 in particular, highlighted a very different level of commitment, which really strengthened the importance of commitment as a property of Fanographic Factors. IP3 was continually talking about how they don’t pay a lot of money to consume sport, i.e. the watch online or television, but those (other fans) that do pay lots of money should get their money’s worth.

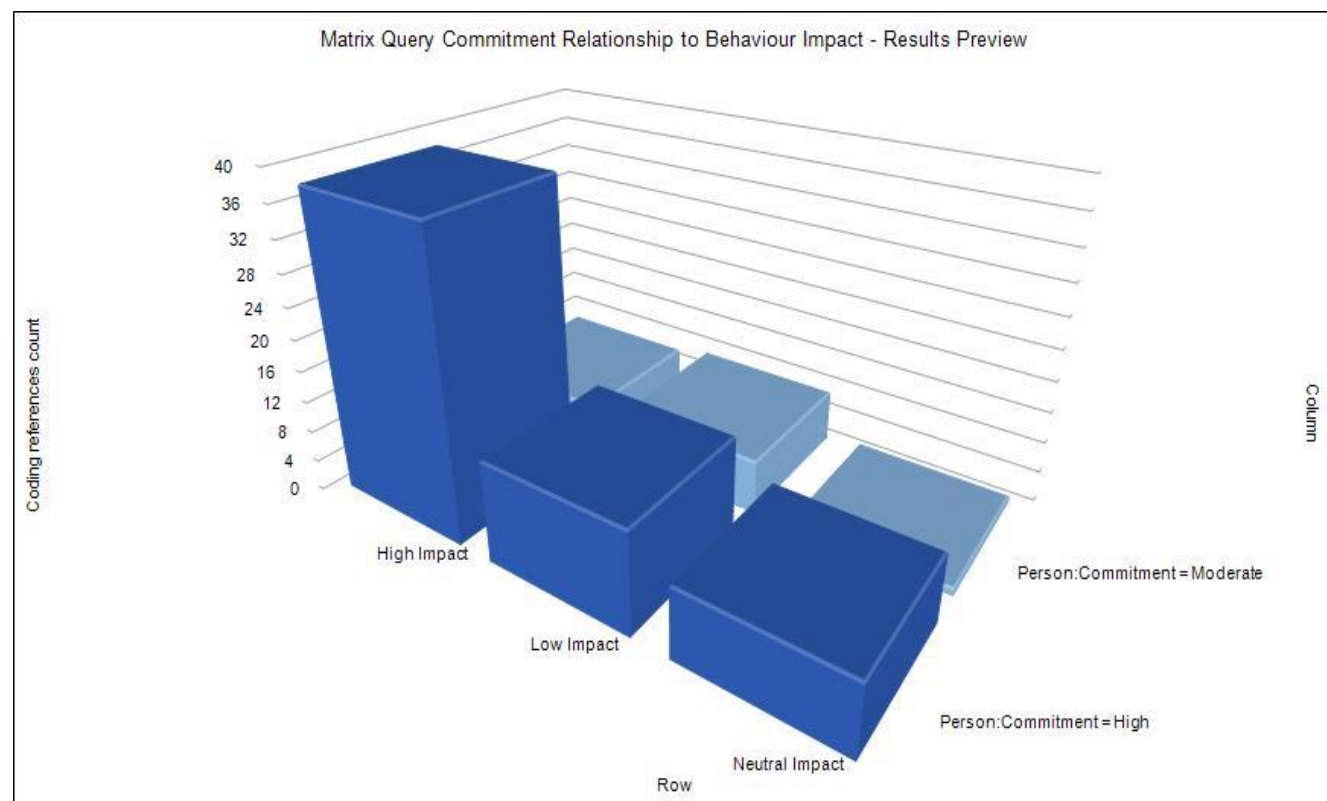
Looking at another perspective on money committed, FGP7 commented how one person doping wouldn’t change their behaviour (reduce consumption for example), and because they have payed money to watch and enjoy the game, there are other players to watch. Because FGP7 has payed money, they alter their attitude in order to reduce the internal dissonance.

*FGP7- “...because I have payed to be there (at a game) to enjoy myself I wouldn’t want to ruin that. There are twenty-two players on the pitch, just because that person isn’t there or is there (if caught doping) but there is anger towards him (athlete caught for doping). Why should that effect my joys of watching everyone else!?”*

Again, the comments above show relationships with other concepts, for example, the context of FGP7’s comments are in a team sport setting. Further in this chapter, the contextual (external) factors are discussed, which “team” and “individual” are both a key dimensions to affecting the perceptions of consumers.

Upon completion of the interview data collection phase (two), a matrix query was carried out in NVIVO to understand the relationship between commitment (High or Moderate in accordance with time and money) and behavioural response (High, Low and Neutral), i.e. reference is made that behaviour would be impacted by transgression. Figure 12 shows the reference count of interview participants in their response to transgression, related to their level of commitment as a sport consumer. It is very evident to see that the higher the level of commitment, the higher the level of negative psychological conflict experienced; and behaviour response is negative.

**Figure 12 - Matrix Query Commitment Relationship**



(Graph from NVIVO analysis of this research)

## Loyalty

Loyalty emerged as a dimension (high-Low) where participants highlighted their behaviour as a result of being loyal. In response to a discussion of a participant's football team, loyalty was indicated as a main factor to continue watching their team even if doping was evident. From an emotional perspective, FGP13 from the focus

groups indicates that they wouldn't enjoy the football. This internal conflict over time could lead to detrimental impacts on their behaviour to continue watching their team, and of course reduce their loyalty. More on "emotions" will be discussed later in the chapter (3.7) where consequences (response) will be discussed.

*FGP13 – "...I was a season ticket holder at Cheltenham (football team) and we used to get battered every week and if that was the reason why (other teams doping) why we got relegated a couple of years ago, it would make me want to stop going to games really"*

*FGF – "so let's say hypothetically that was the reason you were relegated, would you still go (to games)?"*

*FGP13 – "[hesitation]... I'd.... I wouldn't enjoy the football but I think I would go just for the loyalty of supporting my team"*

There was further support, also in the early coding phase of the focus groups that showed loyalty from a particular participant. The author makes note on the importance of context that surrounds an event or happening, which were recorded in an early reflection memo of the second focus group of participant 14.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 3 - FGP14**

**Memo 17/6/15**

#### **Focus Group 2 - Participant 14 (FGP14)**

I am producing this memo for participant 14 as I feel it is very important what I observed, in terms of their position as a sports consumer and the emotion showed in response to questions in the focus group.

### Context as Sport Fan (FGP14)

Participant FGP14 is very evidentially a big fan of rugby, which they also indicated that they support Northampton Saints and Wigan Warriors. Previously they were a season ticket holder of Northampton, but they now live in Leicester and it's too far to travel. The participant has highlighted that the players are their "Idols". This shows that participant 14 has a particular attachment to the players and their sporting ability, which was also evident throughout the entire focus group.

### Focus Group Excerpts

*FC – "If Northampton were implicated in a drug taking scandal?"*

*FGP14 – "I'd go mad!!" [very fast response, high emotion]*

*FC – "would you really"?*

*FGP14 – "Yeah I'd be so angry with them (the players), they're the ones doing the wrong thing and I love them to bits soooo. I'd.... ummm.... I would be so unhappy with them, half the players I respect, they're like my idols, in this case I still might like watching you play but I won't respect you so much anymore".*

*FC – "Ok so you would still go or you think you would go?"*

*FGP14 – "I'd like to say I would still go purely because I like to watch them play. Hopefully the main players that were the main problem are banned, sorted out or sold. Just anything that redeems the name of the club really".*

In observation of the above comments, there was a high level of emotion (action-interaction/response), which were recorded in the observational notes, and internal conflict expressed by FGP14. Looking at positioning them as a fan, their “motivation” is to watch the skill of the players, but clearly with integrity in terms of the player’s natural ability. They also indicate a high level of attachment to the players and the team Northampton, especially at the end when they talk about “redeeming the name of the club” if a drug scandal broke around the players of their team. This shows that the response of the team itself, in the event of a scandal, is critical in how this particular participant responds. These conditions are external and categorised as (intervening conditions).

Participant 14 also shows a high level of loyalty, even in the event of moving locations (which FGP14 indicated is their case), their loyalty lies with Northampton. With my knowledge of sport consumer research at this point, loyalty is a topic that has received attention in its relation to behaviour, but not in the sense of sport fan response to transgression.

I have also noticed from observing the two focus groups to this point, where participants talk about what their motives are for watching sport. If this motive is impacted by a transgression, it can have negative implications. Contrastingly, the opposite is the case where a sport consumer’s motive isn’t impacted; it shows fewer implications on their behaviour. In the next focus group, I will make sure that sampling is done for the concept “motives”.

In sampling the concept of loyalty further in the interviews, it was evident that there was a relationship between loyalty and the motivation of a sport consumer. IP4 discussed how they watched Taiwanese baseball for over ten years and would often by tickets to watch live games over the ten-year span. The discussion in the interview was on the Sporting Transgression cases of match fixing, which emerged in 2008, in the top tier of Taiwanese baseball.

IP4 – “For more than ten years I paid money to buy tickets to watch them (baseball games)”

FC – “Ok, because of that scandal you won’t go anymore?”

IP4 – “No... Not even TV programmes, I don’t watch it (anymore)

The comments of IP4 above indicate a negative behavioural “consequence” of match fixing in Taiwanese baseball, which led to the disconnection of IP4 from the sport. It’s important to note here that IP4’s response is not, and should not be, considered a generic response. There were multiple factors (internal and external) that played an important part in the decision for IP4. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the interview participants will be used as cases later in the chapter, to better illustrate how these internal (Fan Identity & Proximal Factors) and external (Contextual Factors) factors work simultaneously in response to a transgression case.

### **3.5.1.2 Motivational Interest**

Motivational Interest is a fundamental property of the axial category Fanographic factors. Understandably, sports fans have motives that play an important role to how they consume sport, where they consume sport and when they consume sport. In the early stages of the focus groups, I was attentive to the fact that participants were explaining how they are generally motivated to watch the sport or sports that they do. It was also identifiable how these motives were impacted in light of transgression in sport occurring. Furthermore, it wasn’t in all cases that the behaviour was negative, taking the following for example, which was a response to a hypothetical match-fixing scandal between Arsenal and Tottenham of the English Premier League. I will make note that there were Arsenal and Tottenham consumers present in the respective focus group.

*FC – “Hypothetically Tottenham win 2-1 (against Arsenal). You were there and spent money to go. You then find out the result was fixed and Arsenal were payed not to perform?”*

*FGP5 – “I would feel disappointed in way but because we have such a rivalry I wouldn’t care that much because we could say we beat you (Arsenal)”*

This of course led to the deductive thinking of the researcher, “what if they lost?”. How would the dynamic of internal factors change in the event of an external conditional change? This changes the **process**, which is an important aspect of analysis in that it sheds light on action-interaction (Strauss & Corbin 2015). Process will be discussed in details further in this chapter (3.7).

Motivational factors also increased the consumption behaviour for some participants, such a case is player transgression involving Tiger Woods and his infidelity scandal.

*FGP8 – “So if ummmm for example Tiger Woods, if you like golf you will watch golf tournaments but you don’t want Tiger Woods to win”*

FGP8 above responded to a question about the impact of either Player or Sporting Transgression impact on whether it will impact how they consume the sport. In this response, FGP8 indicates that those who love golf, and follow the sport of golf, may actually increase their motivation to watch due to an increased dislike in Tiger Woods. Another participant commented similar as a response to the case of Ched Evans (Sheffield United Football Player), who at the time of this focus group, has been charged for alleged rape of a 19 year old.

*FGP2 – “if Wycombe play Sheffield United I could even want to go to hurl abuse at him (Ched Evans) all game. So I guess in some aspects (of transgression) you could get more people going to watch games.”*

**Property Memo -**

**Motivational Interest**

This concept appears to be an interesting one, and also difficult in some ways to apprehend. What is important about this category is that it represents what motive is present for a sport consumer before a transgression has occurred. If this particular motive is of interest to a given consumer, and a transgression occurs impacting this motive, then there will be consequences of change (behavioural/attitude/emotions).

From my knowledge of consumer behaviour, there is a multitude of motivational factors that can drive behavioural decision-making. Furthermore, the relationship of this concept with other concepts and categories is extensive. This again highlights how the response of consumers is so dynamic in nature and one small change in an internal or external factors can shift a response of a consumer remarkably.

FGP5 indicated how they wouldn't be impacted (behaviorally) as much if "their" team won in a game that match-fixing occurred. Of course deductive thinking has led me to ask the question; "how does this process change if they lost".

What I recall from "Motivational Interest" is how certain motivations in particular have been brought up because transgression can interfere with a particular set of motives that a sport consumer may hold. Most notably, **Success** of the team (intervening condition – external factor) can be an important indicator of dictating behaviour. This dimension, under the "Motivation" property is termed "**Winning**".

Another motivational factor expressed multiple times, is where participants comments have indicated that they want to watch sport where they see a high level of ability and skill that is genuine. This led me to develop the dimension "**Genuineness**", building from some key open codes of "Integrity" and "Honest Sport". Other terms that are closely linked to the same meaning were "proper sport"



and “real sport”, also used by participant words. I am happy with this particular dimension although it was somewhat difficult to name. There were many key words used to identify the same meaning, which certainly warranted the concept to be placed in this category of “Fanographic Factors.

### Genuineness

Genuineness developed as a dimension, as supported by the above memo, from various open categories surrounding sport perceived as having integrity, and that the contest or game and athletes are genuine. Put simply, if the strength of a particular motive is present to a consumer, and a transgression occurs that interferes with that motive, the implications appear to be very negative on the behavioural consequences. For example, in a case where a sport consumer has a high motivation to watch sport that is perceived as genuine, and this is impacted from a case of Sporting Transgression, it will have negative implications. In focus group four, one participant talked about how they wouldn’t see the sport they were watching as a sport anymore and that they wouldn’t watch a team of cheats if it was the case that the team they follow were doping.

*FGP26 – “no, I don’t want a team of cheats at all”*

*FGP26 – “watching is a façade, you’re not watching player play a sport you’re just watching a façade... Well anybody can do that (take drugs and perform better in a sport).*

Further to the above, a participant indicated how they positioned the self “as a sports fan”, which also assisted the rise of the “Fanographic” category. The comment was made in response to a question about Sporting and Player Transgression, and which they feel is worse for them. There is also a relationship in the response to

“Beliefs” (a further dimension of the Fanographic category), with the focus of indicating that their motive as a fan is to watch “something happen” that is real.

*FGP19 – “I think as a sports fan the doping would annoy me more (than a form of off-field transgression) purely because as a fan of sport, if I see something happen whether it’s a world record being broken, I want to believe that it’s real, that someone has actually done it (in a genuine way) and not injected themselves or taken medicine, I want to believe that its actually happened.*

### Nostalgia (emotion)

This dimension, in terms of its name, developed further along in the analysis process. Most of the interview participants talked about their previous experience in watching sport and the positive/negative emotions that the previous experience brought.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 5 - Nostalgia**

#### **Memo – Nostalgia**

9/12/16

This concept has really come to fruition over the interview phase of data collection. It was only after completing the recent interview with IP6 that I have run some constant comparison with previous data to confirm its existence as a likely dimension of property **motivation**. Other participants that discussed nostalgia as a motivational factor were IP1 & IP2. They were more often than not, discussed in the sense of positive emotions and that this was a factor in their behavioural decisions to consume sports.

*IP6 – “.... At the weekend, if there is not a game on at [team name removed where participant works], I almost look to go and watch live rugby or go and watch a local football side because it takes me back to why I loved football”*

I will make note regarding the above statement that IP6 identified how they watch rugby very differently (as a sport fan) than they do football. This highlights the importance of the category **Fanographic Factors** and the ability for them to change over time.

Entry date: 21/5/17

The interview with IP8 provided support for the concept Nostalgia, which they went on to say why they would still attend athletics in light of doping.

IP8 – *“I would still watch it because there is a thrill watching it, watching the races. I don’t know, watching someone on high jump, will they knock the pole off or not? There is always the thrill....”*

The comment above from IP8 were confirmed that the thrill experienced by them is due to the positive emotions they experienced by competing in sport when they were younger (cultural background), now when they watch sport they get those positive emotions coming back to them at times (consequence).

### Entertainment

Whilst most sport fans enjoy sport because it brings “entertainment”, that isn’t the context or definition of the dimension here. This property has strong relationships with “attachment point” (see 5.5.1.3) in that participants, who consumed sport with just an entertainment motive, often didn’t have strong emotional attachments to teams or athletes. IP6 for example, expressed how they have different motives for the different sports that they watch. E.g. they watch the NFL on television on a regular basis but “for pure entertainment” purposes. IP6 watches sports like rugby

and football, with much more motivational reasons, such as genuineness. They highlight that their response to transgression in the NFL wouldn't be anything like the response to rugby or football. IP6 went on to talk about the "Bloodgate" scandal in rugby and that their response was anger and frustration. IP2 also supported this notion that there are sports that they consume for pure entertainment purposes; in light of a transgression in these sports, IP2's response supported the same response as IP6. Low levels of psychological conflict (dissonance) and little change or impact on them continuing the behaviour of the sport in question.

### Monetary

This motive pure and simply indicates the fan that has a monetary (gambling) motive. This type of motive appeared to have a contrary to all other motives and key concepts of the sports fan. I.e. it's argued that uncertainty of outcome is a key ingredient of sport (Beech & Chadwick 2013) that attracts consumers, however, those that have the monetary motive are opposite, they want to know the outcome before it happens, i.e. winning bets that they place.

FGP34 expressed how they are big on sport betting, so much so that they do a lot of research and try to stay away from betting on leagues that have had match-fixing speculations. FGP34 goes on to say how games they bet on completely change the dynamic of internal conflict (dissonance) when match fixing is involved via a discussion with the group.

*FGP36 – "it would be a better game without it (diving in football)"*

*FGP33 – "I don't want that either"*

*FGP34 – "I agree I hate it but the parts where you hear about fixing, because I am more affected by it than you."*

*FGP36 – "I'm talking more about the big tournaments".*

*FGP34 – two years I have been researching about match fixing, you go to Man United game and there is diving you're like “you're a pussy”, but if I am betting a game and I find out fixing in it affects me more. My area is not more affected than yours but we're pissed at different aspect.*  
*I came to the UK and I did research and looked at different things on match fixing and leagues I stay away from. French 2, Italian and Germany U19, I never bet those games.*

It firstly appeared that FGP34 was a heavy gambler, given their knowledge and extent of betting on various leagues seen in the comments. In light of this situation that arose, it sparked me to look at some gambling statistics in the UK. Sport gambling is the UK's second most played gambling activity (behind the lottery), with 28% of the adult population having taken part during the period of once year from June 2016 – June 2017 (Mintel 2017), which assisted development of “motivation”. This situation could quite possibly pose problems for the understanding of consumers if gambling, at any level, is present.

#### **3.5.1.3 Attachment Point**

The property attachment point emerged very prominent across all phases of data collection. The dimensions that make up this property are emotional strength to **Team, Sport, Athlete** and/or **Nation**. In the initial stages of data collection of phase one, these properties began to emerge where participants indicated that they would give more leniencies to the players of the team that they support. In terms of the impact on the response, participants would sometimes show a high level of bias due to their strong attachments to a particular team or athlete. Other participants would express disappointment with a high level of negative emotions. Importantly again, the relationship of the internal factors of attachment, and how they interacted with the contextual factors, would be crucial in the response of participants. One particular participant showed a high level of bias in their response when they were responding to a question about the type of transgression that would have a greater impact on them.

*FGP18 – “I think that it depends on your perspective (as a fan). Russ for example (player on team participant supports) gets a lot of leeway in what he does, me as a Blaze (Coventry) fan, I will allow him to do things that perhaps I wouldn’t allow other individuals to do. So if I’m not a fan, so a Nottingham Panther player (opposing team in the league), they can’t do anything!”*

FGP18 above was clearly very open and honest to the fact that they would have a different opinion, to the same incident, depending on which player or team was involved in that incident. Furthermore, participants who showed a strong level of attachment, showed an extreme level of dissonance at times, which I noted in the observational notes taken during the focus groups and in the reflections of each of the one on one interviews. Below I present two observational notes; the first (observational note 1) is an observational note from focus group 4 with reference to FGP30 & FGP31; the second (observational note 2) is from focus group 5 in reference to FGP37.

#### ***Observational Note 1 - FGP 30 & FGP31***

##### **Observational Note – Focus Group 4 (Participants FGP30 & FGP31)**

##### **Property – Attachment Point**

There is a very obvious and very strong (emotional) attachment shown by **FGP30** and **FGP31**, to Patrick Kane of the Chicago Blackhawks. I must stress the importance here that their attachment is to both the player and the team. In particular here, their strength towards Patrick Kane seems very important in the sense that if it were another player being accused of rape in the same team, I don’t think it would have the same impact on these two participants. I will also stress here that I witness similar behaviours from other participants that show a strong “attachment point” to a team, player, or sport. This indicates it is an important aspect/factor in respect to a sport consumer and how they respond. From my previous experience in teaching sport business, and having a relatively good understanding of sport consumers, there is perhaps a relationship here with the theory that surrounds team identification (for

example; Branscombe & Wann 1991; Wann et al. 2007; Wann, Royalty, & Rochelle 2002) and fan identification (see for example; Trail, Anderson, & Fink 2000)

With further reference to FGP30/31, both participants very much appear to be very distressed and showing negative emotions (**high dissonance**) in talking about how a player from their team is being charged for rape. Both participants also indicate how they would be even more “upset” if there was an impact on the team’s performance in the event of all this, or any other transgression for that matter. The rest of the focus group (none of which were Chicago fans) had very opposite and different opinions of Patrick Kane, indicating that if it’s true then he should lose his contract etc. The strategy (action/interaction) response that I see from FG30 & FG31 is much more biased (attitude) in that “identity protection” is a key behavioural response.

In reference to the above observational note, the discussion around the Patrick Kane topic showed the response of both FGP30 and FGP31, which they also compared (brought up by FGP23) the Patrick Kane rape incident against a hypothetical case of Patrick Kane being caught for doping, i.e. “on-field” (Sporting Transgression) Vs. “off-field” Player Transgression).

*FGP23 – the thing with the Patrick Kane one as well is its more personal than if he had of been done for drugs and it had effected how the team played and the season. At the moment you are looking at him and it didn’t affect how they played. But if he had of taken performance enhancing drugs up to the playoffs that would have affected his team and affected the sport. Whereas this one is affecting him more and his fans*

*FGP30 – It’s weird because, if he had been taking drugs up to the playoffs that would have been terrible as a sports fan but it would have been terrible...*

*whereas what he is doing now is terrible as a person. As a person I don't like what he has done or might have done. Whereas doing something affecting the sport as a sports fan, I would have hated that!!*

*FGP23 – how would you have felt if he was taking drugs and they still won the cup? Would you not have thought if he didn't do it they might not have won?*

*FGP30 – well, he only scored one goal, um it was as good goal but (laughing)*

*FGP31 – maybe that was because he was beating women up. But to me if he or the player is taking drugs and when on to win a major trophy, that to me tarnishes my club winning that trophy whereas if he went out and hit a girl that had no effect on the club winning the trophy, I think there is a big difference between those two and you hate the player. Like Lee Hughes what he did was majorly wrong but that didn't affect the Albion getting promoted because he didn't enhance his performance, it probably made it worse because he was drunk all the time, but that didn't affect the club it affected the individual.*

Both participants (FGP30 & 31) indicate how they classify Patrick Kane “bad as a person” for the rape case (if found guilty), whereas if he was done for doping and it impacted the team, then this would have much worse implications on both participants. This is due to their “strong” attachment to the Chicago Blackhawks evidenced in their comments about the Blackhawks using terms such as “my club” (can be seen in last excerpt above). There was a subconscious biased response (consequence) by both FGP30 & FGP31 when responding to questions still wanting to show support for Patrick Kane. For example, FGP31 implied that they shouldn't be made aware of the rape case and it should be kept confidential, which was disagreed with across the rest of the group

*FGP31 - I am devastated by it all because I am a huge fan and the idea that he could do that, it horrible but at the same time I shouldn't know about that that's his personal life. I wouldn't know if anyone in this room have cheated on their*



*partner or raped someone or whatever the situation is, that's not something I am aware of and that's not something that offends me and I think that's how it should keep".....*

FGP30 also expressed a biased response when they talked about how Patrick Kane was not proven guilty, at the point of the focus group, and that other people and some merchandise partners are holding him guilty without knowledge of proof.

*FGP30 - ... people are taking his merchandise of websites and I get that people don't want to be associated with that and it becomes a kind of blame culture, do you automatically say this guy is, he should automatically be punished and people should stop buying his merchandise and he should lose all his endorsements, and all the things that he has done, his accomplishments should be forgotten because he has done this bad thing. Does he deserve this until there is proof!*

In support of the noted observations of focus group four above, I present an observational note from focus group five, with particular focus on FGP37.

### ***Observational Note 2 - FGP37***

#### **Observational Note – Focus Group 5 (Participants FGP37)**

##### **Property – Attachment Point**

I notice again in this focus group, and in particular, FGP37 of focus group five here. FGP37's strength of attachment to the New England Patriots is very obvious from the implicit explanations or responses that FGP37 uses. For example

*FGF – “when you think about transgression in sport, what are the first things that come to mind or cases you might want to talk about?”*

*FGP33 – “Tom Brady last year” (QB for NE Patriots involved in Deflategate scandal)*

*FGP37 – (FAST RESPONSE) “that is wrong”*

*FGP37 – “if you don’t like Tom Brady there is something wrong with you (I note that participant is showing very high levels of emotion, likely a strong attachment here)*

*FGP36 – “It’s a good example” (meaning FGP33 comments above in answering the initial question)*

*FGP37 – (very fast response) “that he didn’t cheat!!! That Roger Goodell (NFL commissioner) should be banished. He (Goodell) is Hitler, Roger Goodell is Hitler. He does whatever he wants and he’s been given the power to do what he wants...”*

I make note of the above that FGP37 expressed biased (response) behaviour throughout the focus group when it came to New England Patriots. There was a sense of anger towards the NFL for the sanctions that they give to New England, according to FGP37. There is dissonance evidence here in terms of a high level of internal conflict at times throughout the focus group. Key words also used by FGP37 when refereeing to the Patriots are “we”, “us” and for other teams or persons external to the Patriots its “them”. There is a clear association behaviour of FGP37 identifying “as if they are part of the Patriots”.

Before the author progressed into the interview phase of data collection, it was apparent and imperative to ascertain what the participants “attachment” points and “commitments” are, which proved to be pivotal as the interviews progressed. IP2 for example, highlighted that they are “a fan of Andy Murray”, and that he is a big influence (due to strong attachment) on them watching major (tennis) tournaments,

more so when Andy Murray is in the competition. As the interview phase of data collection progressed, I developed a memo indicating that saturation was becoming evident for the property “attachment point”.

### ***Chapter 3 - Memo 6 - Property attachment point***

#### **Memo – Fanographic Category**

##### **Property – Attachment Point**

After completing a review of memo’s and methodological notes related to this property, I can really see the importance that a particular attachment point has for a sport consumer and that saturation seems to be evident. The four dimensions that come to light across both phases of data collection are **Team, Athlete, Sport** and/or **Nation**. For some participants there is more than one attachment point. It is the strength (emotional dimension) of the particular attachment that plays an important part in the response of certain consumers. From a response strategy perspective, participants have shown implicit strategies of a biased response, which ultimately attempts to protect their identity, which of the course the scandalous team and/or athlete is part of. Conversely, participants have shown anger and very opposite attitudes when the scandalous team/athlete is not one in which the participant supports.

In terms of the dimension “Nation”, this developed over time during analysis from an original code “Patriotic”. I found this particular concept difficult to place, and I am of course aware of not forcing the concept into the developing theory.

The focus group phase really brought to fruition that it was difficult to ascertain the response of a consumer who follows the same team. What this means is that fans of the same team may appear to have similar attributes in terms of “commitment”, but their attachment points may differ. To simplify this for example; take two sport fans - (a) and (b), follow the same team. Sport fan “a” has a strong attachment to the

team but a weak attachment to any particular player of the team. Sport fan “b” has a strong attachment to the team and also a strong attachment to a particular player. If the respective player (that sport fan b has a strong attachment towards) is involved in a transgression, sport fan b will likely exhibit a very different response (in respect to fan “a”) even though they both support the same team. In saying this, I felt it was very difficult to ascertain a particular response if this situation were to arise. One thing that was apparent, “identity protection” seemed a common behavioural response (strategy) by participants when their attachment was involved in the transgression.

Additionally, it was common amongst both phases of data collection that participants were fans of multiple sports. Their attachment points very often differed across the sports that they followed.

In looking at the interview reflection I produced on completion of the interview with IP6, it just confirms this. I will attach the end of the reflection (below) on this memo to include some of my deductive thoughts from that interview.

#### ***Interview Reflection IP6 (9/12/16)***

*... In sum, it was apparent that IP6 has different motivations and attachment points for different sports they consume. This isn't limited to just IP6, it is also evident, but not limited to, across participants such as IP1 and IP2. It appears that the different motivations and attachment points are key factors in how IP6 would respond to a transgression. IP6 for example, talked about the “Bloodgate” scandal in rugby and that this case made them angry and upset, and that their respect for the team and players was impacted massively. IP1 went on to say that if cases like this were to keep happening then it would impact their behaviour negatively. IP6 then goes on to talk about why they now watch the NFL, that their purpose is entertainment rather than the technical side supporting rugby. IP6 expressed very different “Fanographic factors” depending on the sport they were referring to.*

### Athlete

The **Athlete** property first emerged where participants indicated how they watch certain sports due to having a particular attachment to a player. Many of the excerpts shown in reference to the property “attachment point” highlight the importance of “athlete’s” presence and strength, as a key dimension.

One participant highlighted how they inadvertently hid their support of a particular player who was caught doping. FGP25 covered up their team jersey (with a coat) at an away game because they had the name of the player (on the back) who was caught for doping.

FGP25 – “...am I going to be the only one wearing number 2 (player number of the player who was caught doping) on the bus (travelling with fans) and have to take all the abuse when I get to the arena and come all the way back, but I do it because I believe them, but then I don’t believe them??? It’s not worth the hassle so I will wear my jacket (instead). Or they did it and I don’t care....”

The “consequences” of a player doping for FGP25 are behavioural (wearing jacket over the jersey) or attitudinal (claiming to not care) to reduce the dissonance experienced. But wearing the jersey is still important due to the colors and front of the jersey being on display.

Looking at further excerpts in the interviews, IP2 for example, indicated how they watch Tennis mainly because of their attachment to Andy Murray. Therefore if doping were to occur in Tennis for an athlete other than Andy Murray, it is likely to have less of a negative response on IP2. In response to a question that if Andy Murray was caught doping, IP2 commented:

*IP2 – “[very hesitant]... I would probably still watch tennis but not the same, I would watch it much more detached (indicating less emotional involvement)...”*

IP5 showed levels of strong athlete attachment to Mo Farah, the Great Britain Olympic gold medalist for running. IP5 portrayed such a high level of passion, almost in a sense that Mo Farah was one of his best friends, even though IP5 has never met Mo Farah. The response was regarding trusting athletes that they follow are free from doping:

*IP5 – “Mo Farah, he is an unbelievable athlete, probably one of the greatest athletes ever produced by this country. He is an incredible person, a great guy. I think there is this suspension of belief that he couldn’t be possibly linked to anything negative you know. So while there is always this outside possibility. I think as a fan of Mo I think that I kind of assume that it can’t happen”.*

Furthermore, IP5 responded to a question about being patriotic and supporting British athletes, which identified relationship with the internal dimension “nation”:

*IP5 – “Yeah, yeah I am, I am. I’m not,,,,, to be fair I’m not patriotic in real life, I really don’t kind of like this misplaced patriotism but when it comes to sports and the Olympics, then yeah I am. You have a certain amount of pride.*

Throughout the IP5 interview, there was a definitive sense that IP5 would respond with bias towards a British athlete for doping. IP5 also indicated how their daughter has the “ready steady Mo” children’s book that came out recently. This was referenced by IP5 in responding to athlete’s being role models to kids, and that IP5’s daughter really loves Mo Farah. IP5 responded to a prompt that - if Mo Farah was guilty of a transgression, and that the transgression impacted on their daughter negatively, would it impact on them and their behaviour to watch Mo Farah?

*IP5 – “I’m not sure [very hesitant] ... I think it would certainly have more of an impact (negative)...”*

### Team, Sport & Nation

The remaining three attachment points are fairly explanatory in a sense of where sport consumers have a particular strength of following. There is a link with previous literature here on the concept social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986), which underpins the multifariously defined concept of team identification; see for example Branscombe & Wann (1991). Using this definition, it simply implies that fans view their team as an extension of themselves. Within the data, there seemed multiple points of attachments, which of course were Team, Sport and/or Nation. All of these concepts are contextually a group setting, which differs from the attachment to one particular athlete. Participants often identified implicitly that when their attachment was at the center of a transgression, this impacts on their identity negatively.

*IP5 – “to be fair I’m not patriotic in real life, I really don’t kind of like this misplaced patriotism but when comes to sports and the Olympics, then yeah, I am. You have a certain amount of pride”.*

“**Nation**” developed as a key attachment point with the dimensional range of “patriotic-unpatriotic”. Nation presented itself most often for participants when discussing the big tournaments, i.e. the Olympics. Many participants indicated that they didn’t necessarily follow particular sports religiously, but in the case when there was an athlete competing from their home nation, they would very much feel connected to the event. There is also a strong relationship with the “Proximal Factor” category property “the self”. Often in the data, participants indicated how they follow sports in the Olympics that they don’t normally consume. Their motivation to watch in these cases is that they identify (the self) and are attached to the athletes that compete for the nation they are from.

*IP6 – “Oh absolutely (I am patriotic), I definitely want to see our (UK) Equestrian team beat the French Equestrian team. I am patriotic now, and I like the underdogs. I like the snippets of stories of what the Olympics is all about.*

The contextual conditions play an important role here with attachment points, both in the level of the sport, transgression composition, and the athlete's level of status as perceived by sport fans (see properties of contextual factors further in the chapter). The below memo refers to focus group one where a participant highlighted the context of a transgression and the extent of the impact.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 7 - FGP7**

#### **Memo - Participant FGP7 – Focus group one**

Here I talk about the comments of FGP7, who discussed a particular case within their country of Estonia. I feel that this passage has a lot to say, even though it is early in data collection. There seems to be many factors in the excerpt below that led to the eventual outcome/response. The impact seems massive from a behavioural perspective.

*FGP7 – “I remember one case, I’m from Estonia, and we don’t have many Olympic winners but there was one guy called who won in cross country skiing and it was back in 2002 in when he won the Olympic games and now in 2010 there was this doping case with him as well and he got tested positive that he had taken drugs and stuff like that but he did it when he was older in his career for one last big tournament. Now he was like a hero in the eyes of Estonian people and there was like, it had a huge impact on skiing in Estonia. Like some people even quit (the sport) because of that, he was like a hero to everybody it was like a national... “*

The above excerpt in the memo on FGP7 highlighted the importance of “role model status” of the athlete in question, and that he was a hero to a nation. Further participants also commented the impact of a national hero, such as Jessica Ennis in the UK.



*FGP5 – “... it would be a really big impact actually. Because she was the face of the 2012 games for Britain. So... I think it would have a much bigger impact.”*

### 3.5.2 Proximal Factors

Proximal factors emerged as a category in result to the splitting of the internal factors that developed in phase one of data collection. I refer back to chapter 3 - memo 2, in the “Fanographic factors” section of this chapter, where it was highlighted that certain internal factors were not necessarily relevant to a consumer as a sports fan. At the point of writing the memo 2, constant comparison led to the formation of codes that fit within the “Proximal Factors” category. Table 7 below represents the axial category – “Proximal Factors”. It is also important to note here that the properties and dimensions are not static in that they work in a dynamic process. I.e. the dimension “sport environment” or even “family members” have a relationship with the property “beliefs”. What separates the dimensions in the case of this paper, and consumer response to transgression, is that beliefs can hold the same, or change, depending on the “Contextual Factors” present/not present to a given transgression case.

**Table 7- Properties and Dimension of Proximal Factors**

Axial Category	Proximal Factors		
Properties	Cultural Background	Beliefs	Interpersonal Relationships
(Dimensions)	<b>-Work</b> (Influence, Hi-Low)	<b>-Morality</b> (Present – Not Present)	<b>-Family Members</b> (Influence, Hi-Low)
	<b>-Sport Environment</b> (Influence, Hi-Low)	<b>-Trust</b> (Influence, Hi-Low)	<b>-Friends</b> (Influence, Hi-Low)
	↔	↔	↔

### 3.5.2.1 Cultural Background

The property “cultural background” was made up of two key dimensions; **work** and **sport environment**. Both played a pivotal role to individuals in their internal process as a response to transgression. Constant comparison was critical in the development of this major category, especially in light of the open coding assigning higher order categories. Below is a memo on “cultural background” during the analysis of focus group four.

### *Chapter 3 - Memo 8 - Cultural Background*

#### **Memo – Cultural Background FG4**

Participant FGP25 has discussed the Thierry Henry case where he handled the ball, which subsequently led to a goal in extra time of a World Cup qualification knock out game. That goal saw France make the 2010 world cup at Ireland’s expense. I note that this participant’s background is Irish; therefore this case was applicable to them, even though the transgression was considered a grey area and part of football.

It didn’t occur to me until this point of data collection how important it seems in previous data as I carry out some comparisons across the NVIVO nodes.

As analysis progressed, there were cases in the focus groups where participants were from a particular culture or nation, but having no real strength or case in impacting how they respond to their nations athletes. Throughout the interviews, theoretical sampling assisted the researcher in identifying the existence and placement of “patriotic” node (NVIVO term for concept) within the “Fanographic” category. “Patriotic” transpired to be a dimensional range (Patriotic-unpatriotic) of

“Nation”, which is one of the “Fanographic Factor” “properties” ..IP5 commented about how they aren’t patriotic in life terms, but as a sports fan they are:

*IP5 – “to be fair I’m not patriotic in real life... but when comes to sports and the Olympics, then yeah, I am”.*

IP5, and others, used the patriotic term in the context of a sports fan, which supported the separation of the two major categories of internal factors being separated.

### Work

For many of the participants their line of work, past or present, appeared many in the data. The appearance would be a reason to support the response that participants made, or would make, in response to certain transgressions. One participants, who works as a solicitor in domestic abuse cases, indicated that a player involved in domestic abuse would have a big impact on their acceptance of that transgression

*FGP21 – “I come from a background of being a solicitor who deals with domestic abuse, it would be a complete no (no tolerance of this behaviour)”*

There were also cases where the line of work had strong relationships with the “Fanographic” factors. For example, IP3 highlighted that they follow female athletes (strong attachment point) and that they do research on women in sport. Furthermore, IP3 also identifies that their opinions are shaped by their work.

*IP3 – “female athletes, Jess Ennis, William sisters, so I guess stronger athletes, so those that are probably more of a following in the media because they are up there, I do like the women’s football and I have a keen interest in that. I follow that’s part of my research area, women in sport.*

*IP3 – “I think I am a fan of sport, and secondly what informs my decisions about player transgression is my job”*

The interview with IP3 was very different to other participants, largely driven by their Fanographic and Proximal factors. I present part of the reflection memo (chapter 3 – memo 9) completed immediately after the IP3 interview ended. What became important from the IP3 interview is how their line of work really played an important role in how they respond to transgressions.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 9 - IP3 Reflection**

#### **Memo – Interview Reflection IP3**

IP3 was very different to previous interviews and participants in the focus groups. The main factor driving this is their “cultural background” (work) shaping their perceptions differently.

The “work” background for IP3 is based around the sport industry and equality in sport. Their occupation is in academia and they indicate they are inclined to consume media surrounding the sport industry on transgression, both PT and ST cases.

With questions that were directed at “what would be the worst type of transgression?” the focus of the answers from IP3 was always PT based. The Wayne Rooney case and Tiger Woods case in particular were talked about by IP3.

Interestingly, IP3 is a Man Utd fan but doesn’t like Wayne Rooney because of the scandal (sleeping with a prostitute) that surrounded him. It seems fitting that IP3 highlighted PT cases against males as their area of work was in equality in sport.

Also, IP3 indicated that they like watching female sport, in particular, Olympics and women’s tennis.

In sum of this, their presence of work (equality in sport) plays a pivotal role in their response and dislike to player transgressions involving male athletes. I felt the sense of bias towards female athletes in that they were never mentioned in negative light and IP3 indicated that women athletes are a stronger “attachment” point for them.

## Sports Environment

The sport environment property developed as a dimension that when present (of an individual), plays an important role in their response. In sum, it represented the extent to which participants have experience competing in sport, and the level to which they also competed. Participants that previously competed in sport (or still do) are less forgiving for cheating within sport; i.e. Sporting Transgression.

*IP8 – “Especially when you have either, because training in athletics, I put in a lot of hard work only to get to a certain level. I was training five days a week and to think that there is other people like you doing that that are far more talented than you but then there is other people who are just like them but do something to be able to be better (implying doping) so you kind of feel cheated out of it”*

IP8 above highlights their experience competing and understanding how hard it is to be successful in sport, in an honest way. IP8 comments that the consequence is negative emotions of feeling cheated.

In contrast, looking into Player Transgression cases off the field of play, IP1 commented about the England football team back in 1996, when they were filmed drinking the night before a match.

*IP1 - “We go back 20 years ago to 96, the England team were filmed in Hong Kong before they went out (drinking), doing this dentist chair and ripping each other’s shirts. They were called a disgrace and everything like that by the national papers. But that was a team bonding event, they then got back on the pitch and got to the semi-final”.*

*IF – “So you and you being, you said earlier you being a previous athlete you know what they kind of.....”*

*IP1 - I know what that needs, I know what that, the team bonding they all stuck together and played well as a team”.*

### 3.5.2.2 Beliefs

Beliefs developed with three dimensions, “Morality”, “Trust” and “The Self”, which hold the belief property together.

## Chapter 3 - Memo 10 - Property Beliefs

### Property Memo – Beliefs

With my previous teaching background, I have come across beliefs many times in its reference to a sport fan and their behaviors. For example, our beliefs are said to play a central role in attitude theory whereby people will have beliefs about an attitude object (Madrigal 2001). With that being said, I didn’t want to force this property, and certainly not the dimensions of its make-up.

Morality fits this category along a dimensional range of being parallel – unparalleled. This continuum denotes if the morality of an individual matches up with the transgression in question. The beliefs property is what really sets this apart from being present in the “Fanographic” factors.

I use here the conversation in the focus groups, which is the first occasion that gave rise to splitting the internal proximal factors. FGP21 indicated

*FGP21 - If there were drugs involved I would be extremely disappointed but at the back of my mind I would be thinking, “you wanted to win for us”, and if we have some silverware at the end of the season I’m tempted to go “you shouldn’t have done it”, and if caught you will be banned. But we still get a bit of metal to put on the shelf at the end of the season...*

*FGP17 – (response is very quick back at 21) “I’d have to say I totally disagree even being a massive sports fan and wanting my team to win and*

*both carrying the same amount of weight, purely for nothing else than being in a professional career as teacher... They should abide by the same morals and laws and privileges that anyone else has...".*

Throughout the focus group, it was evident that both FGP21 and FGP17 were very similar in their Fanographic make up. What set them apart was FGP17 was not as tolerant to an athlete doping, regardless of the "winning a trophy" (condition), as claimed by FGP21. The belief property of FGP17 was present and the key factor in their response was very negative to an athlete on their team doping.

The self-developed very early in the data collection phase where participants were concerned with how their personal image. It seemed to be understood in the early stages that the concept led to a behavioural response of trying to protect "the self" from being associated to an athlete team or sport organisation that conflicts with who participants believe that they are. A key original code that developed "The Self" was "tarnished by association".

### Morality

As can be seen in the above memo, morality, if present in a paralleled dimension in the beliefs of a consumer, the response is likely negative. Morals however, are defined within an individual and what their beliefs are. IP8 for example, highlighted that they expect athletes to behave in the sphere of what the participant in question calls "good morals".

IP8 – "I hold everyone to a good standard of morals, especially when you compete or you're part of sporting world at such a high level, you kind of expect them to have these morals that you would consider good morals.

In other instances, participants claimed that their morals were a priority, and in terms of the context of IP1 and IP7, as sports fans, their moral beliefs lay in the line of sport having a high level of integrity. They responded about this importance:

IP1 – *“I think it’s more that my morals are met that I would look at first without a doubt”*

IP7 – *“Its huge, integrity, authenticity (in sport), I’m quite a moral person I think”*

Morality appeared in a strong relationship with the contextual factors of the response, either by the athlete or organisational body of an athlete.

IP1 – *“if a competitor (athlete) comes out (as guilty), how he deals with the situation is very important and what the sport does as well”.*

#### Trust

The dimension of trust sits on a continuum of high to low, and simply represents the level of trust that a consumer perceives to any given stimuli. As with many of the Fanographic and Proximal factors, there is a presence of the properties before transgression even occurs, as humans, we have a level of trust that exists within us. What was initially interesting in the data was identifying the least trusted sports across phase one of the focus groups.

#### **Chapter 3 - Memo 11 - Dimension Trust**

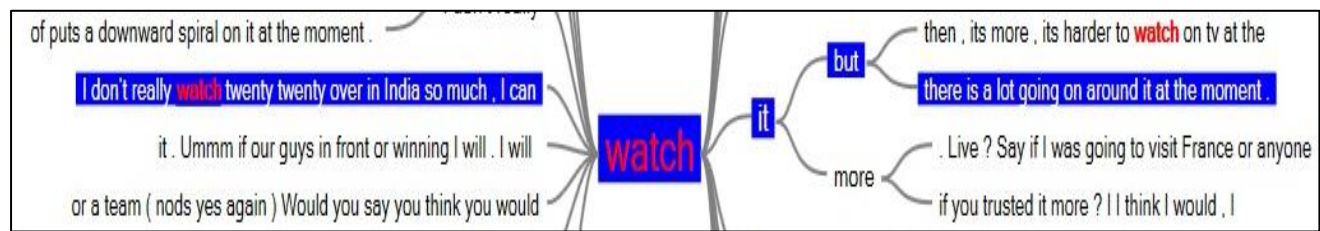
##### **Dimension Memo – Trust**

I ran a word frequency query at the node created in NVIVO called “least trusted sports”. It was interesting looking at the results of the word cloud (below) that showed the three sports most commented on were Football, Athletics and Cycling.





**Figure 13 - Contextual Query on "Watch"**



Blue highlighted comments from above figure read:

*IP8 – “I don’t really watch twenty/twenty over in India so much, I can watch it but there is a lot going on (implied fixing in games here) around it at the moment”.*

IP1 also illustrated the impact of doping within cycling and how the lack of trust has had detrimental impacts on their consumption.

*IP1 – “Cycling I would never trust it... tour de France is just, it just seems corrupt for so long it’s hard to wipe off that image of cheating, all that doping”*

The conditions in IP1’s comments are also notable, the length of time that doping has been prevalent in the sport has really impact the trust level and of course the consequences of this are reduced consumption of the sport.

### The Self

The dimension of “The Self” completes the makeup of the property “beliefs”. It simply represents the belief that people have about their image/identity as an individual and how their image is impacted (or not) by a transgression occurring in an entity (team or athlete for example) that they are associated to. There is also a strong relationship with the “Fanographic” property in that when it is an individual’s team or athlete (attachment), “The Self” image is impacted upon.

FGP28 – “I think, as a supporter, when they’ve (athlete’s) done something wrong you find it personal because it’s with your team”

Furthermore, there is a strong relationship with other proximal factors, i.e. the interpersonal relationships. There was evidence in the data that a heightened sense of internal conflict was experienced by consumers due to the cognitive pressure of knowing that any close relationships (family & friends) “know” that an individual supports a team and/or athlete involved in a transgression. Below I present a memo on the dimension as it was gaining theoretical strength via the interviews.

### ***Chapter 3 - Memo 12 - Dimension "The Self"***

#### **Dimension Memo – The Self (Conflicting – non-conflicting)**

I am producing this memo based on reviewing the previous memo’s created during the focus groups and data during interview collection and analysis. During the focus groups “The Self”, wasn’t named as such, but it was developed via key open codes of “tarnished by association”, “attachment” and “identity”. I refer back to the Fanographic Factors memo (memo 1 of this chapter) where the division of internal factors led to the development of “Fanographic Factors” and “Proximal Factors”. Comparisons of data analysis led to “The Self” developing as a property within the “belief” dimension of “Proximal Factors”. Initial participant comments indicated that their “image” or “self” is tarnished, followed by other participants agreeing that continuing support of those guilty in a transgression, “it’s like saying its ok” (excerpt FGP28 below):

*FGP25 – “...that’s not behaviour (domestic abuse) that’s acceptable and my friends know I support this team and I don’t want my reputation tarnished by association with them”.*

In response to FGP25, FGP28 comments;

*FGP28 – “it’s like you’re saying its ok aren’t you”*

*(All members of focus group four agree with FGP25 and FGP28)*

In terms of the “action-interaction” of Strauss and Corbin’s (1992) paradigm, many participants would go through a process of looking to protect “the self”, or in other words protect their “identity”. The protection of “The Self” occurred by the participant dislocating from supporting the athlete or sport organisation. Additionally important to protecting “The Self” is the contextual factors (conditions) of how the response of the athlete/team to the transgression case.

*FGP26 – “done with the team or the player (depending on the response of the team, if the player is released)”.*

*FGP22 – “it’s how the team would publicly deal with it, would they back it up, would they make it a tiny thing, would they say “no, this is wrong” and it really depends on how they (the team) come out with it”.*

In reviewing some initial literature at the onset of this study, there was confusion (Lock and Heere 2017) surrounding published work on sport fan behaviour, due to the application of different sociological theoretical frameworks applied; for example, social identity theory (Tajfel 1974) or identity theory (Stryker 1968). As Lock & Heere (2017) indicate, these two theories are not equivalent and therefore this presents an issue to understanding fan identity and team identification topics. In saying the aforementioned, the author understands the importance of how human beings see themselves, in terms of influencing behaviour, therefore “The Self” is a factor that, not only earned its way into the theory of this thesis from the data, but is widely applied to consumer behaviour of multiple disciplines, which I will re-visit in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

Further evidence from the interview data showed implicitly how participants perceived transgression to impact on their identity, which of course is termed “The Self” for this research. Understanding the implicit data analysis required a level of sensitivity to the words used by participants to understand their true meaning. Additionally, it was important to review consumer behaviour theory around sport consumers and identification (Kelman 1961). For example, the following excerpts fit well into Kelman’s (1961) description of identification, *“which occurs when an individual wants to maintain or enhance his or her own image through a relationship with another individual or group”* (p. 107).

IP2 – *“That tarnishes my club winning that trophy”*

IP8 – *“It’s always that fear he is going to do something again like that and ruin it. Cuz they’re on that stage and like, you’re not only letting yourself and the team down but you’re letting your fans down and how everyone looks at your team”.*

IP6 – *“Yeah I mean it would definitely affect me more if I had a following for because I suppose if it happened in another team does it change my view of sport, no. Because sport is defined by the team I follow to a degree. If it happens to my team then that arguably does define the sport that I follow and therefore I would have a negative view on the sport”.*

### 3.5.2.3 Interpersonal Relationships

This property represents the amount of “influence” passed onto a given consumer, ultimately having a significant impact on their behaviour. Initially, this concept developed via participants that are parents, describing the impact that transgression would have on their child/children.

FGP24 – *“If it was something (transgression) that would affect (negatively) my kids’ behaviour and how my kids perceive what is acceptable behaviour”*

*FGP23 – “I agree with that and think that’s spot on (response to 24 above), because my son, we’re baggies (West Bromwich) fans and Lee Hughes is my hero and my sons hero, he had (past tense) his picture in his bedroom on the wall. When the crash happened, he was still the hero and he looked up to the guy, but when he went and did that it’s like well “he’s not a hero anymore, that’s not what people behave like””.*

The “influence” of important relationships was also a factor due to the connection that a person may have to a particular individual, i.e. negative emotions felt by someone that is really close can pass onto others. One participant discussed how the Lance Armstrong doping case really upset their father, who is a big fan of Lance Armstrong. The discussion started by FGP12, which led to the development of the following memo:

### ***Chapter 3 Memo 12b – FGP12***

#### **Memo - Participant FGP12 – Focus group two**

I am writing this memo regarding the behaviours of FGP12 as a result of their father being upset about the Lance Armstrong case. To put this conversation in context, FGP12’s father is a big fan of Lance Armstrong. FGP12 however, didn’t indicate that they watched cycling or Lance at the beginning of the focus groups questions, or seem to have a strong following of cycling or Lance Armstrong. Their emotions in the following excerpts seemed to originate purely from the emotional/psychological discomfort that they witnessed in their father.

***FGF, Q4 - Ok, so if we take the lance Armstrong case and you brought the Oprah interview up which is great, did you watch it?  
Have you seen the Oprah Interview?***

*FGP12- “Yeah I saw a bit of it yeah”*

*FGF “Yeah?”*

*FGP12 – “My dad loves him so”*

*FGF – “Ok, how did you feel watching it?”*

*FGP12 – “Sad (participant looks emotionally upset here), it was a bit upsetting for him (the participants dad) cuz.... People looking at him in the wrong sense at times. It was a bit unfair on him to an extent*

*FGF – “Why?”*

*FGP12 – “Well one of his quotes is, he looked up cheating. The definition of cheating in the dictionary and the definition was “to gain an advantage over your opponent”. And he said he never did that he only equaled the playing field cuz everyone was on drugs back then. But he only got done because he was the winner, which is fair enough cuz he shouldn’t have been on it but at the same time you can understand why you can’t compete if you’re not willing to level the playing field.”*

In the above excerpts on FGP12, the strong connection with their father appeared to have implications on the response by FGP12. I need to identify further in the data collection on how those that are close may influence the behaviour of sport consumers.

As data analysis progressed, there was indication from participants that the influence of others is not necessarily actual reality; it also has the potential to be a perceived reality.

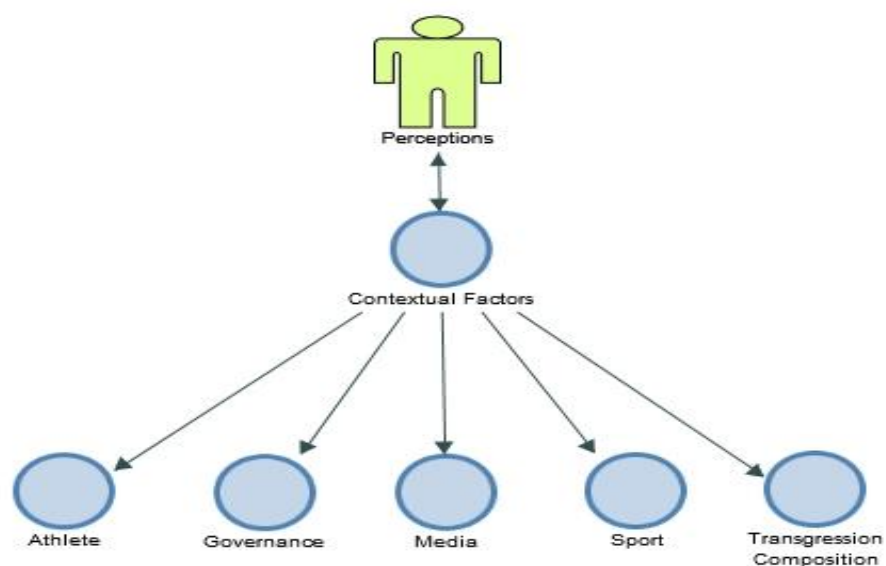
*FGP25 – “... My friends know I support this team and I don’t want my reputation tarnished by my association with them (the team)”.*

The excerpt by FGP25 above is a perceived situation that their association with a team involved in a transgression may reflect on them as an individual and their self-integrity. Here, the level of psychological discomfort is increased due to the perception of close friends.

### 3.5.3 Contextual Factors (External)

“Contextual Factors” emerged as a category that represented the external conditions that impacted the perceptions of sport consumers, thus playing an important and crucial role in the response of consumers to transgression in sport. Much like the internal factors, there is a dynamic nature of the contextual factors. This dynamic nature will be presented in greater details, along with the internal factors, later in the chapter through the paradigm application to the data from the interview applicants.

**Figure 14 - Contextual Factors Category**



“Contextual factors” are made up of the properties; Athlete, Governance, Media, Sport and Transgression Composition, as seen in figure 14. In reality, there are going to be an insurmountable variation of conditions that play a role in how consumers respond to stimuli; however, the data led to the properties and dimensions shown in table 8 below. The importance, relevance and key relationships, with the internal conditions, will now be presented.



**Table 8 - Properties and Dimensions of Contextual Factors**

Axial Category	Contextual Factors				
Properties	Athlete	Governance	Media	Sport	Transgression Composition
Dimensions	<b>-Behaviour</b> (Before- After)  <b>-Role Model Status</b> (Hi-Low)	<b>-Organisational Response</b> (Positive-Negative)	<b>-Influence</b> (Hi-Low)	<b>-Level</b> (Elite – Amateur) <b>-Image</b> (Negative – Positive) <b>-Type</b> (Individual-Team) <b>-Outcome</b> (Successful-Unsuccessful) <b>-Money</b> (Hi-Low)	<b>-Player or Sporting Transgression</b>  <b>-Systematic Problem</b> (Yes-No)
	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔

### 3.5.3.1 ATHLETE

Athlete was identified as a property of the contextual factors with the dimensions of “behaviour” and “role model status”. There is a strong relationship here with the internal “Fanographic” dimension of attachment. In particular, if the attachment of a consumer is the athlete involved in a transgression, this can have detrimental implications.

#### Behaviour & Role Model Status

The behaviour of the athlete involved in a transgression was a very prominent condition that occurred often in the data. On a continuum level, this is represented before, during and after a transgression occurs. The behaviour of the athlete, at any point on the continuum, is a condition that can have either a positive or negative impact on the perceptions and behaviour of consumers.

The dimension of behaviour was evident to be made up of how the athlete, who engages in a form of transgression, behaves before, during and after the transgression occurs. Looking at some of the evidence from interview excerpts, one participant (FGP24) responded to a prompt about why Lance Armstrong was always referred to when there is a whole generation of cyclists that have been doping, and then participant FGP19 justifying why it seemed to have a much bigger impact on them personally when it was revealed that Lance Armstrong was doping?

*FGP24 – “Lance Armstrong was the only one out in the media saying ‘I didn’t cheat’, so being that he said many times that I didn’t [cheat], I am clean.....*

*FGP25 – “mostly because he [Lance Armstrong] portrayed super heroics and just lied from the outset and never owned up to it and taken responsibility for it”.*

Another participant indicated that his “Role Model Status” (high) was a reason that the focus was on him even if you weren’t a fan of cycling, he was known to many.

*FGP19 – “..... Because he persistently denied the fact that he had taken drugs for years and years and years, then to come out and say actually ‘I did do it’. It just sort of put this massive iron, I mean people whether you like cycling or not, you knew who Lance Armstrong was and you knew what his story was and you had a lot of respect for him, as a sports fan it completely destroyed it for denying it for all those years.”*

FGP19 above highlights the conditions of the athlete behaviour and their role model status working collectively. The important aspect of the “role model status” is that this is a perception of an individual. I.e. the “role model status” is subjective to a given sport consumer. Below I present an early memo of the focus group data analysis.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 13 - Dimension Behaviour**

#### **Sub-Category Memo**

##### **Athlete; Dimension – behaviour (phase one)**

This concept of “athlete behaviour” applies to a continuum of time (before during and after a transgression). In relation to comments of FGP25, their discussion was about Lance Armstrong doping the fact that Lance was lying for so long about doping. This isn’t the first time this has come up about athlete behaviour prior to transgression coming to light.

Further in the same focus group, FGP24 also agrees with FGP25 that Lance lied continually and it seems to bring more negative emotions (consequence of athlete lying) due to Lance’s behaviour before being caught.

This was also evident with Tiger Woods, albeit that his case was Player Transgression and didn’t impact the result of sporting competition. It does however, come across that the consequence is participants experiencing stronger negative emotions and attitudes as a result of an athlete lying and hiding a transgression.

It appears at this point that this concept has an important set of “conditions”. The conditions are relevant as a (contextual condition) at the initial onset stage when a transgression occurs. When the transgression has surfaced and come to light, the behaviour of the athlete, from that point, is also of importance as an (intervening condition). How the athlete then proceeds to behave will further impact sport consumers’ attitude and emotions, and possibly their behaviours. This change over time can be either positive or negative dependent on how it’s perceived by a given sport consumer. Of course an individual’s internal factors (as a fan and as a person) will play a very important role as to how the consumer will respond. As planned at this point, the internal factors will be sampled further through interview data collection and analysis.

Excerpts from the interviews saw supportive attitudes to the behaviour of the “Athlete”, after the transgression, having an impact on how they respond to transgression. In this particular excerpt, IP7 was responding to a question about a player on their team killing someone when drunk driving.

*IP7 – “... part of it [hesitant participant response] would depend on the response [of the athlete].... If there was no contrition, no acceptance that type of thing, personally I would find it very difficult, I can’t imagine myself cheering for someone after that happened....*

In relation to the comments above, IP2 highlighted a particular experience in the team they supported signing the player Lee Hughes, whom was driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol and killed someone. Lee Hughes fled the scene and handed himself into the police 24 hours later. The comments from IP2 were....

*IP2 – “I went a lot when I was at school [watching Kidderminster Harriers], and once a year over the last ten years. I stopped going when he [Lee Hughes] signed for them [Kidderminster]. So I wouldn’t go support him playing for Kidderminster.*

*Interviewer – “so is that because of what he did, or because you didn’t like him anyway before the incident....?”*

*IP2 – “Yeah, that would have amplified [running away] it. I mean I think you know, if he had been in the car crash and a person died that’s one thing. But I think because he ran away [it was worse]”.*

What is important in the comments of IP2 is their response (stop going to games) to their team signing a player that engaged in to an extreme case of player transgression where someone lost their life as a result of the athlete breaking the

law. There is a relationship here with the Category “Fanographic Factors”, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Focusing on the dimension “Role Model Status”, it was evident through both phases of data collection, the status of the athlete to a particular sport consumer would play a significant role in how that given sport consumer would respond. Participants that had children, particularly brought up the “Role Model Status” dimension, for example, FGP26 commented to a question about what it would take for them to stop watching a particular sport or athlete.

*FGP26 – “something, we talked about children and my daughter is grown up now, but something that would be a bad role model to her. The taking the drugs, killing somebody, sleeping with somebody is nice [referring to Tiger Woods case not having an impact] but something that you think ‘no that really is bad’. That to me would be the drugs, the killing, the beating up and criminal activities....”*

Two other participants of the same focus group responded to the comments of FGP26 above and fully agreed in supporting their statement.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 14 - Role Model Status**

#### **Memo**

#### **Sub category: Athlete, Dimension – Role Model Status**

This is a property that falls in the “Athlete” category of the contextual factor. There is clear evidence in the comments of participants that indicates the “status” of the athlete involved in the transgression almost dictates the height of the impact it will have. For example, some participants were saying that if Usain Bolt, Jessica Ennis and Mo Farah, for example, were caught doping, it would have “massive” impacts on the sport of athletics.

What I also see in the property “Role Model Status”, is how this relates to one of the properties under the “Fan Identity” category – “Attachment Point”. What seems apparent in this relationship is if a consumer has a strong “Attachment Point” to a particular athlete, then their perception of the respective athlete’s “Role Model Status” will be high. Although it is important to remember that this isn’t limited to this relationship. When looking at all the participant comments, focus groups and interviews, there were some differing views on sports and levels of athletes, but all participants talked about the status of an athlete in some way shape or form. It was very much talked about for athletes representing a nation. Hence, and Estonian Skier was talked about, UK athletes were talked about and a Taiwanese athlete as well. Words used in this sense were “us” and “we”. Participants were very much talking about the athlete as part of them and part of their identity that they feel strongly associated too.

A previous memo on the early concept “Role Model”, highlights the fact that in some cases of transgression, athletes “are let off lightly” because of who they are (their status being high). Taking Suarez when playing for Liverpool for example, one Liverpool fan (participant) commented that the team supported the racism case that surrounded him because he was the best player on the team, and that other players wouldn’t necessarily get the same treatment. There was a common perception in the data that this is the case in some transgression situations.

### *3.5.3.2 Governance*

#### **Organisational Response**

This property is made up of the single dimensional range - positive/negative in terms of the organisation response, of which the athlete is connected to. This includes all stakeholders from the team to the national governing bodies of the respective sport. There was a common perception across many sports that the response of governing bodies, and teams, was inconsistent and also that athletes shouldn’t be allowed to compete in the sport if caught:

*FGP35 – “you have guys (athletes) that are physically abusive to women, away from the field these guys are role models and they're getting slaps on the wrist. Then you have other guys who smoke a joint in their own home and get like 15 games (suspension).*

*FGp23 “... if you're caught, OUT!! Never ever go in that sport again.*

*FGP23 – Yeah so many athletes have come back (from suspensions)*

*FGP27 – “if you're convicted, that’s it, never to participate again!*

IP5 below referenced the Adam Johnson case (convicted of sexual activity with underage girl), and if Villa (IP5’s team) responded similar it would have a serious impact:

*IP5 – “if Villa stood by a player that had done something awful, I suppose if Villa did something similar to Sunderland with Adam Johnson and allegedly knew about his case, and they knew he was going to end up pleading guilty but they continued to let him play. That would have a serious impact”.*

The consensus of governing body’s decisions is often perceived as a monetary motive rather than purely by morals and integrity. This had implications on the beliefs (internal factor) of sport consumers:

*FGP37 – “it’s all about the cash (influencing NGB decisions)*

*FGP – “when you go to the extremes of professional sport and money comes into it, more money is just more of the same. Really, the moral compass is replaced by a bank balance”.*

*IP8 – “I think the more money, the less trusting I am. So when I see football, there is a lot more money in it so I am less trusting in it”.*

IP7 highlighted how they didn't agree with Liverpool's (IP7's team) response in the case of racist comments made by Suarez, which ended up becoming a pretty big scandal.

*IP7 – “An interesting one was about 4-5 years ago, Louis Suarez at Liverpool about the racial insults, the comments he said or did not say. It was very uncomfortable following Liverpool that here he is, a fantastic footballer, one of the best I have ever seen, knowing he was a flawed genius in many senses in terms of his behaviour. And then when this, this became tribal about Liverpool supporting him coming out with T shirts and friends of mine supporting him backing him because of that tribal loyalty and just feeling uncomfortable about it all”*

IP7 went on in the interview to indicate that they believe Liverpool would not have responded in the same way for all of their players

*IP7 – “If it had a been a guy called John Flanagan, played for Liverpool, a local lad who hasn't played much since and probably won't play again he's out on loan, if it had been him I don't think Liverpool would have moved to walk out on the pitch in a future match wearing t shirts supporting him. I think maybe that is where you get disillusioned with football sometimes in that Liverpool felt they needed to do that to prove to a high profile high value signing that they were backing him. Fear of him going away or fear of losing his market value. I think that is where the business side of it comes in. If it had been another player, I don't think there would have been that much fuss”.*

IP7 highlights their perceptions of why Liverpool responded in the way that they did supporting Suarez. The consequences were an emotional one for IP7 in that they felt very uncomfortable with their team supporting a player that was guilty of racial



misconduct. It appears here that there is a relationship with “the self”, throughout the interview, there were comments by IP7 that were concerned about how the world saw Liverpool and its supporters, and that IP7 didn’t want to be part of giving the world “bad ammunition” to paint a bad light about Liverpool or its supporters.

#### *3.5.3.3 Media*

The media is a very important medium that impacts upon sport fans for multiple reasons. The dimension of this property is simply the influence it has on an individual’s internal factors, such as beliefs for example. The “Media” has had relationships across the data with all factors (internal and external), with the ability to impact upon these factors at any point in time, positively or negatively. During focus group analysis, it was evident that a majority of participants were aware of the influence that the media had on their perceptions:

FGP21 – “I would probably say it (media) informs my opinion straight out”... there is no way you're ever going to get close enough to something that big (Lance Armstrong doping case) unless a journalist tells you”

One commonality that was evident in the data was its relationship with trust. Participants commented about media that they trusted (or didn’t trust), and how the media portray things that aren’t necessarily true, in order to sell the story.

FGP15 – “But it depends if there’s a positive or negative spin on it. Like Lionel Messi admitted when he was a kid that he took growth enhancements and that’s against the rules and against the rules of sport. But the media portray it’s as what he (Messi) needed at the time. So they portray it as what he needed to become a great footballer. Whereas someone like Lance Armstrong was victimised, stigmatised, demonised in the media, they absolutely killed him the media. When he came out and he said his side, it wasn’t only him it was his team that contributed. But they seem to have

taken the anonymous. No one talks about the team they just talk about Lance Armstrong”.

IP5 – *“I don’t trust the media no, no way. I mean I guess maybe in sport where it’s less, they have less of an agenda, I don’t trust the media no. I think my opinion tends to be formed reading different, various different sources...”*

Below I present an observational note during analysis of focus group four. Emphasised in this observational note was how FGP28 subconsciously answered a question about their awareness of cases.

### ***Observational Note 3 FGP28***

#### **Observational Note – Focus Group 4 (Participants FGP28)**

##### **Property – Media**

I note here that there was very fast response from FGP28 to the question about where participants are getting/hearing about their cases of transgression brought up in the focus group. The response was so fast it was almost unconsciously thought about!

I also make note that an answer to the same question, social media is discussed as a source of (key) information in the context of minority sport in UK. A player (Domish) was caught doping in the team FGP23 supports (Coventry Blaze) and was released with a media statement (by the team) not indicating the reasons as to why.

FGP23 – *“If you look at Domish (Coventry player) for example, if the Blaze sacked him and didn’t say why, you’re not going to know the reason why; it’s only because it came out on Facebook or Twitter for example”.*

#### 3.5.3.4 Sport

Sport emerged as an important property of the contextual factors that impacted upon consumer perceptions and behaviours. On a dimensional range, “level”, “Image”, “Type” and “Outcome” make up the property. I refer to memo 11 of this chapter, which is a word cloud presenting the most frequent words used at the concept of trust. The top three sports that participants indicated they had the least amount of trust for are football, cycling and athletics. This assisted analysis leading to the development of key dimensions, which are now presented below.

##### Level

Self-explanatory in the name, this dimension indicates the level of the sport from elite to the semi-professional/amateur. The perceptions for high-level sport surrounded the topic of money, and that it’s a motive for athletes at a higher level to be successful, earning more money and endorsements, and therefore engaging in sporting transgressions such as doping. Perceptions across lower levels of sport were linked to forms of sporting transgression around spot fixing or match fixing. Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between governance and the level of sport.

FC – *“So the level of the sport is something you would have less trust for?”*

IP1 – *“Oh without a doubt (very fast response). I think it’s, there was a case this year in football in non-league, a final game... I can’t remember the league, there was one game, a final game, and one team needed a draw to stay up, I think it was Celtic. They got the draw, then afterwards it was deemed there were financial bungs given, there was a lot of controversy. I think at that level, it’s harder to monitor and harder to look at these things. That’s why I think it’s easier for, hard to regulate the whole sport. Different sport but, certain leagues are targeted, your Singapore league, your J-league, your Asian leagues... (Asian) football league are very corrupt because it’s hard to monitor”.*

## Image

There is a dimensional range in the perceptions of consumers with how they view sports in general. In some cases, participants had an image of sports that they do not follow. I note one participant commented negatively about the image of cricket and that the media largely drove this perception.

FGP12 – “So like I don’t really know much about cricket but I’ve heard a lot about match fixings so that makes me think that I don’t really know to trust cricket”

Below I present an early memo from focus group two discussions, which highlighted the consequences for participant FGP12.

### ***Chapter 3 - Memo 15 - FGP12***

#### **Memo - Participant FGP12 – Focus group two**

I write this memo regarding FGP12 and the perceptions they have about the image of sport. There are a number of relationships evident, firstly, FGP12 is a fan of many sports but cricket isn’t one, therefore there is little emotional investment so to speak. Secondly, the media is indicated as a key driver of their perceptions (negative), which is that they do not trust cricket due to extensive fixing that surrounds the sport. The consequences lead to FGP12 not wanting to engage in the sport due to the fact that they do not trust it.

FGF – “Ok so you're less likely to engage in that sport (cricket)?”

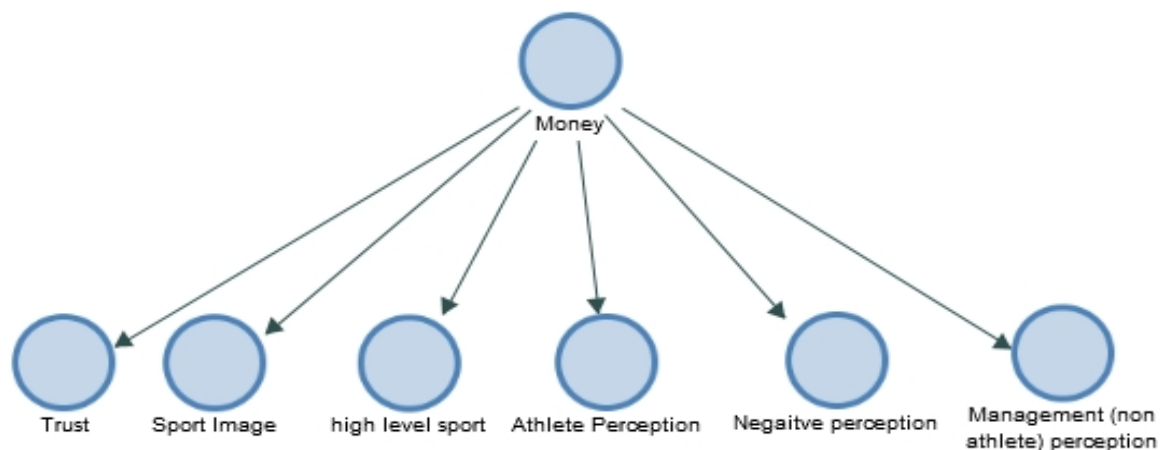
FGP12 – “yeah, because I don’t know about the sport I obviously just read the bad parts in the papers and on the TV and stuff, so it does change my view a bit”

I will investigate further how important the image of a sport is. Especially in this context where there may be “potential” fans that certainly will not engage in a sport due to the negative image that surrounds it.

## Money

This dimension was very constant in the data, and played an important relationship role with the Proximal property “beliefs” (see 3.5.2.2). The perceptions across most of the data were that money is a key motive for athletes to engage into sporting transgression, especially doping for example. Doping leads to potentially more winning and endorsement contracts. Additionally, there was a lack of trust in organisations overseeing sport, and the teams that athletes represent. This was due to transgression impacting the organisation, the sport and the team; therefore there was lack of trust that the truth would be hidden. Relationships recorded at this code with other codes, can be seen in figure 15 below from NVIVO. This illustrates the early development of ‘Money’ and important relationships. This assisted the concept eventually emerging as a dimension of the Contextual Factors category.

**Figure 15 - Early "Money" Relationships**



## Type & Outcome

“Type” simply represents individual sports on one end of the dimensional spectrum and team sports at the other. Perceptions were very much a generic view that doping, for example, is far worse in an individual sport context due to the impact it has on the result of the contest.

IP2 – *“I think team sports possibly have more transgressions but less impact. I trust the same results of team sports more than I trust individual sports. I think team sports you might easily have one batsman taking steroids to hit the ball further or one footballer who is taking money on most amount of corners on a game, but that is less likely to impact the result of a game than if you have a single athlete who is transgressing.*

“Outcome” has strong relationships with “type” in that perceptions were very different when transgression impacted the result of a contest. This was in some cases negative, which you would likely expect. When there were strong “Fanographic” factors present, and doping led to team success, biased behaviour would not be uncommon if the transgression led to success.

FGP21 - *If there were drugs involved I would be extremely disappointed but at the back of my mind I would be thinking, “you wanted to win for us”, and if we have some silverware at the end of the season I’m tempted to go “you shouldn’t have done it”, and if caught you will be banned. But we still get a bit of metal to put on the shelf at the end of the season...*

Another key relationship identified in the context of “type” + “role model status” + “Fanographic factors”; is if a fans point of attachment is strong towards an athlete that is guilty of transgression, also in the context of individual sport. National athletes were often brought up in this context and what scandal would have a big impact?

FGP15 – *“...it would probably be with Rafa Nadal, if he comes out and admits that he has been doping, I think he is the face of tennis and people would, same scenario as Lance Armstrong really, it would be a huge blow to the sport”.*

FGP19 – *“Probably Mo Farah, if it was to come out that Mo Farah was part of this (doping scandal), because again he is someone that’s a national hero,*

*if it came out he was part of that scandal would anything be worth supporting anymore”.*

Both comments above show the importance of how the contextual factors work in a dynamic fashion with the internal factors already presented in this chapter. What was noticeable from the above comments, and others on the same topic, individual sports were most often referenced. Team sport was more often used in the context of match and spot fixing. This leads to the final contextual property presented below – “Transgression Composition”.

#### ***3.5.3.5 Transgression Composition***

This property contextualises a given transgression and in essence, it defines the various responses and perception differences in Sporting Transgression (on-field) or Player Transgression (off-field). Throughout this chapter, analysis and presentation of the internal factors (Fanographic & Proximal) have discussed how they relate to the various forms of transgression cases (on or off-field). Perceptions across the two forms of transgression, within the scope of this study, differentiated Player Transgression by saying that it is more personal to the athlete in question and makes the athlete bad as a human.

### ***Chapter 3 - Memo 16 - Property Transgression Composition***

#### **Sub-Category Memo**

#### **Property - Transgression Composition (phase one)**

I have been constantly comparing the data around the different types of transgression, in particular, ST and PT. During focus group discussion, it was apparent that the consensus about Player Transgression made the particular athlete bad as a person. For example:

*FGP30 – “If he (Patrick Kane) had taken drugs up to the playoffs that would have been terrible as a sports fan but it would have been terrible. What he is*

*doing now is terrible as a person... doing something affecting the sport, as a sports fan, I would have hated that.*

There was a lot of support to the comment of FGP30 across all focus groups that separate “the self” from the athlete a lot easier than when it’s Player Transgression. FGP28 for example, indicated that they find it more personal because it’s within the team they support

*FGP28 – “I think, as a supporter, when they’ve (athlete) done something wrong you find it personal because it’s with your team, as in if it’s something like breaking the law (Player Transgression), it’s annoying and why do they get away with it... if it’s your team you get personal (strong emotions)”*

Where there are particular problems experienced by sport fans, in the case of Player Transgression, is when a fan attachment point is strong towards the guilty athlete. In the context of a team sport, if a guilty athlete is removed from the team (governance/team response), this seems to have positive impacts on dissonance experienced. In reviewing the literature on “the black sheep effect” (Marques et al. 1988), it is understood that fans react in a way that characterises the guilty athlete as separate from the “group” (team supported), hence the athlete is the black sheep. In some cases, this appeared to be a response strategy for participants assisted by the response of the team or governing bodies, for example:

*FGP22 – “it’s how the team would publicly deal with it, would they back it up, would they make it a tiny thing, would they say “no, this is wrong” and it really depends on how they (the team) come out with it”.*

*FGP26 – “done with the team or that player (if the team handle it correctly)*



### 3.6 Paradigm Application Conceptualisation:

#### 3.6.1 Fanographic – Proximal – Contextual Factors

Here I use Strauss and Corbin's (1992) Paradigm model and apply it to cases of the interview participants, which assisted the axial coding process and illustrated the main features of conditions; actions/interactions; and consequences.

- *“Conditions refer to the perceived reasons that persons give for why things happen and the explanation that they give for why they respond in the manner that they do through action-interaction... these explanations may be implicit or explicit in field notes” (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 158).*
- *“Action-interaction is the responses people make to events or problematic situations that occur in their lives... People give meaning to events; have feelings about them; and only then perceive them as problems, and only then do they respond through action-interaction” (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 158).*
- *“Consequences are the anticipated or the actual outcomes of action and interaction. Often before taking action persons take into account possible outcomes. Then based on those possibilities, persons make choice among options regarding which actions-interactions to take. Sometimes outcome occur as anticipated. However, sometimes outcomes do not happen as expected, and an actor has to adjust his or her action-interaction to fit with new and evolving situation” (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 159).*

It is this section that sheds light on how dynamic the internal and external categories work together in a given case of transgression, and to a given sport consumer. Whilst all the interviews were analysed in the development of the final theory, this section will illustrate a sample of four of the interviews and their application to the paradigm. Excerpts were taken from interview participants based on their comments, the observations and methodological notes taken. The interview reflections (reflexivity) are also presented in this section, as they were also instrumental in noting relevant behaviours of the participants under different conditions. I.e. in every interview, the initial questions were designed to ascertain

key information on what type of sport consumer the participant is. As previously mentioned earlier in this chapter, the type of sport consumer that a participant is, plays a vital role in understanding a likely response to a transgression. Following this paradigm section of the chapter, the response category (dissonance process) will be presented referring back to the illustrations presented in this paradigm section.

### **3.6.1.1 Interview Participant 1 (IP1)**

#### **Chapter 3 - Memo 17 - IP1**

##### **Reflection Memo – 29/6/16**

##### **Interview Participant 1 (IP1)**

This reflection memo is occurring on the day of carrying out the interview 29/6/16. It was very interesting to run the first interview and see how different the process was from the focus groups. It was very beneficial to see how the interview allows more concentration and in-depth investigation on what is important to the interviewee, around some of the concepts from the FG's. Probing through this method allowed more concentration on the characteristics of the individual consumer, both as a sports fan and personal proximal factors. This has encouraged me in that the choice of semi-structured interviews was the right choice.

What was interesting from IP1 is that their background of being brought up around a family that enjoys and participates in sport, which shapes their beliefs and ultimately, how they would respond to transgression. It seems apparent here that ST is by far the major concern for this participant. Their belief lies with integrity in sport. Any transgression that impacts the integrity and "uncertainty of outcome", seems to have detrimental effects on them. This relates to having an impact on their motivation, in a negative sense, if a transgression impacts the integrity.

Furthermore on the “cultural background”, this person loves international sport and has pride in being British or as I have termed a concepts dimension, “patriotic”.

This individual was much about team sports (contextual factor), having played team sport their whole life. This also shaped their perception on how they view athletes in their personal lives, and not too much affected by PT’s. Their understanding about minor transgressions is no impact. This individual understands team sport and off field activities are required to boost team morale. This makes the perceptions of this participant more forgiving to minor PT’s, such as the famous case of Paul Gascoigne’s “dentist chair” incident where he was out drinking in a nightclub on a pre Euro 96’ tournament whilst playing for England. This participant indicates that the media can often shape these types of transgressions to be worse than they are. Interestingly, this participant indicated that they feel the media has lowered the many forms of minor PT’s due to athletes understanding that they are always being watch, filmed when out in the public eye. Therefore the athletes are now more vigilant and realize that they need to behave in certain ways.

IP1 talked about their difference in response to “their” team vs. the other teams, in light of transgression. This participant used the cricket spot fixing case to indicate that it wouldn’t stop them watching (behaviour), as it was Pakistan and not England (Contextual Factor). On the flip side, IP1 said that if England were the perpetrators, they would not go and watch (response). They would also disengage in wearing any clothing that affiliated themselves with the team (possible link here to fan identity/social identity theory).

Additionally important, this participant indicated they had a free ticket to the England cricket game, if they were paying a full price ticket, they would be much angrier that they were not watching a legitimate game of sport, that they committed money too. (Direct link here to the category commitment)

IP1 is also a parent, and they further commented that anything, transgression wise, that had an impact on their child, they would then feel the full force of this. I.e. if the

child's hero was involved in a bad transgression, this would have detrimental effects on the child and of course the parent.

### Paradigm application to conceptualise IP1

To conceptualise IP1 as a fan using the "Fanographic Factors" factors, those that are present, and to what degree are:

"Commitment" – Time, Money and Loyalty were present, and to most situations throughout the interview, were high.

"Motivational interest" – Genuineness was present on a high level and was very important to IP1. Previous experience in playing team sports, that IP1 now watches, produces a high level of nostalgia (positive emotions).

Attachment Point – Without question, all four dimensions were evident. In particular, patriotism was high in the sense that England teams were part of their identity.

I now present some of the key excerpts from the interview, which highlights the key concepts identified in this study.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 18 - Paradigm IP1**

#### **Paradigm Application – IP1**

Excerpt:

*Without a doubt, I think I would probably, you know I may well stop going to watch test matches [consequences-behavioural], I might stop going to actually watch them (England cricket team) play. I think the integrity, my*

*thought and perception [action-interaction] is integrity [condition-motivational interest] is in our national game and our national sport is there. So I still follow [consequence-behavioural].*

The above excerpt was a response to the spot-fixing scandal that came to light between England and Pakistan. Three Pakistan players were caught bowling no-balls during the game for others to bet large sums on those no-ball situations. IP1 was actually in attendance, but as an England supporter. If England were guilty of the spot-fixing case (hypothetically), IP1 responded with the excerpt above. The words that are red in brackets, indicate the conditions, action-interaction and consequences.

Excerpt:

*“Cycling, I would never trust it [consequence, low trust]. Um... if our guys [condition – attachment point] in front [condition – sport outcome] or winning I will [consequence-behaviour]. I will watch Olympic cycling [condition, image] but I think tour de France is just, it just seems... corrupt for so long [condition, systematic problem] it’s hard to wipe off that image of cheating [action-interaction, low trust] all the doping in that” [condition, systematic problem].*

The above excerpt illustrates how IP1 has behaved in their consumption of cycling, due to the extent of doping, especially in the tour de France. IP1, due to their internal conditions as a sports fan, and external condition of their nation winning, they will watch. Their trust is low for the sport and the ultimate consequences are that they do not watch the tour de France anymore and have therefore dislocated from watching that format.

### **3.6.1.2 Interview Participant 2 (IP2)**

Here I present excerpts from IP2. In terms of their makeup of the Fanographic factors, I also present the “reflective memo” upon completion of the interview with IP2. As with IP1, there was a good level of indication as to the fit of the Fanographic factors.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 19 - IP2 Reflection**

#### **Reflection Memo – 13/7/16**

#### **Interview Participant 2 (IP2)**

This interview seemed very similar to IP1 for Fanographic purposes; the participant was very much an avid supporter of sports. IP2 indicated they watched multiple sports, TV and live, across individual and team sports.

I make note that this participant showed a very strong commitment to Wolves football club. More so in the relation that it seemed the participant felt very much attached (strong emotion), committed and a part of the club itself. It was evident that this level of commitment had implications on the response to certain transgressions. By this, there was bias evident at times, whilst others, there was more anger and certain disconnection in the instance of having transgressive player on their team. The strong commitment with a team seemed to bring out emotions that might create bias but also create more adverse effects. Certainly I will try and key on this as interviews progress. If I take this interviewee with the first, and linking attachments, then it shows how this would make them disconnect. This participant said they would stop watching wolves if they had a player match fixing or even signed a player involved in an extensive transgression. IP1 showed the same type of behavioural intention, if the case was that an England team player was involved in transgression. Their connection was very patriotic and they feel they are a connection to the team through that identify as a nation so to speak.

This participant talked about the England cricket spot-fixing case and that because it was Pakistan, it didn't impact their behaviour. If it were an England player it would absolutely impact behaviour.

The participant also talked about Andy Murray as their only hero status type of athlete attachment. If he was involved in transgression the participant said they would dislocate from the athlete, but not necessarily stop watching the sport.

It seems very apparent, not just from this interview that there is a grey area across the perception of participants of what they would not be impacted much by and other transgressions that would have a big impact.

This grey area seems very much linked to the fan and proximal factors, I have previously indicated. This participant indicated that, on a small transgression level, they would accept it if it lead to winning the game. I.e. purposeful handball to stop a goal. Any actions deemed to be part of within a game they would be accepting of.

#### Paradigm Application to conceptualise IP2

Again here, the author identifies and conceptualises IP2 in relation to the "Fanographic Factors" category:

"Commitment" – Time, Money and Loyalty were present, and to most situations throughout the interview, were high. There was a very high commitment level to their team – Wolverhampton Wanderers, which IP2 holds a season ticket.

"Motivational interest" – Genuineness was present on relatively high level although there seemed confliction here with the success of the team. IP2 indicating that they "would rather win fairly but they would also rather win". Previous experience in playing team sports, that IP1 now watches, produces a high level of nostalgia (positive emotions), which creates motivation to consume.

Attachment Point – Without question, all four dimensions were evident. In particular, patriotism was high in the sense that England teams were part of their identity. Wolverhampton are the biggest connection (team) and IP2 holds a season ticket. They also have relatively high attachments to other local teams.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 20 - Paradigm IP2**

#### **Paradigm Application – IP2**

Excerpt:

*“Ok so, example on that, there was a player Lee Hughes, his case study, he played for West Brom and I’m a West Brom fan, and I don’t like him [condition, athlete status] anyway. I used to go watch Kidderminster Harriers semi-regularly [action-interaction], I went a lot when I was at school, and once a year over the last ten years. I stopped going [consequence, behavioural] when he signed for them. So I wouldn’t go support him [action-interaction] playing for Kidderminster Harriers [consequence, dislocate from watching Kidderminster]”.*

*IF – “so was that because of what he did, or as you said, because you didn’t like him anyway before the incident?”*

*IP1 – “I mean I think you know, if he had been in the car crash and a person died that’s one thing. But I think because he ran away [condition, athlete behaviour] (fled the scene for 24 hours)”, (IP2 indicates this as the reason it had worse [consequences] on their behaviour.*

*IF – “if they (Wolverhampton) signed Lee Hughes you wouldn’t watch them?”*

*IP1 – “No, because I couldn’t support him. But if he was playing in a match I was going to then I would go”.*



In the above excerpt, IP2 made it clear that the impact of signing a player that previously engaged in a player transgression, leading to death by drink driving, resulted in the dislocation of watching Kidderminster. The fact that Leigh Hughes fled the scene made the consequences much worse. In another excerpt, IP1 highlights the important factors for them in the team(s) they support. They go on to differentiate the self as a fan of different sports teams.

*IP1 - I think emotion and connection [conditions, Fanographic Factors]. I go to Wolves and I want to support the team and I want to support the 11 players on the field [action-interaction]. But if there were Lee Hughes or Ched Evans [conditions, Contextual Factors] there then I wouldn't want to support [consequences, behavioral] those players. But because I don't go to Wasps with those intentions [conditions, Fanographic factors], its different [action-interaction] I don't go to Wasps to support wasps. So if (Danny) Cipriani (Wasps player caught drink driving recently) is playing it doesn't bother me, as I am there just to watch rugby not support someone [condition-Fanographic].*

In the above excerpt, IP2 goes on to indicate how they are a different fan [action-interaction-Fanographic] depending on the sport/teams that they follow. Evidently, their strongest emotional attachment is to Wolverhampton. There is a clear understanding that IP2 will respond in a negative manner when there is a threat to their Fanographic factors with respect to Wolverhampton. There is a strong relationship here between “motivation” and “attachment”.

In reference to the CRT model, IP2 would have a varied “zone of tolerance” to the same transgression but in a different sport that they follow. In looking at the sports they follow with a high level of “Fanographic Factors”, their tolerance zone would be very small. The case with Kidderminster signing Lee Hughes was an example of just that.

### **3.6.1.3 Interview Participant IP6**

Here I present the paradigm application to IP6. To put IP6 in context as a sports fan, they are very much different across different sports. Furthermore, IP6 really shows how they have changed as a fan in some sports over time. This therefore, ultimately changes the way they respond to a transgression.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 21 - Reflection IP6**

#### **Reflection Memo – 9/12/16**

#### **Interview Participant 6 (IP6)**

This interview was very insightful to perhaps some possible concepts that are without strength but also confirming many of the key concepts, some of which appear to be reaching saturation.

What was apparent is cultural background again showed a big play in the participant as a sports fan. IP6 indicated that football was “their life”, they followed Man Utd their whole life, home and away matches. When they started working in the sport of football, they have not distanced from the sport as a sports fan. They choose to consume a lot of other sports instead of consuming football.

They showed how they like the Olympics and also talked about the underdog winning as a focal point that attracts them. There were different motives in this context, also a level of patriotism shown for the UK athletes.

What came apparent perhaps was that over time, fan factors can change and have done so in the case of this participant. This is the first time that I have experienced this across the data. It was changed, as explained above, due to the work background change. I have already includes time in the model on NVIVO, but this

was more to the contextual factors changing. It may be the case that time is also applicable to the fan factors changing, or possibility of.

It was talked about in terms of the level of the transgression, this was after the participant talked about match fixing, i.e. no balls in cricket vs. a deliberate own goal in football. I think that the level of the transgression or perhaps the “zone of tolerance” may well be where all the perceptions lead.

Doping was talked about a fair amount, and it seemed the extent or level of the doping would be the factor to impacting behaviour. IP6 indicated that one person doping wouldn’t have an effect, but if more extensive (systematic problem) then it definitely would.

What also stood out was when IP6 talked about how they are into US sports, in particular, NFL and NBA. IP6 supports the Colts because their friend does, and they wanted something to talk about with them. What was interesting is how IP6 talked about the reason for watching US sports is that they enjoy the entertainment. Almost classifying US sport as more of an entertainment angle but with a lot less emotional attachment.

IP6 claimed that they were patriotic and that in a way, they felt they understood why athletes who only get one shot every four years might engage in doping. They used the term risk reward. On the flip side, they didn’t seem to agree to doping in a “team sport” context.

In sum, it very much seemed that IP6 had different motivations and attachment points for watching different sports. It feels like in their responses, those different attachment points and motivations were key in how they might tolerate or respond to a transgression. Relating this to other data, it does seem that when there is an identifiable sport factor present, i.e. an attachment, a motive for example, if this is compromised by the transgression that takes place, it will have a greater (negative) impact.

I feel that I am getting closer to my theory, which is occurring quicker than I anticipated before employing the interview phase of data collection. I will analyse this transcription and conduct another interview to clarify some assumptions that I feel still require some strength in the “Proximal” and “Fanographic” categories.

### Paradigm Application to conceptualise IP6

Below presents a conceptualization of IP6 in relation to the “Fanographic Factors” category:

“Commitment” – Time, Money and Loyalty were present, although loyalty was reducing in some aspects, i.e. for supporting Manchester United. There was a higher level of commitment shown for rugby and British athletes in mega events. Very loyal to being British and British athletes

“Motivational interest” – Genuineness was present on relatively high level towards rugby, cricket and mega events. In contrast, IP6 followed the NFL more recently and does so for entertainment purposes. This dimension is very much sport dependent for IP6.

Attachment Point – This again was different across different sports. In the context of mega events, UK athletes are the main attachment. For rugby, it seemed a similar case in the players being the attachment. The strength of the attachment was also different across the sports, which IP6 follows differently.

**Paradigm Application IP6**

Excerpt 1:

*"I would say working [condition, work background] within sport my view [action-interaction] of sport has changed [consequences, behavioural]. So I probably follow US sports, NBA and NFL for their entertainment value [condition, motivation], so I have no affiliation [action-interaction] really to any team [condition, Fanographic], I just enjoy the spectacle. Whereas my sports fan this side of the pond, I'm a massive [condition, Fanographic] Olympic fan. I'm kind of that, I love that underdog and small sport in the Olympic context. Football for me, because I am working in football [condition, work background] means something very different now [consequences, behavioural]. So I probably support rugby [action-interaction] as if a normal person might support football. As in you know I like, I am very passionate about the ethics [condition, motivation] behind it and you know I like it that way".*

Excerpt one above, really identifies the conditions to which IP6 consumes certain sports and the conditions to which have created a great deal of change in IP6 consuming other sports. When discussing the impact of certain transgressions across different sports that IP6 consumes, it only really seemed that cases where IP6 had a lot of "passion" (as he indicates), that it would have a detrimental impact on their consumption. There is an excerpt (below) from IP6 that shows the conditions, which led to an increased (positive) emotional state for IP6.

Excerpt 2:

*"I think it just, it all comes down to the result [conditions, outcome] you know, if the Russians are winning [condition] you almost go well that's unfair [action-*

*interaction]. If they don't get anywhere it's almost like well, you know the greater good has won [condition] and I almost enjoy it [consequences, positive attitude/emotion]. I almost enjoy Russia getting beat [conditions] because it's almost like you're trying to cheat and you can't even cheat properly. It makes the winning of the other nation's even better [consequences]".*

IP6 really highlights the importance of the "external conditions" in excerpt two, above. The outcome of the contest is very important to the response, and the author makes note that this has been evidenced strongly across all data analysis. In contrast, there is evidence that supports biased behaviour if a consumer's attachment is the guilty party. I.e. when it is the consumers attachment point of "team" or "athlete" that is guilty (of doping) but goes on to win the contest.

Excerpt 3:

*"So I think transgression, personally, affects me morally [action-interaction] and effects the game [conditions] on a personal [conditions, Fanographic and Proximal] level but it's massively effects investment in sport. Because it can genuinely effect whether sponsorship contracts go through or not, whether or not they continue or don't continue".*

Excerpt three, IP6 is indicating that they are affected when their morals are not met. They go on to indicate that the conditions of the game are important contextual factors that need to align with the key motive ("genuine") to why IP6 consumes certain sports.

#### **3.6.1.4 Interview Participant 7 (IP7)**

I now present here the interview reflection and the paradigm application to IP7. The reflection below assists the contextualization of the interview participant as a sports fan and assisted the application of the paradigm procedure.

#### **Chapter 3 - Memo 23 - Reflection IP7**

##### **Reflection Memo - 13/3/17**

##### **Interview Participant 7 (IP7)**

This interview provided some great insight into sampling the emergent theory to this point. Much like the previous interview, saturation is appearing imminent in that there is little evidence supporting the development of new concepts or variations in the current categories. Importantly, there was good supporting evidence of the key categories and their properties and dimensions. In many cases of this interview, there was little “prompting” required in questioning IP7 as they brought up key concepts in their answers subconsciously.

This interview supports analysis and the strength of “cultural background” as a category. The participant has always been about sport in their life, and now works as a producer in sport. This had an impact, just as it did with IP6, on their position as a fan and how they consume sport. More importantly to this research it also plays an important part in how they respond to transgression.

IP7 seemed very patriotic (to Welsh athletes and sport), so much so that they still felt the anger of a handball between their team (Wales) and Scotland. In sum of this incident, the match referee wrongly awarded a penalty to Scotland. Scotland scored on the penalty, which was ultimately the deciding goal for the game. This game was around forty years ago back in 1977!!!!!!

IP7 is a Liverpool fan; it was therefore not surprising that Suarez was brought up in the discussion. The interview participant seemed very “uncomfortable” and also

indicated that the Suarez biting incident made them feel that way, especially as they didn't agree with Liverpool supporting (which they did). Suarez

I make note that integrity was a big importance to IP7 as a motivational factor. Additionally, this participant was very adamant in saying that they don't like to have "heroes", and the reason for this was that "you get let down". Perhaps a condition here for this participant of multiple cases where they were let down. I will review this more during analysis.

IP7 openly admitted that they wouldn't be able to give honest answer for their team (Liverpool or Wales) being involved in transgression and that bias (behaviour) would likely play a part.

A new concept that came to light, used multiple times by IP7, was TRIBAL. In the sense of talking about sport fans, and football fans in particular. They indicated how they have now shifted their "Fanographic Factors", to be less committed so to speak, due to work and life commitments, but they also say that this has led to them being less tribal so to speak. Perhaps I am seeing that their Fanographic make up has lowered somewhat, which proves to have less emotional attachment. This of course would very much influence the response to transgression. I will have to look back at data to find situations where TRIBAL has been talked about but in different wording. I recall that this was discussed about football fans in the focus groups.

Much like IP6, IP7 shows how their fan identity has shifted over time. They are still emotional about their team and sport, but less commitment.

IP7 indicated that they don't have player attachment, and that they don't trust footballers, individually, all that much.

And much like most of the data, IP7 indicates that football is far too political and decisions (bad ones) are based around money.



IP7 used the term “morals” many times, and talked how they have set morals and hold anybody else accountable to those morals.

Another case brought up was Ched Evans. I will have to listen again as I can’t quite remember full details, but there was some interesting info due to Evans being Welsh.

I will analyse this interview and likely conduct another interview. My assumption before analysis of this interview is the developed theory has strength supported by the data.

#### Paradigm Application to conceptualise IP7

“Commitment” – Time, Money and Loyalty were present, although loyalty was reducing in some aspects, i.e. for supporting Liverpool and their home nation (Wales). Still relatively high, but this is in relevance that they travelled to every game previous to a job change and family life. Loyalty is very much a factor in respect to Liverpool and Wales.

“Motivational interest” – Genuineness was present and morals was a common term used and self-proclaimed. Morals were evident when they disagreed with Suarez being supported by Liverpool when he was clearly wrong.

Some changes were mentioned by IP7 based on the environmental changes (commercialisation) in football. They commented that this has impacted their consumption somewhat as they don’t get the same emotions at Anfield as they used to.

Attachment Point – Still on the higher level for Liverpool as a club. Indicates no attachment to players and this was driven by their belief that you get let down when you follow an individual player.

**Paradigm Application IP7**

Excerpt 1:

*My main interest is more interest in team events [conditions, contextual] rather than individual sports people. I reckon I have always been a cynic, so I have never had individual heroes [condition, attachment], because ah, working in sports [condition, work] as well you find you get let down [consequences, attitude/emotion] when you meet [action-interaction] your hero's.*

IP7 really expressed emotion (Excerpt 1) when indicating above that you get let down when you have heroes. IP7 highlights that they purposely behave in a way that their attachment is with the team. In terms of motivation as a sports fan, IP7 indicates this below (excerpt 2), and then goes on to indicate "The Self" in relation to how they see sport (genuine).

Excerpt 2:

*Integrity, authenticity [condition, motive], it's all... I'm quite a moral person [condition, The Self] I think. I don't suffer people that don't you know, I don't like people that, I'm not sitting in moral judgment of people but if I lose trust [condition & action-interaction] in people I have no time for them [consequences, behavioural] basically.*

In Excerpt 2, IP7 indicates a clear motive in that they want to watch genuine sport, which they align with how they view the self. The consequences of any difference in these beliefs indicated, is a loss of trust, and ultimately, an alteration in the behaviour.

Excerpt 3:

*"You know, people make moral judgments based on who they support [conditions, Fanographic] rather than on the truth... so we are very selective [action-interaction] as sports people in who we judge and what we judge [action-interaction] people by. We let some things go [consequences, bias] because it happens to be the team I support [conditions, Fanographic] type of thing".*

IP7 comments in excerpt three about the bias (response) of sport fans in relation to who a fan supports, athlete or team. This has a strong link here with attachment, and that there was evidence that bias behaviour results when the athlete or team a fan supports is involved in a transgression. The biased responses occurred when the "strength" of the attachment is high for the individual. Even though IP7 is commenting on how other behave (in general), this was the case for participants over the two phases of data collection.

Excerpt 4:

*I have changed as a person [conditions, Proximal], which means I have changed as a fan [conditions, Fanographic] as well. But I hope that I am more balanced and more detached [consequences, behavioural] from the tribalism. I think tribalism, it's great, tribalism in a sense when it gives you the passion but when it means that when you look at things through the prism [action-interaction], very one eyed view and you look through just the lens of your particular club [consequences] and not the wider lens I don't think that's healthy. And you know it's been interesting going back to the Hillsborough thing when you have some fans and Liverpool fans have chanted about other disasters as well. (I note that the participant looks quite distressed talking about this topic, especially as they experienced the Hillsborough disaster watching the game live). Some people do... from other clubs... because of the tribalism and it just makes you think [action-interaction] "what the hell". I think I am beyond that [action-interaction], is*

*that because I don't go to as many matches as I used to [action-interaction], is that because I have grown older [conditions], is it because I have had kids [conditions], I think it's a combination of all those things added".*

Excerpt four above was very much a case of IP7 trying to understand how they had changed as a sport fan. This change ultimately led to changes in how they responded to situations involving their attachments. A combination of conditions has seen a reduction in the strength of their attachment points, which in this participants case, is largely the Liverpool team. The behavioural response that IP7 is talking about is the bias response when the guilty party is the athlete or team that a sport consumer is attached too. Results of analysis support this in some cases, whilst others show the opposite, as indicated earlier in the chapter

### 3.7 The Response Process: Cognitive Dissonance

Results and analysis through grounded theory procedures identified the process (response) of cognitive dissonance to transgression in sport. The dynamic interaction of the internal and external factors discussed throughout this chapter, drive the cognitive dissonance process, which ultimately defines the core category – the “behavioural zone of tolerance”, located at the center of the developed theory, which can be seen in the in the CRT model in figure 11, presented earlier in this chapter.

#### **3.7.1 Transgression Flow Path**

Figure 16, on the following page, represents the “flow path” of a transgression occurrence and how the internal and external factors (discussed in this chapter) work dynamically, ultimately leading to the process of cognitive dissonance.

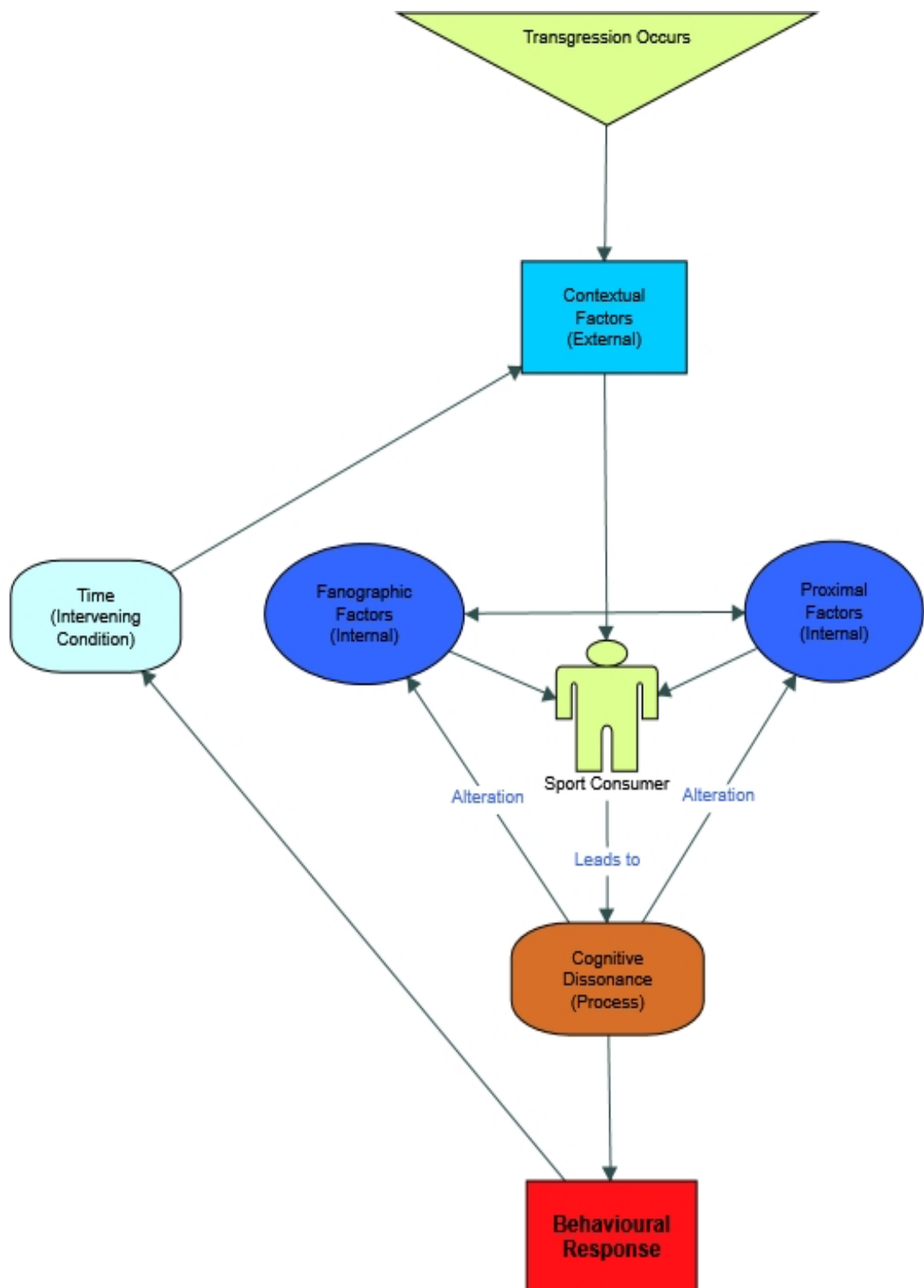
Cognitive dissonance is not a new phenomenon, its birth dating back many years through the work of Festinger (1957). Festinger believed that people naturally prefer

to have consistent cognitions as opposed to inconsistent ones. An exploration into the theory (Morvan & O'Connor 2017: 35) posited that:

*“Festinger details the human preference to hold cognitions and behaviours that are consonant (that is consistent) rather than dissonant (that is, inconsistent): “The individual strives toward consistency within himself. His opinions and attitudes, for example, tend to exist in clusters that are internally consistent”. Instances of inconsistencies, or dissonance, are “psychologically uncomfortable and will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance””.*

The action-interaction of participant's, when transgression (stimuli) occurs, results in the cognitive dissonance process (dissonance reduction) through the conflict of an individual's Attitude, Belief and/or behaviour. The outcome of dissonance process results in the alteration of one or more of the conflicting elements.

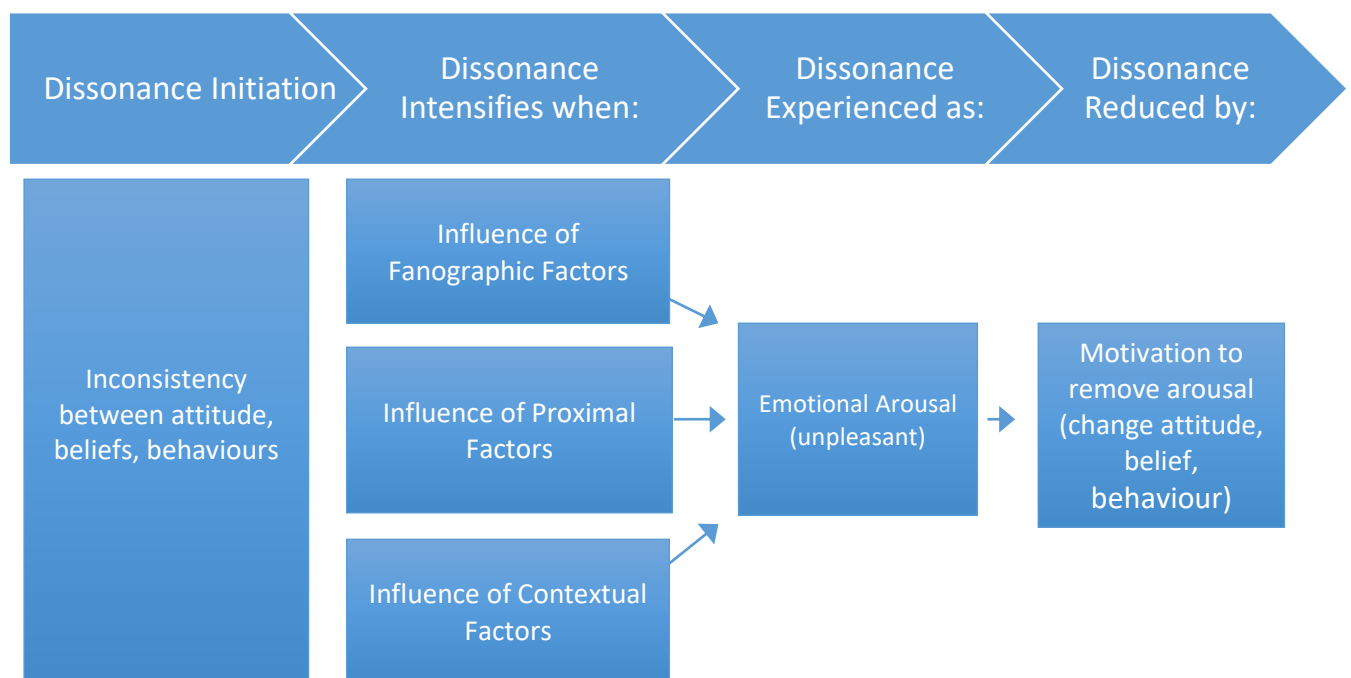
**Figure 16 - Transgression "Flow Path on Consumer**



### 3.7.2 Cognitive Dissonance Process

Analysis of the data through the employment of the paradigm, and constant comparison methods, the dissonance process identified (as shown in figure 16 above) is broken down and illustrated in figure 17 below.

**Figure 17 - Cognitive Dissonance Process**



#### **Key Points in the Dissonance Process**

- Highly dynamic nature of the influential (Internal & External) factors shaping perceptions and influencing the level of dissonance. Each factor is like a key ingredient, one small change and the composition of the dissonance process changes.
- The level of the dissonance drives the motivation to reduce dissonance. Therefore, the greater the dissonance experienced, the more motivation a sport consumer holds to change attitude, belief or behaviour.
- The transgression flow path (figure 16) illustrates how the dissonance process associates with (shown by arrows “alteration”) “Proximal & Fanographic Factors”. The dissonance process can lead to changes in either

(or both) of the internal categories. For example – IP1 highlighted that the extensive doping in cycling, especially Tour de France, has altered their Proximal Factors of beliefs (see excerpt in memo 18 on IP1) by reducing trust; additionally, their Fanographic Factors are altered in the sense of commitment (reduced consumption) to watching the sport

### **3.7.3 Time**

Time is a condition that impacted upon the dissonance process for two reasons.

Firstly, as data analysis progressed, the author was vigilant to how participants claimed that they changed as a fan over the course of time, not due to transgression, but due to a general alteration in their Fanographic or Proximal make-up, i.e.

“commitment” can weaken or strengthen (see for example chapter 3 – memo IP&7).

This change meant that the dynamic interaction of the Fanographic factors change, therefore changing the cognitive dissonance process if salient. Secondly, when a transgression case breaks, the dissonance process begins, and in some cases can shift over the course of time leading to a shift in the behaviour. This is due to many reasons of a conditional change, especially external due to a contextual factor, i.e. new information about the transgression case that is causing the dissonance or a response from the team/athlete that are involved (see for example 3.5.3.2).

Below I present the reflexive memo (25) of the concept over the data collection and analysis, and its importance in the developed theory.

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 25 - Condition "Time"**

#### **Concept/Condition Memo – “Time”**

16/11/15

At the point of analyzing the focus groups, time seems very relevant in comments how they “have changed as a fan”. This is not necessarily to do with transgression. Why it’s important is that their fan concepts change, which impacts how they respond to transgression. Time also is very relevant to the decision making/response to transgression. There could be release of new information, for example the media



may release something new on a particular case. The Patrick Kane incident discussed in focus group four, Kane isn't guilty at this point, and he is waiting the verdict. The participant that is very highly attached to Kane, isn't framing them guilty at this point. They really want to believe in their player, and of course their response (from what it is now) will change when the verdict comes out. Although it can't be ascertained what the response will be.

11/12/16

I am thinking about how "time" fits in with the concepts right now. I can visualize how it is a cyclical process in the model (CRT) I am drafting, which impacts on all the categories and concepts. Internal factors have the ability to change over time, i.e. participants have indicated how having kids has changed their "Fanographic" make up so to speak. I.e. lower commitment levels.

30/5/17

IP7 and IP8 interviews were very supportive of TIME as a conditional factor that changes not only the dissonance process, but the internal and external factors as well. This is why TIME is a continuous element illustrated in cyclical fashion in the CRT model. IP7 has changed their Fanographic makeup and is less attached and less committed to an extent, from how they were 10 years previous. IP8 indicates that they view athlete, "less god like", from when they were growing up.

#### *3.7.4 Emotional Arousal*

The emotional factors (observed and recorded in memos) have been displayed throughout this chapter with the evidence to support the internal and external factors. It was often a common place that emotions surrounded the participant's comments, which gave more explanatory power to justify the comments that were made. Furthermore, the purpose of reflecting on each focus group and interview,

immediately after they had taken place, were to capture the important cues of the participant(s) that would perhaps otherwise be lost. Recordings were carried out and captured via:

- Recordings in the memo's throughout this chapter
- Observational notes example (Appendix B)
- Interview and Focus group "post reflections" (see section 3.6 for examples)
- Reflexive diary Entries (See figure 7 – chapter 2)

Key words used describing negative emotions in this study were; anger, frustration, annoyed, cheated, disappointed, uncomfortable, grief, sad, heartbreaking and worry.

Positive emotions described as; Enjoyment, passion, thrill, excitement and love.

More on emotions are discussed in the following chapter with the literature.

### 3.8 The Substantive Theory: Behavioural Zone of Tolerance

Through the development of concepts and categories, and their relationships, the substantive theory of this study formulated the core category – **"the behavioural zone of tolerance"**. The in-depth detail and articulation of the internal and external factors have identified the factors that form an individual's "perceptions" of a transgression, and the role that these factors play in the cognitive dissonance (response) process. The CRT model (see 3.4 & figure 11) represents the emerged theory with the core category central to all sub-categories.

Here I present a descriptive theoretical memo (Strauss & Corbin, 2015), which illustrates the development of the "Transgression Response Typology Matrix" (figure 18) of sport consumers and their response to transgress in sport; – **Dislocator, Rationaliser, Neutralist and Erratic Ethical.**

### **Chapter 3 - Memo 26 - Behavioural Zone of Tolerance**

#### **Core Category – Behavioural Zone of Tolerance**

##### **Conceptual Summary Memo**

Throughout analysis, I have been very vigilant to the definition of a core category provided by Strauss and Corbin (2015) -

*“The core category, or concept, which is also known as the central category, represents what researchers determine is the main theme of the research”.  
A core category is a concept that is abstract and broad enough to be representative of all participants in the study”.*

Throughout the entire data collection and analysis process, the ultimate goal of this study was to ascertain perceptions and responses’ of sport consumers to transgression in sport. With that in mind, a common theme amongst participants surrounded the early code - “level of the transgression”. At first it was difficult to ascertain what this meant to a participant, certainly there was no generic indication standing out of what the “level” was or is. Factors that eventually came to fruition on this “level of the transgression” were ultimately different for participants depending on the internal (Fanographic and Proximal) factors present (or not) to a particular participant; and the external (Contextual) factors that were present (or not) to a particular transgression case.

The dynamic interaction of the internal and external factors often resulted in psychological discomfort (dissonance) being experienced by participants.

This ultimately led to the process of participants reducing the dissonance and leading to the alteration of one or more of the attitude, beliefs or behaviours.

Given a key aim of this study identifying the response of sport consumers, a typology matrix (figure 18) developed based on four typology classifications. The typologies

developed provide an abstract level of understanding to the “behavioural zone of tolerance”.

It is extremely important that the response of a consumer can shift to any of the typologies if there is an alteration to factors (internal or external) over the course of time.

**Dislocator** – High levels of dissonance experienced due to high influence of internal (Proximal and Fanographic) and external (Contextual) factors being present. Behavioural response of the sport consumer will dislocate their support for their team, athlete and/or sport. Cases of transgression that would see this type of behaviour are systematic problems of Sporting Transgression, such as the doping within cycling. Other cases of Sporting Transgression are match fixing and spot fixing, especially if the consumer in questions is a fan of the guilty athletes. Player transgressions, such as extreme law breaking; murder, domestic or sexual abuse and also consuming grade A drugs often result in dislocation of supporting the guilty athlete. Excerpts used throughout analysis have shown where participants would or have stopped buying game tickets, memorabilia, and other methods (TV, online) of consumption in this typology category.

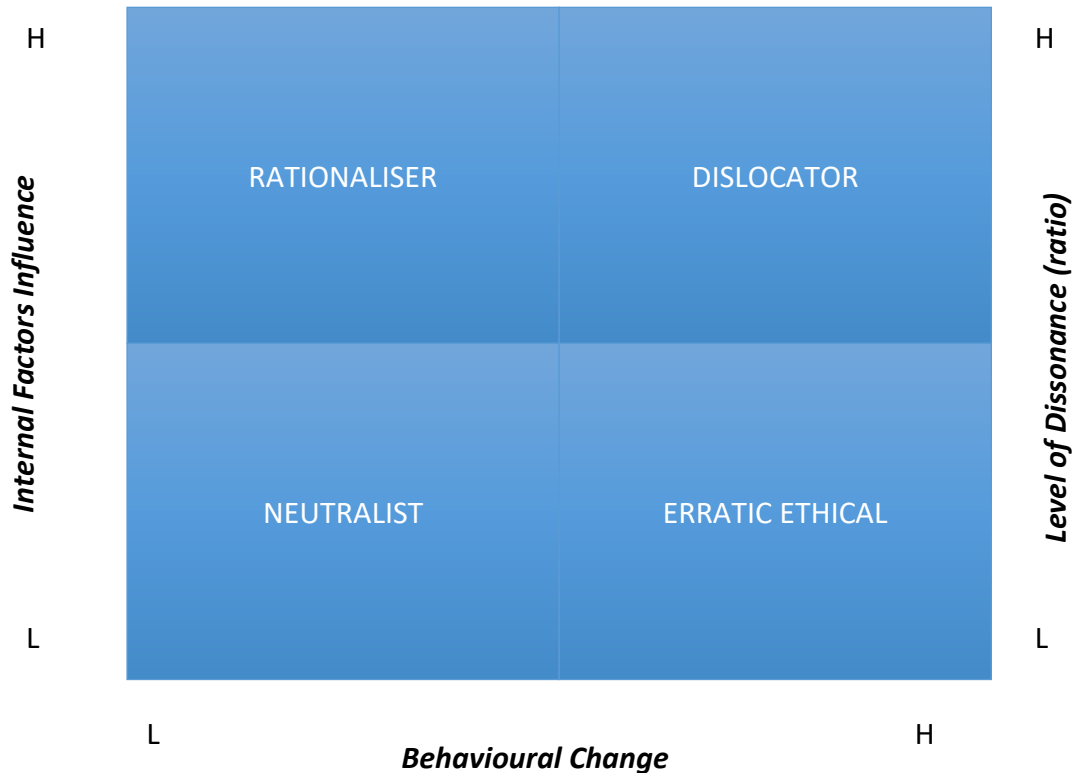
**Rationaliser** – High levels of dissonance experienced due to high influence of internal (Proximal and Fanographic) and external (Contextual) factors being present. Behavioural response is low, meaning the consumption pattern that existed for the Rationaliser before the transgression, is maintained. Instead of altering the behaviour, as a result of high levels of emotion (dissonance), the response is an alteration of attitudes and beliefs. I note this type of behaviour has been posited by Festinger (1957) & Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, (2007). The Rationaliser justifies transgressions in order to maintain consonance (no dissonance) and continue (behaviour) supporting their team and/or athlete. This may even be the case of altering their attitude or beliefs in order to give unjustified explanations of transgression behaviours. This behaviour was evident in the data when participants showed biased attitudes in an effort to protect the athlete/team involved in the

transgression. FGP21, for example, shifted their attitude to a player caught doping in the team they support. Their attitude shifted to thinking the athlete *“wanted to win for us”*. Oxford dictionary (2017) defines “rationalise” as; *“attempt to explain or justify (behaviour or an attitude) with logical reasons, even if these are not appropriate”*

**Neutralist** – Low levels of dissonance experienced due to low influence of internal (Proximal and Fanographic) factors being present. This is a common typology of fans that are not in support of the guilty athlete/team. They are, however, fans that consume sport in supporting other teams and athletes regularly.

**Erratic ethical** – The erratic ethical is the most volatile sport fan typology due to the relatively low influence of internal factors present and therefore low levels of dissonance when transgression occurs. The exception is the presence of one of the proximal factors- “morality”, hence the name erratic (as a sport consumer) and ethical (morality). Given the low presence of Fanographic factors, these fans will change behaviour in not associating “the self” with a sport or athlete where transgression has occurred. If the erratic ethical continued their relatively low consumption, then this would cause increased dissonance. IP3 and IP4 were cases where there were low Fanographic factors present. However, behavioural change was driven by their morality. IP4, for example, indicated they consumed baseball (live attendance and TV) on an irregular basis, over 10 years, for social entertainment aspects rather than having strong emotions supporting the team or athlete. A systematic match fixing scandal broke out in 2008 across the league, which led to IP4 not purchasing game tickets or consuming games on TV.

**Figure 18 - Transgression Response Typology Matrix**



The Rationaliser and Dislocator are the consumers that, from a fan point of view, are the groupings that are connected to the entity involved in the transgression. For example, IP2 (see 3.6.1.2) is highly engaged with Wolverhampton Football Club, therefore their response to transgression (within the club) would see them placed in one of the top two quadrants. Which of these quadrants would be determined by the dynamic of their internal factors and the external factors of the transgression. For other sports that IP2 consumes, for example rugby, they indicate that their motive to watch is much different and their commitment and attachment points are lower. In the event of transgression in rugby they consume, their response may well see them placed in the neutralist category.

### 3.9 Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has outlined the data analysis process undertaken in this study. The initial section provided account to preliminary results from phase one illustrating the open categories generated and the formulation of the axial categories. The axial coding phase, using phase one and two data, was then illustrated via the conceptualisation paradigm model, memo's and diagrams; giving explanatory power to the three major categories of - Contextual Factors, Fanographic Factors and Proximal Factors that give rise to the response process of Cognitive Dissonance (see 3.7). Finally, selective coding led to the development of the core category – “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance”. The CRT model presented at the beginning of this chapter (see 3.4 and figure 11) illustrates the dynamic nature of the axial categories, which highlights the response of sport consumers to transgression in sport.

The focus of the next chapter is to situate this study in critical conversation with existing bodies of literature, integrating theory related to the internal factors (Proximal and Fanographic), cognitive dissonance, and consumer behaviour in the context of sport consumers.

# CHAPTER 4 – DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Chapter Overview

Presenting the emerged theory of the current study, the previous chapter (3) explicated the “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance”, which is illustrated at the center of the CRT (see figure 11) model. The Behavioural Zone of Tolerance is dictated by the continuous dynamic nature of the Fanographic, Proximal and Contextual Factors. As explained in chapters one and two, this grounded theory study returns to the literature after theory development, which then allows the researcher to place the emergent theory within the extant literature. Firstly, there is a systematic interaction with the relevant literature based on the internal factors (Fanographic & Proximal) of the emerged theory. This is due to the individual concepts being important, but not independent as such. The author points out that the contextual factors do not form much of the discussion in this chapter, they are however brought into discussions where relating to the internal factors. This in large is because the contextual factors are external of individuals and therefore generic in nature. Following the internal factors, the theory of cognitive dissonance literature will then be discussed, placing the response process identified in the previous chapter within the literature. Finally, the chapter will close with the methodological approach of this study providing supportive and extending contributions.

## 4.2 Key Consumer Concepts

### 4.2.1 Sport Consumer Theory

The extant literature on sport consumer behaviour has identified some key concepts in contemporary research that relate to the two internal factor categories –

**Fanographic Factors** and **Proximal Factors** (see 3.4 - CRT model figure 11); factors such as commitment, beliefs, emotions, fan identification and attachment. These will



now be discussed and presented in their relation to the internal factors of the CRT model.

Since the early 90's, there has been heavy focus on the research of sports fans, with particular attention on team identification to gain a better understanding of sport consumption patterns based on a sport consumer's identification level.

Contributions, for example, coming from the likes of Branscombe & Wann (1991), identifying that high team identification results in elevated self-esteem, which correlates with increased consumption; Trail et al. (2005) also indicating that the facilitation of self-esteem engenders conative loyalty leading to increased consumption (attendance & merchandise); Wann, Royalty, & Rochelle (2002) on team identification and motivation to predict emotional response in relation to the game outcome. These, and other early contributions on team identification, are claimed to have lacked strong theoretical foundations, which has led to research approaches applying construct measures that are somewhat "haphazard" (Lock and Heere 2017: 2). Further problems in the literature on identification of sport consumers come through the application of the theoretical frameworks; social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979) and identity theory (Stryker 1968). Whilst both sound similar, they are fundamentally different on their levels of analysis. This has resulted in multifarious definitions and conceptualisations of term "team identification".

The work of Cohen & Garcia (2005) indicated that those who are highly identified to a particular group, tend to reaffirm their membership when presented with negative information. Additionally, highly identified fans "exhibit biased attribution processing favoring their team" (Wann and Dolan 1994). Dietz-Uhler et al. (2002) investigated sport fans response to athlete(s) involved in transgression, via two types of response:

1. In-group bias effect – bias evaluation towards their in-group member through unjustified trust, even when information may indicate that, "the in-group member has failed".

2. Black Sheep Effect (Marques et al. 1988) – where the guilty member (athlete) is derogated by the in-group member (sports fan) as separate from the rest of the group.

Results from the of Dietz-Uhler et al. (2002) dismissed the black sheep effect through lack of evidence to support it, and instead, proved that fans evaluated the law-breaking athlete from their team much more highly than a law-breaking athlete from an opposing team. It is however, important to note that Dietz-Uhler's research did not include team identification in their study.

Fink, et al. (2009) on the other hand, included team identification in their research of off-field behavior of athletes (player transgression) and fan response. Results indicated that the higher identified a fan was to a team, the greater the need for them to achieve balance, when responding to player transgression. Furthermore, the response of the team in such a situation can be paramount. I.e. if the team supports the athlete after being involved in an off field scandal, this results in the sport fan with nothing positive to attach themselves too and thus can negatively impact fan identification. In contrast, Branscombe and Wann (1991) posited that identification acts as a buffer against feelings of depression and other negative emotions. Whilst their study focused on identification as the antecedent, Branscombe and Wann did also indicate that other important factors, such as family, work, age and so on, are important to the development of self-esteem and emotional experience.

Relating to the (above) studies of Dietz-Uhler, Fink and Cohen & Garcia, the findings of this study strongly posit that understanding the consumer on a conceptual level (Fanographic Factors), is highly important to understanding a response.

Furthermore, the contextual factors identified in this study are extremely important and therefore it is difficult to accept the validity of Dietz-Uhler's (2002) study. In reference to the "in-group bias effect", this behaviour was evident in the results of this study, where participants were biased towards athletes they support (see for example 3.5.1.3). The facts however, of the claims made are not as straightforward as Dietz-Uhler points out. Participants that showed high levels of attachment to a team, but not high levels of attachment to the guilty athlete in question, the in-

group bias was evident coupled with the black sheep effect, especially in the event of team success. The bias effect would see the response typology “Rationaliser”, see (chapter 3 – figure 18)

In sum, identity theory suggests that individuals have a personal identity – consisting of specific attributes like interests or ability; and a social identity - consisting of group characteristics, such as demographics and organisational affiliations, for example religions, social institutions, or important to this paper, sports teams. In respect to identity theory, Stryker (1980, 2002: 204) posited that *“people define themselves as unique individuals (person identities, role occupants (role identities), or group members (social identities)... An identity becomes activated (or evoked) in a social situation when an individual perceives that the meaning of the situation match the meanings of an identity)*. Table 9 below, provides a conceptual summary both identity approaches.

**Table 9 - Comparison of Identity Theory & Social Identity Theory**

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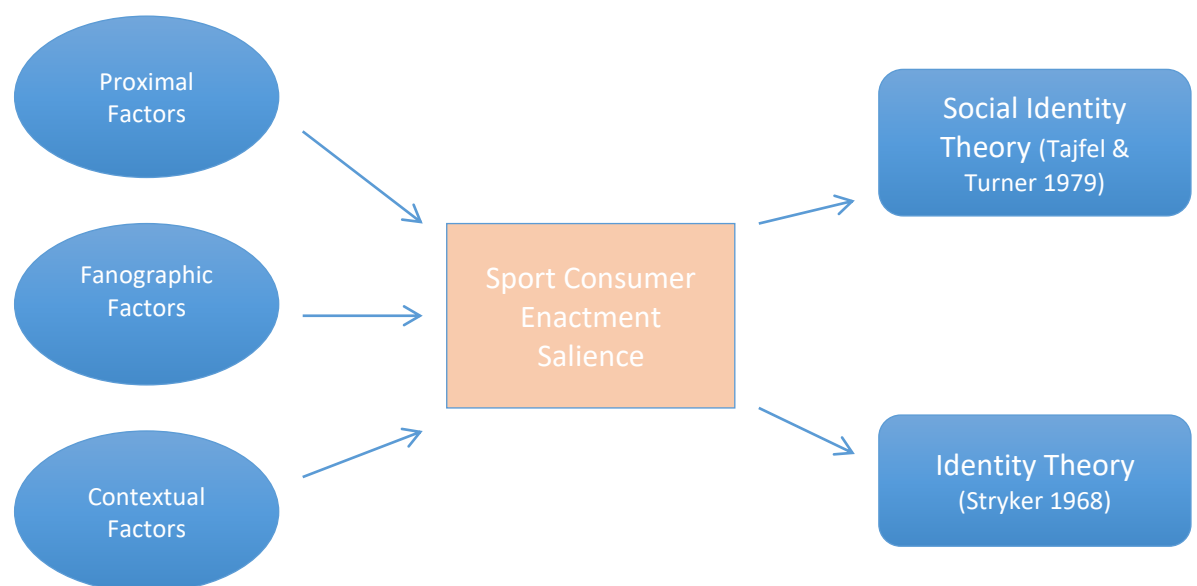
(Lock and Heere 2017: 4)

Literature on sport consumers through the social identity approach over the last two decades have focused on manifestations of identity strength (Branscombe & Wann

1991; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard 2000; Theodorakis, Wann, & Weaver 2010); image maintenance (Bernache-Assollant and Chantal 2009, Branscombe and Wann 1991); factors leading to team identification (Theodorakis et al. 2012; Fink et al. 2003). All of the aforementioned adding contributions in line with their studies (lock & Heere 2017).

The importance of discussing the two theories in table 9 is their relevance to this current studies theory developing the two internal categories “Fanographic” and “Proximal” (see chapter 3.5), which define the key constructs of an individual and the extent to which these factors influence the decision in response to transgression in sport. Referring back to chapter 3 – memo 2, data analysis led to the splitting of internal factors into the two categories (Fanographic & Proximal). The primal factor for this split was the variation in the response of consumers depending on the context of the transgression and their composition of the Fanographic and Proximal categories. This researcher supports the proposition of Stets & Burke (2000) and Lock & Heere (2017), claiming that there is a shift in behaviour based on the individual consumer and the context.

**Figure 19 - Sport Consumer Enactment Model**



(Source: This research)

The above model (figure 19) is proposed from the theory of this research to extend the understanding of sports consumers' response, based on the enactment of Social identity theory or identity theory.

Results of this study highlight the response differentiation of Player Transgression (PT) and Sporting Transgression. When PT occurs, the presence of the Proximal Factors are more salient, and the Fanographic factors more inconspicuous, which drove enactment salience of identity theory. Sport consumers, in the case of PT, behave in cognitive ways that protect their Fanographic make-up (their identity as a sport fan so to speak). The only exception to this being the composition of a sport consumers attachment point (see chapter 3.5.1.3), i.e. if the guilty athlete of the PT is a strong attachment point for a sport consumer, the salience of the Fanographic factors then become much more important and influential in the cognitive process (cognitive dissonance- see chapter 4.3). Particular examples in this study were consumers that had children, in response to law breaking behaviours of athletes (violent acts, murder, drink driving) impacting on their children. Role salience, consistent with identity theory, of being "a parent" was the primary cognition above any other. Contrastingly, sporting transgression (doping, match fixing) often saw more strength and presence of Fanographic factors, which drove the enactment salience to social identity theory. There was a need for in-group (their team) protection hence the salience of team identity being important to the individual. There was evidence of the same consumer shifting between theories. For example, discussion with one interviewee (see chapter 3.6.1.1) was about how they are very highly engaged with international sport (England). The discussion was around doping in cycling, and that they have dislocated from watching the Tour de France due to extensive doping cases. They do however; watch (increase consumption) it at times when a British rider is winning (success as context), i.e. because they are identified as in-group with British (nation) athletes, success of a UK rider alters their cognitions and behaviours, even though they don't trust the sport.

The Fanographic and Proximal factors are recommended as good foundational concepts that are important components of sport consumers' psychological process and should be considered in further studies, whether investigated dependently or independently.

Most recently, Chien, Kelly, & Weeks, (2016) investigated sports scandals and sponsor decisions in relation to team identification and fan attitudes; and even more recently, Kelly, Weeks, & Chien, (2018) on scandal frequency and social identity (team identification) driven response. In reference to the latter study, the scope was limited to off-field scandals where the scandal had no effect on gameplay. Their results indicated that off-field transgression of athletes could influence perceptions of associated stakeholders (the sport, implicated teams and associated sponsors). In reference to consumers of their study, scandal had a negative impact on the attitudes of fans that were "in-group" members i.e. a fan of the team that the transgressor is associated with. In contrast, out-group fan attitudes towards the team were relatively unaffected as their attitudes were already negative. Results of the current study can support the work of Kelly et al. (2016) but only on a superficial level for the limitation they themselves, conclude in their paper. Such as using real scandals and key intervening events that impact on the response over time.

The results of this current paper have highlighted the extremely dynamic nature of consumer interaction with internal and external factors. For example, this study identified that the response of the team ([external] contextual factor) was paramount to understanding consumer response. In a transgression case where the guilty athlete was removed from the team, then attitudes altered (to positive) across in-group supporters (see chapter 3.5.3.2 for details) due to dissonant emotions turning into consonant ones. The results of this study do concur with the argument of Kelly et al's. (2018), that one-off scandals are more dismissive. The results of this study accounted for this claim through the contextual factors (see chapter 3.5.3.5); indicated by the dimension of "systematic problem". Participants in this study often indicated that a systematic problem would be far more detrimental to their

behaviour in the sense of reducing their consumption for the team and athletes they support. This was specified by IP2 (see chapter 3.5.1.3) and their indication that they consume tennis due to their support (strong attachment) Andy Murray. In a situation where Murray is involved in a transgression and absent from the sport as a result, IP2's consumption of tennis would reduce. This further supports Kelly et al's. (2018) study, positing that the stronger the attachment point of a fan to the transgressive athlete, the much different their response is versus another "in-group" fan whose attachment is to another athlete or just the team in general. Again, this highlights one aspect of the highly dynamic nature to understanding behavioural response.

#### 4.2.2 Fanographic & Proximal Concepts

Leading sport consumer behaviour academics; Mahony et al. (2000), Fink et al. (2009), Gau et al. (2009), Parker and Fink (2010) investigated team identification and consumer motives, positing that fans higher in identification have higher motivation levels to attend games, buy more merchandise and travel to away games etc. Given the heterogeneous nature of sport fans, it is posited that different motives of each fan can ultimately create different responses to stimuli. Gau et al. (2009: 77) for example, proposed three sets of motives:

1. Enjoyment Motives – pure entertainment of sport and escape from general every day experience
2. Self-definitional Motives – sense of achievement and affiliation with a team. Strong link here with social identity theory and identity theory
3. Sociability Motives – social interaction with family and friends through attending sport

The findings of this study are appropriate to that of Gau's above in that when a participant identified their motive in consuming sports, there was a correlation with how they would respond. The majority of participants across this current study consumed multiple sports, but for different motivational reasons. One of the dimensional motives of this study (see 3.5.1.2) matched to number 1 (enjoyment) above. When this was the motive for participants in this study, the level of

dissonance experienced was significantly lower. In contrast, motives in relation to 2 and 3 above, saw high levels of dissonance and detrimental behavioural responses in cases some cases (for examples see chapter 3.5.2.3)

Wann (2008: 7) posited, “... *Studies have examined the possibilities that fans of different sports report distinctly divergent motivational patterns*”. Whilst this current study doesn’t disregard this statement by these studies, this current study argues that individual consumers report divergent motivational patterns across sports they consume (see for example chapter 3 - memo 18). This was highlighted in the previous chapter where participants indicated different motives for the various sports they follow, which ultimately led to different responses to the same transgression (composition) depending on the sport in question. This is further problematic for sport managers as a study investigating response to say, doping in football for example, this cannot be representative of a universal response. It can only be representative of the persons that participated confined to that sport. This study strongly posits that response is dependent on the dynamic nature of the internal and external factors (see chapter 3.4) identified in this study.

According to Hebb (1955), motivation is the process that energises and directs behaviour. Funk et al (2012) highlighted that research in the mid 1900’s focused on the “needs” of individuals, which identified key motivational concepts to better explain behaviour. This gave birth to the widely cited and applied theory - Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, which consists of both physiological and psychologically based needs. Some of the notable research approaches in the sport consumer arena have measured scales of eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, aesthetic, group affiliation and family (Wann 1995); also Trail & James (2001) measuring social interaction, physical attraction, family, escape achievement, drama and team image, for example. Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease (2008) investigated eight fan motives (escape, economic, eustress, self-esteem, group affiliation, entertainment, family, and aesthetics) and their relationship with the “sport type”. One problem identified by Wann within their study was the “family” subscale being able to correlate, although their criterion of the family concept was regarding the motivation to spend



time with the family. The focus of these aforementioned studies was on the motivations within the marketing domain, therefore investigating motivational links to purchase behaviours, sport consumption engagement and marketing stimuli. Additionally on these studies, and many others (Kwak 2011), they are dependent and constrained in their ability to assist the understanding of sport consumer response in a variety of contexts. Kwak (2011: 227) further posits that “motivational influence on emotion influencing subsequent cognitions, beliefs, or behaviour”, has been overlooked. This research has provided foundational groundwork in understanding the motivational impact on emotions (response process) in the context of consumer response to transgression in sport. More on the response process is discussed later in the chapter in section 4.3.

The results from this research identified that the role of motivational influence, on the response of sport consumers to transgression, is twofold. Firstly, if a consumer’s intrinsic motivation (that already existed before the transgression) is impacted by external stimuli (transgression), this subsequently will have an impact on their motivation to continue their current behaviour of attending sport events/games; for example, if a participant’s motive is to see “genuineness” (see 3.5.1.2) in sport (i.e. integrity) then transgression directly impacts their motive removing the key factor driving consumption; secondly, external cues can impact motivations and therefore alter ones behaviour i.e. negative emotions of close relationships that inflict on to the behaviour of others (see chapter 3 – memo 11). This research supports the argument made by Funk et al. (2012) regarding motivation on a conceptual level, meaning motivation is regulated by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Funk’s work adopted self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1980), which posits that behaviour is determined by the interpretation of stimuli based on an individual’s subjective experience; i.e. internal and external stimulus inputs directly or indirectly relate to peoples basic needs. This work of Funk was investigated via quantitative methods; this study therefore extends their work via qualitative enquiry.

The team response, as indicated in the results of this research are also highly important to impacting on the response of the consumers; also posited by Fink et al.

(2009) study. In saying this, very extreme player transgression cases of law breaking, i.e. killings, rape and domestic abuse saw a response, in this study, where dislocation (see chapter 3.8) of supporting the athlete was evident. How the team respond after such transgressions was even more critical in how consumers respond. If the team/organisation remains associated with the athlete in the case that one of these extreme cases occurs, then the perceptions across participants were negative and levels of dissonance increased immensely. The team response has the ability to reduce the dissonance in these situations based on their behaviour and actions post transgression. A gap in Fink's study above was its focus on off-field incidents only, and given the findings of this study, the response to Sporting Transgression was highly dependent on the nature of Fanographic and Proximal Factors. Systematic problems (i.e. doping in cycling) and match fixing cases were the type of transgressions that saw consumers dislocate from the sport or team they support. Again, the contextual factors of a case, and how they related to individuals internal factors were important to identifying the type of response.

Commitment has been investigated within the sport consumer literature, with a considerable amount of attention focusing on team loyalty (Mahony et al. 2000), or more commonly, affective commitment (see for example - Funk & James 2001; Kwon, Trail, & Anderson 2005; Trail, Anderson & Fink 2000). Allen & Meyer (1996: 253) define affective commitment to *"identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment"*. Kim & Trail (2011) highlighted investigative problems within the literature on the commitment of sport consumers, due to the concepts stemming from inconsistent conceptualisations. This claim is made due to many academics viewing the concept as unidimensional.

Mahony et al. (2000) utilised the loyalty model (figure 20), proposed by Backman & Crompton (1991), to understand consumer loyalty towards teams based on the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale. The PCT scale design consists of 8 questions, 4 of which determine team identity. Results from Mahony's et al. (2000) study showed that those fans who ranked high on the PCT scale (upper left quadrant), exhibited strong attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Their work did

indicate that levels of commitment “might” decrease in the event of something negative occurring in the team. Whilst their argument was made loosely, due to their quantitative enquiry, the results that emerged from this study support the claim via stronger explanatory power; however, this is also context dependent.

***Figure 20 - Loyalty Model***

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(Source: Mahony et al. 2000)

In relation to Mahony’s study discussed above, their proposition on attitude strength (psychological commitment) resonates with results of this study on the importance of commitment (see chapter 3.5.1.1) and attachment (see chapter 3.5.1.3) as a dynamic relationship within the Fanographic Factors. In the context of consumer response to transgression, the stronger a sport consumer is towards an attachment point (or points), e.g. player, team and/or sport, leads to strong levels of dissonance experienced when transgression occurs with the athlete in question. The response in this situation is either dislocation (“Dislocator” typology) of team or player(s) (see chapter 3.8, figure 18), or biased attitude attributes (“Rationaliser” typology) to protect the identity of the self and/or the team/athlete. Funk & James (2006: 178) definition of loyalty is “viewed as a commitment to a specific team that is persistent, resistant to change, and influences cognitive thoughts and behaviour”. This

definition is adopted in this study to assist the conceptualisation the term within the Fanographic factors category.

A key dimension of the Fanographic factors that emerged in the theory of this study, is “attachment” (see chapter 3.5.1.1), which is an important factor in the response process. When sporting transgression cases were discussed, such as doping and fixing, those that indicated high levels of commitment led to increased levels of dissonance. These types of commitment referred to in this study were behavioural (physical) commitment of sport consumers. I.e. time and money. Common themes in the data emerged with participants indicating that they would stop giving their time and/or money in response to transgression, such as game tickets and memorabilia purchases. This was particularly relevant to sporting transgression cases. There were some cases where the level of loyalty, as used in participants words, were extremely high, that fixing and doping didn’t have as detrimental an impact if loyalty levels were low. I make note here again, that any of the concepts in the theory of this study work in a dynamic fashion.

According to Kwak et al. (2011) there has been a considerable amount of research, which explores the role emotions play on sports consumers in response to various stimuli. Much of the research focuses on emotion as an outcome variable therefore, there is a gap in the understanding the subsequent cognitions and behavioural intentions and behaviour of sport consumers. Other areas of research on fans emotional response have seen some academics pay attention on distancing tactics (Bizman & Yinon 2002), motivation and team identification (Wann et al. 2002; Funk & James 2004; Potter & Keene 2012), and marketing (Kwak et al. 2011). What is important to note here, with reference to the aforementioned literature on sport fan emotions, is the association that emotions have with team identification, involvement and attachment to sports and athletes in order to reinforce the self-image. Additionally, and very important to this research, Kwak et al. (2011) indicated that it is not so much the event (either positive or negative) that produce the emotions, it is the individuals cognitions and evaluations that interpret the event.

Due to the heterogeneity of sports fans, it becomes problematic to indicate that sport fans will respond in the same way to a stimuli or event.

Sport marketers have been very proactive with advertising through a greater understanding that fan attendance, and its link with the “self-esteem enhancement” of sports fans, has a strong link of emotional arousal to stimuli. Given that consumers unconsciously engage into maintaining social image and self-esteem, two forms of image management tactics have been identified as BIRGing (Basking in Reflected Glory) (Robert et al. 1976) and CORFing (Cutting off in Reflected Failure) (Snyder et al. 1986). In the case of BIRGing, sport fans will look to associate themselves closer to the team or athlete when they have success i.e. “we won today”. In times of unsuccessful teams or athletes, fans will engage in CORFing i.e. “not sure who that team was out there today but it wasn’t my team”. Bizman and Yinon (2002) researched distancing tactics by sports fans in times of success and failure. Results indicated that fans engaged in distancing tactics that had an immediate effect on self-esteem and emotional response. Their results further posited that BIRGing or CORFing has the ability to affect one’s self-image. In support of this, End et al. (2002) provided insight into fans identifying more with teams when they were successful, ultimately, End et al concluded that fans will identify with a successful team leading to an increased level of BIRGing amongst these fans.

Whilst much of the BIRGing and CORFing literature indicates that individuals strategise to maintain public self-image, Cialdini (1976) and more recently Boen et al (2002), they do not preclude that sport consumers engage in BIRGing or CORFing irrespective of others, i.e. that sport consumers can also do this in a private manner. Boen et al. (2002) examined BIRGing and CORFing with sports fans in a private matter, i.e. irrelevant of the influence of others. What is noteworthy from their work is the proposition that *“social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) offers an interesting framework by which to interpret these intrapersonal motivations”* (p. 777). As explained earlier in this chapter on team identification, social identity theory refers to the individual evaluations (cognitive and emotional) of belonging to

a group. More on emotions and its influence on behaviour in this study, will be discussed with cognitive dissonance later in the chapter (see 4.3)

There are contrasting reviews in the literature on the term on the term nostalgia as a concept; for example Cho, Ramshaw, & Norman (2015) comment that nostalgia is a highly selective and positive view of the past. Furthermore, Davis (1979: 18) defines it as *“a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impeding circumstances”*. Contrastingly, other academics have argued that nostalgia is a negative emotion (Hertz 1990, Best and Nelson 1985). Results of this study support the considerations of Baker & Kennedy (1994) that nostalgia incorporates both the positive and negative. Results of this study highlighted that nostalgia, in some cases, was the salient motivational factor that drove behaviour. For example, some comments being *“the thrill of cycling [experienced when younger]”* (see chapter 3.5.1.2 - memo 5) led to continued consumption (although reduced) of sport even in light of doping cases, and irrespective of a negative attitude towards the sport. Further consumers indicated watching the same sport in other contexts (such as lower levels), due to transgression. For example, a comment indicated the behavioural alteration *“reminds me of why I loved football [indicating nostalgic emotions]”* (see chapter 3.5.1.2 – memo 5). This positive influence for participants was based on their past sport experiences, identified in the *“Proximal Factors”* of this study (see chapter 3.5.2). In contrast, one participant commented how they feel football has moved away from what they enjoyed about the game in the past.

IP7 – *“that is where modern football is becoming, it’s like retail park (football grounds), it doesn’t matter where you are it looks the same, feels the same. The teams or names might change but ummm, so I have become disillusioned”*.

The excerpt highlights that nostalgia is present in a negative dimension, creating a level of dissonance at the present time for the participant. In the event of additional

negative stimuli for this participant, implications, in a behavioural sense, are of real concern for sport managers and marketers.

Cho et al. (2015) researched nostalgia within the sport tourism context, concluding that different experiences lead to different levels of nostalgia being experienced, which the author of this study supports. Further to this the results of this research highlighted that time is key mediator to nostalgia. In reference back to IP7 comments above, they have been a fan of Liverpool since the 70's, therefore the changes over this period of time are not relatable to the changes for someone who became a fan in 2010.

Grounded theory approaches into consumer response to transgression have received very little attention. Manouchehri et al. (2016) produced a grounded theory study on the effect of doping on sports marketing in Iran, with the key focus of the paper aiming to identify the effect on consumer purchase behaviour.

Their claim is that dissonance is evident although there was no evidence to support the dissonance process. As highlighted in this study, the conditional factors (internal and external) are absolutely paramount to understanding the cognitive dissonance process. The author of this study further contests their research based on the methodological procedures, for example the application of the axial coding phase appeared to be lacking in methodological procedures, additionally, there wasn't a single reference to any of the four (Strauss, Corbin, Glaser and Charmaz) key experts in the grounded theory arena.

#### **4.2.3 Media and Trust**

It's fair to comment that a majority of sports publicity occurs through the many streams of media coverage (Bruce & Tini 2008), and given contemporary technology, reach a global audience at an unprecedented pace. As Jones (2008: 235) has posited, it's fair to agree that the media coverage of sport and its personnel is like a "double edged sword". This two-fold effect simply indicates that the media can create strong relationships for sports fans, but at the same time it can also destroy this relationship.

According to the English Oxford dictionary, Trust is “*Confidence in or reliance on some quality or attribute of a person or thing, or the truth of a statement*” (Oxford Dictionary 2011). Researchers, Mayer, Davis & Schoorman (1995: 237), have defined the term as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to another party”. Bee & Kahle (2006) have highlighted that the use of trust, as a construct influencing fan attitude and behavior, has received minimal attention from researchers. It is posited by many that trust is a central factor in successful relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt 1994) and that trust is the essential element for long-term relationships (Doney & Cannon 1997; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremler 2002).

The nature of sports fans, and the sport industry as whole, makes for a complex ordeal in the sporting context when factoring trust. It is the interconnectedness of fans, players, coaches and teams where relationships are created and based (Lee et al. 2013). With that being said, it is believed that fans create a positive relationship, or are more likely to initiate a relationship, when their expectations are consistently met (Wu et al. 2012). Wu et al. (2012) provides support around this trust relationship, using evidence from the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL). The breakout of two game fixing scandals, in the CPBL seasons 1997 and 2005, led to a 50% drop in attendance immediately after the scandals broke. This evidence supports the belief that commitment reflects the level of trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001), and ultimately, the higher level of trust will lead to a positive influence on behaviors. In contrast, the work of Swanson et al. (2007), which looked at the mediating role of trust and satisfaction, found that trust alone did not impact consumer intentions supportive behaviors – i.e. purchase of tickets. This perhaps then, fits with the notion of fan identification or fan attachment, where by fans who are satisfied with a successful team they support may not be as negatively affected when trust issues come to light. The results of the current study argue Swanson’s study being based on behavioural intentions only through attitudinal measurement. Additionally, they didn’t include any consumer variables, therefore not knowing if consumers were first timers or, have been attending for years. As mentioned throughout this study, understanding the context of the consumer is vitally important to understanding a likely response. Results on trust in this study (see



chapter 3.5.2.2) illustrate that trust has had a direct impact in consumers dislocating from sports that they have low levels of trust. For example, cycling was discussed many times throughout this study, with many consumers indicating that they have stopped watching or attending the sport due to the systematic doping over the last twenty years.

It is believed that a major portion of trustworthiness is explained through three characteristics (Sirdeshmukh et al 2002), and perhaps that these characteristics are important in the trust building relationship. According to Mayer et al. (1995), these three characteristics, through an individual's perception of the party, are defined as:

1. Competency – is a set of skills applicable to a single, fixed domain
2. Integrity – can be found when a trustor perceives that a trustee adheres to a set of moral principles that a trustor finds acceptable
3. Benevolence – the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive.

Within the sporting context, integrity stands out to be of a big importance. It can be fair to say that most stakeholders are under the assumption that the sport they consume is legitimate. It is this legitimacy of sport that links up strongly with the “uncertainty of outcome” in sport, also known as the “core element” (Mason 1999, Chadwick 2009). As Schuman (1995: 129) defines it, *“Legitimacy is a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”*. When sport therefore, becomes subject to transgressions, a negative impact on consumers trust towards the integrity of sport, and its legitimacy, becomes threatened. Take the case in the NBA, which involved a referee (Tim Donaghy) betting on games that he officiated. Donaghy pleaded guilty in 2007, which in turn made NBA fans question the integrity of the sport, and ultimately the distrust of the entire NBA (Lee et al. 2013).

Lee et al. (2013) investigated regaining fans' trust after negative incidents (competency-related vs. integrity-related) and response types (apology vs. denial),

positing that when the violator adopts an apologetic response, the respondents are likely to perceive the violator more favorably. The results of the current study support the work of Lee. The levels of dissonance experienced in this study were far greater when the guilty athlete was lying. The case of Lance Armstrong was discussed many times in the results (see chapter 3.5.3.1) that the continuation of lying led to much greater impacts on sport consumer. From a behavioral perspective, the results of this study showed direct links to impacting on behaviour, such as attending live and watching on Television (see 3.5.2.2). The extension this study makes to the findings of Lee is twofold; firstly, the profile (role model status – see 3.5.3.1) of the athlete is an important factor in the response process; secondly, the response process is also very dependent on the nature of the attachment of the sport fan. Cases where the attachment was very strong towards the guilty athlete saw mixed results. Chapter 3 – memo two discussed the response of their father (very strongly attached to Lance Armstrong) was emotional in the sense of sadness. Their father's emotion resulted in a response of attitudinal bias (See typology "Rationaliser" chapter 3.8) claiming that Lance was "leveling the playing field" (meaning all riders were doping). The emotions (upset/sadness) of the father transferred onto this participant (FGP12) even though they weren't a heavy supporter of lance like their father.

One of the biggest detrimental factors on consumer trust, that sport organisations face, is that trust can be damaged even without any proof. The media proves to play a significant role when transgressions occur (Storm & Wagner 2011), and with a synergy effect of public interest coupled with, the ability of the media to transcend transgressions globally, has resulted in scandals becoming more frequent (Thompson 2000). Whilst the media can damage sports fans trust, it can also be a catalyst for sports organisations to gain forgiveness and aim to rebuild trust when it's lost. Both Benson (1988) and Coombs (2006) both posit that, in the event of a scandal, strategic and effective communication is paramount in minimizing the destructive effect, and ultimately this impacts on consumer forgiveness. Sport organisations often utilise the many streams of media communication, such as Twitter and Facebook, to present information reaching the globe. Other factors that have a

major impact on forgiveness is often down to the personality of the individual, and therefore this highlights the importance of a strategic response to reach a large target market. More on the media in sports is discussed further in this chapter. Whilst individual personality is highlighted here, it's important to note that fan identification also plays a significant role in the trust relationship of fans and their team. Stemming from social identity theory (Taifel & Turner 1979), it's suggested that individuals perceive their social world (Lee et al, 2013) as "(a) in- group that the individuals belong to and (b) out-group that they do not belong to". This simply explains that individuals will tend to show bias towards their team, and or athletes. It is even posited that individuals will give unjustified trust in the event when an in-group member has failed (Dietz-Uhler et al. 2002).

The media plays a significant role in the dissonance process, especially in a contemporary world where consumers expect a media scandal on a daily basis (Trenberth & Hassan 2012). In addition, Storm and Wagner (2011) posit that the media have the power to amplify a scandal and report them globally. It is also at this stage, when the media publicise the transgression, that the transgression becomes a scandal. Further to this, the media also has the potential to influence individuals (Bush et al. 2004), and more important to the purpose of this paper, athletes as role models can be important influencers on lifestyles and consumption patterns (Martin & Bush 2000). Technological advances, such as online videos, have also increased the tangible elements to consumers creating even more fragility to the corporate world (Mattila 2009). In the light of transgression, consumers can be exposed to an overwhelming amount of information, much of which may be conjecture or rumor. This kind of exposure on consumers creates a psychological environment know as cognitive dissonance, a theory proposed by Festinger (1957). Cognitive dissonance theory is the mental stress that individuals experience when they hold two or more contradictory conflicting beliefs.

Looking at the media-sport connection, from a macro environmental perspective, sport organisations have less control over what is publicized, which proves a downside when negative stories are printed. According to Numerato (2009), there

are 3 dimensions to the macro social relationship between sports corruption and the media:

1. Political-economy perspective which encompasses the analysis of the relationship of sports to media advertising, sponsorship activities and product marketing linked to sports celebrities
2. Technology and new media that have enhanced the interconnectedness of the world. Some new media, which are not traditional sources such as Facebook and twitter, have heavily facilitated this global communication and the speed to which news can travel.
3. Analysis of the relationship between the media and sport corruption must be carried out in a context of societal corruption.

The author makes reference to the second dimension, technology, since the introduction of the Internet the world has seen interconnectedness at an extreme level. Sport organisations have taken advantage of social platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, using them as successful marketing tools with next to no cost in the process. In contrast, these social platforms have the potential to cause a massive burden in light of transgression. Athlete or celebrity behavior can be propelled at a rapid rate through social media sites; take Twitter for example, Twitter has the potential for a scandal to emerge rapidly and globally. Incidents such as the Lance Armstrong doping case, Tiger Woods infidelity and spot-fixing incident in the Pakistan Vs. England game, which found 3 Pakistan players guilty of bowling “no balls” for betting purposes.

Beech and Chadwick (2013: 425) posit that there are likely to be 3 truths to communication tactics as a result of a crisis situation: *“Firstly – the battle for public support is usually won or lost in the first few hours, necessitating a quick response; Secondly – it is essential to develop a crisis communication plan aimed at frequent and regular communication of organizational messages to the public; Thirdly – the more complex those procedures are, the less likely they are to succeed”*.

According to McGregor & Harvey (1999) and Shilbury, Quick & Westerbeek (1998), the ultimate effect that negative publicity has on sports organisations is their “bottom line”. This includes areas such as ticket sales, merchandise and sponsorship. The work of Gorse (2014) supports the aforementioned, especially from a relationship standpoint between the sport organisation and sponsors. Gorse’s work indicated that the media attention, surrounding transgressions in sport, could have a direct impact on the consumer’s image of brands associated with the transgressive party.

### 4.3 Cognitive Dissonance

Given the extensive and substantial research that spans sixty years (for example - E. Aronson 1999; Aronson, Blanton, & Cooper 1995; Bergmann, Heidt, & Maller 2010; Festinger 1957; Fontanari, Perlovsky, & Cabanac 2011; Frewer et al. 2011; Gregory-smith, Smith, & Winklhofer 2013; Harmon-Jones 1999; Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones 2007; Mcgrath 2017; Sakai 2002) on cognitive dissonance theory, the author presents a short overview of how this section of the chapter will unfold. Firstly, extant literature on cognitive dissonance theory will be discussed since its inception by Festinger in 1957; secondly, the literature that has focused on cognitive dissonance, within the sport context, and dissonance reduction, will also be discussed.

Results of the study found that consumer response resulted in the experience of dissonance, which is based on individual perceptions (interpretation), formed by the internal and external factors present (or not) when transgression in sport occurs. Reducing this dissonance, led to the process known as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957), and also driven by internal and external factors identified. This section of the chapter will illustrate the history and background of cognitive dissonance theory, placing this study within the literature.

An important quote made by Festinger (1957) resonates well to the results of this study due to the extremely heterogeneous nature of sports fans and that response

can vary drastically due to key factors, also identified as a key tenet in this study (see chapter 3.5). Festinger (1957: 15) commented:

*“Remember also that two cognitive elements may be dissonant for a person living in one culture and not for a person living in another, or for a person with one set of experiences and not for a person with another”.*

The above comments highlight that the response process is an extremely complex one, and the support in both the “Fanographic” & “Proximal” categories representing that the dissonance experience is individually based. This study adds to the existing literature on cognitive dissonance theory through the identification of “which” and “how” the cognitive elements are salient (or not) and processed by sport consumers based on their composition of factors (internal and external) that were identified in the previous chapter (see 3.5); and how they are important to sport consumer response to transgression.

In its birth, Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT - Festinger 1957) was seen as a major development in fields of consumer behaviour and social psychology (Morvan & O’Connor 2017). Festinger proposed that dissonance arises from inconsistency in individual’s cognitions resulting in the alteration of attitudes, beliefs and/or behaviors. Furthermore, cognitive dissonance theory posited three ways in which individuals will aim to reduce dissonance when experienced:

1. Change in attitudes and/or behaviors and/or beliefs - A behavioral change is claimed to be the most problematic for individuals especially when it may well be a well-learned behavior.
2. New information – in this case, the acquirement of new information will overcome a state of dissonance and therefore alter the current cognitive state. I.e. a smoking causes lung cancer although a smoker may claim that recent research has not fully proven such a case.
3. Reduction in cognitions – individuals will attempt to reduce their beliefs and attitudes in order to reduce dissonance. I.e. a smoker may

indicate that they are more likely to die from other causes than smoking, thus reducing dissonance and continuing the behaviour.

In terms of the attitude component of cognitive dissonance theory, attitudes are not as simplistic as favorable or unfavorable. The structure of an attitude is said to be the summary of evaluation as a point on an evaluative continuum (Bohner & Wanke 2002). Early academics (Rosenberg 1956; Steiner & Fishbein 1965) produced evidence that 3 major components make up the structure of attitudes; affect, cognition and conation, and are very much interrelated. Others however have criticized these claims, such as (Triandis 1971; Lutz 1991) have argued that separate measures should be considered, due to the weak links, when measuring the 3 important components.

Other criticisms on attitude measurement (Wilson and Hodges 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992) have concluded that attitudes are temporary constructs. In a research survey, for example, participants will decide and construct a response to a question from memory, or they may even create an instant judgment [response] on the spot. More recent researchers believe that attitudes are more temporary constructs in contrast to traditional researcher views of evaluative responses being more cognitively represented (Peterson 2005). In addition to attitude constructs, Stapel and Winkielman (1998: 634) have pointed out *“the context in which a target stimulus is embedded provides a frame of reference for interpretation and judgment. Hence, the same target can be associated with different responses depending on the context in which it is judged”*. When taking the heterogeneous nature of sport fans, Winkeilman’s work is important that fans attitudes may differ depending on the context it is perceived. Results in this current study, as an example, illustrated that the same sport consumer can respond to the same type of transgression differently across multiple sports that they consume, or respond differently to the same transgression depending on who the transgressor is (for in-depth review see chapter 3.5 onwards). In addition, the level of commitment and attachment (see chapter 3.5.3.1) that a fan has towards a team will reflect the strength in attitude in response

to transgression. It was not uncommon for the participants in the study to change attitudes as a method of reducing dissonance (see typology “Rationaliser” – chapter 3.8).

Additionally important to the understanding of cognitive dissonance is the relationship between the three cognitions that we hold; consonant (harmony), dissonant (unharmonious), or irrelevant (Morvan & O’Connor 2017). In reference to the latter, Festinger indicates that the irrelevant cognitions... are just that, they are irrelevant, he references them because they merely exist in our cognitions. The perceptions and response of consumers to transgression is pertinent to the three key tenets (attitudinal, behavioural, beliefs). Their importance and place in the emerged theory were discussed in the previous chapter (see chapter 3.5.2.2 & 3.8).

Cognitive dissonance theory was one of the more successful consistency theories in the mid 1900’s in relation to other consistency theories at that time (Beswick 2017). In the 1970’s, research on cognitive dissonance theory took off, with Wicklund and Brehm (1976) identifying thousands of CDT studies.

Whilst research subsided in the 1980’s, the 1990’s saw a shift back towards the topic (Laird 2006). Given the sheer volume of empirical research on cognitive dissonance theory, and the various distinctions put forward by researchers, it’s difficult to put CDT into a meaningful order (Brehm 2007).

The strength of the dissonance is a key determinant to the pressure on an individual to reduce the dissonance they experience. According to Festinger (1957) not all dissonance is the same and they also vary in strength - the amount of dissonant elements compared to consonant elements is termed the “dissonant ratio” (Beswick 2017). The results of this study found that the strength and presence of key internal factors (Fanographic and Proximal – See chapter 3.5 onwards). For example, “attachment point”, is a key property in the Fanographic category, when the attachment point relates to the guilty party in transgression, dissonance will increase. Additionally, the strength of this attachment point within a given consumer will also increase the dissonance ratio. The “Transgression Response Typology



Matrix” (figure 18 chapter 3.8) presents four typology response zones, with the Dislocator and Rationaliser experiencing the highest levels of dissonance ratio. These typologies will be referenced to throughout the remainder of this chapter.

According to Brehm (2007) there is little disagreement in the literature that cognitive dissonance should lead to changes that will reduce the dissonance experienced. Where disagreements have appeared in the literature is what factors affect the magnitude of the dissonance. In the mid to latter part of the twentieth century, various motivational explanations produced revisions of cognitive dissonance theory; which are - self consistency theory (Aronson 1968, 1999); self-affirmation theory (Steele 1988); and the action based model of dissonance (Harmon-Jones 1999). These models will now be discussed with contemporary application of them in the literature.

#### *4.3.1 Self-Consistency*

The argument posited by Aronson’s (1968, 1999) modification of cognitive dissonance proposes that dissonance did not occur through inconsistency of cognitions, he instead described dissonance as the way an individual acts that violates his or her self-concept. To define – *“the self-concept summarises the beliefs a person holds about his own attributes and how he evaluates the self on these qualities. Although your overall self-concept may be positive, there certainly are parts of it you evaluate more positively than others”* (Solomon 2018: 201). According to Aronson, individuals feel dissonance where the respective individual behaves negatively, or against what they perceive is contradictory to their self-concept. Referring back to table 9 in this chapter, Self-consistency theory correlates to social identity theory enquiry, where the “self-concept” is a key component. Context depending, evidence of participants responding in this manner was evident within this study. An example from this study (chapter 3.5.2.2 – memo 8) supports this theory where a participant indicated that their response to drug taking in the team they support would be behavioural (negative). They are a teacher by occupation, and their attitude held that doping in their team is not acceptable. This consumer

protects their self-concept (teacher) to justify their attitude formation and behaviour.

Other examples in the data correlate with identity theory (see chapter 4, figure 19) where role salience (parent for example) becomes the primacy when dissonance is experienced. I.e. the self-concept is threatened if consumers aren't a "responsible parent", based on athlete's transgressive behaviour. Results of the current study showed that sport consumers response to transgression can be heavily dependent on the response of teams and organisations (see chapter 3.5.3.2), i.e. severing a contract of a guilty athlete when the transgression is damaging to the team. It is in the interest of sport organisations, at times when transgression does occur, to reaffirm and drive the salience of important values across their fans, thus reducing dissonance. This elucidates the importance of understanding the results of this study are vital to sport managers management post transgression.

#### **4.3.2 Self-affirmation**

Steele's self-affirmation theory (1988) proposed that dissonance induced attitude change occurs due to a threat, giving rise to motivation, to the self-image or moral integrity. The difference against the original theory is that Festinger posits dissonance occurs via perceptions of inconsistent cognitions. The study of Steele experimented by inducing dissonance, with results indicating individuals become motivated to affirm self-integrity. According to Nail, Misak, & Davis (2004: 1895), self-affirmation theory is similar to self-consistency theory in two ways, *"First, both theories point to the critical role of the self in producing dissonance; consequently, both theories conceptualise dissonance as being grounded in the ego and not in a free standing need for cognitive consistency. Second, like self-consistency theory and for the same reasons, self-affirmation theory is relatively parsimonious"* – in relation to Festinger's theory.

A major tenet to both of the aforementioned theories is the esteem of individuals. Both indicating, in contrasting directions, that levels of dissonance correlate with the

levels of self-esteem, something that was not evident in the results of this study, possibly due to the adopted approach being qualitative in nature and not quantifying variables. It is the contradiction of self-esteem levels that set apart self-affirmation theory and self-consistency theory (Nail et al 2004). Where the two theories match up with the results of this study is that implication on “the self” can impact the level of dissonance experienced. Simon, Greenberg, & Brehm (1995) contested the findings of Steele’s experiments, supporting the explanation of Festinger’s original theory in that salience of important values could reduce an individual’s perception of the importance of the dissonant act. Some participants expressed how they felt “tarnished by association” in response to an athlete they support being caught for either forms of transgression (PT & ST). How the consumers responded was very much in relation to the context of the situation. For example, when an athlete was guilty of doping within a team supported by participants, one particular set of comments were “my friends know I support this team... I don’t want to be tarnished by association”. This was in the context of perceiving that their friends (not fans of the team) will paint them in the (negative) light that the guilty athlete is now in. The focus (see table 9) saw the salient “cognition element” of this sport consumer focused on social commitment to their friends (non-fans) in order to remove from the “group” (sports team) to protect “the self”. I.e. if they continue to support a team that accepts transgression behaviour, what does this say about the consumer and their integrity? That was a commonly themed unconscious, self-perceived question across the data.

#### *4.3.3 Action-based model*

Harmon & Jones (2007) indicate that the aforementioned theories of cognitive dissonance are supportive of dissonance theory over other revisions; however, their belief is that questions “why”, are still left unanswered. In addressing questions left unanswered by Festinger, Harmon-Jones (1999) proposed the action-based model to answer the “Why”? I.e. – why aversive consistency and why dissonance evokes a negative emotional state. The model proposes that *“inconsistency between cognitions makes persons uncomfortable because inconsistency has the potential to interfere with effective action”* (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007: 11). The

action-based model highlights that perceptions and cognitions are important and guide actions, when an individual holds two inconsistent cognitions, potential to act in accord with them is undermined. The main suggestions of extending dissonance theory here, is that a negative affective state is specifically aroused when cognitions and action implications conflict. In sum, when dissonance occurs, so too does a negative affective state, which creates motivation in the individual to engage in a behaviour to correct the problem. Throughout the data, there were a number of affective (emotional) states observed or recorded, or implicitly highlighted by individuals. From an observational point, anger and frustration were evident, particularly when the athletes or teams were strong attachment points to respective participants. This led to a different variety of responses, again, dependent on the internal and external factors. What is interesting in the action bases model, it argues that one “freely chooses” to engage in a behaviour that is against their attitude and/or beliefs. This was often the case across the data where participants didn’t want to dislocate from their favorite team/athletes, however, certain transgressions were not tolerable and therefore this response was the only option, even though it was against initial beliefs and attitudes. Across the data in this study, Player Transgression in the context of extreme law breaking (murder, homicide, domestic abuse) or extreme levels of Sporting Transgression (match-fixing to lose, and in some cases of doping) participants exhibited behaviours that were against their beliefs or attitudes. The results of this study identify and correlate with the suggestions of the action-based model. This study extends the action-based model in providing answers to the very questions its creators sought to answer – the “why”.

#### *4.3.4 The Multiplicative Power Function*

A relatively new model (in cognitive dissonance theory) that has received little attention by academics is the “Multiplicative Power-Function” model, introduced by Sakai (1999). Sakai’s model is the redefinition of the cognitive states of minds in that it:

*“Can be cognitive, emotional, or motivational – or even unconscious”, although the state of mind must always be expressible in a sentence by the person in question (Sakai 1999: 49).*

The MPF model identifies with the preceding models of cognitive dissonance discussed in this chapter, positing that the key cognitive elements of cognitive dissonance are identified as: “(a) *Behaviour related cognition* (Joule and Beauvois 1997, Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones 2007, Harmon-Jones and Mills 1999); (b) *self-concept about being consistent, competent and morally good* (Aronson 1999; Aronson, Blanton, & Cooper 1995; Stone & Focella 2011); (c) *being responsible for aversive consequences* (Cooper and Fazio 1984), and (d) *self-integrity* (Aronson 1999, Steele 1988)” (Sakai 2002).

The results of the emerged theory in this study reflects and supports the MPF model on the key cognitive elements – (a), (b) and (d) as shown above. In respect to these three, there was evidence of various cognitive elements salient in the response of participants, which were elicited in relation to the internal (Fanographic & Proximal) and external (Contextual) factors inducing the cognitive elements. Examples to the above MPF model (a-d) are:

- a) The behaviour related cognition – “dissonance results when one “freely chooses” to engage in behaviour that is inconsistent with attitude or belief” Harmon-Jones et al 2007: 11), therefore altering their attitude to be consistent with the behaviour. An example from the results of this study (see chapter 3.5.2.2 – memo 10) showed a sport consumer that shifted their attitude to continue their behaviour (attending games). The attitude from the consumer about the player doping was that “he wanted to win for us”. This participant was against doping (attitude) and didn’t want it occurring in their team, but in this case when it was apparent they did, their attitude shifted about the doping player to create less conflict in continuing to support their team. In reference to the Response Typology Matrix, this participant is placed in the “Rationaliser” quadrant.

- b) Consistency of the self-concept (Aronson 1995, 1999) simply implies, as indicated, that dissonance arises via cognitive inconsistency with a threat to integrity of the self. Using the same example as above (chapter 3.5.2.2 – memo 10), a participant contrastingly argued the claim (as it was focus group data) and indicated that their response would be opposite, i.e. they are a teacher by occupation, and their attitude held that doping in their team is not acceptable. This consumer uses part of their self-concept (teacher) to justify their attitude formation. Other examples in the data correlate with identity theory (see chapter 4, figure 19) where role salience (parent for example) becomes the primacy when dissonance is experienced. I.e. the self-concept is threatened if consumers aren't a "responsible parent", based on athlete's transgressive behaviour reflecting negatively onto their children (see chapter 3.5.2.4).
- c) Results showed no correlation in the data that supports cognitive elements of cognitive dissonance arise due to being responsible for aversive consequences (Cooper & Fazio 1984). The author of this study extends the argument of Harmon-Jones et al (1996) and Aronson (1999) that aversive consequences are not a necessary condition, especially in the context of consumer response to transgression, for dissonance to occur; however, it may add strength to dissonance.
- d) Self-Integrity preservation (Steele 1988; Aronson, 1999) is at the heart of cognitive elements here. Using the data (see end chapter 3.5.2.4), for example - "I don't want to be tarnished by association". This was in the context of perceiving that their friends (not fans of the team) will paint them in the light that the guilty athlete is now in, threatening their integrity as a person. This is consistent that cognitive tension is a "threatened sense of self-integrity" (Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993: 893)

#### 4.4 Recent Literature Enquiry

There has been some recent literature into the investigation of sport consumers' response/behaviour as a result of transgression. Lee, Kwak, & Moore (2015) investigated athlete transgressions impact on sponsor evaluations. They found in their study that cognitive dissonance was a prerequisite to the moral reasoning process that consumer engaged in. Their method approach was common with the majority of sport consumer literature via a quantitative approach assessing attitudes. The population for their study was university students on sport management courses with an average age of 32 across two phases of data collection. The results of the current study do confirm Lee et al's posit that cognitive dissonance occurs, and that moral coupling and moral decoupling are evident responses in the current study. Moral decoupling refers to a response where an individual separates the transgressors job performance from their immoral actions, which basically separates an individual's immorality judgment about a transgressor from their performance judgment. Contrastingly, an individual who engages in a response of moral coupling, an individual doesn't separate the immorality and performance, therefore the evaluation of the athlete carries over as negative attitude towards the athlete and brand attributes. The final response is moral rationalisation (Bhattacharjee et al. 2013), which is where individuals reconstruct immoral actions as less immoral in order to continue supporting the athlete. This latter response relates to a type of response that makes up the "Rationaliser" quadrant in the response typology matrix (see chapter 3.8 figure 18). There are arguments to the findings of Lee et al's (2015) study explained above. Firstly, their population sample was limited to university students with a considerable low average age. The current study found that those who had children (and generally older in this case) had different responses when a transgression impacted their children (see chapter 3.5.2.4). Their study didn't incorporate individual differences across the population, which is represented in this study as the Fanographic and Proximal factors. Chapter three elucidated how critical these internal factors are to understanding the response. Furthermore, Lee et al's study was limited to one on-field case (doping)

and one off-field (fraud) case. This is extremely limited given the response to the many other maleficent cases of transgression in sport.

Recent qualitative enquiry in to doping effects on sport marketing were carried out by Manouchehri et al. (2016). The focus of investigation was similar to Lee et al's (2015) in that their findings focused on the three types of response, as indicated above, with Manouchehri claiming similar results. The current study argues Manouchehri's finding via multiple factors. Firstly; it is reasonable to assume they adopted the Straus & Corbin's grounded theory approach (same as the current study) by using the open, axial and selective coding analysis techniques. They fail, however, to reference or cite Strauss and Corbin throughout the entire study. Furthermore, they fail to reference or cite any of the three major grounded theory approaches and authors Strauss & Corbin, Glaser, and Charmaz. This leads to the questioning of the credibility and validity in their grounded theory approach. Their investigation only focused on doping, which this current study extends the investigation to multiple cases of transgression. Their population sample was undergraduate students, which this study has highlighted, from the first two focus groups with students, is not a sufficient sample to support the evaluation criteria of grounded theory (see chapter 2.10).

## 4.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the place of the emerged theory within the extant literature. The initial focus (see 4.2) was identifying the importance of the internal factors on the dissonance process and their link with understanding sport fans perceptions and behaviours in response to transgression in sport. The latter part of the chapter (see 4.3) discusses the comparison of cognitive dissonance theory arguments and their fit within the emerged theory of understanding sport consumers "behavioural zone of tolerance" in response to transgression in sport. The development of the typology matrix (see figure 18) in the previous chapter conceptualises the dissonance process leading to four behavioural types –



Dislocator, Rationaliser, Neutralist and Erratic Ethical. For the definition breakdown of these behaviour types see chapter 3 – memo 26.

The next chapter will conclude this study by highlighting the theoretical and practical contributions. The contributions presented will be in the sporting context and wider industries where applicable. Limitations and future directions for research will be presented at the close of the next chapter.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter four discussed the emerged substantive theory of consumer response to transgression in sport and its place within exiting theories. This chapter will summarise the achievement of the study and present the professional, theoretical and academic contributions. Section 5.3 of this chapter firstly presents Table 10, which illustrates a visual representation of the contributions, theoretical and methodological. Following table 10, the key contributions made via the CRT model (5.3.1), identity theory & social identity theory (5.3.2), and cognitive dissonance (5.3.3), will all be articulated. The chapter will come to a close following a series of recommendations for future direction of research into sport consumers' behaviour, and sport consumer response to transgression in sport (see 5.4 onwards).

### 5.2 Achievement of the Study's Aim and Objectives

At the onset of this research, the aim of the study was to generate a substantive grounded theory elucidating sport consumer response to transgression in sport. The research question to address was:

*What are consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport?*

The perceptions of consumers are formed based on the dynamic composition of their internal ("Fanographic" and "Proximal") factors, and how they interact with the external ("Contextual") factors (see chapter 3.4 and 3.5). This interaction of factors identified the process of "cognitive dissonance", which ultimately dictates the response. Due to the very complex nature of understanding a consumers "behavioural tolerance zone", a typology matrix (figure 18) was developed to

identify the response categorisation of a sport consumer, which provided a description of the main behavioural types/definitions of the core category that emerged – “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance”.

The CRT (Consumer Response to Transgression) model (see chapter 3.4, Figure 11) developed in this study, represents all the major sub categories, the dissonance process, and how they intersect and interact dynamically to define a sport consumers “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance”. The objectives of the study have been achieved through the identification of the problem, the conditions (internal and external), and response to transgression in sport. Additionally important and relevant to the CRT model is the conditional element of “time”. This is important to the study for two main reasons; firstly, the relationship with the dissonance process where there can be a shift in the behavioural typology matrix if any of the internal or external conditions alter from their formation at the start point, where the cognitive dissonance process began (see chapter 3 memo 20).

### 5.2.1 Theory Evaluation: Scientific & Creative

As proposed by Charmaz (2006), as presented in chapter 2.10.4, the evaluation of grounded theory is based on four stages. For a more in-depth detail on the evaluation criteria for this research study – see chapter 2.10.

1. Credibility – This is elucidated throughout this thesis; in particular, the procedures carried out and presented in chapters two and three. Identified throughout this study, Strauss and Corbin’s grounded theory approach has been applied throughout.
2. Originality – Chapter’s four and five identify the originality contributions this study has made to both knowledge and practice (see below 5.3).
3. Resonance – this study has articulated real life experiences of participants, which has provided real accounts of behaviours in response to transgression.
4. Usefulness – the theory developed offers insights into its application for further studies and also to practitioners. Contributions to practice are discussed in 5.3

### 5.3 Contributions to Theory, Research and Practice

This study presents good foundational investigation into consumer behaviour that has potential to reach wider parallel areas of investigation within consumer response and behaviour, such as marketing & management. This study has also provided a framework for investigation via Strauss & Corbin's (1992) approach in the grounded theory arena, which has the potential to assist researchers should they employ similar qualitative investigations.

The key contributions, theoretical and methodological, relate to the key points as addressed in the discussion of chapter (4). The areas are:

- Social Identity theory and Identity Theory (see chapter 4.2.1)
- Team Identification and Fan Identification (see chapter 4.2.1 & 2)
- Cognitive Dissonance Theory (see chapter 4.3)
- CRT Model (see chapter 3, figure 11)
- Methodological Contributions

Table 10 below, provides an outline of the above points, following which will be a brief discussion of each topic.

**Table 10 - Theoretical and Methodological Contributions**

<b><u>Contribution to Existing Concepts/Theories</u></b>	<b><u>Supported</u></b>	<b><u>Extended</u></b>	<b><u>Challenged</u></b>	<b><u>New</u></b>
<b>Social Identity Theory &amp; Identity Theory</b>	- Ervin & Stryker, (2001) Self-esteem and identity theory are related, that they mutually impact behaviour	The compositional makeup of the internal and external factors of the “behavioural zone of tolerance” dictates which theory becomes salient in response to transgression  Response to Player Transgression creates behaviour that makes Fanographic identity more inconspicuous in comparison to Proximal factors	Both theories are not independent of a consumer in response to transgression. Both exist simultaneously and are context dependent. Studies posit over-emphasis on one theory or overlap definitions causing obfuscation	Enactment of Personal Identity Model. In the context of consumer response to transgression in sport, response salience is internal and external, factor dependent (dynamic).
<b>Team Identification and Fan Identification</b>	Locke & Heere (2017) Identity crisis of understanding sport consumers	Conceptualisation of sport consumers as “Fanographic Factors” & “Proximal Factors”	Misguided multifarious applications of social identity and identity theory across sport consumer studies.	Fanographic and Proximal categories combine as a sport consumers identity in Transgression response context
<b>Cognitive Dissonance Theory</b>	Festinger (1957); Behaviour related- Harmon-Jones (2007), Harmon-Jones & Mills (1999); Self-concept- Aronson et al, (1995), Stone & Focella (2011); Self integrity- Aronson (1999), Steele (1988)	Sakai’s (1999) Multiplicative Power Function model within the context of sport consumer response to transgression. (removing aversive consequences- see right)	Cooper & Fazio (1984) no presence of aversive consequences to support applicability.	Dissonance process of sport consumer defining the “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance”

				"Sport Consumer Typology Matrix" developed to provide a framework to enhance understanding in practice and in knowledge of response types.
<b>Emotions</b>	<p>Baker &amp; Kennedy (1994) nostalgia being positive &amp; negative</p> <p>Ervin &amp; Stryker (2001) Self-esteem and identity theory are related – cognitions of the self and emotions are intertwined</p>	Emotion and the self are critical in the dissonance process of sport consumer response to transgression	Best, Nelson (1985); Hertz, (1990) concluding nostalgia is a negative emotion	Nostalgia is both negative and positive in the context of sport consumer response to transgression. When positive, can reduce dissonance to increase behaviour
<b>Methodological Contributions</b>	The application of procedures in substantive grounded theory in the context of consumer response to transgression in sport	Evidenced theory based on conceptual development of categories adding to Strauss and Corbin's methodological approach.	Over dominance of quantitative enquiry in to sport consumer behaviour.	Grounded theory study of sport consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression - Represented through the CRT model

### 5.3.1 The CRT Model

The major contribution of the present study is the emerged theory of the Behavioural Zone of Tolerance, as the first attempt to understand consumer perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport - via a grounded theory approach. The section 5.3.1 above represents the internal and external factors of the model, and the place of extant literature that assisted the categories within the model. Section 5.3.2 above, explicates the dissonance process as a result of the extremely dynamic nature of the internal and external categories.

The full interaction of the CRT model (figure 11) elements dictates a sport consumer's zone of tolerance. With that said, this is the most significant contribution of the model to both theory and practice.

### 5.3.2 Social Identity theory, Identity Theory and Sport Fan Identification

Here the author relates to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979) and identity theory (Stryker 1968), and how both have been important applications in understanding fan and team identification. As explained in chapter 4.2, there is much confusion in the sport consumer literature on these theories and their applications. Some have misunderstood the differences between the two in trying to explore fan (as individual) and team (as group) identifications. The current study extends and supports the work of Locke & Heere (2017) and Stryker (2001) in that both theories are applicable to consumer response to transgression in sport. The theory produced in the current study posits that the response process justifies their (a consumer) response based on factors that are internal and external. There is evidence that some responses will protect the group identity to which an individual belongs, other instances, role salience (such as being a parent and protecting their children) will dictate the response process.

The "Fanographic Factors" category developed in this study for two reasons; Firstly, the category provides important concepts that conceptualise the compositional makeup of a sport consumer (as a sport fan), playing a key role in the response process; secondly, the confusion that exists in the literature regarding sport fans led to the development of the

new framework that can be applied, and amended/extended where necessary, in the investigation of sport consumers in future studies.

The “enactment of identity” model represents how the dynamic of the internal and external factors interact to drive the response salience based on the two identity theories explained throughout the discussion chapter. Player transgression often saw a higher influence of proximal factors, which drove cognitions in line with Stryker’s identity theory. In contrast, sporting transgression would see a much stronger presence of the Fanographic factors, which would often lead to cognitions in line with Tajfel & Turner’s social identity theory. The extension to theory in the current study is the dynamic natures of the factors that identify both theories do not exist independently in the context of consumer response to transgression in sport. The development of the “Sport Consumer Enactment Model” (see figure 19), illustrates that the factors (internal and external) dictate the salience of cognitions and behaviours in the response process.

### 5.3.3 Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The “Behavioural Zone of Tolerance” elucidated the very complex and dynamic nature of the interaction between the internal (Fanographic) and external (Contextual) factors, which guide and inform the dissonance process of a given sport consumer. The emphasis in the extant literature is that three of the four posits taken from multiplicative power function model (Sakai 1999) of cognitive dissonance explains the cognitive element around which the dissonance exists in sport consumers response to transgression. The response process in the current study found the cognitive element is identified as behavioural related; consistency in the self-concept and moral equilibrium; and related to self-integrity. The fourth factor of the MPF model incorporates aversive consequences, which results of this study did not correlate to. This study therefore recommends future research to investigate consumers’ post-transgression attitudes and behaviour with a considerable amount of time between the transgression occurring and the sample being studied. This will allow further investigation into the possible consequences of decisions that were made previously. To provide a more conceptual identification of behavioural response types of consumer behavioural zone, the “transgression response typology matrix” was developed as the first to present response types (see chapter 3.8, figure 18).



### 5.3.4 Methodological Contributions

This study provides advances to the consumer behaviour literature in a variety of ways.

Firstly, the application of grounded theory on sport consumers (as a general enquiry) is of extreme value and one that remains to be thin in the literature. Funk et al (2016), leading authors in the sport consumer behaviour (SCB) arena, have indicated the narrowing of methodological approaches to the field of SCB. Most of the recent enquiry has been predominantly attitudinal surveys, which are limited to understand a more in-depth account for other environmental factors, or their dynamic interaction with internal factors, on SCB. With that said, Lynch (2013) reviewed grounded theory as method of consumer behaviour enquiry highlighting three advantages (Pettigrew et al. 2000: 5) that fittingly represent the contributions of this current research: *“First, the method was designed for use in sociology and therefore is highly applicable to the influence on consumer behaviour. Secondly, it is appropriate for in situ analysis of behaviours which is highly relevant for consumer research; and finally, its purpose is to generate theory”*.

The emergent substantive theory is not based on previous theoretical frameworks; the author encourages the application of the emerged theory in future studies of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The nature of the theory in this study being grounded, also presents the options for the theory to be modified based on new data collected in future studies.

## 5.4 Contributions and Implications for Practitioners

The development of the grounded theory in this study has two main benefits to practitioners. Firstly, theory provides in-depth knowledge into the types of response to a transgression that has occurred; Secondly, the understanding that the response of practitioners, after transgression occurs, is hugely important to reducing the negative fallout. In reference to the former benefit above, this study highlighted and categorised four main behavioural typologies - Rationaliser, Dislocator, Neutralist and Erratic Ethical (for

detailed description of these see chapter 3.8). If sporting transgression or player transgression does occur, the typologies provide a level of reference point.

Based on the emerged theory, some key recommendations from this study are presented below.

#### **5.4.1 Utilising the Internal Factors**

The emerged theory has identified important internal factors that are particularly relevant to sport fans as individuals and how they interact with stimuli. It is recommended that practitioners research their fan base in-line with the factors identified in this study. By understanding “their” fans/fan base characteristics, it will benefit how they strategise their post transgression response, should it occur to reduce negative fallout. I.e. understanding which fans likely fit into which quadrant of the typology matrix. Additionally, these characteristics are not confined to transgression, they also have the ability to identify to practitioners on what “type” of fan they are to the respective team/organisation. The result could assist other key business functions, such as marketing strategies adopted to suit the needs of their fans based on their Fanographic and Proximal factors. For example, knowing that certain fans have relatively low commitment and attachment, what strategies can be employed to increase these elements? Engagement strategies on the brand are likely to see an increase in both commitment and attachment.

#### **5.4.2 Utilising the Matrix**

The top two quadrants of “Rationaliser” & “Dislocator” (see 3.8) are the fans that resemble high levels of Fanographic factors. They are the fans that are linked/support the team/athlete/organisation that are central to a transgression. These fans experience high levels of dissonance and their movement in the quadrant can at times be volatile. Especially if contextual factors alter, i.e. media release new information. Practitioners have the ability to employ dissonance reduction strategies, which will inevitably reduce the negative impact of consumer response. Transparency has proved to be a key element throughout the response process, and also time. Communication is advised to happen as soon as immediately possible given that the cognitive dissonance process can alter at any point,

maybe from speculation press release or even word of mouth. A further strategy to reduce dissonance in transgression situations is releasing tangible marketing tactics that reaffirm positive emotions (nostalgia) on the identity of the team/athlete/organisation. Nostalgia, in this study, was a motivational factor that often drove behaviour. With a better understanding of a fan bases motives, employing marketing tactics that drive these in times of transgression can reduce fallout on their bottom line

The bottom two quadrants are the categorisation of fans that have low levels of dissonance for multiple reasons; the “Neutralist” is found to have lower levels of Fanographic factors present, which are for two reasons. First, this represents fans of opposing teams, therefore in light of transgression their dissonance would remain low (with the exception that a transgression doesn’t indirectly impact their team/athlete). An example of the Neutralist in this study is IP6 (see 3.6.1.3), in their position (context) as a fan of the NFL only. IP6 supported the NFL for entertainment purposes (motive) only, with very little strength in attachment and low levels of commitment. In light of transgression, they would be placed in the Neutralist quadrant for most transgression types, other than a systematic problem (i.e. match fixing of multiple athletes or extensive doping). Contrastingly, IP6 would be placed in one of the upper quadrants if a transgression occurred in rugby, this is due to the internal changes of the Fanographic factors.

The erratic ethical are also sport fans with low levels of Fanographic factors. I.e. their consumption is generally low and also their attachment. If transgression occurs, there is not a particularly high level of dissonance, although proximal factors, especially beliefs and morality, drive the decision making here. It is easy for the erratic ethical stop their already low consumption with low levels of dissonance being experienced in the process.

The theory also provides a good basis of enquiry for sport organisations to find out details of their fan base that relate to the internal factors. By understanding these factors before any transgression comes to light, practitioners can better predict how the cognitive dissonance process may occur. Additionally, practitioners honesty is also essential, in the event where there are false information communicated (athletes or organisations) the dissonance

process increases immensely, which further alters the response, and also a key tenet of the proximal factors – trust. Referring back to being proactive (5.4.1), organisations that understand their fan base, in relation to the Fanographic factors, could target these low level consumers in their marketing strategy to engage them more with the athlete/team/organisation. This is a proactive recommendation for before a transgression occurs, therefore if one does arise; there is more probability of these fans maintaining their behaviour.

### 5.4.3 Case Example

Here the study uses the recent case of Ched Evans as an example to practitioners of the incorrect response to a player transgression case.

Ched Evans, a professional footballer for Sheffield United, was indicted in a rape (in 2011) charge of a 19 year-old girl, who was under the influence of alcohol and deemed too drunk to consent. There was lots of speculation, in the media, about the event and whether it was deemed true. Evans was sentenced in 2012 to five years imprisonment, although he ended up serving half of his sentence and was released in 2014; with his former club (Sheffield United) speculating Evans rejoined them. This led to a petition by club supporters threatening a boycott, high status patrons Charlie Webster, Lindsay Graham, Dave Berry and Paul Heaton all resigned. Jessica Ennis-Hill also stated that her name be removed from the stand at Bramall Lane. This response was from the fans was based on the cognitive dissonance with the primary cognitive element self-integrity. Evans rejoining the club, and sport fans continuing to support the team in light of this, ultimately indicates that they condone the heinous act. This led to many fans being placed in the “Dislocator” quadrant. This response was also evident in this study on the case of Lee Hughes, which saw the response of IP2 as “dislocating” from their support of the team that signed Hughes (for details see chapter 3.6.1.2)

## 5.5. Limitations and Future Research

Recent maleficent cases, of many forms of transgression have seen doping - Lance Armstrong and multiple others in the sport of cycling, the Russian systematic doping cases across athletes of over thirty sports on the international stage, leading to calls of banning Russian athletes competing in the 2018 winter Olympics; spot fixing – Pakistan Cricket team bowling “no-balls” against England in 2012 leading to the suspension of three Pakistan international players. According to many, the known cases of transgression are just the tip of the iceberg (Maennig 2005). With that said, there is a plethora of opportunities for investigation into the many types of sporting and player transgression. It is recommended that investigations could focus more in-depth on case-by-case analysis after a transgression has occurred. The current study did not assess consumer response over a period of time, therefore a longitudinal study would benefit the understanding how the dissonance process alters over time and the factors that play an important role in those changes.

This study has revealed a number of concepts relevant to sport consumers that are important in the response process to transgressions. Quantitative methods could be employed to investigate the concepts further to confined transgression types and measure strength and presence of these concepts. For example, examine a particular case of sporting transgression, such as match or spot fixing. Furthermore, the concepts developed in this study can be applied in further areas of sport consumer behaviour. As mentioned, the developed Fanographic and Proximal factors should be utilised and extended in further studies.

Finally, this study was predominantly made up participants from the UK, therefore there is a clear cultural aspect to the area under study. Response to transgression in one culture may well be completely different in another. The recommendation is to investigate how the Fanographic and Proximal factors have variation across different cultures; accounting for these changes would constitute an interesting area of investigation and further development of this study.

## 5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In summary, this research set out to explore consumers' perceptions and behaviours in their response to transgression in sport. As such, the findings have presented the emerged grounded theory of a sport consumer's behavioural zone of tolerance. This chapter began by presenting the achievement of this studies aims and the evaluation of the theory developed (see 5.2). Then followed the contributions of this study to theory, practice and research methods, particularly being highlighted and presented in table (10) format. Section 5.4 provides implications to practitioners of the internal factors (Proximal and Fanographic) of the developed theory (Behavioural Zone of Tolerance), along with practical application of the response typology matrix (see 5.4.3). This chapter then concludes by indicating its limitations and proposing further research directions.

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# APPENDICIES

## Appendix A

### Focus Group Questions and Discussion Guide

WELCOME and thank you for volunteering to take part in this focus group. You have been asked to participate, as your point of view is important. I realize you are busy and I appreciate your time.

Introduction:

This focus group discussion is designed to assess your thoughts about transgression in sport and the impact that these transgression events have on you as a sport fan or person. This focus group will last around an hour. Are you all happy for me to record the discussion to facilitate data collection?

Despite being taped, I would like to assure you that this focus group discussion is completely anonymous. All audio-recorded data will be collected, transcribed and kept for data analysis and academic reporting purposes. All transcriptions from the focus group contain no individual information whatsoever. Therefore, you should answer to all questions as truthfully as possible.

Focus group Rules:

- Important in focus group discussion is that only one person speaks at a time. Please try to wait for others to finish before adding your views. There is also no order to which you have to speak. If you want to speak please do so.
- There are absolutely no right or wrong answers to any of the questions in the focus group.
- You do not have to agree with what others say

Any questions before we start?

Warm up Question

1. Let's do a quick round of introductions. You may know people or you may not, either way, just tell the group your name along with your favourite sports and any team(s) that you support.
2. What do you understand about the term "Transgression"?



## Guiding Questions

3. When you think about transgression in sport, what are the first things that come to mind?

Follow ups (if necessary)

- a. Tell me about your understanding of transgression in sport?

4. Explain to the group 3 transgressions in sport that you are most aware of?

Follow ups (used cases if necessary)

- a. Why those 3 cases? What's the worst you have heard of the three?
- b. Probe with ways the group consumed these scandals such as media outlets – News channels, social media, team/athlete websites

5. What kind of transgression issues do you currently see or hear going on around the sport industry? (use cases if necessary)

Follow ups (if necessary)

- a. Can you explain where you hear about these issues

6. Try and think hard of any transgression that happened in a sport that you enjoy watching the most; can you explain how this made you feel?

(Follow ups if necessary)

- a. Has a player been involved in the transgression or the organization?

7. Does transgression on the field of play impact you more than a transgression off the field?? ((ST Vs. PT))

(Follow-ups)

- a. Which do you feel is worse?

8. How does transgression impact the way you follow a particular sport? E.g. purchase of tickets, memorabilia or TV viewing.

- a. If transgression has occurred in your sport how did you react? Did you change your behaviour at all?
- b. If no transgression has affected you to now, in the sport you follow, can I get everyone to close his or her eyes and think and explain how it would affect

you? Think of your FAVOURITE player, or your FAVOURITE team. (Probe with cases if it occurred to their team or athlete here if necessary)

9. Do transgressions outside of the sport you follow affect or impact your views of the sport you watch.

10. Do you believe that your favourite team/player is free from any transgression?  
(Probe after answer is given)

(Follow ups if necessary)

a. If no, Why? [Probe]

b. If yes, Why? [Probe]

11. Which sports do you trust the least because you feel there may be transgression occurring

a. Why that sport?

b. Do you trust players, organization, and referees?

12. In your opinion, explain which kind of scandal is likely to negatively impact sport in the future?

13. Of everything that we have discussed today, is there any issues that you can think of that would be important to discuss?

### **FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

(Not for participants) Cases to be used for probing purposes during the focus group

#### **Player Transgression**

1. Tiger Woods infidelity (2009)
2. Oscar Pistorius (2014) murder case
3. John Terry
  - a. Case 1 extra marital affair (2010) with Wayne Bridge's (teammate) ex partner.
  - b. Case 2 Racial allegations (2011) towards Anton Ferdinand
4. Ray Rice Fiancé assault in Las Vegas hotel elevator (2014)

#### **Sporting Transgression**

1. Lance Armstrong case caught doping confessing in 2013
2. Pakistan spot fixing case bowling no balls Vs. England (2010). Salman Butt, Mohamed Asif and Mohammad Amir.
3. Calciopoli scandal of the Italian football Serie A. (2006) Link between team managers and referees rigging games. Included AC Milan, Fiorentina, Lazio and Juventus
4. F1 Crashgate, Renault ordered Nelson Piquet Jr. to crash allowing teammate Alonso to win. (2008)
5. Biogenesis scandal in MLB (2013) several MLB players given PED's and banned subsequently by MLB

## Appendix B - Observational notes (example from Focus Group 2)

6. Try and think hard of any transgression that happened in a sport that you enjoy watching the most; can you explain how this made you feel?

(Follow ups if necessary)

- a. Has a player been involved in the transgression or the organization?

Participant/case /key	Notable Quotes and Behaviours
13	Lower (football) league discussed Cheltenham always lost. If because of transgression he would stop going. There was a degree of hesitation and real uncertainty.
FC	<i>Hypothetical prompt behaviour</i>
13	Might go for loyalty, interesting that this participant really feels that loyalty plays a part.
FC	<i>Cheerleading prompt (to participant 12)</i>
12	Ashamed to cheerlead team that's corrupt (relatively fast response, little hesitation here from the participant)
FC	<i>Drug taking prompt to FGP14 (Northampton fan)</i>
14	Loves team but would be unhappy as players are idols. Participant shows extremely fast response and anger here. What I can only describe as extremely strong emotion towards players and team. Not sure if still go to game (relative degree of hesitation)
FC	<i>Prompt by team reaction (how team responds)</i>
14	Really important to protect the name of the club, i.e. players are sold or released (if guilty). Again, strong emotions and discomfort shown here Maybe because its players they're attached too or team?

## Appendix C

# Focus Group Participant Information

### Study Title:

**Understanding Consumer Perceptions and Intentions as a Result of Transgression in Sport**

Dear focus group participant,

Thank you for your participation in this research, which is conducted by Russell Cowley of the Coventry Business School. This research aims to explore the perceptions and intentions that consumers have on transgression in sport. Your participation is important for the completion of this research.

The discussion will last approximately 1 hour and themes and questions will focus on transgression in sport. A voice recorder will be used throughout for the purpose of collecting all the necessary information to support results in this study. Please be assured that data collected from the focus group discussion will be confidential and used for academic purposes only. Data will also be coded appropriately and reporting of results will be completely anonymous. Likely outputs include academic publications and dissemination of findings to sport organisations and various National Governing Bodies in sport.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and therefore you have the right to withdraw up to 7 days after the focus group is carried out, without giving an explanation.

Before the start of the focus group discussion you will be asked to complete a consent form and at the end of the focus group you will be asked to provide some basic demographic information.

Once again, thank you for participating in this research. If you have any questions about this research after the focus group discussion, please contact Russell Cowley at [cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk) or [aa6442@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:aa6442@coventry.ac.uk)

Should you have any issues or complaints you can contact Prof. Simon Chadwick [bsx051@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:bsx051@coventry.ac.uk) and alternatively, Samantha Gorse at Coventry University [aa7031@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:aa7031@coventry.ac.uk)

## Appendix D

### Focus Group Participant Consent Form

Study Title:

Understanding Consumer perceptions and intentions as a Result of Transgression in Sport

**Russell Cowley**  
**Coventry University**  
**Dept. of Business Environment and Society**  
**Priory Street**  
**Coventry CV1 5FB**  
**Email. Cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk**

Please  
tick Box

- |    |   |                          |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | I confirm that I have understood the above study (as explained by the researcher and the written information provided) and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw, up to 7 days after the day of the focus group, without giving reason or explanation.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I agree to take part in the above study.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I agree to focus group discussion being voice recorded.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

---

Name of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Name of Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature

## **Appendix E – Semi-structured interview schedule and questions**

### **Project Title: Understanding Consumer Perceptions and Behavioural Intentions as a Result of Transgression in Sport**

#### **Semi-structured Interview Schedule**

##### **Project Information (Read Verbatim)**

Thank you for taking part in this study. I know that you already confirmed, through the online BoS questionnaire and the consent form, that you are ok with this interview being recorded, but can I just ask again that you are now ok for me to start recording?

As indicated, this interview will last approximately 50 minutes. If you have any questions during or at the end of the interview then please feel free to ask at any time.

For the purpose of this research interview, we are going to be focusing on two forms of transgression;

Sporting Transgression is defined as “Scandal where athlete(s) behave immorally or illegally, which has a direct impact on the sporting contest”

Player Transgression is defined as “Scandal where by athlete(s) behave immorally or illegally, off the field of play, creating a direct impact on the stakeholders for which the athlete(s) is/are associated to.

I am talking to you as sport consumer and therefore feel that your insights are beneficial to this research. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers to any questions. I do require you to be as honest as you can with your response to the questions in order that I get a true reflection.

#### **Interview Questions**

##### **Section A – Consumer Motivations, Commitment and Attachments to Sport**

1. To get started, could you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you see yourself as a sports fan? Could you also tell me how you follow these sports and athletes? (live attendance, TV, internet)

### **Prompts**

- Cultural background, birth place and occupation
- Motivation for watching that athlete/sport.
- Attachments to particular athletes or elements of the sport
- Commitment – length of time watching athlete/sport
- Patriotic – National level sport or athletes followed

### **Prompt Question**

1A. If you could tell me, how would you explain your relationship with your attachments indicated in the previous question

### **Prompt Question**

1B. Would you say that integrity in sport is of big importance to you?

## **Section B – Consumer Personal Experience**

2. Has there been a form of transgression occur in the sport or athletes that you follow? Have you personally experienced any transgressions as a sports fan that you can explain to me?

**NOTE: If not applicable to interviewee move to question 3.**

2A. Can you recall how this transgression made you feel? What emotions do you recall if any?

### **Prompts**

- Anger

- Disappointment
- Frustration

2B. Can you tell me how you responded to this transgression?

2C. What were the key factors that made you behave this way?

#### **Prompts**

- Loyalty/trust
- Bias
- Emotions
- Impact on significant others (i.e. children)
- Individual morals
- Cultural background
- Integrity
- Tarnished (success or association)

2D. How was the response from the sport organisation or governing body?  
Did that response influence your thoughts, emotions or actions?

#### **Prompts**

- Athlete Ban (lifetime Vs. minimal time)



2E . Has your view on athletes changed from how you saw athletes before the transgression?

**Prompts**

- Role models
- Accountability (before and after)
- False Image portrayed by athletes
- Human nature to transgress????

**Section C – Impact of Transgression on Consumer**

3. What types of transgression would have the biggest impact on you as a sports fan?  
Would this transgression stop you watching the sport or athlete?

3A. What factors would you consider to be most important to you as an individual, and the impact that the transgression would have on you if the transgression occurred?

**Prompts**

- Beliefs
- Emotions
- Morality
- Family members
- Trust Other fans
- Cultural background
- Integrity
- Tarnished by association

**External Prompts**

- Transgression impact athlete performance
- If applicable, refer back to impact on emotions respondent identifies in response to question 2
- False image of athlete

3B. Using the transgression you just discussed, would the behaviour of the athlete, team, or governing bodies, after the transgression occurred, have an impact or alter on how you might respond to the transgression?

4. Would certain transgressions affect you more than others, such as on and off field transgression or the type of transgression in particular sports?

NOTE: Improvise from answer given in question 3

(Prompts)

- a. Sporting vs. Player transgression?

(Tiger woods, Lance Armstrong, Mcguire, deflategate, Calciopoli, Ched Evans, Tocketgate)

**Prompt**

- cultural background? Elicit factors of choice
- PT – bad as a human being
- ST – bad as a sports fan

- b. Type of transgression i.e. doping vs. match-fixing

- c. Individual sports vs. team sports

5. Would you react differently to a transgression by your team or athlete against an opposing athlete or team, for the same transgression? Can you tell me briefly how this might make you feel and respond?

(Prompt Question)

- a. Would you be more lenient or bias towards your team/athlete and would you remain loyal to your team or athlete?

(Prompt Question)

- b. Who would you feel more anger or disappointment towards, your team or athlete or opposing teams/athletes?

(Prompt Question)

- c. Would team/athlete success impact your response in light of transgression?

#### **Section D – Media Impact on Consumer**

6. Do media sources that you consume about sport influence your thoughts about transgression in sports where athletes are involved? **Prompt from experience with media from question 1 if applicable**

(Prompts) – what outlets do you use? How do these sources change how you think about your athletes and sports you follow?

Prompts

- Outlets used
- Sources change perceptions

(Prompt question)

6a. Does the media impact on your trust in sports or athletes?

Prompt

- Would you hold an athlete guilty initially (societal perception) based on what the media have portrayed an athlete to be

## **Section F – Additional Comments**

7. From what we have discussed today, do you have any further comments that you feel are important to discuss?

## **Closing Statement**

Thank you very much for participating in this interview

To reiterate, the recordings of this interview will be transcribed, analysed and then destroyed

The details from this interview will not go beyond myself

If you would like to receive a general summary of the interviews and the important themes that emerge then please let me know.

Thanks again for your time

## **Appendix F**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Screening Questionnaire and Participant Information** **Bristol Online Survey**

#### **Project title:**

Consumers' Perceptions and Behaviours in their Response to Transgression in Sport

#### **Participant Information Statement**

The aim of this study is to research consumer perceptions and behavioural intentions in response to transgression in sport. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and you can opt out at any stage by closing and exiting the browser. If you are happy to take part, please answer the following questions relating to you as a sport consumer, and to clarify suitability for an interview. Your answers will help us to better understand the response from consumers to the many type of transgressions that occur, when athletes are involved. The survey should take approximately 2/3 minutes to complete. Your answers will be treated confidentially and the information you provide will be kept anonymous in any research outputs/publications. Your data will be held securely in an encrypted file on the Coventry university computer system. All data will be deleted by 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016. The project has been reviewed and approved through the formal Research Ethics procedure at Coventry University. For further information, or if you have any queries, please contact the lead researcher Russell Cowley at [cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk). If you have any concerns that cannot be resolved through the lead researcher, please contact Dr Yue Meng-Lewis at [yue.meng@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:yue.meng@coventry.ac.uk). Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your help is very much appreciated.

#### **Chance to win and iPad**

Participants, who complete this short online questionnaire, are short listed to participate in the Skype/FaceTime interview. If you complete the interview you will be entered in a draw to win an iPad mini. This prize draw does not affect your rights as a participant in any way.

#### **Informed Participant Consent (forced response question via BoS)**

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information regarding the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions
- I understand my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw (including the information I provide) until 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016, without providing a reason

- I understand that all the data I provide will be anonymised and that my own individual information will be treated confidentially
- I am happy that the data I provide may be used (anonymously) in: academic papers; and in funding proposals to research funding bodies
- If selected for a Skype/Facetime interview I am happy for the interview to be recorded.
- I agree to take part in the above study.

By clicking to “proceed” you agree to have read and understood the 6 terms set above

**Bristol Online Survey Screening Questions:**

1. Are you
  - Male
  - Female
2. Are you
  - Under 18 years old (terminate)
  - 18-39 years old
  - 40-65 years old
  - Over 65 years old
3. Do you currently live in the UK?
  - Yes
  - No (terminate)
4. Which of the following best describes you
  - Avid sports fan
  - Moderate sports fan
  - Not much of a sports fan (terminate)
5. Do you have any children?
  - Yes
  - No
6. Could you briefly tell me your occupation?

---

7. Do you own/have access to Skype/Facetime

- Yes
- No (terminate)

8. Please select any of the following sports that you are interested in and follow  
- Football; - Rugby; - Tennis; - Cricket; - Athletics; - Motor Racing; - Boxing; - Golf; -  
Snooker; - Darts; - Basketball; - Ice Hockey; - Baseball; - American Football; - Cycling; -  
Other.

If other please specify \_\_\_\_\_

- Please complete the brief contact details so that I can get in touch and we can discuss your possible participation in a one on one interview.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your participation

## Appendix G

### Semi-Structured Interview Consent Form

Participant Number.

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

##### Project Title:

### **Understanding Consumer Perceptions and Behavioural Intentions as a Result of Transgression in Sport**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study for the purpose of collecting data on sport consumers perceptions and the behavioural intentions, as a result of transgression in sport.

Before you decide to take part, you must **read the accompanying Participant Information Sheet and sign as appropriate, and return to the researcher at [cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk)**

If you consent to having the interview video recorded, all recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Transcripts from the research will only be viewed by the researcher and will be stored in a password protected computer file until they are destroyed on 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2018.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information about any aspect of this research. It is important that you feel able to take the necessary time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

#### **Should you require any further information about this research, please contact:**

Russell Cowley, Coventry University, Jaguar Building, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB. Email: [cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk).  
Alternatively contact my supervisor Yue Meng-Lewis, Jag 10, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB

PLEASE DELETE (YES/NO) AS APPROPRIATE. PLEASE THEN **TYPE** NAME, IF YOU AGREE TO THE TERMS, IN THE PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE BOX AND EMAIL TO:  
[cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cowleyr2@coventry.ac.uk)

1	I confirm that I have read and understood the <b><u>Participant Information Sheet</u></b> dated [DATE] for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions	YES	NO
2	I understand my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw (including the information I provide) until 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2016, without providing a reason	YES	NO























<b>3</b>	<b>I have noted down my participant number (top left of this Consent Form) which is required by the research if I wish to withdraw from the study</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>I understand that all the data I provide will be anonymised and that my own individual information will be treated confidentially</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>I am happy that the data I provide may be used (anonymously) in: academic papers; and in funding proposals to research funding bodies</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>I am happy for the interview to be <u>video recorded</u>.</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>I agree to take part in the above study.</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>Participant's Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
<b>Russell Cowley</b>		

## Appendix H

### **(Early Open Codes) Extracted from NVIVO**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Memo</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
Athlete		10	344
Athlete connection		1	4
Athlete perception		7	178
Socio-economic background		1	2
Sportsmanship		1	1
Athlete response		6	13
athlete separation		7	23
Athlete status		8	50
Community and personal development		2	6
External Influence		2	8
Lower level athletes		2	11
Behaviours		8	48
Behavior uncertainty		4	9
Bias		6	12
Psychological Conflict		5	8
High Impact		10	70

Low Impact		6	22
Neutral Impact		6	14
Sport Consumption		6	50
Fan Identity		4	37
fan attachment		8	57
connection to game		4	8
societal view point		6	26
Fan type		10	59
Feelings/Emotions		3	45
Individual Morals		2	2
initial bias		6	18
Motivation		6	25
Team Identity		9	51
transgression effect on fan ID		8	45
Governance		9	66
Sport organisation response		0	0
Impact		7	27
aftermath injustice		5	21
athlete pressure		1	1
Biggest potential scandal		2	4
effects of transgression		8	85
Impact on children		2	4
Level of Transgression		7	55
Long term effect of transgression		7	54
Personal Experience		2	17
Post Sporting Transgression		10	80
return to sport		1	3
Repeated transgression		4	14
Sport Image		4	60
Transgression Macro impact		12	111
Management (non athlete) perception		6	23
Media		3	10
Consumer media retention		2	5
ethnicity of twitter followers		1	1
Internet Source		2	3
Media Coverage		8	98
Media influence		7	52
Media reputation		5	15
Media Source		5	32
Social Media		4	11
trustworthy source		4	8
Unknown Source		3	3
Money influence		6	27
Perception		7	240
controversial perception of drugs		4	4
Negative perception		9	245
Neutral Perception		4	41
Positive Perception		6	73
Pro athlete Perception		1	39
of fans		1	3
Sport perception		1	10
role models		7	41

Sport		7	55
Common transgression occurrence		6	27
high level sport		4	11
Individual v team		2	4
Mega Event		2	2
sporting outcome effect on perception		5	10
Transgression suitability		1	1
Transgression		4	9
Evidence		4	12
Evidence uncertainty		4	5
Human nature to transgress		1	4
Location of transgression in sport		5	21
Multiple observation		3	4
Multiple transgressions		6	20
Transgression duration		2	4
transgression link to personality		4	7
transgression rumour		3	5
Transgression suitability		2	2
Unlawful Act		7	56
Trust		11	98
increase trust		3	8
Least trusted sports		6	47
Uncertainty		4	13
Type of transgression		11	88
Domestic sexual abuse		1	1
Doping		9	78
doping acceptance		5	5
Marital Affair		2	3
Match Fixing		2	6
Player transgression		10	152
Sporting Transgression		11	211
Spot Fixing		1	3